

A VINTAGE YEAR

For fine wines, but maybe not fine politics

Glorious autumn: I've sojourned in Eugene nearly 50 years and I don't recall an autumn more lovely. I just want to wander the streets, besotted by colors and aromas, tipsy with nostalgia for autumns of my childhood, lingering now in the autumn of my life. For viticulturalists (grape-growers and winemakers), autumn 2012 has them trembling; despite our soggy June which reduced crop size, these long stretches of warm days and cool nights have led to rising sugars and deepening colors in the clusters, promising what could become a classic vintage. Harvesting has already begun. Now, if the rains hold off just a bit longer, and the birds don't swoop down from Canada, andandand ... That's what I want to write about, but birds and rains are not the only dangers we face this season.

Last month's column began with an admission that I've been studying Republican — not easy: The language is contorted (still struggling with lingo like “legitimate rape”) and the logic is torturous (as we'd expect from folks who brought torture back into foreign policy).

Lately, I've been having problems with locating Republicans in the electoral contests. Oh, I know that their standard-bearers in the presidential campaign are Romney (“Mr. 47 percent”) and Paul (“Thou shalt not lie”) Ryan, but it's the other candidates I'm having trouble identifying. Has anyone else noticed? They never put the term “Republican” on their glitzy lawn signs and campaign fabrications. In contrast, DeFaz proudly identifies himself as Democrat. So why the Rep stealth?

Sure, some voters apparently are rather miffed that Republicans in the House and Senate have used every legislative trick available to thwart any attempt by Obama and the Democrats to pull us out of this recession, a recession brought on by Republicans during the Bush years. The Republicans' PR hacks, especially on Faux News, have worked hard and spent millions to pull off a classic switch: Blame Obama for the recession and then blame him for not turning the economy around — heckuva stunt, a feat of amazing chutzpah.

Try this twist: A right-wing Republican produces a video that mocks and insults Islam's holiest figure, the prophet Muhammad. Millions of fervent believers in Islam react in fury, attacking American embassies, killing an American ambassador. Then, instead of joining the president and the nation in mourning the loss of our brave countrymen and condemning the killers, while repudiating the scurrilous insults in the video, turn on the president and try to weaken him politically. Do this, too, all while shedding big crocodile tears of nostalgia for the national unity we experienced after 9/11. Wow.

And it works, at least among the Republican “base.” OK, I'm done. I can't do this any longer.

Let's talk wine, our neighbors' good wine, something to sip in this warm, pastel twilight:

A touch of sweetness, intense flavors of ripe pears and peaches, whiff of melon and citrus: **Sweet Cheeks 2011 Riesling** (\$13.50) balances the sweetness with crisp acidity, making a fine semi-sweet wine to match with spicy dishes and late-summer veggies.

Still time for rosies: **Dylan's Run 2011 Teresa's Rosé** (\$10) is another semi-sweet wine, a blend of pinot noir and Muller-Thurgau for a lively range of complex flavors favoring, say, a grill of light sausages, white cheeses. **Territorial 2011 Rosé**

of Pinot Noir (\$12) is dry and delightful, giving up notes of strawberries and cherries, balanced for acidity that favors summer grub.

Sarver 2009 Pinot Noir Select (\$24) is just fine pinot, medium-bodied, complex without overpowering the bright cherry flavors.

Gotta go big? Not much bigger than **J. Scott 2010 Petite Sirah** (\$25). The grapes grew in the Rogue Valley and Jonathan Scott Oberlander crafted a massive, flavor-packed red that'll age for years. Open and decant an hour before serving. Bang.

Savor the autumn, drink some good wines. Share with friends. As for that other study, close it out: No more Refum-blicans. ■



Sweet Life Pâtisserie October Desserts of the Month

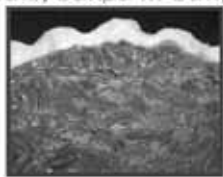
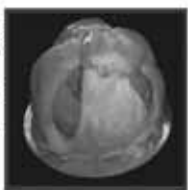


Chai Spice Cheesecake

A cheesecake infused with 5 spices, with a candied ginger graham crust, topped with sour cream and cinnamon. Contains no tea. gluten-, egg- and dairy-free optional

Apple Dumpling

A poached apple stuffed with dried fruit and toasted nuts, baked in butter pastry and drizzled with caramel.

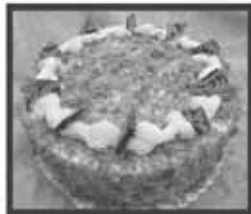


Bourbon Pecan Pie

A sweet pecan pie infused with bourbon whiskey.

Pumpkin Nougatine Cake

A pumpkin sponge soaked with sweetened cream, filled with vanilla whipped cream, finished with french vanilla buttercream and walnut nougatine.



Pumpkin Pie

Our gluten-, egg- and dairy-free version of a classic pumpkin pie. gluten-, egg- and dairy-free

Caramel Apple Cupeake

A spiced applesauce cupeake with caramel buttercream. gluten-, egg- and dairy-free



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Big enough to meet your needs.

**Fall colors and Fall flavors all
October at Sundance!**

All Pumpkin beers are priced 20% off this month!

Elysian Dark O'The Moon *Pumpkin Stout* 22oz **\$6.19!** (reg. \$7.95)

Oakshire Big Black Jack Imp. *Pumpkin Ale* 22oz **\$3.79!** (reg. \$4.75)

Laurelwood Stingy Jack *Pumpkin Ale* 22oz **\$5.29!** (reg. \$6.75)

Elysian Nightowl *Pumpkin Ale* 6-Packs **\$6.95!** (reg. \$9.99)



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