

BRUISE & BREWS

Time for fomenting & fermenting

I'm writing days before this ominous election, a harsh test of our fragile democracy, a chance for us to learn if mere money can overwhelm the process. One test: If voters have elected a zombie fraud, financed by a Wall Street hedge-fund vampire, over Peter DeFazio, one of the most principled congressmen ever to sit in the House, then maybe we have little reason to hope that this experiment in democratic self-rule has much chance for success.

But democracies have failed before (Athens, Rome, Germany — examples abound). One of the consolations of reading a lot of history is the knowledge that hellishly vile people have grasped power in the past and have done great harm to millions — Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Bokassa — then have themselves faded into dust, and, despite all that despotic depravity, common people have endured and survived. Life goes on.

The most dependable consolation, however, is still remembering that good people endure. And that's a reason to give thanks in the season of Thanksgiving: Even if the election produces a nightmarish outcome, we have this moment to gather friends and family and share our table, the best grub we can gather, the best wine we can afford.

As usual, we urge you to buy local, even if foreign competitors have been fighting for market-share by slashing prices (for example, a juicy Barbera from Italy's Casteggio rides on retailers' shelves for \$7.99, an absurdly low price for an import).

Share some good news, too: Despite a dubious future, confident individuals keep creating new enterprises. Case in point, Simon Blatz and others have opened Blue Dog Mead (tasting room at 245 Lincoln, open by appointment). He's been joined by winemaker Ray Walsh and, most recently, Ninkasi, aiming to produce a local version of the world's oldest brewed drink.

Mead starts with honey, water and yeast ("And a blessing," Walsh adds). The mix ferments, then undergoes blending and "adjustments" for balance. Next, some gets carbonated for sparkle; some diverts to become a "wine-product," a still wine (no bubbles or very few), fills wine bottles and retails for \$7.99. It's available now and would make a surprising addition to your holiday feasting, delivering distinctive honey/pear/ apple flavors with crisp acidity; despite the honey base, this is not a "sweet," sugary wine. Served slightly chilled, it "smells like honey, tastes like honey," Blatz says, but would complement appetizers and some entrées. Mead has the added virtue of reminding us that even when much is taken away, much endures.

We really can't get more traditional than mead, but wine made from grapes also packs history. In local lore, King Estate has played a major role in establishing an Oregon identity for the dry white we call pinot gris (or pinot grigio) in the global wine market. Then King launched a second label, less expensive than estate wines; thus began the Acrobat line, and it succeeded beyond parental dreams — **Acrobat 2011 Pinot Gris** (\$11) is bright and crisp with delightful pear/apple flavors, fine company for roast bird, even tofurkey.

A local red with style and flavor, at a bargain price-point: **Lone Oak Vineyards 2008 Pinot Noir** (\$11.50!), Monroe-born, is light in body but long in pinot flavors — cherry, strawberry, spice. Drink with anything. **Witness Tree 2010 Pinot Noir ChainSaw** (\$19), a Salem native, offers a heftier body, notes of raspberry, earthiness, complex and enticing.

Need a big red for Aunt Mary? Try **J. Scott 2009 Avanté** (\$17.50) a crafty assemblage of syrah, viognier, petite sirah and Grenache — rich, ripe and flexible, suitable for a range of richly flavored dishes.

Remember that Thanksgiving weekend is a fine time to tour wineries with visiting friends and family. Most of the wineries are open for tasting and many offer special events — lotsa music. Check online (willamettewines.com) for details. Designate a driver. Be careful. Enduring requires diligence. ■



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This Saturday!
11am-5pm

Individuals Nourishing Community Since 1971

Fall Tasting

Saturday, November 3rd 11am to 5pm

Come Sample:

☀ **40 organic apple & pear varieties**

☀ **local and regional goat & cow cheeses**
from fraga farms, juniper grove farm, la mariposa, fern's edge goat dairy, oak leaf, willamette valley cheese, goldin artisan, & black sheep creamery

☀ our own **local sundance kitchen**
cookies, pumpkin pie, roasted squash, hummus,
& spiced columbia gorge cider

☀ **local chocolates & rose jam** from premrose

☀ **locally** roasted organic **coffee** from cafe mam

☀ **tea** from **locally** owned j-tea

☀ **local cider & beer** from 2 towns & oakshire

☀ **face painting!** ☀ **live music!**

Come Learn:

☀ soul to grow **mushroom** growing **demo booth**

☀ food & water watch **information booth**

Come Sip:

☀ **local pinot noir**
just around the corner at
sundance wine cellars

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