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Volume 18

Number 10

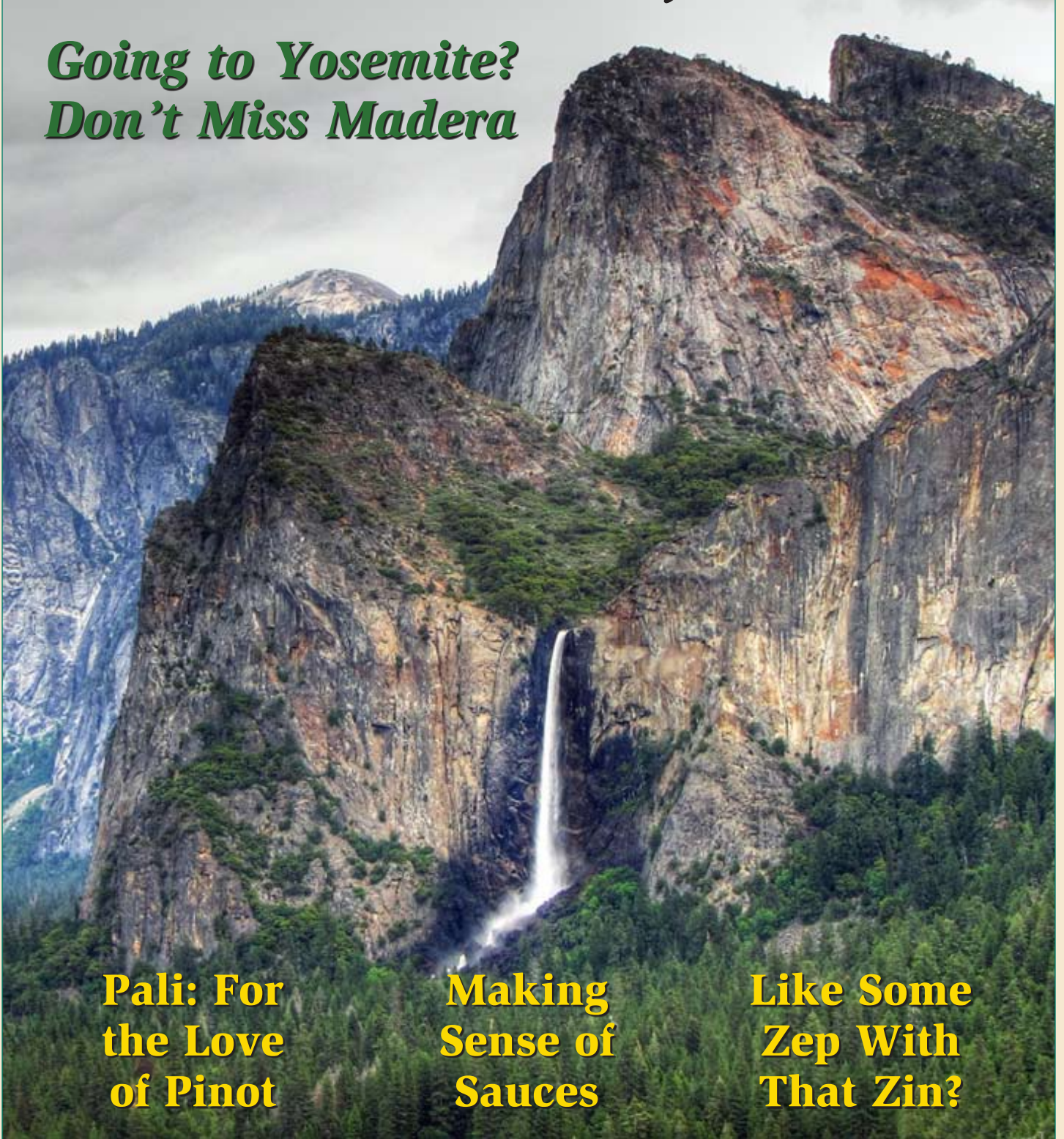
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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

Going to Yosemite? Don't Miss Madera



**Pali: For
the Love
of Pinot**

**Making
Sense of
Sauces**

**Like Some
Zep With
That Zin?**

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Intrepid Wine Enthusiast, Chief Taster and Winehound:
Martin Stewart

Chief Operating Officer
(aka "The Buck Stops Here"):
Lawrence D. Dutra

Editor:

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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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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Some Zep With That Zin?

By Robert Johnson

We know that the aroma of food influences our perception of its flavor. We also know that certain foods taste better with certain wines. (That's why we have a feature called "Food & Wine Pairings" in each issue.)

But can sound influence the way we perceive food... and, by extension, wine?

That's what an ongoing study by Unilever seeks to determine. The study deals with multisensory perception and whether "input" from outside sources can make food taste sweeter, saltier, crunchier and so on.

Early findings were published in the journal *Food Quality and Preference*, and they're pretty interesting. A blind tasting of various sweet and savory foods was conducted, with the level of the background noise adjusted at various intervals.

Note that the term "noise" was used, but the assumption would be that in a restaurant setting, "noise" would equate with "music." Which opens up an entirely separate study possibility since there are so many styles of music.

But back to the initial study: Not surprisingly, those participating (39 women and nine men) liked whatever food they were being served more when they also liked the sound. Also, as the noise level increased, items

being eaten were perceived to be less salty or less sugary. Likewise, when the noise level was dropped, those same foods were perceived to be more salty or more sugary.



Which leads us to the obvious question: Could the same methodology be applied to wine? Might we one day see menus that include not only a wine recommendation for a specific dish, but also a music recommendation? Or might wine bars install jukeboxes featuring tunes that pair with their wines?

We could definitely see (or hear) a nice lyrical tune by smooth jazz guitarist Peter White accompanying a glass of silky-smooth Pinot Noir. Or a rockin' tune by Led Zeppelin being played when a glass of spicy Zinfandel is poured. Or an old ballad by Ol' Blue Eyes playing while a couple shares of bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon.

Of course, the ultimate challenge would be finding the right wine to pour with a Lady Gaga song. This is why science is so important.



Sorting Out the Confusion Over 3 Common Wine Descriptors

The language of wine can be daunting, particularly to one who is new to the beverage... and the terminology.

Certain terms or phrases may mean one thing to one person and something entirely different to another. That's why we try to be consistent in the way we use vinous verbiage — not only here in *The Grapevine*, but also in the Tasting Notes that accompany club selections.

But even we slip up on occasion, simply because our tasting panel consists of human beings with unique palates and who “experience” wine in very personal ways. The perception of wine is part science and part art — just like the winemaking process — and it's virtually impossible to get six or seven knowledgeable (and opinionated) people on the same page.

That said, we can offer some general definitions of three terms that are commonly misused or subject to varying interpretations, even among experts...



- **Fruity** — Many people think this word is a synonym for “sweet,” and while it can be, it more often is not. It simply refers to a wine with very prominent fruit flavors.
- **Dry** — This term often is thought of as the opposite of fruity but, again, that is a misnomer. A dry wine simply is one that has had virtually all of its natural sugars “burned off” during the fermentation process.
- **Sweet** — Some think this term equates with syrupy or overly sugary. With some dessert-style wines, it does. But more often, it simply means that some residual sugar remains (1 or 2 percent) following fermentation.



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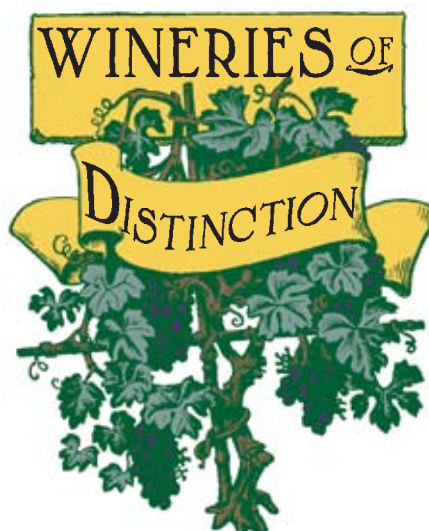
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2 Pals Create Pali Wine Co. (But That Isn't How It Got Its Name)

Tim Perr is the vision, the drive and the passion behind Pali Wine Co., a Pinot Noir specialist in California's Central Coast region.

Not all Pali wines are made from Central Coast grapes, however. A Sonoma Coast-designated Pinot made by Pali recently garnered an impressive rating of 96 points from *Wine Spectator* magazine.

Perr's infectious love of wine is what turned his friend and business partner Scott Knight on to wine in the late

1990s, and it's what sparked the two entrepreneurs to create Pali Wine Co. as a winery focused on small-lot Pinot Noir production in 2005. As founder and managing partner, Perr oversees winery operations at the Lompoc, Calif., facility and manages grower relationships.

Perr began his professional life as an insurance actuary and in 1994



co-founded Perr & Knight, an actuarial and insurance services firm. Having successfully developed Perr & Knight into a thriving company with more than 100 employees, the longing to build another successful business from the ground up drove Perr to seek out other opportunities for investment.



Tim Perr

Perr, Knight and their spouses often traveled together to the Napa Valley and the Central Coast to keep their fingers on the pulse of hot new wineries, so it seemed natural that their next business venture would be in wine.

With Pali Wine Co., the vision was and is to create a wine brand recognized for excellence at every level of production. “We were so excited to get it off the ground,” Pali recalls, “we decided that our best option was to put all of our resources into the winemaking and into purchasing the best grapes possible.”

Scott Knight provides much of the sales insight and vibrant energy behind the winery. He is the yang to Perr’s yin, and as a Southern California raconteur with a sunny personality, Knight perfectly complements Perr’s dynamic drive and analytic acumen. Knight is the quintessential people person and a natural fit for directing sales and distribution for Pali Wine Co.

“We are wine aficionados,” Knight says of the group of partners who founded Pali Wine Co. “Starting the winery was all about creating a business that aligned with our passions.”

Perr introduced Knight to the finer details of wine, though it didn’t catch on until 1999 when Perr brought two bottles of 1997 Opus One to the company Christmas party.

“He opened it, and wow, that was the epiphany that I needed to get into wine,” Knight says. Before long, he signed up on highly-allocated winery mailing lists, starting with Cabernet Sauvignon specialists and evolving to a love of Pinot Noir.

Knight attributes much of his sales

expertise to the experience he gained working as a waiter and bartender while studying psychology at the University of California at Irvine. After college, he went on to work for Enterprise Rent A Car in its management-training program. After a few years of running his own

Enterprise office, he went on to sell group health insurance for Pacific Mutual, managing telemarketing for three states.

In 1994, Knight met Perr through Perr’s wife, Judy, who had been a childhood friend of Knight and his family. Perr and Knight found they had many of the same interests, and began hanging out. As 1994 drew to a close, Perr decided to start his own actuarial consulting business and recruited Scott to lead sales.

And what about the “Pali” name they selected for their winery? It’s named after their hometown of Pacific Palisades, just west of Los Angeles.

Today, Pali Wine Co. produces a “Cuvee” series of wines defined by their appellation of origin and named for different neighborhoods in the Pacific Palisades. It also produces a very limited amount of vineyard-designated wines.

“Our goal is to make wines that speak well of their origin and their varietal,” Perr says. “While Pinot Noir remains our first love and a significant part of our production, we also produce a few other varietals when we have the opportunity to make a wine we think is worthy of sharing.”

Winery 4-1-1

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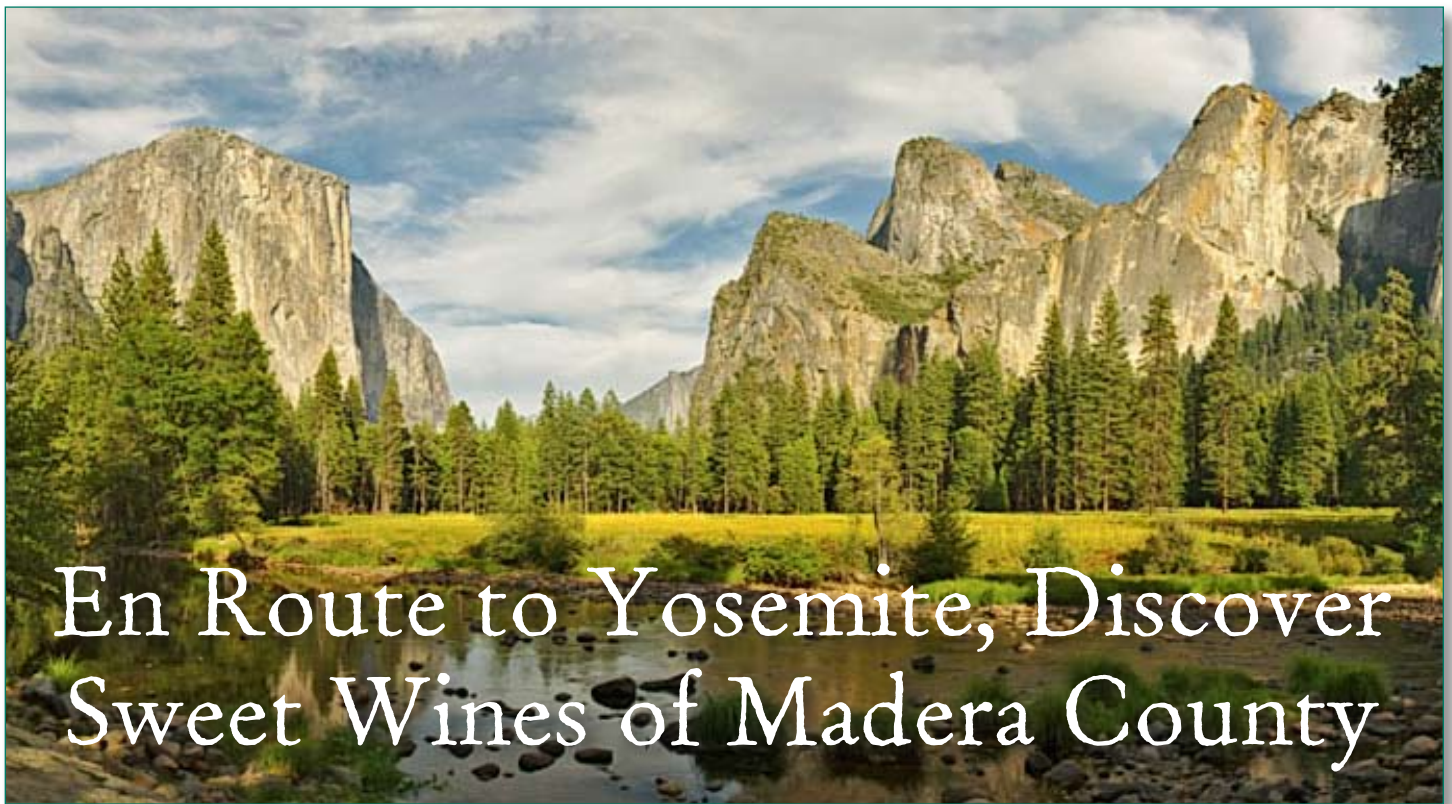
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En Route to Yosemite, Discover Sweet Wines of Madera County

Being in the exact center of California places Madera County in an enviable position as “gateway” to almost every destination in the state. But there’s also a good reason to stay in the area: wineries that produce delicious fortified elixirs.

Stretching across three California tourism regions from the Central Valley to the Gold Country and into the High Sierra speaks to the diverse number of experiences from which visitors can choose beyond wine tasting.

Additional agriculture is showcased at various locations, including historic Cobb Ranch, home of the famous Pizza Farm. One of North America’s largest fossil finds, in the north county near Chowchilla, has prompted plans for a Discovery Center-style museum. Travel amenities — lodging, restaurants, gas stations, etc. — are readily available at nearly every exit on State Highway 99 in Madera County.

The eastern part of Madera County continues to set the bar for adventure and family activities. Just follow the Southern Yosemite Highway 41 from Madera to the foothill communities of O’Neals, Raymond and North Fork. Historic communities such as

Coarsegold, Oakhurst and Ahwahnee — with museums and sites that dot the landscape — are monuments to Madera County’s rich heritage.

Bass Lake has been recognized as one of the “West’s Best Lakes” by *Sunset* magazine. Historic Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, with its authentic steam-powered Shay locomotives, is both educational and entertaining.

American Indian culture also is an important part of the regional experience. Numerous gatherings happen each year as the resident tribes celebrate and educate. Two tribes in the region are involved in gaming enterprises as a means of economic development. Chukchansi Gold Resort in Coarsegold is celebrating its second year, and a new facility by the Mono tribe is planned for a site in the north county.

Madera County, while sometimes referred to as the “southern gateway”

to Yosemite National Park, also is the gateway to locations in the magnificent Sierra Nevada. Bordering the Sierra National Forest, with access to the famous Ansel Adams and John Muir Wilderness Areas as well as the Sierra Vista National Scenic Byway, has spawned the phrase, “Passageway into the Range of Light,” to more fully describe the experience of the region.

Madera County also is known for producing internationally recognized, world-class dessert wines and Ports. In recent years, a handful of small, family-owned wineries have opened to



TOURING TIPS

complement these flagship premium wineries.

This renaissance is driven by the recognition that Madera County is a unique grape-growing region. The region is bounded and cooled by the San Joaquin River to the southwest and the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the east. Warm summer temperatures, combined with varied soil types, provide a foundation for the full development of the grapes. In recognition of these distinctive characteristics, Madera was recognized as an American Viticultural Area in 1985.

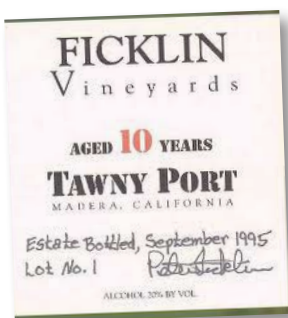
Set unobtrusively on a back road in Madera County is the home of Ficklin Tinta Port. Ficklin's Port is widely acclaimed as one of California's finest wines created in the Portuguese tradition.

The Ficklins use a time-tested "solera" process to produce a blend that is consistent in character year after year. They never bottle all of a single year's crush. Some is held back as needed with each succeeding vintage. In theory, there is some of the first wine ever produced in each bottle of Ficklin Tinta Port.

In very exceptional years, Ficklin bottles a vintage-dated Port in limited quantities of about 1,000 cases. A new addition to the portfolio is the Aged 10 Year Tawny Port. Winemaker Peter Ficklin has also set aside a group of special barrels for a 20-year-old Tawny Port.

The Quadys are another renowned winemaking family in Madera. Andrew and Laurel Quady left crowded Southern California and their jobs in pyrotechnics and merchandising to pursue their dream: a non-urban way of life making wine.

Returning to school, Andrew graduated with a Masters in Food



Science-Enology from U.C. Davis, and Laurel became a licensed CPA. In 1975, at the urging of friend Darrell Corti, they made their first Port from Amador County Zinfandel grapes at the now-defunct Lodi Vintners, where Andrew was working as an assistant winemaker.

In 1977, the Quadys settled in Madera, and while Andrew was working at Heublein, they built a small winery behind their country home and made Port during evening hours and over weekends.

In 1980, they decided to add a fortified white dessert wine to their line. The wine, from the obscure Orange Muscat grape variety, was named Essensia and became a major success. In 1983, opportunity knocked when the Quadys were offered a crop of Black Muscat grapes, which became the first bottling of Elysium.

By 1984, the expanding business needed space, and Andrew and Laurel needed help. Fresno State graduate Michael

Blaylock, now the winemaker, joined the family business and a new winery was completed and additional wines were added to the lineup.

For those who enjoy sweet and/or fortified wines, Madera County is a "must-do" destination.



For Further Information

Madera County Lodging
www.madera-county.com

Ficklin Vineyards
Madera
559-661-0075

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VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Leaf-Peeping Opportunity for Wine Lovers. Near Chateau Grand Traverse Winery on Michigan's Old Mission Peninsula, one can soak in spectacular (and colorful) views of both East and West Traverse bays. During the fall, the vineyards, orchards and forests on the peninsula take a back-seat to no region — including New England. At the winery, sample the selection of Rieslings and cherry wines.
<http://www.cgtwines.com>

2 Hot View from a Winery. On the West Coast, where the autumn colors aren't quite as spectacular, one can still enjoy a fabulous view while sipping wine. Simply head to Malibu Wines (not far from the famous Malibu Café), bring a picnic, buy a bottle of Malibu wine, and lounge on the expansive lawn, which is accompanied by a scenic mountain backdrop. There's even live music on certain days.
<http://malibuwines.com/>

3 Hot Wine Destination for Green-Thumbed Art Lovers. In California's southern Humboldt County, Persimmons Garden Gallery has it all: a café, wine bar, art gallery and nursery. It's a great stop on the way to (or back from) California's spectacular redwood tree groves. At the café, be sure to try the crepes. If crepes aren't your thing, both sweet and savory tapas are available.
http://www.persimmons.net/persimmons_garden_gallery.html



Peppery. A word used to describe a wine that has an impression of black pepper in its flavor spectrum. A prime example: Zinfandel.

Qualitätswein mit Pradikat. In Germany's wine-ranking system, the highest quality bottlings. Often abbreviated QmP on bottle labels.

Rioja. A major wine region in northern Spain, as well as the name of a red blend typically consisting of Tempranillo and Garnacha (a.k.a. Grenache) from that region.

Sangria. A drink made from wine and fruit, popular at Mexican and Latin American restaurants.

Tartaric Acid. The predominant wine acid that occurs naturally in grapes.

Uctuous. A term used to describe a rich, thick wine with a very rich aroma. Often used in connection with sweet dessert wines.

VINESSE STYLE

THE ROLLS ROYCE OF OLIVE OIL

Some call olive oil "the great life extender." It's packed with antioxidants and vitamins, and while it's 100 percent fat... it's the good kind of fat.

There is an Israeli woman who claims to be 120 years old, and credits her longevity to drinking a glass of olive oil each day. A full glass may not be necessary, but we do know that vitamin E helps prevent heart disease and numerous other disorders.

For a special (not to mention expensive) indulgence, try the limited-production, ultra-premium olive oil from the Kritsa region of Crete, known as Lambda.

This oil is made utilizing the method of common pressing — the Koroneiki olives are cold-pressed within eight hours of being picked, producing a flavor of intense freshness and

fruitfulness. The oil is then bottled by hand by highly trained personnel.

Lambda is among the most expensive cooking oils on any market shelf; it's known as the Rolls Royce of olive oils. It boasts extremely low acidity and an unforgettable after-flavor.

Shipped in a stylish bottle, the packaging emulates the prestige of the oil. That makes it a wonderful gift for the best friends on your holiday shopping list.

A standard bottle runs around \$50, but if you do

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APPELLATION SHOWCASE



Nelson, New Zealand

Depending on where one lives — such as anywhere in the United States — the Nelson winegrowing region of New Zealand can take a long time to reach.

But the journey definitely is worth the effort.

Nelson lies on the northern end of New Zealand's south island. The wineries are on the plains, southwest of the town, and on up into the hills of Upper Moutere. The terrain faces north onto Tasman Bay and, of all the major wine regions from Gisborne on south, it is the one that does not lie predominantly east of the mountains.

Nelson gets significantly more rainfall than the neighboring Marlborough region, which is quite dry. Despite the rain, the northern exposure gives it long hours of daylight and the second highest number of total sunshine hours in the country.

An attractive town with many

gardens, Nelson overlooks Tasman Bay. Typical for New Zealand, the properties and gardens are well-tended. Nelson also is the gateway to the popular Abel Tasman National Park and the Kahurangi National Park. Both are excellent for hiking and nature walks.

The region is likely to remain small due to the lack of spacious growing areas and its distance from transportation centers. The two dozen wineries are typically small but with picturesque settings.

This is not Cabernet Sauvignon country, but the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir can compete with the best in the country, and sublime renditions of Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc also are crafted by some of the vintners.

In fact, the Sauvignon Blancs are among the region's most elegant wines. Whereas New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc has a reputation for being racy and herbal, the bottlings from Nelson are lighter in body and possess refreshing citrus flavors, kissed by a hint of minerality.

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Q My husband and I live in Minnesota, and we're planning to head south for the winter. Where is the southernmost wine region in the world?



A That would be in New Zealand. Specifically, in New Zealand's Central Otago growing area. Ironically, it's also the region that is closest to Antarctica, which means it's cool enough to produce some exceptional bottlings of Pinot Noir. If you go in December, January or February, expect sunny days and high temperatures — which can be a nice way to break up a cold Minnesota winter.

9,518

Number of acres devoted to vineyards in the Casablanca Valley growing region of Chile. Because of the valley's proximity to the Pacific coast, the vineyards experience morning fog and cool breezes — ideal for quality winegrape growing.



“ We live very simply here but with all the essentials well understood and provided for — hot baths, cold Champagne, new peas and old Brandy.”

— Winston Churchill, in a letter to his brother about his summer house.

For decades, Zinfandel was considered California's “native winegrape.” In recent years, genetic “fingerprinting” has revealed that Zinfandel is virtually identical to the Italian grape known as Primitivo. It makes perfect sense that California and Italy would share a common grape variety, since many of California's earliest vintners were Italian immigrants. By the way, both Zinfandel and Primitivo descend from a rare Croatian variety called (and good luck with pronouncing this!) Crljenak Kastelanski.



Did you know that glass can be reused up to six times? That makes wine bottles prime candidates for recycling.



Willamette Valley Vineyards in Oregon has always offered its customers a dime for each bottle returned to the winery — not much in the way of spare change, but a noble environmental gesture nonetheless. Two years ago, California's Fetzer Vineyards began using bottles that weigh 16 percent less than its former bottles. Other wineries also are using bottles made from recycled glass. So, don't throw those wine bottles away — recycle them!

One of the myths of wine drinking it that red wine should never be stored in a refrigerator. While it's best to finish a bottle of red wine the same day that it's opened, if there's some left over, it's definitely better to recork it and put it in the fridge overnight. When you're ready to finish it off the next day, simply take it out about 20 minutes prior to consumption. White wines can be kept for two or three days in the refrigerator, but keep in mind that they do lose a little bit of their flavor with each passing day. As with reds, they should be removed from the refrigerator and allowed to “warm up” just a bit, as over-chilled wines don't offer much flavor.



FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS

MAKING SENSE OF SAUCES

Red wine with beef and white wine with fish. For generations, pairing wine with food was as simple as that.



Then came the book, *Red Wine With Fish*, and all hell broke loose. Yes, we're kidding, but there's no question that book got people to put more thought into the wines they served with dinner.

The main lesson learned in succeeding years is that it's not so much about the food, but about the food's dominant flavor. And, in many cases, that flavor

comes from a sauce.

With that in mind, we offer some simple guidelines — as *Red Wine With Fish* proved, there no longer are any rules — for pairing wine with a number of popular sauces...

- **Coconut-based curries.** California Chardonnay — the rich, buttery versions — don't match with a wide variety of dishes; they're much better when savored solo. But this is one exception to the "rule."
- **Marinara.** Chianti is the obvious choice, because it's always a good idea to pair country with country — in

this case, Italy. If the sauce has a little bit of a kick to it, Zinfandel is another tasty option.

- **Balsamic Vinaigrette.** This one can be problematic, but the best choice is a bright, refreshing Sauvignon Blanc.
- **Aioli.** Whether you're using it as a dip or a spread — or even an accent to a main dish — a Rosé-style wine makes a perfect pairing partner.
- **White cream sauce.** Chardonnay is a good choice, and so is Pinot Grigio or Riesling.
- **Sweet soy plum sauce.** If you've ever had the VIP Duck dish at P.F. Chang's, you're familiar with this tasty sauce. It matches beautifully with Gewurztraminer.



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BRAISED LAMB SHANKS IN PORT WINE SAUCE

Try this delicious dish with Syrah, Shiraz or Zinfandel. This recipe makes 6 servings.

Ingredients

- 6 small lamb shanks, about 7-lbs. total, trimmed of visible fat
- Salt
- Pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ½-lb. brown mushrooms, stemmed and quartered
- ½-lb. shiitake mushrooms, quartered
- 10 large cloves garlic, peeled and split
- 6 large shallots, peeled and split
- 3 cups chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup Port
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped
- 2 bay leaves

Preparation

1. Season lamb shanks with salt and pepper to taste.
2. In a roasting pan just large enough to hold shanks in a single layer, heat olive oil over medium-high heat.
3. Add shanks and sear on all sides (about 5-8 minutes total). Transfer to platter.
4. Add mushrooms, garlic and shallots to pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned (about 2 minutes).
5. Add stock, Port, rosemary and bay leaves. Bring to boil, scraping any bits sticking to pan.
6. Add shanks. Cover with tight-fitting lid or foil.
7. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes, then turn shanks. Continue baking until meat is tender and just starting to loosen from bone (about 45-75 minutes). Set pan on counter until meat is cool enough to handle.
8. De-fat cooking juices by pouring into fat separator

and skimming top layer, or by pouring juices into bowl and freezing until fat solidifies.

9. Pour sauce over shanks and arrange mushrooms on and around meat.

SHRIMP, AVOCADO AND GRAPEFRUIT SALAD

This recipe makes 4 entrée-sized servings, and matches beautifully with Sauvignon Blanc or Gruner Veltliner.

Dressing Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons grapefruit juice
- ¼ cup grapefruit soda, such as Izze
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ cup canola oil

Salad Ingredients

- 1-lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 8-oz. package mixed spring greens
- 2 grapefruit, cut into segments
- 1 avocado, pitted, peeled and sliced

Preparation

1. Combine juice, soda, garlic, mustard, salt and pepper.
2. Slowly whisk in oil until dressing thickens.
3. Pour ½ cup of dressing over shrimp, and marinate for 1 hour. Reserve remaining dressing.
4. Remove shrimp from marinade. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat, and cook shrimp (turning once) until pink (about 3 minutes).
5. Mix greens with some of reserved dressing in a large bowl.
6. Divide greens among four plates. Top with shrimp, avocado and grapefruit segments. Drizzle remaining dressing on top.

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