

Migraine Months

Some friends and a taste of good wine can help

I yanked my fedora down hard on my head, trying to prevent what felt like an imminent cerebral eruption. All my adult life, people have told me I read too much, think too much, I should stop worrying, be happy. That ghastly Bobby McFerrin song with the whistling even plays through my lips now and then, try as I might to shake it.

Sure, don't think about nasty stuff like Iraq, where another 50 died today. Some sweet soul wrote a letter in *The Register-Gawd* today, saying essentially that, well, it's the wrong war, for the wrong reasons, at incredible costs, true, but we can't leave all those poor folks with our mess until we "stabilize" that ragged country. Stabilize? Like bringing together a peace-loving democratic coalition of Sunni and Shia sects? Same folks who have been righteously maiming each other for 1,300 years? Sure, and while we're doing that we might also want to pull together Israel's Likud party and Hamas, plus, say, the Kurds and Turks, Pakistan and India ... who else should just come together and make nice?



lemon pepper spiciness. Mouse noted that this varietal has become fashionable in London; one wine wag has dubbed it "Gru-Vee." We can only hope the pun hasn't taken root. Austria grows a gob of grüner veltliner, in fact, more than its famous Rieslings, but the indigenous wine used to be just a light, simple quaffer that no one took seriously; its emergence is largely due to better grape-growing and wine-making techniques. Now, in the hands of quality-conscious producers like Hiedler (recognized as one of the best), it's reached new levels of complexity in flavors, and its crisp acidity makes it a match for, say, fresh salmon or other oil-rich seafood. Folks who like to experiment with cellaring should know that grüner veltliner is said to age well — but it's awfully tasty fresh. Serve cool, not cold, for best flavors. Enjoy, but please don't call it "groovy."

Wine grapes have been grown in Greece for, we think, thousands of years. When the Romans invaded and grabbed up everything Greek — cultural looting still unmatched in

When the Romans invaded and grabbed up everything Greek, they also snatched grape cuttings, leading to their becoming, now, the world's largest producer of wine.

That's why I was feeling seismic forces in my forebrain. It didn't help that my eyes felt like they'd been dipped in a deep-fat fryer. About then, I heard the old Otis rumble and clank to a (near) stop down the hall; it never reaches up here to the 15th floor without howls of protest. I waited, oddly calm, idly wondering if the explosion of my pate could damage the already cracking walls in the hallway. I heard a light tap on the pebbled glass of the office door. Knob turned, door opened, revealing a dapper, jockey-sized figure in Harris tweed and Italian loafers.

"Mouse!" I croaked. "You're back!" He stepped in, hand extended, wry smile playing on his handsome face. I gripped the hand, like holding a velvet-covered vise. Following a clatter and sounds of breaking glass, Mole rolled into the room, wearing a white lab coat, stethoscope (!) around his neck, rushed us both: "Mouse, youse's home! We t'ought youse's still in London."

"Well," Mouse began when he could breathe again, "one can't remain long in the City without longing for the saner sentiments of the Continent. Besides, you will recall, I intended a protracted investigation of enological progress in certain regions where the wine-making — and the wines — remained distinctively rustic but often charmingly defined by local lands and character. As expected, the wine consulting enterprise has had predictable effects, and world marketers will now begin work on new brands. I have several samples." Mouse opened a leather case and withdrew bottles; Mole scrambled for glasses and his notebook.

First out was **Hiedler 2005 Grüner Veltliner** (\$12) (GROON-er VELT-lener), a bright, crisp white with nice melon/pear aromas and fresh herbal, mineral flavors with

scale, including the whole pantheon of Greek gods — they also snatched grape cuttings, leading to their becoming, now, the world's largest producer of wine. Meanwhile, the Greek wine industry languished, except for large production of usually mediocre retsina; with its pine-resin aromas and flavors, retsina is an acquired taste though it can be yummy with certain Greek cuisine. (Drop in on Anatolia on a Sunday night when they're serving Poppi's menu, have a carafe of retsina with some kalamarakia and dolmadakia; with such Greek grub, retsina begins to taste like Riesling.) Happily, most other Greek wines stayed in Greece, consumed by locals and travelers dining on local chow. Lately, though, there's been a turn. Mouse brought out **Domaine Gerovassiliou 2005 Malgousia** (\$22), called it "quite drinkable," high Mouse-praise. After recovering from sticker shock, we detected pretty floral nose and flavors of peaches and citrus, balanced with nice acidity. Research reveals that malagousia is another indigenous grape, gone nearly extinct, now in recovery and timely rescue and, given modern winemaking treatment, showing promise as a fine white. Put it with pasta with white clam sauce; be tickled.

Quickly from Spain (can be found in Long's Meats' new wine shop): **Las Rocas 2004 Garnacha** (\$17), made from old vines Grenache, with deep flavors of dark fruits, flat-out gottahaveit with fresh rosemary-grilled lamb chops.

With Mouse home and Mole at my back, I feel stronger, like we might just make it through these migraine months of the lingering Bush-world of corruption and incompetence and madcap mullahs. Hope springs; wine helps.

ew

Tasting Room & Wine Bar

Wine & Dine till Nine!

- Now Open Thurs-Sat till 9pm
- See Website for Complete Store Hours
- Serving Over 20 Wines by the Glass
- Limited Beer and Non-Alcoholic Drinks
- Menu of Lighter Bites

Weekly Specials

- "Wine Down" Friday. See Store for Details
- Tuesday & Thursday Themed Tastings
- Saturday Live & Local Music

Need a meeting place?
Ask about Tasting Room Reservations

WineStyles

2846 Willamette St, Eugene
434-WINE
southeugene.winestyles.net

INTERNATIONAL CAFES

FIFTH STREET MARKET

Mediterranean • American
Mexican • French • Greek

Five Great Flavors

One Location

8:30am - 7pm Mon-Sat
9am - 6pm Sun

www.5stmarket.com

I RUN WITH SCISSORS THE SALON

During the month of April bring in 3 cans of FOOD for Lane County & receive \$10.00 OFF any service or a free gift.

www.irunwithscissorsthesalon.com

PHONE FOR AN APPOINTMENT: 541-870-0388

TOWNHOUSE PLAZA - 570 LAWRENCE SUITE 112 • EUGENE, OR

SUNDANCE WINE CELLARS

bringing Eugene fine wines since 1983

- Complimentary wine tastings ever Friday and Saturday 4-6 PM.
- Huge selection of wines from the region and around the world.
- More than 200 Oregon Pinot Noirs in stock.
- Many hard-to-find and allocated wines.
- Large organic and sustainable wine section.
- Stemware and wine accessories.
- Knowledgeable staff to advise you.

2470 ALDER ST. EUGENE 687 - 9463

WWW.ORWINES.COM