

No More Miss-takes

It's a hole new year ahead

The golden holiday glow has dimmed — but '08 has gone, and good riddance. Except for the wines. Our snitches inform us that last year's wines might be a decade's best, at least for growers who delayed harvesting until that brief dry, warm stretch that fattened berries and raised sugars. The crop will be skimpy, but early barrel tastings promise exciting flavors, especially in pinot noirs. We won't know certain-sure for months, but first-sipping signs augur auspiciously.

Of course, it'd be nice if buyers/consumers had jobs and bux to spend on wine in this reeking recession, but we have hope, right? We can climb out of the W-hole, crawl out from beneath the Bushes and get back to the garden, grow our way outta this swamp.

The new year stirs optimism, a sense of fresh beginnings. So let's clear out debris and detritus, toss last year's errors and scope a finer future.

Now, we don't condone mistakes; in fact, we check and double-check — except when we get rushed. Then ... finkles occur. Last year — to babble Bush-speak — mistooks were made. We sent y'all on a wine tour, giving directions, but no destination name, to **Pfeiffer Vineyards**. We apologized, OK? Worse, last month we praised **LaVelle Vineyards 2006 Merlot**, noting its hefty ticket at \$44; clearly, I (yes, me, not Mole, nobody else) read the invoice wrong, had two bottles, total \$44, so, lessee, divide by two, carry the naught, um, \$22. So here's the make-up: LaVelle's merlot was yummy, even at \$44, so it's gotta be twice as good at \$22. Simple math, duh!

Whatta year. I even mispeled a word I know prefekly wel.

Mole and I have seen the light: no more miss-takes for 2009. Good thing, 'cause we've rumbled some awfully good glug for this month. But take note: Winemakers and wine importers/wholesalers/retailers across the global market are feeling the pinch of this recession. Sales are down (except, oddly enough, in the very high-end wines — weird, huh?) while costs are still rising (relieved some by the retreat in oil/energy prices). As usual when the market's Invisible Hand tightens its grip on producers' oompa-loompas, we can expect some "volatility" in wine prices, that is, some dramatic cuts in prices. So keep a close watch on stickers, check for deep discounts as everyone scrambles for market share. Another predictable outcome will be a



rash of bankruptcies and consolidations as "haves" buy out struggling "have-nots." Some small labels will disappear, or at least change ownership, a sad state because that will reduce variety in style and interpretation, at least until the next bubble. Meanwhile, we score beauties on retail shelves: Itgripes us here at Investigations — unabashed localists that we are —

that our northy neighbors seem able to produce huge quantities of very good *vins* at affordable prices. Among the best and most consistent we find **Chateau Ste. Michelle 2007 Pinot Gris Columbia Valley** (\$9). Now pinot gris, properly speaking, ought to be Oregon's grape, but CSM (dammit!) does a nice job: rich flavors of melons, apples, pears, with good acidity, friendly, drinkable, affordable wine, would sit very well with shellfish, all sorts.

Our neighbors at **Sweet Cheeks Winery** have shaped their spot into a hugely popular destination, noted for pretty tasting room and outdoor patio with scenic valley views. They're still defining themselves in terms of their wines, but their SCW dry Riesling has been outstanding. Recently, friends tripped by, packin' **SCW Blanc de Noirs**, uh-huh; doubtful, we tasted, slurped yummy sparkler with pinot noir depth of flavor and character. Jumped the phone, rang up SCW's Lorrie Normann for the scoop; turns out behind the SCW label lurks bubbles made by Gruet, one of our faves, which is why this one's only sold at the winery (\$22) — easily worth the trip. Look for **SCW Red Fizz Brut** on Valentine's Day, again only at the winery. Oh, and lay a lip on **SCW 2007 Pinot Noir** (\$22).

Friends also tipped us to **Dusky Goose 2006 Pinot Noir Dundee Hills** (\$58), another super Oregon wine in tiny production (only 1,000 cases), richly aromatic, deeply layered in flavors, complex melding of red and black berries with an elusive hint of violets, all on a silky texture. Made by the talented Lynn Penner-Ash, this pinot deserves special treatment, a nice hidey place for at least a year while it matures into the profound wine it promises to become. The sticker demands heavy scratch but when worth is greater than cost, that, bobbies, defines value.

We here at Investigations and *Eugene Weekly* wish you a better year. We might not yet have emerged fully from the grim shadows cast by the Bushlings, but we can see the rosy rim of dawn, a brighter day in the offing. We've read the entrails carefully, and this'll be a lovely year, no mystics about that. *Skool!* **EW**



Tim Verkler

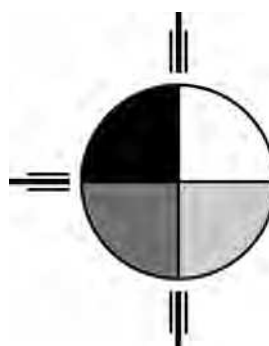
- A Full-Service Real Estate Broker •
- Earth Advantage S.T.A.R. Graduate •
- Former Home Builder •

Multi-Million \$ Annual Sales
1999-2008

485-1613



timverkler@remax.net • www.eugeneproperties4u.com



DONALD DEXTER JR DMD LLC DENTISTRY

"The first wealth is health."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Invest in your health, the returns are abundant.

2233 WILLAMETTE ST, BLDG B • 541-485-6644

www.drDEXTER.com

SUNDANCE WINE CELLARS

Oregon's largest selection of fine wines.

King Estate Pinot Gris

Our everyday low price on America's best selling Pinot Gris!

Reg. \$18.95.....\$12.95

Bryn Mawr 2005 Reserve Pinot Noir

More than 50% off on this Oregon cult Pinot - while supplies last!

Reg. \$40.00.....\$18.95

Brassfield Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio.

Crisp, refreshing whites - perfect for summer sipping.

Reg. \$14.95.....\$8.50

Chalone '04 Merlot & '06 Cabernet Sauvignon

Icons of Monterey county. Now half off - while supplies last!

Reg. \$18.95.....\$8.95

2470 ALDER STREET IN EUGENE

PHONE: 541.687.9463 WEB: ORWINES.COM



January 16-18
Historic Ashland Armory
208 Oak St. Ashland

Harry Manx

The Insomniacs



Friday Acoustic Concert

6 pm dinner, 7 pm music

HARRY MANX • Mac Potts •

Songs-in-the-Round w/ Pete Herzog

Jerry Zyback and Rick Di Dia and

Aireene Espiritu

Saturday Dance

6 pm dinner, 6:30 pm dance

TOO SLIM & THE TAILDRAGGERS

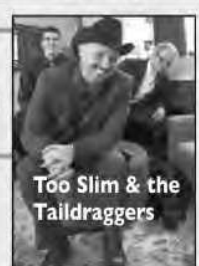
The Insomniacs • Karen Lovely

Sunday Dance

5:30 pm dinner 6pm dance

PORTLAND BLUES JUNIORS,

Gabe Young & Friends



Sponsors: Ashland Food Co-op, Ashland Creek Inn, Southern Oregon Travelogue, Holiday Inn Express, Bard's Inn, Ann Hathaway's Cottages, Standing Stone, Avalon

Tickets available at
www.stclairerevents.com
or call **541.535.3562**

THE ADULT SHOP

e-ADULTSHOP.COM

\$9⁹⁹
DVDs

**BUY 2
GET 1 FREE**

Offer good for barcode 900999

290 River Rd Eugene 541.688.5411	720 Garfield Eugene 541.345.2873	86784 Franklin Eugene 541.636.3203	2315 9th St NW Corvallis 541.754.7039	726 John Long Rd Rice Hill exit 148 541.849.3344
---	---	---	--	---