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March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Capella Market is selling "Pearl Bucks" for \$1 each. Your dollar will go directly to help people with disabilities to live fuller lives.



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MARCH 16 & 17

Our 7th Birthday & Annual Wine Sale!!



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Wine BY LANCE SPARKS

Spring's Promise

Wines in anticipation of outdoor dining

Maybe most people hate making mistakes. I know I do. Last month I tried to do a little good for some fine people: I mentioned the fundraiser wine auction on behalf of Start Making A Reader Today (SMART), an event involving my old pal and wine maven Larry Malmgren. Unfortunately, I sent interested readers to the wrong place.

The SMART wine auction will be held from 5:30 to 7 pm Tuesday, March 20, at Boulevard Grill, 2123 Franklin Blvd. Wine auctions can be mighty fun, offering the chance to pick up rare and special bottles. And since Malmgren is a first-class wine scrounger — and has a fine collection of his own, into which I know he'll dip for this purpose — I'm confident there'll be some jewels on the tables. Kat and I will certainly attend. Note: If some of you decide to join us — and I hope you will — please remember that this is a charity auction for a very worthy cause. Bid generously; you'll be doing good for yourself and many others.

Now, while I'd like to launch into some political discourses — West Eugene EmX, the line-up of Howdy Doodles running for the Republican nomination for president, some nasty practices involving mining and pesticides — the first order of business today involves good food and good wines.

But first, I have a message from the plants: Spring, they tell me, is here.

Let me admit right off that I don't presume to get on the other side of Punxsutawney Phil or any other professional groundhog expert weather guesser. But I'm a gardener, an utter amateur, sure, a punter who pushes seeds and starts into soil and then hopes, someone who battles weeds and always loses. But I've learned to listen to the Greenies, so even though we're still teetering on the brink of March, the rhodies are busting out and others are all a-budding. Word: Plant the peas, pull the popweed.

In celebration (or blind faith), we've begun cooking outdoors, wok-ing Asian dishes with the first spring veggies, flavors and spices that leap in the mouth and leave winter as gray shadows and soggy memories. And Asian cuisine just romances with Rieslings, those lovely, lively whites that originate in France and Germany but also thrive in the Northwest — and some other, rather surprising places.

One of our recent favorites is **Pacific Rim 2007 Dauenhauer Vineyard Riesling** (\$12), bursting with pear/apple/citrus flavors, creamy in the mouth with enough sweetness to round out the flavors but balanced with zesty acidity, a stir-fry dream.

Australia has emerged as a source of superb Rieslings, and **Wolf Blass 2004 Gold Label Riesling** (\$20) delivers those pretty fruit flavors with a distinctive petroleum/mineral note that echoes some of Germany's best.

But for Riesling in its most refined expression, it's hard to beat **Domaine Jean Sipp 2009 Riesling Reserve Vin d'Alsace** (\$18). The wine is crisply dry, typical of Alsatian whites, but brings its fruit forward on a structure that showcases the grapes' delicacy and finesse. One sip leads to another, and this wine makes melodies with food.

Oregon pinot noir has garnered rave reviews from the national wine press, and **Haden Fig 2009 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (\$19) is bargain-priced (for pinot noir) and just delicious drinking right now (even better a year from now), with right-down-the-alley black cherry/raspberry flavors, razor-edge balance and long-playing finish. Any reason to drink this is a good reason.

Final note: Lotsa folks like a nip of sweet wine with dessert, and **Noble Estate 2010 Semi-sparkling Muscat** (\$15) is simply superb: Fruity, floral, lightly bubbly, made for a bit of delicate cheese and dried fruit. Yum!

'Nuff said, and no mistakes, right? So now come snow and ice. Day-um. Even plants can goof. **EW**

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EUGENE WALDORF SCHOOL

"Paint with Me" Morning Saturday, March 10, 10-11:30 am
Windows on Waldorf Wednesday, March 14, 8:30-10:30 am
18th Annual Spring Benefit Auction Sat., Mar. 17 at the Hilton, 6:30-10:00 pm
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Clinical Trials of America in Eugene is conducting a clinical research trial on the effect of an investigational, non-hormonal, herbal treatment for hot flashes.

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- ◆ Are naturally or surgically menopausal
- ◆ Not currently using estrogen or hormone therapy

If you are interested in participating call or email the Study Coordinator, Helen at (541) 349-0523; helenm@ctofa.com