



I'm not much of a religious man. In fact until last year I had never been to a mass. All I learned from that experience is there is a lot of handshaking, kneeling and things that are just downright odd that go on in that big religion. My mother was the daughter of a missionary stationed in India. She married a heathen from Brooklyn and gave up all that truck before I came on the scene. She did try reading me the Bible when I was a kid but it didn't take.

However it is now the month of September. The most religious of months in Oregon's wine industry. By and large the winemaker crowd (that I have run into) is a downright agnostic one. This month there will be penitent folk in the vineyards. Perhaps they will look for guidance and blessings from the Rastafied Church of the Cowboy Buddha. Whatever the spiritual bent people will be praying for warm, mild, sunny weather to prevail until at least late October.

This is the make or break time for the harvest. Too much heat and sun can cause the fruit to ripen too quickly, too early as well as causing reduced crop weight and increased delicacy. Too much rain is a nightmare. Mildew problems at this time of year are among the worst situations that winemakers have to deal with. Spraying sulfur on grapes close to harvest (to keep the mildew down) can lead to all sorts of problems in the winemaking process. Rain can also dilute the concentration of the fruit and lead to thin, watery wines.

There is a fine line between the two situations that winemakers pray for. This summer has not exactly been a hopeful harbinger of things to come. Inconsistent weather, patchy rains and fog have been common, at least in Yamhill County. Right now people would say things have basically been fine, but they would be sucking in air and crossing their fingers as they said it.

I thought, in light of the spiritual transformation that occurs across the Western part of our great state, I would offer up a few prayers for the upcoming months and year.

I pray that as the '94s begin to come out that the price of Oregon Pinots does not go through the roof. The signs, unfortunately, are not good. Already the '93 Beaux Freres was seen for as high as \$45/bottle and a re-released Ponzi Pinot was marked at \$40. I am certain that the first \$50 Oregon Pinots will show up from the '94 vintage. The crop was very small, anticipation is unprecedentedly high, and, judging by early tastings, quality is indeed very high. My prayer is that the wineries that have produced quality \$10-\$15 wines aren't suddenly asking for \$15-\$20. This may be the reality that is born out of our supply and demand market though. Two Hail C. Buddhas and on to the next one.

I pray that when the Big Boys come to the state to make wine they choose to do it with the style that Archery Summit is exhibiting in the construction of their new winery in the Red Hills of Dundee. Sure, it is a frighteningly large project and untold amounts of money have been poured into it with more to go. The thing is, it fits. Frank Lloyd Wright would at least be pleased. The building works with the landscape. In fact most of the winery is built directly into the hillside. There is a flow to it that comes with good architecture, careful planning, some class and care for how it looks. It will not be audacious and awful. The folks with the really big bucks poised below the border are looking at this part of the world with more and more scrutiny all the time. Come they will, build they will. Let's pray that we aren't overrun with gaudy Chateaux that ruin it for the people who love this land.

Let's all pray that the Yamhill County Commissioners take their heads out of their butts and allow Basecamp Bravo to remain where it is. This has nothing to do with wine, but it is in our neighborhood and it's about human decency. For those of you who don't know what Basecamp Bravo is pull up your chair and put your feet on the woodstove. This is a refuge for Veterans on rural land outside of Yamhill that has been operating for the past 10 years. It is a place for homeless Vets to go to have support, a place to stay where they continue to stay, where they won't be hassled, a decent meal and an opportunity to sort things out. Apparently, to continue to stay on this land Basecamp Bravo was going to have to get the area rezoned. They were denied this rezoning. Now, unless some type of intervention occurs, they will be forced off this land, and presumably back onto the streets and into the inadequate VA services most of them have been denied previously ("Agent Orange, you say? Never heard of it. Next."). More power to you folks out there in Yamhill.

And to finish, some random prayers: Let's pray the Cubbies can find themselves a placekicker who can hit those extra points, three more touchdowns and the Rockies would have had them. I pray that in the year of Mickey Mantle's death the Boston Red Sox can shed The Curse and ride the fluttering pitches of Tim Lincecum to a World Series title. I pray that the franc plunges against the dollar and French Burgundy becomes something I can afford. I pray that the new Danish study, which shows that the consumption of 3-5 glasses of wine per day reduces health related deaths by 50%, is wildly accurate. And lastly I pray that someday the good Reverend will put down his can of Bud and pick up a bottle of red wine, at least for a day.



Recommended Wines for the Month: I have stumbled across a few wines that will make even the most skeptical get down on their knees and see the Holy Light! Amen! There will be no need to pray when you open up this stuff. Your faith will be rewarded here on earth.

Torii Mor 1994 Pinot Noir: It's not available yet. That's the bad news. It will be available in early October, and it is fantastic! Rich Dundee Hills fruit cascades over your palate and is followed up by exciting spices that linger on the tongue for ages. This wine is delicate in nature but has fine structure, decent tannins and a firm backbone. You should be able to pick this one up for \$13 or \$14.

Autumn Wind 1993 Chardonnay Reserve: I know people who have tasted this who swore it was Napa Chardonnay. Oregon is not so famous for good, let alone stellar Chardonnay but this is the real deal. Tons of rich,



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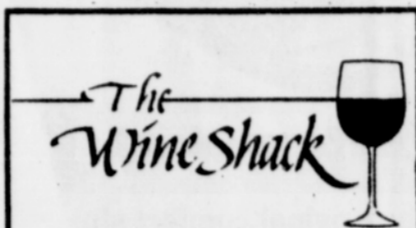


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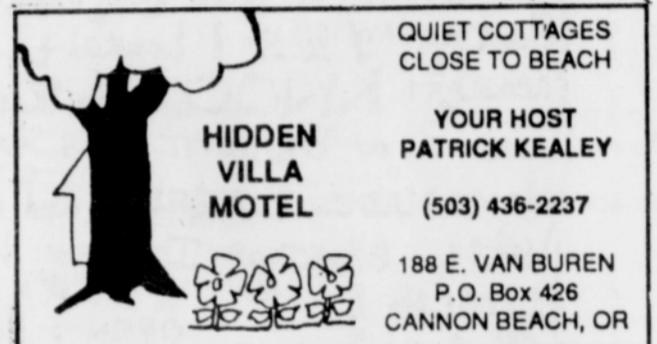
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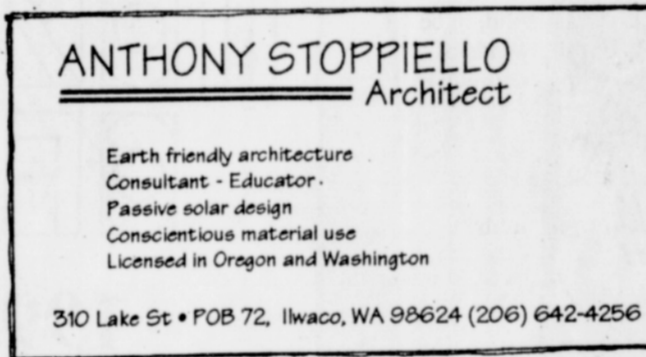
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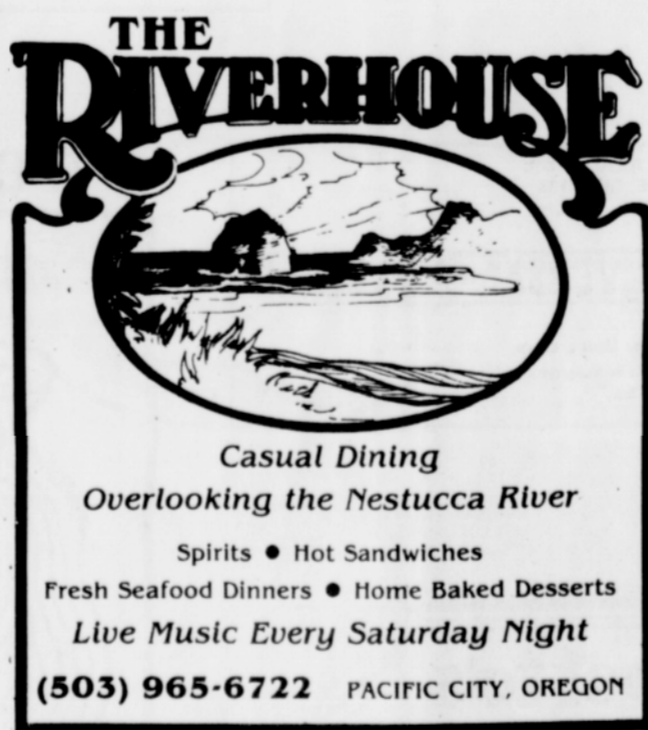
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tropical fruits mingle with sweet apples, pears, and nuts. Generous French Oak lends layers of cinnamon, vanilla and nutmeg that complement without overwhelming. The weight of the wine is significant and your entire mouth is coated with this golden Chardonnay. Only 90 cases were made and they are literally giving it away at \$15. Availability is pretty much limited to the winery. Call or visit soon to ensure your stash.

Bridgeview 1993 Black Beauty Merlot: From the winemaker who brought us one of the stars of the '92 vintage, La Merleausine, comes this supple wine. A tip of the hat to Bridgeview and their packaging. Nice job. The wine is the real star of the show. Broodingly dark fruit is accented by a touch of sweet French Oak, licorice, espresso and leather qualities. The wine finishes with a rush of dark, bitter chocolate. Not loaded with big, soft tannins, which makes one wonder how this wine will hold up over the long run, but damn it's nice to drink now. Especially for about \$12.

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