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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS



MARTIN'S JOURNAL

How wine is distributed may not be the sexiest of subjects, but it's prompting battle lines to be drawn in at least two states.

In 2005, a Supreme Court ruling seemed to open the door to a much freer flow of wine from wineries and retailers to consumers. We say "seemed to" because some of the companies most impacted by this long-withheld freedom of commerce — distributors — responded by pulling out all the stops to retain the middle man.

We've seen it in Illinois, a state long known for aggressive lobbying of legislators, and in Texas, where there seemed to be a concerted effort to under-inform state lawmakers on the subject.

We won't take up valuable *Grapevine* space to fill you in on all the details. However, if you'd like to learn more, we are providing regular updates and links to news stories on VinesseTODAY.com. You'll find most of the related articles archived in the area called "The Wine Business."

Martin Stewart Jr.

Any Way You Slice It, Pizza & Wine Make Tasty Companions

By Robert Johnson

Sure, you can dish it out. But can you take it?

The "it" in this case is not a verbal jab, but rather a much more enjoyable (not to mention delicious) topic: pizza. More specifically: pairing pizza with wine.

Usually, the phrase "pizza wine" isn't meant to be a compliment. Wine shopkeepers typically utter those words when describing a wine that's cheap and not all that distinctive — the kind of wine you find in big jugs on supermarket shelves.

But there are lots of very good wines that match beautifully with pizza. Just keep in mind that "pizza" has a very broad definition depending on the types of toppings heaped upon it.

For a plain ol' cheese pizza with lots of tomato sauce, it's hard to beat Chianti, or the American mir-

ror-image of that wine, Sangiovese.

After that, things get more complicated. For instance, the somewhat "earthy" nuances of a mushroom pizza call for a wine with similar traits. A rustic red from Bordeaux — not a \$100 bottle, but something much more simple — would be a good choice.

If the pizza topping is somewhat spicy, such as sausage, it's hard to beat a California (red) Zinfandel. Another solid choice would be a

spicy Australian Shiraz.

There's even a great pizza-and-wine pairing for those who strick strictly to white wines: Pour a glass of Pinot Gris with a veggie pizza. And if the only veggies you prefer are asparagus and artichoke, try a



well-chilled Sauvignon Blanc.

Any way you slice it, pizza is a wonderful comfort food. Add the right kind of wine, and you can turn pizza night into a party.

(For more food/wine pairings, go to VinesseTODAY.com.)

Robert Johnson can be reached at Robert@vinesse.com.



OUR MISSION:

To uncover and bring you wine gems from around the world, which you're not likely to discover on your own, and which enhance your wine enjoyment.

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Martin Stewart

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


Wine Steward:

Katie Montgomery

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A story we ran earlier this year prompted several questions from member Dan James of Dallas.

Because there were multiple questions from Dan and limited space in our "Q and A" department, Editor

Robert Johnson asked if I'd mind replying to Dan's note.

"Sure," I said. "As long as I can print the reply in my 'Cellar Notes' column." What could Robert say? So here goes...

"I really enjoyed reading about the influence of oak barrels in *The Grapevine*," Dan wrote. "Can you clarify a couple of things about the oak barrels?"

Sure.

"The story talks about the aroma from brown sugar, chocolate, butter-scotch, etc. Is that a subjective result of the toasting, or are these foods (brown sugar, chocolate, vanilla, bacon, etc.) actually used in the toasting process? I assumed that the food was somehow included in the wood fire described."

Lots of foods include artificial colors and flavors — and that includes some of the wine cooler-type products out there — but "real wine" does not.

The foods mentioned are merely aroma and/or flavor *impressions* that are created by the toasting of the wood. A wine aged in an oak barrel typically will pick up some of those impressions, but you needn't worry about counting bacon fat or chocolate calories.

Wine judges, including members of the Vinesse tasting panel, use those terms to give you an idea of what a wine smells and tastes like — not what it's made out of. With the exception of the yeast used to control the fermentation process, about the only ingredient you'll find in wine is grapes.



"The article also says that oak barrels are reused and are good for about five years," Dan adds. "But how many batches of wine does that represent? How long does each batch typically remain in the barrel?"

Just as paint fades in color over time, the degree of aroma and flavor influence an oak barrel exerts fades with each passing year. Thus, a wine aged in a brand new oak barrel will taste more "oaky" than one aged in a five-year-old barrel.

As for how much time a wine spends in barrel, there is no "typical" scenario. Generally speaking, red wines

will be aged in oak longer than whites, but some vintners subject Chardonnay to just as much oak aging as their reds receive. It all depends on the vintner's "vision" for each wine he or she makes.



WINE A_{TO}Z

Vanilla. A scent imparted in wine by aging in certain types of oak barrels.

Weighty. A wine that is full-bodied and assertive in both aroma and flavor. It typically will have a long after-flavor as well.

XWinery. A Napa Valley-based winery founded on the basis of an MBA project at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. The wine clubs of Vinesse have featured several X wines in recent years.

Yeasty. A bread-like aroma found in some wines, such as those that have undergone a secondary fermentation (Champagne being the primary example).

Zaca Mesa. A highly-acclaimed winery in Santa Barbara County that has served as a training ground for some of the Central Coast's most acclaimed vintners.

Austere. Term used to describe a wine that offers little flavor.

APPELLATION SHOWCASE

OHIO

Every state in the Union now has at least one bonded winery, which means “wine country” is everywhere — and that includes the great state of Ohio.

At last count, the “Buckeye State” was home to about eight dozen wineries, and most of the best can be found in the Grand River Valley American Viticultural Area, in Ohio’s north-east quadrant. Another top region is the Lake Erie coastal area, which runs from west of Cleveland to Toledo.

During the mid-1800s, before California was widely populated or planted, Ohio was one of America’s leading wine producers. But it suffered more

than most from the business effects of Prohibition, and by the time Prohibition was repealed, other states were in better positions to step in and fill the void.

Ohio’s wine renaissance has picked up steam more recently, however, as vintners have learned to plant the varieties that fare best in specific microclimates. That’s why you’ll see the “usual suspects” such as

Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling sharing barrel and shelf space with lesser-known varieties such as Catawba, Chambourcin, Seyval Blanc and Vidal Blanc. Sweet dessert wines also are popular.

If you have time to visit only one Ohio winery, we recommend Ferrante Winery, near Geneva. Its Dry Bunches Riesling is a national award winner, and its onsite restaurant offers sweeping vineyard views —

a perfect backdrop for wining and dining, Ohio-style.

During the mid-1800s, before California was widely populated or planted, Ohio was one of America’s leading wine producers.



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VINESSE STYLE

SONOMA COUNTY DINING

When visiting Sonoma County wine country, there is no reason for one to go hungry. Just bring money.

Sonoma is a dining paradise, and that's because it's a diverse agricultural region. While its vast stretches of vineyards are world-famous, lesser known are its array of small farmers that supply local restaurateurs with a bounty of fresh, local and often organic offerings. Sonoma also is home to numerous artisan cheese makers and ranchers who can supply fresh meats.

Sonoma lamb, salmon from Bodega Bay and Petaluma duck can be found on many menus, while desserts might be built around succulent in-season peaches.

And it's not unusual to see local chefs perusing the bins at the numerous farmers' markets during the early morning hours, seeking to beat the

crowds to the freshest and finest products. Many a restaurant "special" has been motivated by those just-after-dawn shopping strolls.

So, where can one experience the bounty of the county? Here's a list of some of our favorite Sonoma County dining destinations, segregated by town:



• **Healdsburg** — Cyrus, Dry Creek Kitchen, Zin, Ravenous, Manzanita, Ralph's Bistro and Willi's Seafood & Raw Bar.

• **Forestville** — Farmhouse Inn.

• **Sonoma** — Deuce, The Girl & the Fig, The General's Daughter, Carneros Bistro and La Sallette.

• **Santa Rosa** — Zazu, Syrah and Willi's Wine Bar.

BEING GREEN

The 4th Australian Wine Industry Environment Conference is taking place in early August, and organizers expect it will build on the outstanding success of the previous conferences in 2000, 2002 and 2004. The 2007 full-day event will respond to strategic and technical environmental issues in order to assist the industry in meeting challenges laid down by policy makers, consumers and winegrowers themselves. A "green exhibition" will provide delegates and industry suppliers a chance to explore innovative, environmentally-supportive products and services. Attendees also have the option of attending a full-day technical tour to view first-hand vineyard and winery sites where innovative and interesting solutions have been put in place. Australia has been dealing with the effects of an ongoing drought, and that has heightened awareness of how closely the wine industry is married to soil types and climate. It also has increased interest in "green" practices that help mitigate the impact of droughts and other curveballs that Mother Nature may toss.



Take Time to Take the Temp

When it comes to wine, probably the biggest mistake made by restaurant servers involves serving Chardonnay too cold.

And that's not a swipe at the servers. Most do the best they can with what they have to work with — which can include cooling units set too low, policies that call for all opened white wines to be placed in ice buckets, and a general lack of knowledge on the part of restaurant owners.

We never expect to experience absolutely perfect wine service because the proper serving temperature varies — and sometimes quite widely — by wine type. A general rule of thumb is that the lighter the style of wine, the cooler it should be. Ideally, varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio should be served at around 45

to 50 degrees to accentuate their crisp and clean qualities.

Chardonnay, however, should be served about 5 to 10 degrees warmer. Otherwise, its lovely aromatics can be muted. And that would be a shame because Chardonnay is almost as

much fun to smell as it is to drink.

For light- to medium-bodied red wines — Pinot Noir, Beaujolais, fruit-forward Merlot — the ideal temperature is about 60 degrees. Full-bodied reds — Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Zinfandel — can be served even warmer. Keep in mind, however, that the warmer they're served, the more assertive their alcohol becomes. It's a balance between muting the flavors and overwhelming the palate with a sense of “hotness.”

A good tip: If a wine seems “hot” in your throat, cool it down. If it's difficult to get much aroma out of a wine, warm it up.

A general rule of thumb is that the lighter the style of wine, the cooler it should be.



Four Seasons



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TOURING TIPS

Seeking the Sonoma Valley State of Mind

Cradled between the Mayacamas and Sonoma mountain ranges, Sonoma Valley is recognized as the birthplace of California's famed wine industry.

Just 45 minutes north of San Francisco (when the traffic cooperates), the valley beckons with fine dining, a flourishing arts scene, charming shops, tranquil lodging, world-class spas and more than 40 wineries. The valley even offers 13,000 acres of parkland, helping to preserve the rural lifestyle that's continually threatened by an influx of residents and accompanying infrastructure.

For now, however, the town of Sonoma remains a place you can park your car and walk more than 150 years back in time. The eight-acre Sonoma Plaza is the largest town square of its kind in California and a National Historic Landmark.

The carefully preserved adobe buildings include the Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma, the last

in California's 21-mission chain.

In nearby Glen Ellen, author Jack London lived and wrote at Beauty Ranch, now an 800-acre historic park. Kenwood Vineyards makes a few bottlings that bear the Jack London name.

Long a culinary destination, Sonoma Valley today offers more than 40 dining choices of the non-logo variety, ranging from casual bakeries and cafes to acclaimed chef-owned restaurants.

Much of what you'll find on the dinner table is grown or made right in the valley, including abundant produce, artisan breads, cheeses and olive oils. (See "Vinesse Style" in this issue for a list of recommended local restaurants.)

Around the Sonoma Plaza and throughout the valley, you can browse in chic boutiques and quaint

shops featuring clothing, home furnishings, kitchenware, jewelry and unique gifts. And wherever you go, you can expect warm, personal service from proprietors who know, and sometimes even make, their



merchandise.

Whether your passion is painting and sculpture, live music, literary readings, theater, movies, fast cars, hiking or golf, you'll find plenty to do in the valley.

The Sonoma Valley Museum of Art stages world-class exhibitions. Galleries and studios showcase the works of local artists. And the bounties of the seasons are celebrated in summer's Salute to the Arts, fall's Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival, and winter's Olive Festival.

Accommodations range from cozy bed-and-breakfast inns to charming historic hotels, and from stylish lodges to luxury spa resorts. National chains also are in abundance, pushing the total number of options to nearly 100.

Sonoma Valley is a wine-growing appellation, a culinary capital, a historic treasure and a natural wonder. You might even call it a state of mind.

It's an ideal destination for any season, for a weekend or a week, or as your headquarters for an extended stay in the San Francisco Bay Area — without that annoying city noise at night.

For Further Information

A great resource for planning a Sonoma Valley vacation is the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau. Write to the Bureau at 453 First Street East, Sonoma, CA 95476, or call the office (toll-free) at 866-996-1090. Additional information is available online at sonomavalley.com.



Dalla Valle: Great Wines You Probably Can't Buy or Drink

Dalla Valle Vineyards is a small, family-owned winery that was founded in 1986. And its wines are highly sought-after.

The winery and vineyards are located on a plateau 400 feet above the Napa Valley floor, in the eastern hills of Oakville. The combination of perfect sun exposure and the cooling marine influence from the Pacific Ocean make it an ideal site for world-class wine-growing.

Dalla Valle has reached an admirable level of acceptance in the last decade, fueled in part by astronomical ratings bestowed by power-

ful wine critics. The wines made from Dalla Valle Vineyards fruit are pure, unbridled expressions of wine grapes at their most powerful and concentrated. They're of immense stature and richness, with well-integrated tannin and acidity.

Dalla Valle Vineyards produces two estate wines, a Cabernet Sauvignon and a proprietary red wine called "Maya."

The Cabernet Sauvignon is blended with a small amount of Cabernet Franc and is aged in 50 to 60 percent new French oak barrels. This wine consistently exhibits impressive structure and velvety berry flavors, vintage after vintage.

Alluring and full of unmistakable pedigree, Dalla Valle "Maya" is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc from the small and remarkable vineyard that bears its name. Each year, fewer than 500 cases of this wine are produced.

The grapes for "Maya" are aged in 70 to 80 percent new French oak, producing a graceful wine of refinement, rich elegance and outstanding aging potential.

Want to try one of Dalla Valle's wines? Get in line. The winery presently is not accepting any new names for its mailing list, but it will add your name to its waiting list, on request.

Now that's exclusivity.

(To read about more "Wineries of Distinction,"



check out the archives on VinesseTODAY.com.)

Quotes Du Jour

■ *Ludwig Van Beethoven was among the greatest composers ever, but he also knew how to relax:*

“A glass of wine is a great refreshment after a hard day’s work.”

■ *Francis Ford Coppola, filmmaker and vintner, on the role of wine in popular media:*

“In the past, people were always smoking cigarettes in movies. Today, I would hardly imagine a fine dinner portrayed in a movie or a television show that didn’t include wine on the table.”

■ *French author Alexandre Dumas, prioritizing the evening meal:*

“Wine is the intellectual part of a meal; meats are merely the material part.”

■ *Greek philosopher Plato obviously was a fan of wine:*

“No thing more excellent nor more valuable than wine was ever granted by God.”

■ *English actor and restaurateur Michael Caine:*

“Home is where the wine is.”

Q AND A

(Perhaps the name of this column should be changed to “A and A” this month, as two of our members provide input on information included in recent editions of The Grapevine.)

I am excited to try the pork loin recipe featured in (a recent) shipment. However, as a pork producer, I know how important it is to always use a meat thermometer when cooking a pork loin (or any pork roast) to ensure it isn’t overcooked, and therefore dried out and tough. We always remove a roast when the thermometer reads 142 degrees, and let it stand for at least five minutes before carving. Pork should be served when it is slightly pink for it to be its juiciest. Please include this little tidbit with the next pork recipe you feature so your wine club members can enjoy succulent meats with your awesome wines.

— **Sari Hartmann**

Dear Sari: We certainly appreciate

the tip, and hope all members will take it to heart when cooking with pork.

Redon was a late 19th-early 20th century French artist, not a 10th century artist as stated in your Volume 15, No. 7 Grapevine newsletter. Nevertheless, I do appreciate those tips on the wineries.

— **John Lee**

Dear John: We’re the first to admit that if the “Jeopardy” category were “French Artists,” we’d be in deep trouble. Our initial thought was that we simply missed the “2” key on the keyboard when we meant to type “20th,” but then we checked our source material and it, indeed, referred to Redon as a “10th” century artist. Obviously, we need to get some new source material, and we thank you for correcting the record.

(For some actual questions from a member, please turn to “Cellar Notes by Katie” on page 2.)



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CANADA'S NEW GROWING AREA IS PRINCELY

Niagara, Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island: You have company. Prince Edward County has become the fourth officially recognized Designated Viticultural Area in Canada's Ontario province. Canada's DVA is similar to the American Viticultural Area designation here in the U.S. Prince Edward County has a very cool climate with 15 different soil types, and is known primarily for Riesling and Pinot Noir.

RED WINE LESSENS PROSTATE CANCER RISK

Men who drink moderate amounts of red wine are only half as likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer as those who don't drink it at all, according to a report in the June issue of *Harvard Men's Health Letter*. Red wine seems to be especially protective against the most advanced and aggressive cancers, lowering risk by about 60 percent. The key word here is "moderate," meaning four to seven glasses per week. The Harvard report cautions if one glass a day is good, don't assume that two glasses would be twice as good. Three Harvard studies have also concluded that those who enjoy alcohol in the same modest amounts benefit from a lower risk of heart attacks, strokes, enlarged prostate and erectile dysfunction. Why red wine and not white wine, beer or hard liquor? The short answer that is no one really knows.



Speculation focuses on natural antioxidants such as flavonoids and resveratrol. These chemicals may work against male hormones that stimulate the prostate gland. For more, visit VinesseTODAY.com.

BUENA VISTA WINERY MARKS 150th BIRTHDAY

On September 7 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the historic Buena Vista Winery tasting room in Sonoma, California, wine will flow, food will be feasted upon, and merriment will prevail in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Buena Vista's founding – a landmark event for commercial winemaking in the New World. Highlights will include local artisan cuisine from select Sonoma restaurants (including Carneros Bistro and El Dorado Kitchen) paired with Buena Vista Carneros wines, live music, and proclamations from local government officials in honor of Hungarian Count Agoston Haraszthy, who founded the winery in 1857. Tickets for this historic celebration are available to the public and cost \$60 per person. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Sonoma Valley Historical Society. Tickets may be purchased online at buenavistacarneros.com or by calling 800-325-2764. To learn more about Count Haraszthy, visit VinesseTODAY.com.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL FOR WINE? DAN ACKROYD!

Normally one must venture to California in order to visit a "celebrity winery," as Francis Ford Coppola, Fess Parker, Mario Andretti, et al call the "Golden State" home. Soon, however, Dan Ackroyd is expected to unveil a winery bearing his name on the other side of the continent – specifically, somewhere in Ontario's Niagara growing region.

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CORN RISOTTO WITH PINK SHRIMP

This recipe, which makes 4 first-course servings, is nicely complemented with a glass of Chardonnay.

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 yellow onion, finely diced
- 2 cups Arborio rice
- 5 cups vegetable stock
- 12 pink Maine shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 1 teaspoon fresh tarragon, chopped
- 1 cup fresh corn kernels
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- Chopped tarragon and chervil, for garnish

Preparation

1. Light grill.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a

3-quart saucepan and sweat onions until translucent, about 4 minutes.

3. Add rice and stir to coat grains of rice with oil. Barely top rice with stock, bring to a boil, immediately reduce to a simmer, and stir constantly. Continue to stir and add more stock as stock is absorbed.
4. Brush shrimp with remaining olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill shrimp over a medium-hot fire for 2-3 minutes per side, or until cooked through. Reserve.
5. After about 20 minutes, the risotto should be soft and creamy. Finish with butter, tarragon and corn kernels, stirring gently to combine.
6. Place 1/4 of risotto on each plate and top each portion with grilled shrimp. Garnish each plate with a sprinkling of chopped tarragon and chervil, and serve immediately.

CHESTNUT PUREE

Enjoy this yummy dessert with a glass of off-dry or semi-sweet wine.

Ingredients

- 1 pound chestnuts
- 1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
- 2 ounces chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons rum
- 1 cup heavy cream

Preparation

1. Boil chestnuts in their skins until cooked. Peel and puree.
2. Melt chocolate in a double boiler. Let cool.
3. In a medium bowl, mix cooled chocolate into the chestnut puree. Add powdered sugar and rum.
4. In another bowl, whip the heavy cream.
5. Unmold chestnut mixture onto a platter to form a dome-shaped mound. Cover with whipped cream and refrigerate for at least one hour before serving.

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Card Number _____				Exp. Date _____		
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<input type="checkbox"/> Check Enclosed, Payable to: Vinesse						

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