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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Holiday Gift Idea: The Bubbly Chandelier is an energy-saving light fixture that uses Champagne bottles as pendants for compact fluorescent bulbs. It was created by interior designer Alegre Ramos, and is available through Ramos' Green and Greener general store in Valley Village, Calif. Each chandelier is custom-made, and customers supply the empty bottles. A piece with five bottles and five 1-watt LED bubbles goes for about \$1,150. green-and-greener.com

2 Hot Wine Bar: Las Vegas is home to more than its share of fancy (and expensive) wine bars, typically tucked inside celebrity-chef restaurants at the fancy hotel/casino high-rises. But when locals want to avoid the convention crowds and save a few bucks, they eschew "The Strip" and head for Nora's Wine Bar & Osteria. There, you'll find a wine list that's 350 bottles strong, and 60 of them are available by the glass. Wine flights and cheese plates also are offered, as are family-style meals — all at family-friendly prices. norawinebar.com



The Hands-on Approach

While there is much romance associated with winegrape growing, the reality is that it's dirty work — just like almost any agricultural activity. The men and women who work in the vineyards do not invest significant sums in manicures or nail polish.

The type of soil found in a vineyard plays a key role in the quality of the grapes and, ultimately, in the wine made from those grapes. But it may surprise you to learn that "richness" is not a desired quality.

We asked three vineyard managers in California's Napa Valley to list the qualities they seek in soils for winegrowing. In no particular order, they said that the best soils are: 1) free draining; 2) fairly light in texture, with gravel at the surface and well below; 3) moderately to very deep; and 4) not high in organic matter, but with enough to promote healthy vine growth.

"Healthy" is the key word. Whereas farmers seek "vigor" in other crops, too much production from a grapevine is a negative because it "waters down" the grapes. Less vigor promotes more concentrated flavors in the grapes and, thus, greater complexity in the wines.

To the men and women who take a hands-on approach to growing grapes, we dedicate this special issue of *The Grapevine*.



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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-  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
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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



WILL SPAIN PASS FRANCE IN WINE PRODUCTION?

A report predicts Spain will produce more wine than France by 2015. The report, commissioned on behalf of the *Vignerons Independents* (France's independent winemakers' association), says French production is expected to drop from the 2000-04 annual average of 52.8 million hectoliters to 43.9 million hls. Italy, at 60 million hl per year, is the biggest producer of wine in the world, followed by France and Spain at 45 million hl each (on average) in the last decade. Falling production levels have been attributed to France's reluctance to adapt to new trends and new types of consumers.



3 PIONEERS HONORED BY CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR

The California Exposition and State Fair has honored three wine pioneers with Lifetime Achievement Awards: Mike Grgich, Warren Winiarski and Mary Ann Graf.

CLOS LaCHANCE OWNER HELPS DAVIS RAISE FUNDS

Bill Murphy, co-founder and owner of Clos LaChance Winery, has been appointed Chairman of the Board of Visitors and Fellows at U.C. Davis' Department of Viticulture & Enology. As Chairman, Murphy will lead a talented group of board members who represent the wine industry community, including vintners, wine growers, business leaders, finance executives and researchers. This board

plays an integral role in helping the university raise funds and build new teaching and research facilities for the Department of Viticulture & Enology.

YES, 'PROSECCO' IS A REAL WORD

Is it acceptable to serve edamame to a dinner guest who's a pescatarian? Should you pour Prosecco or soju for the winner of the Texas Hold 'em game you're planning near the infinity pool? And what's that wing nut in the corner saying about dirty bombs and nasty Noroviruses? Before your next wine party, go ahead and consult the latest edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, which now includes edamame (immature green soybeans), pescatarian (a vegetarian who eats fish) and about 100 other newly added words that have taken root in the American lexicon. Many of the new entries reflect the nation's growing interest in the culinary arts, including Prosecco (a sparkling Italian wine) and soju (a Korean vodka distilled from rice).

DUCKHORN LEADING WINE INSTITUTE

Margaret Duckhorn has been elected Wine Institute Board Chairman for the 2008-09 fiscal year. Duckhorn is co-founder and Executive Vice President of Industry Relations at Duckhorn Wine Company, which includes Duckhorn Vineyards in St. Helena, Paraduxx in Napa Valley and Goldeneye in Anderson Valley.



Napa Valley's Hidden Art

It has been said that the world's most magnificent wines are like coveted works of art.

In the Napa Valley, there's plenty of *actual* artwork to accompany the liquid masterpieces aging in the cellars. You just need to know where to find it...



- **The Hess Collection winery** (shown here) houses galleries devoted to contemporary painting and sculpture. 707-265-3489.
- **Mumm Napa** has a permanent gallery of some 30 works by photographer Ansel Adams, supplemented by rotating exhibitions. 707-967-7700.
- **Artesa Vineyards & Winery** boasts a gallery and an outdoor sculpture. 707-224-1668.
- **Hall St. Helena Winery** has an architectural gallery devoted to the

man who designed the facility, Frank Gehry — the visionary behind the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, the outdoor concert venue at Chicago's Millennium Park, and other distinctive projects. 866-667-4255.

- **At Hall Rutherford Winery**, a tour of the art-filled cellar, including a tasting of Reserve wines, can be had for \$40. 707-967-0700.

Napa Valley also is home to galleries, museums and resorts where art plays a prominent role. Among the places to check out between winery visits are the

Caldwell Snyder Gallery (707-200-5050), the Napa Valley Museum (707-944-0500), Auberge du Soleil (707-963-1211), and Di Rosa Preserve: Art & Nature (707-226-5991).

The Snyder Gallery and Di Rosa Preserve feature contemporary painting and sculpture, the museum has a permanent collection and rotating exhibitions, and Auberge du Soleil is home to the I. Volk Gallery.

Quotes Du Jour

■ *United States Senator James A. McDougall, on the role of wine in society:*

"Do you remember any great poet that ever illustrated the higher fields of humanity that did not dignify the use of wine from Homer on down?"

■ *Norman deLeuze, founder of Napa Valley's ZD Wines, on the allotment of his favorite variety:*

"We make the Pinot Noir for me, and if there is any left over, we sell it."

■ *Adam Smith, writing in The Wealth of Nations:*

"The cheapness of wine seems to be a cause, not of drunkenness, but of sobriety... In the countries which, either from excessive heat or cold, produce no grapes, and where wine consequently is dear and a rarity, drunkenness is a common vice."

■ *A Latin proverb:*

"Bacchus opens the gate of the heart."

■ *Italian vintner Piero Antinori, on wines of a place:*

"Even Cabernet Sauvignon, when it is grown in Tuscany, is really a Tuscan Cabernet. It has its own style."



BISQUE OF BUTTERNUT SQUASH

This filling soup makes a great prelude to a meal... or can be a meal in itself. It matches beautifully with Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio or Chenin Blanc, and this recipe makes 8 servings.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 Granny Smith apples, cored and diced
- 1 large butternut squash, peeled and chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cans (15-oz.) chicken broth
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 1/2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper

Preparation

1. Melt butter in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add apples, squash, carrot, celery and onion, and cook, stirring, until softened (about 20 minutes). Add broth and cook until squash is soft (about 30 minutes). Stir in cider, brown sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon. Cool for 1 hour.
2. Puree soup in batches in a blender or food processor. Pour soup back into Dutch oven. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Heat until hot. Pour into bowls and serve.

Optional: garnish with apple slices and sour cream.

TURKEY WITH PEAR-RAISIN SAUCE

Try this dish — a tasty alternative to typical holiday turkey fare — with Riesling or a well-chilled bottle of bubbly. This recipe makes 4 servings.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 lb. sliced deli turkey
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup white wine (not oaky)
- 2 ripe pears, thinly sliced
- 1 piece (1-inch-long) ginger root, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper

Preparation

1. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add two teaspoons of the oil.
2. Cook turkey until warmed through (4-5 minutes). Transfer turkey to a plate and keep warm.
3. Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 teaspoons of oil in skillet. Raise heat to medium high. Add raisins and wine, and cook, stirring, until raisins plump slightly (5-7 minutes).
4. Add pears, ginger and salt, as well as the pepper (to taste), stirring occasionally until pears soften (5-7 minutes).
5. Divide turkey among 4 plates, top with pear-raisin mixture, and serve.