

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



**Dear Abby:** I have a friend of 20-plus years I'll call "Gladys." We enjoy walking our dogs and talking about relationship issues. Sometimes it's just me counseling her. She often regales me about these wonderful times she has — get-togethers with her other friends that I'm not invited to. She loves going into detail about how wonderful her excursions are, etc. I have always made excuses to myself about it — I'm more boring and straight-laced than her other friends, not as rich, not as smart. (It's true. I don't party much. I'm a total lightweight.)

Also, I'm one of her only friends who hasn't met her boyfriend of more than a year, and believe me, she has confided in me about their relationship the whole time. I have been concocting in my mind a way to address this with her without driving a wedge. (She can be very sensitive and defensive.) My boyfriend doesn't like how she treats me, but she's never been anything but kind and sweet with me, generally. She just doesn't include me in her social circle. What is your take on this?

— *Strange Friendship in California*

**Dear Strange Friendship:** My "take" is that over the last 20 years you have fulfilled one particular function in Gladys' life, being her therapist and dog-walking chum. Period.

Your boyfriend has a point. She appears to be centered on herself and insensitive about how her confidences have made you feel. In my opinion, what she has been doing isn't kind and sweet; it is clueless. Ask Gladys (and her boyfriend) to go out for a social activity. It's worth a try. If you really want to know

why you have never been included in her social circle, I don't think it would be rude to ask why — IF you are prepared for the answer. It's a fair question.

**Dear Abby:** My grandson-in-law seems to have no motivation to take advantage of his VA benefits after just having completed his military service and not having been trained to do anything in civilian life. He's married and has a toddler. They have moved in with his parents, who babysit the child while his wife works. He wastes every day and doesn't seem to want to find a job or get training (paid for by the VA).

My granddaughter is frustrated and at her wits' end. We have offered suggestions and sent emails for virtual job fairs for veterans, but he doesn't seem interested enough to apply for anything or follow up on the one or two interviews he has had. She has even filled out job applications for him. What can we do to encourage her or him? Frankly, I feel like she would be much better off leaving him. Any suggestions?

— *Granddad-In-Law in Florida*

**Dear Granddad:** Your granddaughter's husband appears to need more help than being steered toward job fairs. He may need to be medically and mentally evaluated. Could he suffer from PTSD, drug addiction or an undiagnosed mental illness? And what do his parents have to say about this? Once your granddaughter knows what she is dealing with, she will have a better idea of what to do about it. Right now the most helpful thing you could do is discuss with her what I have written and provide emotional support until she has some answers.

YOUR HOROSCOPE *By Madalyn Aslan*

Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★ POSITIVE | ★★ AVERAGE | ★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SUNDAY, FEB. 7, 2021:** Idealistic, harshly spontaneous and brilliant, you have a social vision and a desire to right existing inequalities. This year, you set an example for others and succeed on a grand and popular scale. If single, you're a true free spirit, and you search for the perfect mate until July. If attached, you are so important to your partner. You are set to be a wonderful parent. CAPRICORN has your back.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**  
★★★★ You acquire a deeper understanding if you look at the practices of other lands. This is a marvelous time for writing. If you have an idea for a story, put it on paper. Add foreign phrases if you want to be a brilliant conversationalist. Tonight: Fun.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**  
★★★★ Research goes well today, you have new insight and a renewed empathy for children. If you take time to teach others, your own learning deepens. Complete work requiring analysis and precise measurements. Tonight: New technologies and gadgets are an asset.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**  
★★★★ An abundance of forceful energy rains on you from the ideas and choices generated by companions. Personal involvements will be electric, exciting and unpredictable. You can meet people who revolutionize your whole life. Tonight: Gather information and be a good listener.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**  
★★★★ You will find satisfaction today in getting organized and developing good habits, after relaxing for the first part of the day, of course. You have more empathy with animals. A pet shows love and devotion. Tonight: A nutritious meal with loved ones.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**  
★★★★ Accept an invitation. Creativity accelerates if you enjoy novelty and stimulation. Study a new subject or skill if boredom threatens. Your humor and charisma win new friends. If you encourage a relationship, a commitment is offered. Tonight: Lady Luck is smiling on you.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**  
★★★★ Foster peace and patience at home. Ideally, you want your residence to feel safe, with the atmosphere of a peaceful sanctuary. Reconsider and postpone any major building or home improvements. Tonight: You have very good judgement. Trust it well.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**  
★★★★ Resist the temptation to exaggerate. A tall tale told now could damage your credibility. Be factual about all communication and be subtle with jokes and humor. Others are in a serious state of mind. Tonight: Investigate the terms of any new commitment before getting involved.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**  
★★★★ Take some time to evaluate what you really want. It's a day to control impulses and rein in impulsiveness. You can resolve debts today. The demand for your skills intensifies, and you're aware of new options for professional growth. Tonight: Relax.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**  
★★★★ Your charm and beauty are especially appreciated today. It's a perfect time to reach out to a new love, plan a virtual get-together, or express artistic inclinations. You're starting a new cycle of tremendous energy and enthusiasm. Tonight: In wonderment.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**  
★★★★ Today makes you quiet. You will prefer not to externalize your deepest thoughts and desires. Peace and privacy are cherished. Quiet hours help you find your balance. Old memories and news from old contacts are in your thoughts. Tonight: Some low-key meditation.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**  
★★★★ Friends offer encouragement. You will be warmly welcomed into new circles if you seek companionship. Today helps you discriminate in your choice of associates. You will find it easier to select goals. Tonight: Reach out to old colleagues from past careers.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**  
★★★★ It's a day for freshness and dynamic expansion. Be daring about trying a new interest or type of project. You'll enjoy exploring ways to make a difference in your endeavors. You become highly visible and could assume a position of leadership. Tonight: Online networking.

Olive oil is one of hottest ingredients in Asia

BY JOANNA OSSINGER  
Bloomberg

Twenty years ago, when chef Shinobu Namae cooked at the acclaimed Italian restaurant Acqua Pazza in Tokyo, he had trouble selling dishes made with olive oil, one of the cuisine's featured ingredients. Customers frequently asked him to omit it from their order.

Today, says Namae, "people in Tokyo love olive oil." At his Michelin three-star L'Effervescence, the chef can now source locally made oil from Souju, a farm in the Kagawa prefecture that once grew Bonsai plants. Because the owners were expert at pruning, Namae says they can control the growth of the olive trees to sustainably "harvest good fruits constantly."

Japan's increasing taste for olive oil has spurred local producers. The country won eight awards, including four gold ones, at the 2020 NYIOCC World Olive Oil Competition. A big winner, Green Basket Japan, has olive groves in Odawara, about an hour outside Tokyo.

In 2019, Japan exported 276.23 metric tons of olive oil, a 209% increase from 2018 and a 545% increase from 2014.

China is also committing to the olive oil business. In 2020, the extra-virgin, organic oil Xiangyu Coratina won double gold at the Athena International Olive Oil Competition out of 430 entrants. The company that produced it, Xiangyu Oil Olive Development Co., hired an



Angel Garcia/Bloomberg file

Bottles of olive oil move along the production line at the Borges Agricultural & Industrial Edible Oils plant in Tarrega, Spain, in 2019.

Argentine agronomic engineer, Pablo Canamasas, to produce the winning oil.

"Extra-virgin olive oil consumption in China is increasing at a significant pace," said Canamasas via email. "Particularly in big cities and in a segment of the population aged 25-35 that has traveled abroad and is more exposed to the Mediterranean diet or has heard of it."

Xiangyu's olives are grown in the Wudu District in China's western Gansu province. The climate has enough similarities to the Mediterranean coast to produce quality olives, including slightly alkaline soil and plenty of sun, according to Xiaoyong Bai, chairman of Garden City Olive Technology Development Co. His Garden Taste oil won a gold medal for quality at the 2018 International Olive Council's Awards, where it was recognized for its "ripe

fruitiness."

Bai has been growing olives for 23 years; his plantation now encompasses more than 3.7 million acres. A retired civil servant and committed environmentalist, Bai said that he's helped plant trees "on many barren mountains" via a translator over email. He added: "At present, China consumes 6,000 tons of olive oil every year, with an annual growth rate of 18%." In 2020, his company exported a batch of olive oil to South Korea, the first time he sold product outside China.

The Asia-Pacific olive market is expected to record an annual growth rate of 4.2% from 2020 through 2025, according to market research firm Mordor Intelligence. Mordor sees the region's market for olive oil growing rapidly to meet surging demand from consumers because of its health benefits.

In Singapore, Sebastien Lepinoy is likewise pushing world-class oil, but he's not using local olives. The chef at Michelin three-star restaurant Les Amis spent five months developing a blend to complement his modern French cooking for such dishes as Langoustine de Locudy-giant shrimp with zucchini and an extra-virgin emulsion.

"I needed an olive oil to match with my cuisine and also, for cheese," Lepinoy says. He used five kinds of olives from Château d'Estoublon, in Provence, France, to create a blend that he imports, uses, and markets to customers.

Lepinoy has enough confidence in the market for olive oil in Singapore that he's selling bottles of his smooth, subtly peppery oil for \$36 (\$48 Singapore). He says there has been good demand for a more healthful fat as an alternative to his restaurant's famed butter.

Although travel restrictions have kept away tourists who might buy souvenir bottles of oil, restrictions have also kept the city-state's well-off residents home, and they've shown a lot of interest in the olive oil, Lepinoy says.

Still, there is some resistance to olive oil in Asia. "Crazy as it may sound," says Canamasas, who helped produce Longnan Xiangyu's award-winning oil, "the Chinese public have the same view we outsiders have on Chinese products: that they are of poor quality."

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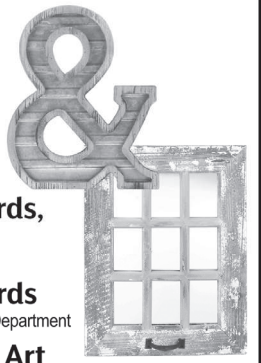


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