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Volume 2
Number 4
Vinesse Bonus Shipment

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SKU 11770

The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS



Successful winegrape growing is a year-round process. Grapevines need care throughout the year, including in areas that receive snow in the wintertime. As we approach another harvest season, here's hoping Mother Nature not only stays out of the way, but grants plenty of grape-nourishing sunshine to America's vineyards.

The Seasons of The Vineyard

VINESSE



L I S T

1 Hot B&B: Located on the far eastern side of California's Paso Robles wine country is Justin Vineyards, which includes an upscale B&B called the Just Inn. If you're looking for peace and quiet... and perhaps a little romance... this is the place to stay. There's plenty of peace and quiet, California wine country ambience, not to mention lovely vineyards just steps outside the door. Rates start at \$350. 800-726-0049.

2 Hot Cruise: Silversea Cruises this year is hosting a series of 14 culinary- and wine-themed cruises. Award-winning chefs from top dining establishments around the world have been lined up, as have vintners from some of the world's most renowned winemaking estates. Good food and good wine have long been an essential part of the cruise experience, but Silversea has upped the ante. silversea.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.

YOUR GRAPEVINE TEAM:

Intrepid Wine Enthusiast, Chief Taster and Winehound:

Martin Stewart

Chief Operating Officer (aka "The Buck Stops Here"):

Lawrence D. Dutra

Editor:

Robert Johnson




Wine Steward:

Katie Montgomery

The Grapevine is published by Vinesse, 822 Hampshire Road, Suite E, Westlake Village, CA 91361; 1-800-823-5527. Copyright by Vinesse, LLC. Printed in USA.

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CHARTER MEMBER BENEFITS:

-  *The Grapevine* Newsletter
-  Premium wine selections at members-only prices
-  Wine tasting as a participant on VINESSE's Gold Medal Award Panel
-  Free subscription to VINESSE's Cyber Circle Community
-  Members-only savings, including *Food & Wine* subscriptions, dining out, gourmet food and tickets to the hottest events
-  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



GATHER A FEW FRIENDS & HEAD TO MONTE-CARLO

If you're a meeting planner... or if you know a meeting planner... check out the luxurious options at the Hotel de Paris in Monte-Carlo. The hotel offers a tour of its extensive wine cellars and a Champagne toast with the head wine waiter... a tour and tasting of three wines... and an intimate candle-lit dinner in the "Caveau" room for up to 50 people. Or just go by yourself



and ask to be shown around. At the Hotel de Paris, the staff aims to please.

A WINE BAR THAT'S WORTH LOOKING FOR

Finding hidden gems is part of the fun of wine appreciation. Take, for instance, the 8-stool Vintage Inn, a tiny wine bar hidden up a narrow flight of stairs in — of all places — the Osaka train station in Japan. The first challenge is just finding the place, which requires wandering through a maze of underground shops and restaurants, most of which do not have English-language signs. But once you're there... and if you manage to secure one of those precious stools... you're in for a great wine experience because proprietor Kawalasaki Yoshikazu is passionate about the subject. Expect wines both known and under the radar.

TEMECULA: IT'S ALMOST LIKE BEING IN NAPA

For a one-day getaway from the Los Angeles area, head toward San Diego — but before you get there, swing

over to Temecula, home to more than 20 wineries. Leave mid-morning, and if traffic cooperates, you can enjoy a leisurely lunch at the Smokehouse Restaurant on the grounds of the Ponte Family Estate Winery. The outdoor eatery has views of the neighboring hillsides and vineyards — a very Napa-esque experience. Nibble on baked figs or nosh on a grilled

vegetable sandwich, then head to the tasting room to sample the Ponte wines. 951-694-8855.

THE WEATHER'S GREAT; LET'S HAVE A BELLINI!

The classic summertime cocktail of Italy is the Bellini. Invented at Harry's Bar in Venice during the 1930s, the delicious, refreshing, bubbly concoction is amazingly simple to make: Just mix Prosecco with fresh white peach juice; the portions are up to you. In a pinch, any type of white sparkling wine will do, as will frozen peach juice. But be forewarned: Nothing beats the real thing. P.S.: As the story goes, each summer Harry's Bar employed a man whose only job was to cut Italian white peaches and then squeeze them to extract the juice. Talk about a specialized profession!



Las Vegas Wine Adventures

Las Vegas is a place where anything can happen.

Imagine a restaurant where the wine list is selected by not one, but several world-renowned sommeliers. You don't have to imagine it in Vegas; just head to Lotus of Siam.

Situated in a nondescript mall just east of the Strip, Lotus serves what may be the best northern Thai food in the United States. It's so popular among local sommeliers that they got together and helped develop the wine list — which, appropriately, is heavy on Gewurztraminer and Riesling. 702-735-3033.

Other Vegas finds...

■ Can bar food change your life? It can if you're sitting at the oyster bar of Thomas Keller's Bouchon at the Venetian Resort-Hotel-Casino. Order the petit plateau of lobster, shrimp, clams, mussels and, of course, oysters... along with a glass of Sancerre... and prepare to be amazed. 702-414-6200.

■ The "menu prestige" at Guy Savoy's Bubble Bar at Caesars Palace would set you back \$290. If you'd rather allot more of your budget to the blackjack tables, opt for the special: four "small bites" for \$40. The least expensive glass of Champagne is \$29, but you need *something* which to toast the amazing food. 702-731-7110.



Quotes Du Gour

■ *Theologian Paul Tillich, on the parallels between wine and life:*

"Only wine of all drinks continues to live and grow in the bottle. It is a baby, then it becomes a young adult... and slowly it enters old age, and then it dies. Of all drinks, wine alone recapitulates life. This is why wine is a sacrament."

■ *Daniel Johnnes, wine director and sommelier for Montrachet, on Beaujolais:*

"Just thinking of Beaujolais makes my mouth water! It is one of the most succulent, juicy, thirst-quenching, and all-around delicious wines I know."

■ *Famous French vintner Philippe de Rothschild, on wine and enthusiasm:*

"Excellent wine generates enthusiasm. And whatever you do with enthusiasm is generally successful."

■ *William E. Masse, on the importance of the vineyard:*

"Good wines can not be made from poor grapes."

■ *Marvin R. Shanken, publisher of Wine Spectator magazine, on the wine lifestyle:*

"Wine lovers are more than just wine drinkers. An appreciation of fine wine is part of a sophisticated, adventurous approach to life."



RUBY PORT CRANBERRY SAUCE

Thanksgiving will be here before you know it. But you don't have to wait until then to try this delicious dish, which is a great companion to turkey or ham. Open up a light white and a light red to enjoy with the meal.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups Ruby Port
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3 cloves
- 1/2 stick cinnamon
- 3 allspice berries
- 4 black peppercorns
- 2-inch by 1/2-inch strip of orange peel
- 12-oz. package cranberries, washed

Preparation

1. In a medium saucepan, combine Port and sugar.
2. Tie the cloves, cinnamon stick, allspice and peppercorns in a small piece of cheesecloth. Add the spice bundle to the saucepan. Add the orange peel.
3. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer gently until the wine is reduced to 1 cup (about 4 minutes).
4. Add cranberries to the wine. Return to a simmer over medium-high heat, then lower the heat and simmer until the cranberries pop (about 10 minutes).
5. Remove from heat and pour into a bowl. Let cool to warm, then remove the spice bundle and orange peel.
6. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

SUMMERTIME SPINACH SALAD

Don't let the name of this dish fool you; it's great at any time of the year. And it matches beautifully with Sauvignon Blanc.

Salad Ingredients

- Baby spinach (1 large handful per serving)
- 1 ripe pear, cored and cubed
- 6 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup hazelnuts, toasted, skinned and chopped

Salad Preparation

1. In a small skillet, toast hazelnuts until fragrant (do not scorch). When cooled enough to handle, roll them in a clean dish towel to remove skins. Separate skins and discard. Chop hazelnuts coarsely.
2. Allowing 1 large handful per serving, arrange greens on plates.
3. Add pear, goat cheese and hazelnuts.

Dressing Ingredients

- 1/2 cup virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon dry Sherry
- 1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh tarragon, finely chopped
- Pinch of celery
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of pepper

Dressing Preparation

1. Combine all ingredients in a bottle.
2. Cover and shake vigorously to blend.
3. Serve dressing on the side.