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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

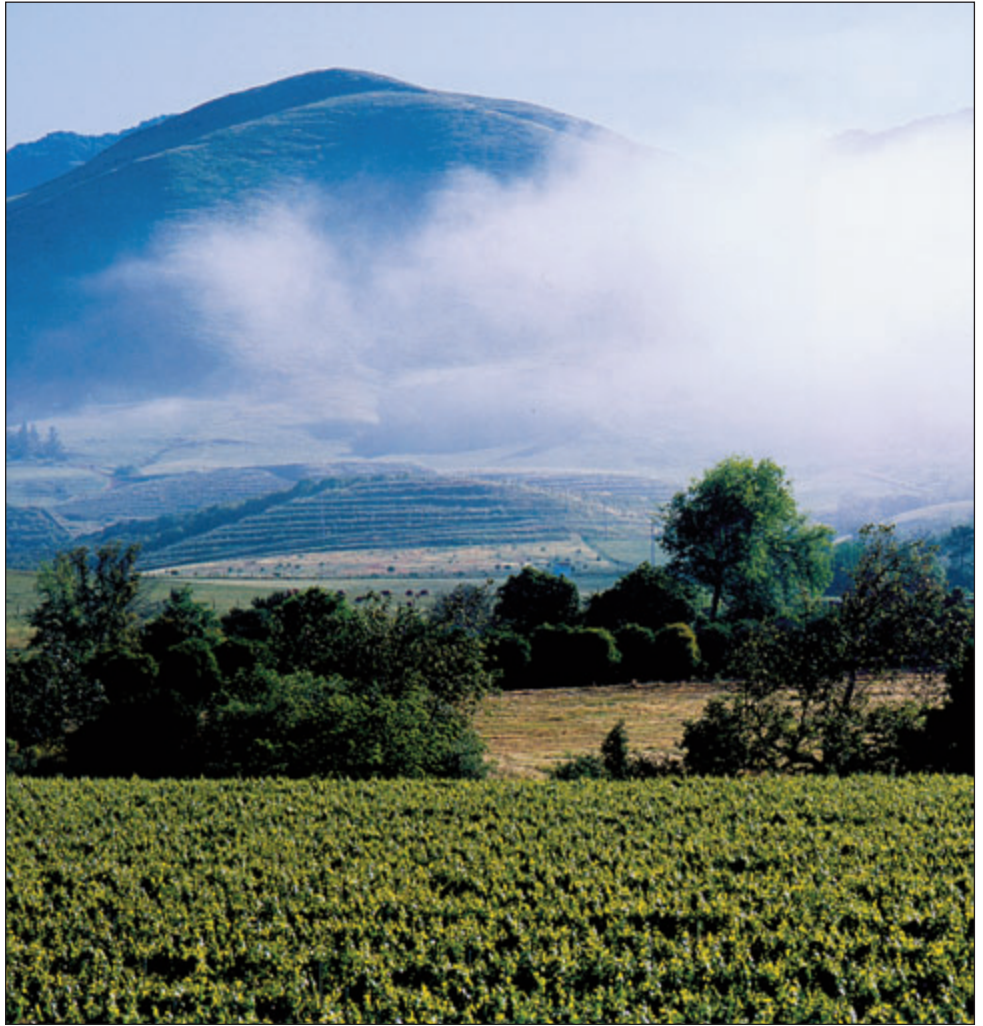
VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Restaurant Wine List: When in Rome... check out the Regina Hotel Baglioni's aptly named restaurant, Brunello. Its venue options include a nicely appointed dining room, a plush lounge and sidewalk tables — all near the top of the Via Veneto. We love risotto, and Brunello's scorpion fish risotto with wild fennel is an inspired take on the dish. But the real star of the show is the wine list — 500 bottles strong, and representing every region of Italy. 39-06-4890-2867.

2 Hot Wine Country Hotel: Not that we're complaining, but we've always wondered why a wine country hotel would provide a bottle of wine as a welcome gift for guests; it just seems like overkill. Perhaps that's why the Solage Calistoga in Napa Valley stood out during a recent visit. Its welcome gift: cupcakes — a sweet way to end a palate-stretching day of wine tasting. 866-942-7442.

3 Hot Wine Festival: Taste Reserve wines and new releases, take in cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs, attend seminars and more at the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival. Dates: November 12-15. worldofwineevents.com



The Fog Factor

Fog can be a real pain when one is trying to fly in or out of San Francisco International Airport. And it can be downright dangerous when one is on the road and visibility is cut to just a few car lengths. But in the world of wine, fog can be a grape grower's best friend. Winegrapes thrive in regions that receive a good deal of sunshine during the day, then cool off overnight. The grapes need sunshine and warmth in order to grow, but too much sun can generate too much growth, causing quality to suffer. When fog rolls in during the evening and overnight hours, then lingers during the morning, it keeps the grapes from heating up too quickly during the day. So, the next time you're stranded at SFO due to fog, look at the bright side: A few miles north, that fog is helping to keep grape and wine quality high.



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.

YOUR GRAPEVINE TEAM:

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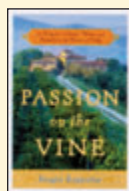
CHARTER MEMBER BENEFITS:

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-  Random giveaways of wine and accessories
-  Wine Finders Reward — identify a future wine selection and earn a reward
-  Perfectly matched recipes for featured wine selections



A BOOK FOR LOVERS OF ITALIAN WINE

Around Manhattan, Sergio Esposito is known as one of the co-owners of Italian Wine Merchants, a wine shop and private-event dinner space. But he's about to get a lot more famous, now that his book, *Passion on the Vine: A Memoir of Food, Wine and Family in the Heart of Italy*, has hit bookstore shelves. "Memoir" is a good way to describe the book, although "travelogue" would not be inaccurate, either. *Passion on the Vine* details Esposito's journeys through the Italian countryside, as he meets, dines and (of course) drinks with some of the country's top winemakers. Through his writing, we learn not only the identities of those vintners, but also why the wines they craft are important — and worth a few dollars more. *Passion on the Vine* is published by Broadway Books, and retails for \$25.



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD & WINE

How does Sergio Esposito feel about the food and wine experience? "People in the U.S. separate food and wine and family," he says, "but in Italy, they are all the same thing. You don't have wine without food, without family. For me, wine should support food. It's a symbiotic relationship."

AT LAST: THE PERFECT PICNIC WINE GLASS

Summertime is picnic time, which creates a conundrum for wine lovers. Wine tastes best in glasses made for the beverage, but it's risky transporting those delicate stems to a park. A good solution: the tulip-shaped, stemless

glass — made of reusable plastic — from Govino. The glass is at once elegant and shatterproof, and includes an indentation for the thumb so even slippery hands can keep a firm grip. Widely available, the Govino glass sells for about \$2.

CARNIVORES UNITE AT THE PALAZZO

Expect most of the wine you find at the restaurants of The Palazzo — the new, 3,068-suite resort next door to the Venetian in Las Vegas — to be red. Reason: Three of those restaurants are steakhouses. Carevino comes from the talented hands of Mario Batali and Joe Bastianich. Cut is a Wolfgang Puck production. And Morels French Steakhouse & Bistro is an offshoot of the Grove in Los Angeles.

MICE TAKE TO BUBBLY IN A HEALTHFUL WAY

In a recent study, mice exposed to high concentrations of Champagne experienced a greater level of protection from *neurotoxicity* — things that are bad for brain cells, and lead to conditions such as Parkinson's disease. Future studies are planned to determine whether the same benefits would be experienced by humans.



EVERYTHING'S NEW IN 'OLD EDNA'

In California's Edna Valley — part of the Central Coast winegrowing appellation — there's a two-acre town site known as Old Edna. In 2000, Pattea Torrence and her husband, Jeff Kocan, purchased the town, and have been restoring it ever since. The Old Edna Custom Gourmet Deli/Café has become a favorite destination for wine lovers, a place where they can pick up picnic supplies and gather information about local wineries. Torrence says future plans may include a special tasting room and perhaps even an "Old Edna" wine label.



‘Big Apple’ Wine Bar Hopping

Two of the hottest restaurant trends of the new millennium are wine bars and “small plates.”

The two intersect deliciously in New York City, where several new establishments are offering the best of both worlds: creative cuisine and well-selected wine-by-the-glass lists.

On your next visit to the “Big Apple,” here are five worth checking out:

■ **Accademia di Vino.** A perfect place for people who not only like to drink wine, but also to think about it. There’s hot and cold antipasti, grilled pizzas, pastas, a number of main courses and desserts, all concocted to be compatible with the well-selected wine list, which includes nearly 30 selections by the glass. And if you have a sweet tooth, know that more than a dozen dessert wines are featured in a convenient half-bottle size. 212-888-6333.

■ **Adour.** Tekkies will love this place. While the restaurant seats 72, there are only four chairs available at the wine bar — and those are coveted seats, indeed, among wine lovers. The bar itself is covered with goat skin, which provides an ideal backdrop for an interactive wine menu

that is beamed onto the bar. There are both food and wine listings, and each bottle listing includes information on the producer, the region of origin and so on. There are more than 40 by-the-glass offerings, and the food is best described as modern French. 212-710-2277.

■ **Bar Boulud.** Pates, terrines and cheeses are the culinary highlights at Daniel Boulud’s new brasserie. As you might expect, French bottlings dominate the wine list, including about two dozen by the glass. 212-595-0303.

■ **Terroir.** The name says it all (almost). This 24-seat wine bar features selections that are distinct expressions of their places of origin. In a world of increasing “sameness” among many wines, that makes Terroir unique. More than two dozen wines are available in 6-oz. and 3-oz. pours. The Italian food also is noteworthy; we loved the lamb sausage with fried sage leaves. 646-602-1300.

■ **Xai Xai.** Pronounced *shy-shy*, and named after a beach town in Mozambique, this wine bar in Hell’s Kitchen specializes in South African food and wine. The wines (numbering more than 50) are served in small carafes, and the food selections include bunny chow (stuffed bread) and *biltong* (dried meat). 212-541-9241.



Quotes Du Jour

■ *Former Oakland Raiders tackle Alphonse Dotson, now working harder than ever at the age of 65, tending his 1,800 grapevines in the Texas Hill Country:*

“My mother told me, ‘I used to worry that you might become a gambler, and now you are taking the biggest gamble of them all.’”

■ *Charles-Maurice de Talleyrande-Perigold on the “process” of wine drinking:*

“First you must hold your glass to the light and swirl the wine slowly to study its color. Then you bring the glass to your nose to breathe the wine’s bouquet. And then, you set your glass down and you talk about it.”

■ *An American proverb containing much wisdom:*

“The wine of life comes from bottles, not battles.”

■ *A Spanish proverb:*

“Wine in excess keeps neither secrets nor promises.”



HERB PORK ROAST

Here's a delicious dish that matches beautifully with Syrah. This recipe makes 8 servings.

Ingredients

- 4 large garlic cloves, quartered
- 1 pork loin roast, boneless, about 4 to 5 lbs.
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon dried leaf sage, crumbled
- 1/4 teaspoon rosemary, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon dried tarragon, crumbled
- Dash ground cloves or allspice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1/3 cup water
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 tablespoons water

Preparation

1. Cut 16 small pockets into roast and insert garlic slices.
2. In a small bowl, combine salt, various herbs and lemon peel. Rub seasoning mixture into the roast.
3. Pour 1/2 cup water into slow cooker; add the roast.
4. Cover and cook on low for 8 to 10 hours. Pork roast should read at least 160 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.
5. Remove roast from juices. Combine cornstarch with the 3 tablespoons water; stir until smooth, then stir into the crockpot juices.
6. Cook on high until thickened. Serve with the pork roast.

BAKED RED SNAPPER

Looking for a recipe that pairs nicely with Chardonnay? Here it is, and it makes a nice, light, summertime meal for 2.

Ingredients

- 2 red snapper fillets, about 6 to 8 oz. each
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium clove garlic, pressed or minced
- 3 or 4 drops Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon Creole or Cajun seasoning, or your own favorite seasoning blend, with salt
- 1/8 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 1 to 2 teaspoons minced fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon snipped fresh or frozen chives
- 3 to 4 tablespoons plain or seasoned bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preparation

1. Place snapper fillets in a baking dish which has been sprayed with a butter-flavored baking spray.
2. In a skillet, melt butter with garlic, Worcestershire sauce, Creole seasoning blend, pepper, parsley and chives.
3. Cook on low for 2 minutes, just to blend flavors.
4. Brush both sides of fish fillets with the butter and herb mixture. Toss bread crumbs in the remaining butter mixture; sprinkle over the fillets.
5. Bake at 400 degrees for about 12 minutes, depending on thickness of fillets, until fish flakes easily and is no longer translucent.