

NEXT WINE CLASS BEGINS FEBRUARY 2



In this four week class we will explore the characteristics of dominant grape varieties and learn to distinguish between them, study the importance of climate and soil and their impact on wine, discuss the effects of winemaking styles and techniques, explore fundamentals of wine and food pairing, and generally just plain have a lot of fun. \$95. Next class February 2, 9, 23 & March 2 2005 - Wednesday evenings 7:30 to 9 pm.

Join us for a very special wine dinner.

Sundance Wine Cellars and Adam's Place Restaurant will collaborate on a special wine dinner featuring the wines of Reichsgraf von Kesselstaat, one of Germany's finest wine producers. This multi-course event is designed especially to accompany several of Kesselstaat's finest wines which will be presented by Annegret Rae Gartner, owner of the estate. Reservations can be made at Sundance Wine Cellars or Adam's Place.

\$75.00 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 6 PM

2470 ALDER ST.
EUGENE, OR
687-WINE



CHOW! WINTER 2005

SOUTH WILLAMETTE Wines

Local winemakers are world-class. BY LANCE SPARKS

California's Napa and Sonoma Valleys used to be comprised of sleepy agricultural villages just north of the Bay Area urban centers. Calistoga, Oakville, and Yountville dozed, quiet and cozy. A few area folks grew grapes and made wines that generated a bit of hoopla among world wine geeks. Land was affordable, and the influx of weekend tourists was merely irritating.

Then the 1980s transformed the entire region, as wine boomed and the valleys and surrounding hillsides sprouted vineyards. Now 20 years later, Highway 29 from Napa to Calistoga is one of the busiest roads in the state. Want to buy an acre of agricultural ground? Bring a FAT checkbook.

Here in the South Willamette Valley, on Territorial Road from Lorane to Monroe, and on Highway 126 from Eugene to Veneta, farm folks run some cattle and horses, cultivate filbert and apple orchards, raise Christmas trees, garden some veggies. They grow some grapes, and make wines, too.

And those wines are good, some say very good, though only a few winegeeks are aware of how good they really are and will be in the near future. Meanwhile, no one in government at the local level thinks about the potential impact fine wines might have on the communities near the vineyards. It's still sleepy-time in our countryside.

Eugene-area winemakers are relatively few, and with one major exception, production is miniscule compared to Napa or Sonoma. But, barring catastrophe, that will certainly change, and soon. Cruise our local vintners and their don't-miss vinos.

EUGENE'S URBAN WINERIES

Eugene Wine Cellars, located at 255 Madison Street, produces a wide range of wines, all gaining popularity, especially with local imbibers and restaurateurs. EWC viognier, pinot noir, melon (a grape variety) and pinot gris are all quaffable, but they have set a goal of making a definitive syrah. The 2001 EWC Syrah is very good - dark, rich, peppery, on its way to top-shelf. Also, lotsa locals are grabbing up EWC 2002 Pinot Noir Pindarvine, a single-vineyard bargain due for a big jump in price.

Territorial Vineyards is Eugene's newest urban winery, and it's already making a big buzz in the winepress. From 20 acres and selected contracts, Territorial bottles a fine pinot gris and some of the state's tastiest Chardonnay. But their two top pinot noir bottlings, Stone's Throw and Capital T, are both superb, with super futures.

LaVelle Vineyards, located in Elmira, maintains a bistro/tasting room in Fifth Street Market, pouring their full line including a good sparkling wine, riesling, pinot gris, pinot noir and others. Invite LaVelle 2002 Pinot Gris to dinner with your favorite salmon.

THE PEARLS OF TERRITORIAL ROAD

Chateau Lorane produces a wide range of wines, some standards (pinot gris, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, syrah) and some rare (honey mead). New (2000) wine-maker David Hook is a crafty New Zealander with lofty goals: slurp Chateau Lorane 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon Applegate, Asian Vyd., organic, yummy.

King Estate is our region's largest producer, with an international rep for top-quality wines. Their reserve pinot gris is widely acclaimed and delicious, but King Estate 2002 Pinot Noir Estate is flat-out world-class, meticulously detailed wine-making by Ray Walsh, another brilliant Kiwi.

Iris Hill is just beginning, but watch this label. Their pinot gris is a fine value, crisp and bright. **Hinman/Silvan Ridge** has a long history and they produce a wide range of very good wines, but for my palate none is more consistently terrific than Silvan Ridge Early Muscat, a delicious dessert wine/aperitif, semi-sparkling, with wonderful flavors. Coming soon, just across the road, **Sweet Cheeks Winery**, opening Memorial Day weekend.

Up the hill from Hinman, **Briggs Hill** doesn't have a tasting room, but owner Ron Kuhn scores with a pretty "white table wine" and will soon release Briggs Hill 2001 Pinot Noir. Hide it for awhile, let it develop, be happy.

At the Territorial/Hwy 126 intersection, wheel toward Florence, roll a mile or so, and haul in at **Secret House**. Expect to taste fine riesling and an array of good wines, but don't leave without Secret House Red Silk, a rosé sparkler made from pinot noir, full-flavored and food-friendly. Back there at Elmira, follow signs for **LaVelle Vineyards** and their tasting room and gallery, just too lovely to miss, inside and out.

Turn north on Territorial, toward Monroe; you're on the way to tiny **High Pass Winery** (yup, on High Pass Road), on the fringe of civilization. Owner Dieter Boehm took gold and Best of Show at this year's State Fair for High Pass 2002 Pinot Noir Walnut Ridge Vineyard; deep, rich, complex.

Wheel on, bucolic scenery. Near Monroe, whoa-up at **Panther Creek Winery**, grab some 2001 Pinot Noir. End in charming downtown Monroe, at one of the state's best, **Broadley Vineyards**. Load the truck with as much Claudia's Choice Pinot Noir as you can afford.

That's it, folks - the South Willamette Grand Tour of Wines. We might have missed some because more are coming all the time. With each vintage we get a little stronger and look a little more like the younger versions of Sonapacino. Only with better wines.

EW



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the atmosphere,



the value,



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11th & Chambers - 5:30am-11pm • 2115 Franklin - 5:30am-11pm

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