

FOOD/DRINK/MORE

TASTE

BC LIQUORSTORES

THE GREEN ISSUE

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a question of closure P 86

BLANC DE BIZARRE

quirky, offbeat white wines of the world P 12

COMPLIMENTARY

OVER 25 NEW RECIPES INSIDE

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BC LIQUORSTORES



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COVER




ANTINORI SANTA CRISTINA PINOT GRIGIO
Italy \$18.99 758151
Straw-yellow in colour, with fruity aromas and hints of peaches and ripe apples, this lively wine is balanced with good acidity.



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Visit www.bcliquorstores.com to locate any product sold at BC Liquor Stores and for current price information.

OUR SYMBOLS

-  Country of Origin Flags
-  BC VQA Wines
-  Sweetness Code
-  Organic

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TRY SOMETHING
NEW



 **DARESBURY'S QUINTESSENTIAL WARRINGTON DRY GIN**
England **\$27.74** 540419
Traditional and very attractive, this classic gin is long, extremely smooth and somewhat smoky, with beautifully refreshing juniper and pine aromas. Quintessential indeed!

 **CAZADORES REPOSADO TEQUILA**
Mexico **\$39.99** 772293

Spicy aromas of cinnamon and lemon peel with sweet fig and bread pudding greet the nose. Impressive and austere agave fruit flavours follow, with hints of eucalyptus and lovely light oak accents on the finish.



  **DOMAINE DU CLOS DU BOURG SAUVIGNON DU TOURAINE**
France **\$14.99** 370205
This lovely and versatile wine from the Loire Valley is highly aromatic, with a floral nose and delightfully delicate, refreshing and lingering flavours. Enjoy it with lunch on the deck or on its own on a warm spring day.



THE NEW ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

DELICATE PASTA, GRILLED ASPARAGUS, SPRING LAMB – THESE DAYS, WE JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH NUOVO FARE.



SPRING LAMB & GRILLED ASPARAGUS

and people eat it with their fingers – a nice, communal way to welcome the season. The accompanying asparagus is grilled and garnished with chopped, fresh mint and a drizzle of lemon-infused olive oil.

Start the meal with a bottle of **Mionetto Sergio Brut**, with its creamy, red-apple/peach flavours, citrus streaks and a touch of sweetness. Contemporary master vintner Sergio Mionetto produces this wine based on a formula shaped by the founder Francesco Mionetto in 1887. The magic is in two ancient grape varieties, unique to the Veneto, blended with the finest Prosecco grapes.

While sipping on a flute of Mionetto, begin preparing the pasta course. Walnut ravioli with a filling of ricotta, Gorgonzola and walnuts is an adaptation inspired by the traditional Ligurian walnut sauce. It is said ravioli were invented in Liguria to stretch a small amount of leftover meat or fish into a full meal the following day.

Ciao to all the work preparing homemade ravioli. You will be delighted at how quickly these can be assembled using prepared wonton skins. These thin egg noodle wrappers are available in Oriental markets and in the produce department of supermarkets. Wonton skins can be kept tightly sealed in the refrigerator for about two weeks.

To accompany the pasta, choose two delicious, cool-style whites from northern and central Italy: **Castello Banfi Principessa Gavia**

Just in time for spring, Vancouver's best-known Italian restaurateur Umberto Menghi describes how groups of city dwellers flock to the newly lush countryside of Tuscany to celebrate the season's arrival with a *scampagnata*, or picnic – and shows us how we

can do this at home.

In his cookbook, "Toscana Mia: The Heart and Soul of Tuscan Cooking," Menghi recalls how *la scampagnata* coincides with the arrival of spring lamb and wild asparagus. The lamb is served in the middle of the table

Gavi and **Rocca della Macie Occhio A Vento Vermentino**. The Gavi is built to offset the ravioli with its fresh floral, pear, almond and citrus aromas and rounded, tasty flavours of lemon, pear and red apple. It should easily slice through the Gorgonzola, refreshing your palate after every sip.

Alternatively, you can match the richness and nutty oily notes of the ravioli's cheeses and walnuts with the Macie Vermentino from Maremma. Round, dry and soft on the palate, its crisp apple skin, pear, lemon, butter and quince flavours melt into the dish.

The powerful scent of lamb and its strong-flavoured meat is just the ticket for the generous, savoury, licorice-scented wines from Bolgheri. Offer a pair of Bolgheri blends to tame the meat. **Le Serre Nuove Dell'Ornellaia**, a Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot blend, is really an Ornellaia "bambino." Ripe, full, round and warm, its peppery, menthol, cardamom, plum and savoury flavours are the perfect foil to the lamb, mint and lemon.

The same goes for **Tenuta Guado al Tasso**. The Antinori property extends from the foothills around the medieval village of Bolgheri down to the sea. Many of the 2001 Bolgheri reds are magical, but the Guado, with its silky texture and dense core of spicy, meaty, peppery, blackberry fruit, is the wizard of all.

An Italian's idea of dessert is Macedonia – pronounced mahtch-eh-DONE-ya – a fresh-fruit compote named for the troubled Balkan region shared by many ethnic groups. It's a well-considered blend of the moment's peak fruit, cut up, lightly sweetened and left to macerate with lemon juice or an orange-flavoured liqueur. You could also use Kirsch,



ITALIAN MACEDONIA

sweet or dry Marsala or Limoncello.

After pacing yourself for this multi-course marathon, cap it off with a pair of similarly structured, lightly frizzante fruity endings based on the aromatic Moscato grape.

The **Bottega Petalo Il Vino dell'Amore Moscato** is sweet but delicate with good acidity. The fresh orange and peachy

mineral flavours mirror the Macedonia. If you want to bump it up a notch then serve the **Batasiolo Bosc Dela Rei Moscato d'Asti**. This is classy Muscat with a light spritz, a fresh nose and fine acidity followed by a parade of ripe peach, apple, spicy, nectarine and orange flavours. Viva Italia!

PASTA SHAPES AND SAUCES

- Long, thin pastas, like linguine and angel hair, go well with light sauces (simple tomato, garlic and oil, clam) that don't overwhelm their delicate texture.
- Long, thick pastas, like fettuccine, are sturdy enough to handle creamy or robust sauces, such as Alfredo and carbonara.
- Thick, tubular pastas, such as penne and rigatoni, help scoop up chunky, full-flavour sauces, like a meat ragout, and bind together well in casserole dishes with cheese.

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FOR RECIPE, PLEASE SEE PAGE 93

PASTA 101

- Use good imported dried pasta. De Cecco is made in Italy and has a toothsome texture and nutty flavour.
- Use six quarts/litres of water for up to one pound (450 g) of pasta. Cover the pot so the water comes to a rolling boil quickly.
- Salt the water just before adding pasta; add at least 1 heaping tablespoon (15 ml) of salt per pound of pasta. The addition of salt enhances the flavour of the pasta.
- Do not add oil to the water. To prevent the pasta from sticking together, stir frequently during cooking.
- Reserve some of the cooking water before you drain the pasta. If a sauce is too thick, a little pasta water will lighten it; if a sauce is too thin, add pasta water and then reduce it. The starch will thicken the sauce.
- Do not rinse pasta. The starch that clings to the strands is important to the taste and texture.
- If you are adding pasta to a sauce, undercook it by two minutes so it can simmer in the sauce and absorb some of its flavour.
- If you are going to bake the pasta, reduce the cooking time by one third.



WALNUT RAVIOLI

BC LIQUORSTORES

TASTE 9

12 YEARS OF FOREPLAY. ONE LONG, WARM FINISH.



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Wine and Food



 
MIONETTO SERGIO BRUT
 Italy **\$26.99** 515551
 Creamy, red-apple/peach
 flavours, citrus streaks and a
 touch of sweetness.



 
**CASTELLO BANFI PRINCIPESSA
 GAVIA GAVI**
 Italy **\$25.95** 162271
 With its fresh floral, pear, almond
 and citrus aromas plus rounded,
 tasty flavours of lemon, pear and
 red apple, it should easily slice
 through the Gorgonzola.



 
TENUTA GUADO AL TASSO
 Italy **\$89.99** 722660
 A silky texture and dense core of
 spicy, meaty, peppery, blackberry
 fruit.



 
**ROCCA DELLA MAGIE OCCHIO
 A VENTO VERMENTINO**
 Italy **\$18.99** 93773
 Round, dry and soft on the palate,
 its crisp apple skin, pear, lemon,
 butter and quince flavours melt into
 the dish.



 
**BOTTEGA PETALO IL VINO
 DELL' AMORE MOSCATO**
 Italy **\$17.99** 580993
 Sweet, but delicate with good
 acidity



 
**LE SERRE NUOVE DELL'
 ORNELLAIA**
 Italy **\$59.99** 91496
 Its peppery, menthol, cardamom,
 plum and savoury flavours are the
 perfect foil to the lamb, mint and
 lemon.



 
**BATASIOLO BOSCO DELLA REI
 MOSCATO D'ASTI**
 Italy **\$19.99** 288449
 A fresh nose and fine acidity
 followed by a parade of ripe peach,
 apple, spicy, nectarine and orange
 flavours.

WINES TO ACCOMPANY THE ITALIAN DINNER



Wine

THIS IS A CALL FOR A WHITE WINE REVOLUTION!

Whether we inspire a sans-skis uprising or not, there is a myriad of delicious gems on BC Liquor Stores shelves that regrettably get overlooked. The happy-go-lucky punter is wont to grab the tried-and-true, to drink what's comfortable, to vote monochrome with their dollars and their palates. To take on those unpronounceable whites shelved in the corners and on the bottom racks of the store is to get off this vinous merry-go-round and to start tasting in Technicolor.

After a tough workout in the tasting room the other day, we were in need of some good music. Sipping a little **Moschofilero** and scrolling through our CD collection, we realized the overwhelming choices: hip hop (urban or underground), jazz (inside or outside), classical (Baroque or 20th century) and rock (Beatles or indie). There we sat with genres galore, sub-genres of the genres, to say nothing of the sub-sub genres.

Wine is kind of like that. There's a slew of purple genres out there and we'd be missing out if we didn't sip from them all.

Sure, knowing what you like to drink 90 percent of the time is important. You know you can scan the shelves for a Shiraz, you can skip "Chile" and go straight to "Italy" (or vice versa), or you can head straight for the bubble because you know Champagne is your desert island wine.

But then there are those times – and we swear that they're getting more frequent – when

we find ourselves scrolling past the Alt Rock in favour of a little Hammond B3 organ mastery by Jimmy Smith, or maybe the latest hard-hitting, streetwise rhymes à la Aesop Rock.

Must we have more citrus aromas? More oak-induced vanilla flavouring? More guitar riffs? When the playlist seems stale and the Sauvignon Blancs lack lustre, the Chardonnays become a blur, and your five-disc changer has done a full rotation and you haven't even noticed that ringing sound is not Nickelback. It's the alarm bell telling you to press "eject." Reach for that bottle in the corner – the quirky white that can re-fire your taste buds. It's about aural diversity.

REVIEWS:

Vintage in and vintage out, we love the **Muscadet Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie** from Château de Chasseloir. It's raging freshness, catching you off-guard with its vibrancy and lip-smacking tang; made from the zippy Melon de Bourgogne grape and left on its lees to pick up some weight and bread-y character. This may just be the ultimate spring fling.

Also from the country that brought you the baguette, the Citroën and romance (not necessarily in that order), comes the **Jaffelin Bourgogne Aligoté**. It seems every grape wants to lay claim to being the "poor man's Chardonnay" – the dubious honour is currently shared by Pinot Blanc and Chenin Blanc – but in our opinion, Aligoté wins hands down. It's from Burgundy, and

it's what we drink when we can't find a white Burgundy for less than \$25 (which is nine times out of ten). Look for nut, apple and peach pit aromas punctuated by an unmistakable leesy note (i.e. like bread yeast). OK, it's not Montrachet, but it's great with fish and chips.

Another bottle we can't keep in stock is the **Gazela Vinho Verde**. Whether it's lunch, brunch, or an afternoon tippie, we're constantly cracking into this citrus explosion that's punctuated by an inviting fizz. Vinho Verde literally means "green wine," though the reference is to its youthful energy, not its flavour or the colour of the eggs you should be serving alongside. Pairing with anything from omelette to hors d'oeuvres, chill the Gazela well and try not to polish off the whole bottle.

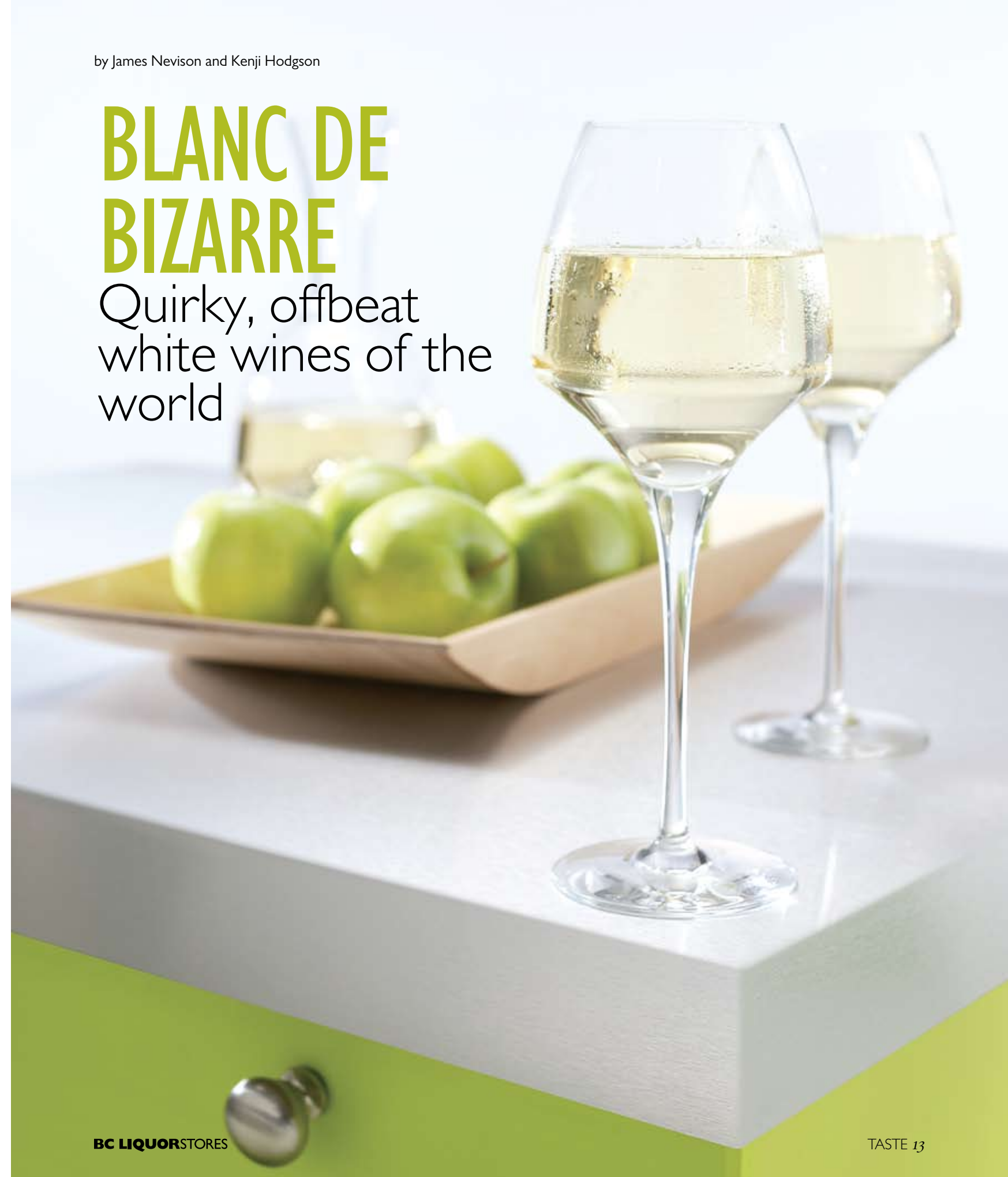
In keeping with the Portuguese theme, we have recently discovered **Sogrape's Vinha do Monte Branco** from the Alentejano region. So-what? Alenteja-who? While we were looking for a translator, we popped the cork on this Portuguese gem, inhaling whiffs of lemon, guava and melon. There's a distinct perfume on the nose, followed by a brief but nicely textured, finish. We're thinking cucumber canapés on a Sunday.

Sticking to the always-epicurean Continent, we opened a bottle of **San Marco's "Solo Frascati,"** complete with a mouthwateringly minimalist label. No tacky animals here – this Frascati is as fashionable

by James Nevison and Kenji Hodgson

BLANC DE BIZARRE

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as it gets. Made of Malvasia and Trebbiano grapes and hailing from a region near Rome, we in BC, don't generally get treated to the crisp, floral nuances of this Italian appellation. Add wild flowers and strawberries to the olfactory mix and it's hard not to love Frascati.

Continuing east, we would be remiss if we left out a Greek wine, quite possibly the pinnacle of quirkiness. And we mean that in the most complimentary way. Straight up, we're crazy about wines from Greece, no matter how dwarfed this category is compared to, say, Oz. Greek reds are rich, balanced, and food-friendly. The whites, like this **Moschofilero** from Boutari, are about as idiosyncratic as they get. The Moscho is

massively perfumed, easy to sip; and before we knew it, the 750 millilitres had disappeared. Possibly the best experience of this tasting.

Regrettably, there's not a lot of white wine on the shelf from Argentina. We're too focused on the red Malbec grape and not enough on Torrontes. Surely this is what the gauchos swig while they ride into the sunset, what's poured at all the raucous Buenos Aires parties, or what's served with a large Argentine steak? Well, if we were in Argentina right now, Torrontes is what we'd be sipping. This grab-you-by-the-nostrils white exudes aromatics until the cows come home. "Quaffable" only begins to describe the **Lo Tenco Torrontes**.

Our own backyard is not without its fair share of quirky white wines. In fact, before all the Cab and Syrah got planted in the Okanagan, the valley was home to a plethora of fair-skinned oddities. To some extent it still is, what with grapes the likes of Kerner, Siegerrebe and Ehrenfelser. Quails' Gate winery is not one to turn its nose up at vinous curios, here matching Pinot Blanc to the rare Chasselas, a grape commonly grown in Switzerland, that yields a pleasant, fruity wine. Savour the fresh aromas of green apple, apricot and bar soap of the **Quails' Gate Pinot Blanc Chasselas**. It's squeaky clean sipping and we can't think of anything quite as appetizing this spring.



CHASSELOIR MUSCADET SÈVRE ET MAINE SUR LIE France **\$19.95** 107862 Catches you off guard with its raging freshness.



JAFFELIN BOURGOGNE ALIGOTÉ France **\$19.78** 53868 When you can't find a white Burgundy for under \$25.



GAZELA VINHO VERDE Portugal **\$10.99** 141432 Try not to polish off the whole bottle!



SOGRAPE'S VINHA DO MONTE BRANCO Portugal **\$13.99** 64808 We're thinking cucumber canapés on Sunday.



SAN MARCO'S SOLO FRASCATI Italy **\$14.99** 180166 It's hard not to love.



BOUTARI MOSCHOFILERO Greece **\$18.95** 177154 Possibly the best experience of this tasting.



LO TENGO TORRONTES Argentina **\$13.99** 365890 A grab-you-by-the-nostrils white.



QUAILS' GATE PINOT BLANC CHASSELAS BC VQA **\$15.99** 585737 Squeaky clean sipping.

BC LIQUORSTORES

TASTE 15

BC LIQUORSTORES BEST BUYS

WONDERFUL
TASTE,
GREAT
VALUE

TASTE AND VALUE — IT'S IN THE BOTTLE!



LUNA BEBERIDE BIERZO MENCIA
Spain **\$15.99** 860684
Smooth and stylish, offering an impressive balance of softly ripe red cherry flavours and vibrant acidity, this wine is round and rich with a sweet, pleasant finish. Great value! 91 Points *Wine & Spirits*



ADOBE ORGANIC CHARDONNAY
Chile **\$13.99** 97527
Open citrus, peach and honey melon on the nose, smooth and refreshing on the palate, with mineral and more honeyed fruit flavours – a stylish and affordable gem.



RAZOR'S EDGE SHIRAZ
Australia **\$19.99** 858456
Lifted aromas of black fruits, spice and licorice follow through to supple-textured flavours with good fruit purity and ripe tannins. The finish is tinged with chocolate richness. 90 Points *Wine Spectator*



SANTA RITA RESERVA PINOT NOIR
Chile **\$14.99** 539601
This new world-style Pinot Noir has beautifully balanced and concentrated flavours of black-cherry jam, orange, floral hints and sweet spice. Very elegant! 89 Points *Gismond*



CHÂTEAU PESQUIÉ CÔTES DU VENTOUX LES TERRASSES
France **\$16.99** 708750
An amazing wine at an astonishingly low price, it's vibrant, full-bodied, lush and food-flexible with smoky, roasted herb and spicy black cherry. It's almost too good to be true! 90 Points *Robert Parker*



CONCANNON PETITE SIRAH
USA **\$19.99** 306423
Solid and chunky, with black pepper, smoked meat and blackberry aromas following through to rich, round tannins with ripe fruit flavours and an enjoyably dry finish. Simply delicious!



HMV SEE YA LATER RANCH GEWÜRZTRAMINER
BC VQA **\$16.99** 868067
Soft and pleasant, with ripe red apple and hints of lychee, this is the wine to serve chilled to cool down a hot curry dish or spicy Asian hotpot.



YALUMBA Y SERIES VIOGNIER
Australia **\$17.99** 624502
Light and floral, with spicy ginger, grapefruit and apple in a buttery, round yet fresh and slightly lean style. Very enjoyable!



LEOPARD'S LEAP THE LOOKOUT CAPE MOUNTAIN RED
South Africa **\$10.99** 233270
This tasty and affordable red blend offers soft, peppery, meaty flavours with blackberries and a touch of clove spice that is very easy drinking and ideal with light meals. Great value!



VALCOMBE COSTIÈRES DE NÎMES
France **\$12.99** 857243
A lovely offering of floral, mineral, black fruit aromas and soft, pliable textures with red fruit, and meaty, licorice flavours on the finish. More great value from the South of France!



CASTILLO DE ALMANSA RESERVA
Spain **\$12.99** 270363
Loads of peppery spice, tobacco leaf and coffee with a smooth, round palate of black cherry, cedar and smoky chocolate flavours. A delicious wine with barbecue, tapas or simply by itself.

SPRING COCKTAILS

created by David Wolowidnyk, West Restaurant

JOLICOEUR

8	green grapes, crisp and fresh
2 oz (60 ml)	Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc
1 oz (30 ml)	Grey Goose Vodka
¾ oz (45 ml)	elderberry flower syrup (IKEA)
¼ oz (15 ml)	fresh lemon juice
	edible flower petals

Muddle the grapes in a shaker glass. Add the Sauvignon Blanc, vodka, elderberry flower syrup and lemon juice and fill with ice. Shake vigorously until very chilled. Taste and adjust, if necessary, to balance the sweetness and acidity. Double-strain (using a tea strainer) into a chilled martini glass and garnish with edible flower petals.

Spring Cocktails



GEISHAGAVE

4	1 mm thick rings fresh Jalapeño
1 oz (30 ml)	Sauza Silver Tequila
1 oz (30 ml)	Yoshi No Gawa Organic Premium Sake
¾ oz (20 ml)	fresh lime juice
1 oz (30 ml)	jasmine green tea syrup (2 parts sugar/1 part jasmine green tea)

In a mixing glass, lightly muddle one of the fresh jalapeño rings. Add liquid ingredients. Pour into a cocktail shaker with ice and shake until well chilled. Strain through a tea strainer over crushed ice in a rocks glass and garnish with fresh jalapeño rings.

Note: the longer this drink sits the spicier it becomes... for a milder drink, use less jalapeño.

CLEARLY THE HEIR

1 ½ oz (45 ml)	premium gin
1 ½ oz (45 ml)	heirloom tomato water (see recipe below)
1 leaf	fresh basil
3 drops	fresh lemon juice
4 drops	simple syrup

Place the basil leaf in the palm of your hand and clap your hands together to release the flavour. Place basil in mixing glass with the gin and allow a gentle infusion into the spirit for 1 minute. Add ice, heirloom tomato water, fresh lemon juice and simple syrup. Gently stir all ingredients until well-chilled then double-strain into a chilled martini glass.

Garnish

Score a cherry tomato then blanch for 30 seconds. Peel back the tomato skin and pierce the tomato with the tip of a basil stock.

Heirloom Tomato Water*

Spread a triple layer of cheesecloth over a large bowl or container, leaving a large indentation in the centre. Secure it in place with string. Coarsely chop 2-3 heirloom tomatoes and place them in the cheesecloth to sit for 12-16 hours, so the water from the tomato pieces gradually seeps out and through the cheesecloth into the container. The result is clear tomato liquid, or tomato water.

**David recommends making more heirloom tomato water than the recipe calls for. He says, if any is left over, it makes a wonderful drink on its own!*





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CONSULTANT'S CHOICE

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Dean Anderson
Product Consultant, Mission Park Signature Store, Kelowna
“Wine, spirits and beer can be compared to the universe; there are many new and exciting discoveries to be made.”



Jo-Ann Potter
Product Consultant, Langley Signature Store
“What I really enjoy is product knowledge – learning and sharing knowledge with my co-workers and customers.”



Elaine Conway
Product Consultant, Dunbar Liquor Store
“So many wines...so little time!”



LES BRUNNELLES CROZES-HERMITAGE
France **\$24.99** 485250
Les Brunnelles is made from 100% Syrah grapes, which are grown in the Northern Rhône region of France. It features aromas and flavours of black cherry, blackberry, slate/mineral and smoky, barbecued meat with a touch of menthol. This wine says barbecued steak or an oven roast please.



DE BORTOLI PETITE SIRAH
Australia **\$12.99** 336750
This wine is very easy drinking, smooth and silky. It's good as an accompaniment to grilled meats or simply quaffing back with friends.



ST. URBANS-HOF RIESLING QBA
Germany **\$19.99** 597997
Mouthwatering aromas and flavours of honeyed nectarine, apple and minerality, it comes across as just off-dry with an opulent, fruity mouth feel that gives way to a crisp, lingering finish. Indulge with blue cheese, salads, poultry or smoked ham. Perfect for a spring picnic!



STAETE LANDT SAUVIGNON BLANC
New Zealand **\$27.99** 638403
This family owned vineyard and winery is located in the Marlborough region of New Zealand. The wine is partially sur-lee aged to impart intensity, complexity and structure. A mix of ripe passion fruit, lemon grass, tree fruits and a balanced backbone of acidity make it perfect with halibut or chicken dishes.



MCWILLIAMS-HANWOOD CHARDONNAY
Australia **\$14.99** 557934
The McWilliam's Chardonnay is a beautiful, big, fat mouthful with a creamy, melt-in-your-mouth character. It's easy drinking on its own or with appetizers, such as tuna carpaccio.



PERRIN ET FILS VACQUEYRAS LES CHRISTINS
France **\$26.99** 585315
This outstanding wine combines the black fruit spiciness of Syrah with the silkiness of Grenache. Black cherry and sweet spice aromas bursting with fruit and smoky licorice and a long, pure, muscular finish. Decant and enjoy with grilled rib eye or spicy lamb. 91 Points *Wine Spectator*

GROWING ORGANIC

GOOD FOR FARMERS,
GOOD FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT &
GOOD FOR YOU

We sometimes forget how fortunate we are here in British Columbia – our local organic farmers are a passionate group, determined to change the way we eat. From the Cowichan and Fraser Valleys to the Okanagan and Interior, the diversity of what is grown for our tables is staggering. The growing climate is ideal and the soil is abundant with nutrients.

Organic and sustainable may be the buzzwords of the day, but this trend actually has us stepping back in time and doing as our forefathers did before pesticides and fertilizers became the norm. We are becoming more aware of what we are putting into our bodies and are coming to realize the impact of the choices we make on our health and on the environment.

The cost of buying organic is often questioned: higher manual labour costs and smaller yields account for the main difference of organic compared to conventional farming, which, at the cost of the environment, grows for large production. Soil health is one of the main factors in good organic farming and composting is probably the most important of those factors. Giving back to the land is an age-old

FROM THE COWICHAN AND FRASER VALLEYS TO THE OKANAGAN AND INTERIOR, THE DIVERSITY OF WHAT IS GROWN FOR OUR TABLES IS STAGGERING.



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BUYING LOCAL IS JUST AS IMPORTANT, IF NOT MORE SO, AS BUYING ORGANIC. LOCAL, IN-SEASON STRAWBERRIES CAN NEVER COMPARE TO THOSE FLAVOURLESS IMPORTS, AND WAITING FOR THE FRUIT TO COME INTO SEASON MAKES IT THAT MUCH MORE OF A TREAT.

tradition and makes so much sense at an environmental level, rather than leaching nutrients out of the soil, as large-scale commercial farming tends to do.

Taste is another huge consideration when buying and growing organic. I think the best example is the poultry industry. Put an organic chicken next to a commercially grown one and you'll see what I mean – the taste is so amazingly different, you'll never go back. Similarly, organic, free-range chickens not only live a kinder life, they also lay the best-tasting eggs.

Buying local is just as important, if not more so, as buying organic. Local, in-season strawberries can never compare to those flavourless imports, and waiting for the fruit to come into season makes it that much more of a treat. Buying local is also much friendlier to our planet. I'm sure you've heard about the 100 Mile Diet*; I believe it is something we should all consider, at least some of the time.

Visiting a local farmers' market in early spring is a highlight for many a serious foodie. From the first spears of asparagus to tender baby salad greens, spring offers so many welcome treats we've missed during the chilly winter months. Chatting with the farmer who grows your food is such a rewarding experience and, in my opinion, makes the food that much more delicious.

The East Vancouver Farmers' Market at Trout Lake boasts arguably the best selection of locally grown organics under one 'umbrella.' Little Qualicum Cheeseworks and Goat's Pride Dairy make delicious artisan cheeses and are always generous with their samples. Deciding which one (or 10) to buy is often the hardest part. Waiting in line for a bag of Glorious Organics Spring Mix is a tradition well worth the time spent and, if you haven't had the pleasure of tasting Bad Girl Chocolates, I'd say you really haven't lived!

The eatlocal.org website posts dates and locations of the local farmers' markets. As participating vendors grow, bake, make or raise the products themselves, the markets provide a wonderful opportunity to meet the farmers face to face and interact with the people who grow your food. Ask them the best way to cook or serve the product and you'll be sure to receive at least one idea, if not four!

Growing your own is another great way to get closer to your food. Many of the farmers sell starter plants to get you going in the right direction, and most are more than happy to give growing advice. Start with a few fragrant containers of culinary herbs alongside some interesting varieties of heirloom tomatoes. A combination of Green Zebra, Black Krim, Stupice and Yellow Pear tomatoes will bestow on you a bounty of multi-coloured and amazingly flavoured salads in the warm summer months. It's so rewarding when that first heirloom tomato ripens to know that you grew it with your own hands – not to mention the unbelievable taste difference from those grown in a sterile, industrial environment.

Organic menus can be simple yet delicious, featuring locally grown and preferably organic ingredients. Shopping at your local farmers' market and gathering artisan-crafted food items to work into your menus also streamlines the process and is a great way to discover unique products made right in your own backyard. Fresh honeycomb with a lovely local artisanal blue cheese is the perfect beginning to a spring menu. Springtime and asparagus go hand in hand and a chilled soup garnished with crème fraîche and chives evokes the season perfectly. Follow this with a main course of locally raised lamb and a simple dessert featuring local, juicy strawberries and you have the quintessential spring menu.

Organic, local eating is not only a better choice for our planet, it's a much tastier way of eating, satisfying our soul as much as our tummy!

***NOTE:** THE 100-MILE DIET REFERS TO BUYING AND EATING FOOD THAT HAS BEEN GROWN, MANUFACTURED OR PRODUCED ENTIRELY WITHIN A 100-MILE RADIUS OF THE HOME OF THE PERSON WHO WILL BE CONSUMING THE FOOD. EATING A 100-MILE DIET IS ONE WAY PEOPLE CAN REDUCE THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT WHILE SUPPORTING LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS.

A LOVE AFFAIR WITH WINE & FOOD

YOUR GUIDE TO PERFECT PAIRINGS

It was the summer of '92. I sat in the dim light of a crowded dining room, surrounded by abstract sounds and smells. It appeared before me in an instant – a veal chop, straight out of the oven, drizzled in a balsamic glaze. A tempting waft of charred smoke rose up, inviting me to take my first bite. I gave in, and a fork full of flavour was in my mouth. It was good.

Then there was the wine – it was a 1988 Kenwood Jack London Zinfandel from California's Sonoma Valley. It had been poured into my glass minutes earlier and I had swirled it round and round, waking the flavours from within, releasing the fruits that had long been encased in the bottle. I took a sip and the result took my breath away! The food – this dish of charbroiled veal, coupled

with the wine – this Zinfandel in all its fruitiness – this combination was the most phenomenal thing that I had ever tasted. It was as though heaven itself had entered the room and surrounded me with sheer delight. It was at that moment that I embarked on my love affair with wine and food.

If you have never experienced food and wine synergy, then you are missing out on one of life's most enchanting experiences. True synergy is not totally unlike true love – where two elements come together to achieve something greater than both of the parts.

The subject of pairing wine with food has long intimidated many of us and plainly bewildered others. Finding the right match is sometimes viewed as complicated and confusing, but it doesn't have to be! While

it's true there are some scientific reasons that certain wines go better with certain foods, for the most part it is simply a matter of common sense – putting together two flavours that taste good together.

Whether you consider yourself a real gourmet, or someone who just eats 'food for fuel,' one thing is certain: flavours play an important part in your daily life.

We mix flavours together in every meal we make, from a sandwich (what kind of cheese should be used with this meat?) to crafting soup (which herbs will go best with these vegetables?). So, whether you know it or not, you already have experience in the art of pairing flavours and a head start on knowing how to pair wine with food.

by Mirelle Sauv 

Above all, pairing wines with foods is a great way to experiment with different flavours, learn about your own taste preferences and best of all have fun!

Let's start with the basics: Here are five rules of thumb (one for each finger), to keep in mind, when approaching food and wine pairings:

COLOUR CODING

While there are several exceptions to this rule, white wine often goes best with white fish and white meats; red wine is often the best bet with red meats like venison, lamb or beef. The subtlety of choosing specific wines for these pairings depends on the methods of cooking and accompanying ingredients.

BLOOD AND TANNINS

Red wines usually have a degree of tannin to them (an astringent quality in the wine that makes our mouths feel dry), and more tannic wines tend to go best with rarer meats. So, if you like your beef rare, look for a wine that is full and complex, such as red Bordeaux or Barolo, as they tend to be higher in tannins; if you prefer your meat well-done, have a wine that is rich and berried instead – something like a California Zinfandel or an Australian Shiraz perhaps.



BALANCE TEXTURES

Contrast plays an important part in food and wine pairings. Take salad dressing, for example: oil is very viscous and rich, while vinegar is quite the opposite – thin and astringent. When the two are mixed together, the result is a harmonious balance of oiliness and acidity, much like a perfect wine and food pairing. So an oily fish such as trout will go wonderfully with a vibrant and fruity wine – something a little higher in acidity, such as Sauvignon Blanc or Semillon.

FLAVOUR SHOWCASE

When you want a flavour to shine, it is important to frame the flavour with subtle enhancements, not overpower it with another, more powerful flavour. For instance, if you really like the herbaceous notes of a cream-

based pasta dish, be sure to pair it with a wine subtle enough to show it off, such as a delicate and crisp Italian Pinot Grigio. If you paired it with a full and luscious wine like a big, oaky Chardonnay, it might taste yummy, but you'd be hard-pressed to find those distant herbal flavours, as they'd be masked by powerful toast and buttery notes.

HOT AND COOL

When serving spicy foods, it's best to pair them with fruity wines, which act as a coolant to the palate after a mouthful of heat. Fruity and off-dry whites, such as German Rieslings and Gew rztraminers, are great bets with spicy Asian dishes, while light and fruity reds such as Gamay are good companions to spicy beef dishes such as Mexican burritos.

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REDS



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Wine & Food



Rules are good to have as guidelines, but what is paramount is that you enjoy the meal, creating it and indulging in it. Above all, pairing wines with foods is a great way to experiment with different flavours, learn about your own taste preferences and, best of all, have fun!

Look around for taste inspirations to know what flavours go best together.

Something as simple as childhood classics like peanut butter and jelly can inspire a terrific pairing by breaking down the flavours. The peanut component to the classic can be found in a modern Pad Thai dish, while the jelly can be represented by a very grapey wine, such as a Beaujolais Nouveau. Knowing how well the flavours of peanuts and jelly mix

in a sandwich, why wouldn't they work wonderfully together as food and wine?

Another way to approach flavour pairings is by enhancing similarities. Take roast beef in a mushroom sauce, for example. This dish has some earthy flavours from the mushrooms in the sauce, and an effective way to bring out those flavours in the food is to pair it with a wine that also has earthy flavours – something like a California Sangiovese perhaps, or a Brunello di Montalcino, which is made using the Sangiovese grape.

There are countless things to consider when pairing wines with food, but the most important thing is to drink what you enjoy. So, if you really love white wine, and red

wine is just not your thing, then drink white – even if you are having steak. Sure, a Cabernet would be a better pairing, but if you don't like red wine, then what good will that do you? Instead, focus on pairing the dish with as full and luscious a white wine as you can muster, such as an oaky California Chardonnay. After all, you do want to taste your wine with dinner, and drinking something light like a Pinot Blanc would taste a bit like drinking water.

Food and wine are always best enjoyed together, so have a great time figuring out which food and wine combinations work best for you.



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WHITE



DELICATE AND CRISP



INNISKILLIN OKANAGAN DARK HORSE VINEYARDS PINOT BLANC

BC VQA **\$17.99** 558429
Light and crisp, this BC white is a perfect pairing with delicately flavoured, locally inspired canapés such as smoked salmon and cream cheese toast points.



VIBRANT AND FRUITY



MOILLARD VIOGNIER

France **\$11.89** 639757
Tropical fruit and moderate acidity make this French white wine a delightful accompaniment to shellfish – particularly prawns, sautéed in a light cream sauce.



FULL AND LUSCIOUS



PENFOLDS KOONUNGA HILL CHARDONNAY

Australia **\$15.49** 321943
A steal of a deal, this oaked Aussie Chardonnay is a classic match with roasted chicken, as its buttery texture stands up well to poultry and its juiciness complements the meat.



FRUITY AND OFF-DRY



SELBACH RIESLING BERNKASTEL QBA

Germany **\$14.99** 517581
Sweet orchard fruit flavours burst through in this juicy white wine from Germany. Off-dry and refreshing, this wine pairs perfectly with spicy Asian stir fries or seafood hotpots.



SWEET AND FRUITY



CONCHA Y TORO LATE HARVEST SAUVIGNON BLANC

Chile **\$14.98** 1628 375 ml
Sweet with apricot and honeyed characteristics, this is the ideal wine to end a meal, serve chilled alongside spiced baked goods such as apple pie.

RED



LIGHT AND FRUITY



DUBOEUF BEAUJOLAIS VILLAGES

France **\$16.84** 275735
Light-bodied and subtle with fresh red fruit flavours, this wine is a delightful complement to a deli platter of cured and dried meats and sausages.



FRUITY AND EARTHY



RUFFINO CHIANTI

Italy **\$16.99** 1743
Medium-bodied with flavours of tart cherries and earthiness, this rustic red wine is best drunk alongside equally rustic cuisine – spaghetti and meat sauce, for example.



RICH AND BERRIED



RAVENSWOOD VINTNERS BLEND ZINFANDEL

USA **\$17.99** 359257
This full-bodied and juicy red wine will taste delicious with an equally juicy homemade hamburger straight off the grill – the charred meat flavours draw out the smokiness in the wine.



FULL AND COMPLEX



CHÂTEAU PEY LA TOUR RÉSERVE DU CHÂTEAU

France **\$25.27** 442392
This classic red blend from France's Bordeaux region showcases complex flavours of blackcurrant and bell peppers, making it an ideal pairing with prime rib steak, roasted medium-rare to balance the wine's tannins.



SWEET AND EARTHY



FONSECA 10 YEAR OLD TAWNY

Portugal **\$20.17** 516617 375 ml
A lighter-style port with a distinct nutty flavour, this is a great match with mild blue cheeses and walnuts in the late afternoon, evening or at the end of the meal.

FRESH, HEALTHY & DELICIOUS COOKING

SPRING RADISHES WITH BUTTER AND SESAME SALT



I first encountered cooking locally and seasonally during a macrobiotic phase I went through in my late teens. It lasted a year or so, but the principles stayed with me. In the mid '80's, I wanted to replace all menu items using summer produce with fall and winter fare, as we moved into those seasons. I was told I couldn't because our customers had come to expect these items. I realized that I would be fighting a losing battle and kept my seasonal thoughts to myself. Twenty years later, local and sustainable have become key

words in the eating green revolution.

In this spring menu, the key players – radishes, halibut, spinach and rhubarb – are all available locally at the same time. This menu is a good starting point for a summer menu; salmon can be used when it comes into season and served on a bed of green beans with diced tomato and fresh basil added to the vinaigrette instead of lentils. Apricots, peaches or blackberries can replace the rhubarb in the cobbler, and grilled zucchini with a sprinkling of local cheese – goat or otherwise – would be

delicious as an appetizer.

There are many aspects to sustainable eating, and the way to approach it is by taking baby steps. You could just cut to the chase and make it your mission to purchase only local and sustainably produced food, but if you have a family with varied tastes, it's better to slowly introduce a new way of eating. Incorporate the good while removing the dubious. Keep your goals small and realistic. Here are a few "baby step" tips to get you started:

WARM HALIBUT & SPINACH SALAD WITH LENTIL & PANCETTA DRESSING



MAKE EVERY BIT COUNT

How many of us have vegetables going limp in the crisper, cheese going mouldy and stale bread? Use everything up while it's still fresh. On the rare occasion when I have more vegetables than I can eat, I'll make soup and freeze it.

WHAT DOES YOUR MONEY SUPPORT?

Many people have no problem spending \$12 a day for specialty coffees and a snack to go along with the coffee. Yet, there is resistance to paying what is perceived as an outrageous price for local, sustainable food.

GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

Teach them about where their food comes from. Let them choose an item to eat that falls within the sustainable criteria. If you have outdoor space, plant a small garden that will be easy to take care of. Tending a few carrots, potato plants or heads of lettuce then eating them is a wonderful experience for children.

Healthy Cooking

SHOP SEASONALLY

Support farmers' markets and natural food stores that stock local ingredients. Instead of planning what to eat, let what is available do the planning for you. You'll fall into the happy rhythm of cooking and eating with the ebb and flow of the seasons.

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SPRING RADISHES WITH BUTTER & SESAME SALT



HATTENHEIMER SCHÜTZENHAUS RIESLING KABINETT

Germany **\$22.99** 50856
This fresh and elegant wine is both succulent and delicate, with delightful flavours of green apple, lime, mineral, nectarine and spice. Very classy!



WARM HALIBUT AND SPINACH SALAD WITH LENTIL AND PANCETTA DRESSING



CHÂTEAU STE. MICHELLE COLUMBIA VALLEY CHARDONNAY

USA **\$21.99** 232439
Pleasurable and food-friendly with an appealing sweet, citrus-fruit character and subtle oak nuances, this complex and interesting wine partners nicely with white fish, cream sauces and poultry dishes.



RHUBARB COBBLER



PARADISE RANCH LATE HARVEST CHARDONNAY/RIESLING

BC VQA **\$24.99** 892158 375 ml
With open baked-apple and honey aromas and flavours, this is a soft and easy sipping treat to serve with fruit salad or desserts. Enjoy!



MÉNAGE À TROIS CALIFORNIA WHITE

USA **\$17.83** 360875
This lovely blend comes through with a burst of buttery rich, ripe flavours of honey, citrus, orange blossom, peach and sweet spice. Enjoy it with salad or Asian cuisine.



CASAS DEL BOSQUE SAUVIGNON BLANC

Chile **\$17.99** 740878
Fresh aromas of grapefruit and mineral lead to rounded flavours of green apple, asparagus and citrus. This elegant wine is an ideal match to fish or vegetarian dishes.



ROYAL DE NEUVILLE PETILLANT ROSÉ

France **\$11.99** 81661
From France's Loire Valley, this petillant, meaning gently sparkling, pink is fresh, bright and delightfully fruity – a perfect match with this rhubarb cobbler. Excellent value!

BC LIQUORSTORES

Hiving LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT COMES HOME

RATHER THAN THE COCOONING TREND OF THE '80s, WHICH PROVIDED US WITH EVERYTHING AND ENABLED US TO SHUT OUT THE WORLD, HIVING HAS US TRANSFORMING OUR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES INTO PLACES WHERE WE CAN ENGAGE, INTERACT AND RECONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN A WARM AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT.



Bringing friends and family into your home to entertain and unite, be it with a great board game or a meeting of your book club, interaction and connection with others is what we crave and the best way to do it is in a beautiful, warm, relaxed setting. Creating “insperiences,” a buzzword associated with hiving, is a great way to achieve this.

Hivers are turning their homes into welcoming havens to share with family and friends. This spring is the perfect time to try out this trend in your own home with just a few simple modifications.

The hive home is all about relaxed entertaining in warm, inviting décors. Hive homes feature West Coast materials – think cherry hardwood floors, stone tile, glass, stainless steel, modern but never cold and with a strong leaning towards environmentally friendly building ideals. Expansive, open gathering rooms are built to comfort and engage others, and make for great entertaining opportunities.

Decorating a hive home can be as simple as bringing in a few natural elements, such as river rocks, driftwood, and shells into a room and clearing out the clutter. At the other

end of the spectrum, it can be as complex as removing walls to open up a room for better flow and choosing a new colour scheme to match the new space. Using “green” paints in beautiful and inviting colours, such as sea-loving blues and greens blended with warm creams help set the tone for entertaining and welcoming others into your hive. Combine natural elements in your new space and bring in some springtime with pots of fresh herbs and branches, adding another layer to your hive decorating by engaging the sense of smell. Large pillows in complementary colours for floor seating

by Lee Murphy

SPACIOUS, ENTERTAINING-FOCUSED KITCHENS AND GREAT ROOMS ARE AT THE CENTRE OF THE HIVE.



around a low table allow for intimate entertaining and a fun space for those board games.

Spacious, entertaining-focused kitchens and great rooms are at the centre of the hive home and where the “queen” reigns (or in some cases, the king!) and where guests are part of the prep and interaction is the name of the game. Consider hiring a chef to do a cooking demonstration, complete with wine tasting, for you and your friends. Many of us are interested in learning more about wines and their origins and a professional wine tasting is an enjoyable and educational way to do this.

Another element to the hiver’s arsenal of entertainment tools is the bar. To set up the perfect hiver’s home bar, the use of fresh mixology ingredients for a house signature cocktail is a must. Muddling your own homegrown herbs with fresh fruit is a great way to personalize drinks. Having a few interesting combinations available for friends to try their hand at bartending adds interactive fun to a cozy gathering. A great selection of little-known, interesting wines adds an element of inquisitiveness and gets conversations flowing. And keeping a good choice of glass wear on hand is a nice added touch.

Nothing brings people together like great music, and a state-of-the-art sound system, complete with iPod® dock, helps to create a convivial atmosphere. The combination of iTunes® and “airport technology” can once again have friends and family sharing and getting involved, dreaming up great mixes and party playlists for all to enjoy. Simply set up a laptop station and let everyone have a chance at downloading; you’ll be surprised how much fun this is and the results are always interesting and varied. Who knew Great Uncle Bob loved hip-hop! If you have space, creating a dance floor may sound corny, but there is a dancing

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queen in many of us and it usually only takes a little gentle prodding to help her emerge.

Creating ambience with energy efficient lighting is another strong element in a hive home. CFLs, or compact fluorescent lights, are four times more efficient and last up to 10 times longer than incandescent lights. The newer CFLs also give off a warmer, more inviting light rather than the cool white of the

older fluorescents, making you and your guests look better than ever. Thanks to the new technology, they can now be used anywhere that incandescent lights were in the past and they now come in a wide variety of shapes and styles, allowing you to easily switch over to the more environmentally friendly choice.

Hiving is also about community living and many developers, architects and designers

are incorporating this lifestyle trend into their plans and communities. The home featured in this article at ParkLane's Southport is one such project. Situated on the banks of the Nicomekl River and surrounded by old-growth trees, it boasts gorgeous open-plan living spaces perfect for the hiver. The high ceilings and wide-open living area that encompass the living room, dining and

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Images shot on location at ParkLane Homes Southport Development in South Surrey. For more information, visit www.parklane.com T. 778.292.0871

kitchen would make entertaining effortless. The pretty terrace off the dining area is the perfect spot to host a casual cocktail hour. Set up the lovely grey marble island with help-yourself appetizers and drinks and watch everyone relax and enjoy. Grant Miller, Chief Designer for ParkLane Homes, says: "The

homes have been thoughtfully designed to satisfy all personal and entertaining needs in an open plan concept with clearly defined spaces. Details such as oversized windows, charming Juliet balconies and stunning outdoor 'living rooms' with fireplaces blur the line between indoor and outdoor living spaces, allowing the

community to blend seamlessly with its natural surroundings."

So now you're all set...ready to turn your cozy cocoon into an inviting hive. Welcome friends and family into your space and watch everyone reconnect and relax.

BC LIQUORSTORES

TASTE 41

SUBLIME SPRING BRUNCH

CLASSIC CAPONATA WITH CRUSTY BREAD AND ARUGULA



 **CASTELLO DI GABBIANO CHIANTI DOCG**
Italy **\$14.86** 25155
The first sip reveals invigorating flavours of sour cherry, blackberry and spice followed by a dry, vivid finish. A perfect match for many Italian dishes!



 **TRIVENTO AMADO SUR**
Argentina **\$14.98** 568238
Rich with dark cherries, vanilla and spiced berry aromas, smooth and lush on the palate with spiced plums, meaty hints, earth, cocoa and peppery flavours, this wine is beautifully presented and well priced.

SCALLOP CAKES WITH CILANTRO MAYONNAISE AND TARRAGON-ROASTED SNAP PEAS AND PEPPERS



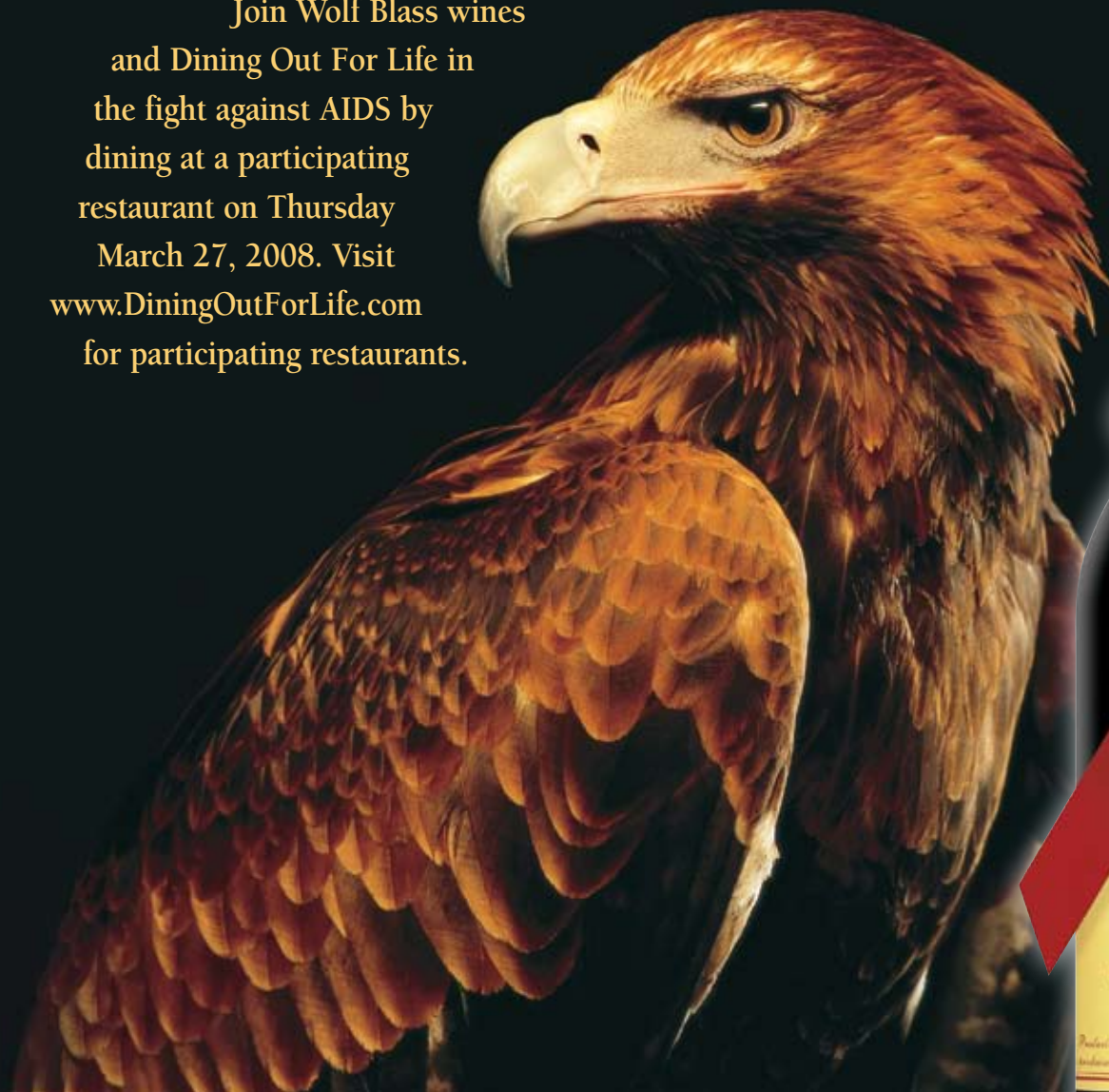
BLOOD-ORANGE MIMOSAS

Makes 8 servings
3 cups (750 ml) fresh blood-orange juice
1/3 cup (80 ml) Grand Marnier orange liqueur
1 tbsp (15 ml) sugar
1 bottle (750 ml) Prosecco, well-chilled

Stir together juice, liqueur and sugar in a 2 quart (2 litre) pitcher until sugar is dissolved. Chill until cold, about 1 hour. Slowly pour in Prosecco, stirring to combine. Serve immediately.

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WOLF BLASS

FOR RECIPE, PLEASE SEE PAGE 99



LITTLE CHOCOLATE LAVA CAKES



 **VILLA MARIA RIESLING**
New Zealand **\$16.99** 67736
This wine is crisp, vibrant
and so refreshing, with soft
flavours of mineral, green
apple, citrus blossom and
apricot on a lingering finish.
Perfect with scallops! 89
Points *Wine Spectator*



 **TRIO THREE VINEYARDS
SAUVIGNON BLANC**
Chile **\$15.99** 245605
Round and soft, with grassy
and slightly smoky aromas and
flavours, grapefruit, passion
fruit, butter and apple and
good length to the finish, this
wine is crisp, balanced and
quite elegant!



 **GEYSIR PEAK SAUVIGNON
BLANC**
USA **\$15.84** 340208
Look for true varietal
expression with lime, fresh-
mown grass, white flowers and
passion fruit, good intensity of
flavours and round textures.
This pairs beautifully with
oysters or soft goat cheese.



 **TENUTA DE ANGELEIS
ROSSO PICENO**
Italy **\$14.77** 632141
The nose is aromatic, with
floral, spicy, earth tones.
The palate is fresh, with red
currant, spice, a touch of
almond, some meaty flavours
and good richness and depth.
Excellent value!



 **SPERONE MARSALA
ALL'UOVO CREMOVINO**
Italy **\$15.99** 12971
This superb dessert wine from
the island of Sicily is used in
many international dishes. It
shows full, velvety flavours and
can be enjoyed as an aperitif
or with desserts such as the
chocolate lava cake.



 **CHÂTEAU PARTARRIEU
SAUTERNES**
France **\$19.78** 448944 375 ml
Rich and honeyed in style, with
beautiful aromas of spice, sweet
citrus, especially orange, this
Sauternes is very attractive and
approachable now, but with
aging potential. It will match well
with many foods, including a
chocolatey dessert such as this.

BC LIQUORSTORES

TASTE 45

CALIFORNIA

FROM AMADOR TO ZINFANDEL

A is for **AMADOR COUNTY**, a charming, rugged enclave in the Sierra Foothills east of San Francisco, steeped in history from the first great California Gold Rush, many of whose pioneers sowed the seeds of the modern wine industry. It's renowned for "old style" hearty, spicy Zinfandel, grown in lean, mean volcanic granite soils.

LOS CARNEROS is a little patch linking Napa and Sonoma that wallows in morning fogs from San Francisco Bay, producing perfect cool-climate growing conditions. Look for good Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, often with a Burgundian twist – and some good sparklers too with strong connections to Champagne and cava producers.

LIVERMORE, just 63 km south of the Bay Bridge, traces its first plantings to Spanish missionaries, who in the 1760s brought vines that later formed the foundation for much of the modern industry. Livermore Valley is home to, among others, Wente (founded 1883) – which put California on the map for its 1889 Paris Exposition medal-winning Chardonnay, now the most widely planted Chardonnay clone on the continent.

LODI is defined by the vast Central Valley, home to California's agricultural heartland. Grapes from here have long formed the backbone of the state's wine industry, but the region is only now beginning to

AS WINE PRODUCERS THE WORLD OVER COMPETE FOR CONSUMERS' ATTENTION, CALIFORNIA TOO IS SPREADING ITS REGIONAL WINGS BEYOND THE FAMILIAR – AND FORMIDABLE – NAMES OF NAPA AND SONOMA. OUR WHIRLWIND "ALPHA TASTER'S TOUR" PROVES THERE'S PLENTY TO OFFER AT EVERY LEVEL AROUND THE GOLDEN STATE – AND MIGHT EVEN PIQUE YOUR INTEREST FOR A VISIT.

receive its dues. Vineyards that once shipped grapes to the big-name Napa wineries are starting to come into their own, and wineries elsewhere are beginning to recognize the region once known only for bulk wines.

MONTEREY is home to Cannery Row – immortalized by John Steinbeck – but it's also the centre of Monterey County's flourishing wine touring region, dotted with wineries such as Château Julien, Bernardus, Jekel and Hahn. The perfect jumping-off point, a tasting trip from here can meander down the coast, all the way to Santa Maria and Santa Barbara.

NAPA is known for big reds – and often even bigger prices, for wines that put Bordeaux on notice that California had arrived – and forever banishing the notion that good wine comes only from France. California's flagship is home to some 400 wineries, making wines of every variety and price point. Dig around to find some budget-friendly drops in just about all varieties.

PASO – as in Paso Robles, within spitting distance of Hearst Castle on the Central Coast, where vines have taken over from walnuts – is home to some of the most independent-minded vintners anywhere. While many others focused on Bordeaux, Paso turned to the Rhône

by Tim Pawsey



Photos courtesy of the Wine Institute of California

NAPA, CALIFORNIA'S FLAGSHIP, IS HOME TO SOME 400 WINERIES MAKING WINES OF EVERY VARIETY AND PRICE POINT. DIG AROUND TO FIND SOME BUDGET-FRIENDLY DROPS IN JUST ABOUT ALL VARIETIES.

Valley for its inspiration – and spawned a generation of Syrah-lovin' "Rhône Rangers," who get together annually to host the world's largest tasting of Rhône varietals at Hospice du Rhône.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY – along with the Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Rita Hills and Los Alamos – offers some of California's prettiest wine touring, with wines to match.

It was in these parts that Pinot Noir, propelled to stardom by the movie *Sideways*, scored its knockout punch over Merlot. In fact, you can claim a booth in the Hitching Post restaurant, sip owner Frank Ostini's wines and pretend you're Giles – if you must. But no dumping the spit bucket, please!

SONOMA has the best of both worlds, thanks to a lengthy growing season with ideal cool-climate influence from maritime fogs that waft in daily like clockwork and drive acidity. Sonoma is also known for a wide range of varieties that always seem to deliver, from Burgundian-tuned Pinots and Chards to crisp Sauvignon Blancs.



Z stands, of course, for **ZINFANDEL**, the grape closest to every Californian's heart, and the one almost everyone seems to grow. Just how crazy are Californians for Zin? All you have to do to find out is to take in Zap! – the world's largest single-varietal (and wackiest) wine celebration like no other, that every year draws thousands of inky, purple-stained teeth, manic fans (plus hundreds of wineries) to Fort Mason on San Francisco's shores. You can book now for next year's extravaganza, January 28-31, 2009. For details, visit www.zinfandel.org.

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Wines of California

CALIFORNIA WINES: MORE THAN PINOTS AND ZINS



RENWOOD AMADOR COUNTY OLD VINES ZINFANDEL (AMADOR)

USA **\$32.60** 214528

An intriguing, juicy, spicy Zin with layers of ripe black and red fruit, vanilla and Christmas-cake spices over chalky tannins with a lingering finish.



SAINTSBURY CARNEROS PINOT NOIR (CARNEROS)

USA **\$45.60** 359265

A well-balanced Pinot from selected small lots, with a definite Burgundian bent: intense red and black fruit with polished, silky notes and lively acidity.



WENTLE MORNING FOG CHARDONNAY (LIVERMORE)

USA **\$16.33** 175430

Central Coast fruit goes into this entry level Chardonnay that sports crisp, clean apple and citrus with tropical hints over restrained oak.



CLAY STATION VIOGNIER (LODI)

USA **\$18.80** 106401

From the Delicato family, who own one of the region's largest and most environmentally responsible vineyards, comes this stainless steel-fermented, orange and honeysuckle-toned Vio with good mouth feel and a lengthy close.



J. LOEHR RIVERSTONE CHARDONNAY (MONTEREY)

USA **\$22.99** 258699

Tropical and toasty oak aromas, followed by peach and citrus palate with buttery tones and good acidity. Think roasted chicken or just good sippin'.



AVALON CABERNET SAUVIGNON (NAPA)

USA **\$22.78** 171116

Smart sourcing from Rutherford and Oakville is behind this highly affordable Napa Cab: black cherry and blackcurrant vie with anise and vanilla on a lush palate with good finish.



LIBERTY SCHOOL CABERNET SAUVIGNON (PASO ROBLES)

USA **\$22.99** 527184

Ripe fruit shows off the perfect Paso climate in this intensely flavoured Cab with lively blackberry-plum and mulberry notes and a spicy end, wrapped in appealing tannins. Think anything grilled.



KENWOOD SAUVIGNON BLANC (SONOMA)

USA **\$18.80** 367334

Easy drinking Sauvignon with lively tropical notes, decent acidity, a hint of mineral and a touch of oak to round things out. Think pasta and cream sauce or light seafood. Very good value!



RODNEY STRONG KNOTTY PINES ZINFANDEL (SONOMA)

USA **\$23.99** 264739

Great Zin value from one of Sonoma's originals: black pepper and spice, sweet black cherry and balanced oak with a full finish.

BC LIQUORSTORES

TASTE 49

GREENING YOUR GLASS

drinking organic

“What’s good for the earth is good for the vine. what’s good for the vine is good for the grapes. what’s good for the grapes is good for the wine. and the wine, when it’s good, it lifts the spirits.”
www.lunarorganic.com

Not so long ago, most organic wines had a reputation for not tasting very good. Those days are gone — today, there are dozens of excellent organic wines on shelves, and they’ve been joined by a growing selection of brews, spirits and port too.

To be labeled organic, the grapes, hops and grains used to make the wines, spirits and beers must have been grown without the use of pesticides and chemical or synthetic fertilizers. Conventional farming uses these because it’s usually the cheapest and easiest way to protect crops from disease, weeds and pests.

Organic growers use traditional farming practices, those that are natural and sustainable, to raise healthier crops. Generally, to be certified organic, they must meet strict standards that ensure they have avoided using pesticides and chemicals and were armed organically for a prescribed number of years. While initial costs are high, in the long run the costs to farm organically are about the same as for conventional farming.

A modern day winemakers’ mantra says that wine is “made in the vineyard,” meaning if they’ve grown good grapes, the wine will evolve without chemical cleansers or preservatives.

There are many wineries worldwide, including in the south of France and Sicily, that farm using natural, sustainable methods but are not certified organic. In Chile and Argentina, because of isolation and geography, optimal weather conditions and few pests, chemicals are rarely needed.


Some wineries have taken the process beyond organic and are growing grapes biodynamically, using a holistic, spiritual approach and following the natural rhythms of the earth. To some observers, it’s all hocus-pocus, but the proof is in the drinking. Biodynamic wines are thought to be clearer, more vibrant and last longer and, with ultra-premium wineries such as California’s Benziger, France’s Chapoutier

and Chile’s Viña Seña making in-demand quality wines, attitudes toward biodynamics are changing.

Since it’s rarely stated on the label, it’s not easy to find out if the winemaking process is organic. There’s a good chance if the grapes are organic, the winemaking has followed suit. Some wine labels say “made with organic grapes” which means that they’ve forgone certification of the winemaking process because they believe that moderate quantities of added sulfites are beneficial to the wines and without them, don’t taste as good.

Some organic wineries to watch for include Germany’s Dr. Loosen; Bonterra, Fetzer and Hogue Cellars in the US; BC’s Summerhill; Italy’s Villa Teresa; France’s Chapoutier and newly certified Moillard; Chile’s Cono Sur; and Carm from Portugal.

Many wineries making organic wines don’t bother with certification and others that are certified don’t display it on the front label, although it may be in the fine print on the back. Still others will simply use words on their labels such as “natural,” “sustainable” or “biodynamic” — all clues that it’s more than likely a “green” wine.

All BC Liquor Stores have organic displays, where wines and spirits are grouped together, plus you’ll find them in their country-of-origin or individual product sections — beer, spirits, etc. — with shelf tags displaying the organic symbol . Look for Rain Vodka and Juniper Green London Organic Gin and beers such as those from Nelson, Pacific Western and Fuller’s Organic Honeydew. There are 46-and-counting organic products available. Check www.bcliquorstores.com for listings, including what products are at which stores. Additionally, product consultants can recommend other wines that aren’t labeled organic but are made with organic grapes. It’s easier than ever to drink organically and drink well.

It’s easier than ever to drink organically and drink well.

by Judith Lane



CORIANDER QUENCH

Created by David Wolowidnyk

4 cubes	frozen mango
2 oz (60 ml)	Rain Organic Vodka infused with cilantro
4 oz (120 ml)	mineral water
6 drops	fresh lime juice
4 – 6	ice cubes with cilantro leaves frozen inside them

In a long, tall glass, stagger the cilantro cubes of ice with the frozen mango then pour in the infused vodka, mineral water and fresh lime juice to make this light, refreshing and thirst-quenching cocktail.

Vodka-cilantro Infusion

Place 30 fresh, clean cilantro leaves into a large jar with a tight fitting lid. Add 2 oz (60 ml) of boiling water. Close the lid and shake the jar to extract the essence of the leaves. Fill the jar with organic vodka and let sit for 3 hours, then strain the vodka back into the bottle that it came from.

Cilantro Ice Cubes

Half-fill each section of an ice cube tray with water and place a clean cilantro leaf on the surface. Freeze for 30 minutes. Top off the ice cube tray with water and re-freeze, so that the leaves of cilantro are suspended in the cubes.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SULFITES

People often drink organic wines believing they’re sulfite-free. While they don’t have added sulfites, like all wines they have small amounts of naturally occurring sulfites that act as a preservative. Without them wine would spoil.

About one per cent of people, mostly asthmatics, are truly sensitive to sulfites. True sulfite allergies can result in wheezing, dizziness, accelerated heartbeat and hives. The culprit in wine that causes “red wine headache” is more likely to be a group of chemicals called biogenic amines. There are more sulfites in dried apricots and prunes than in wine. A package of dried apricots has far more sulfites (about 2,000 parts per million) than an entire bottle of red wine, which has a legal maximum of 350 parts per million. Most wines have far less.



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Greening Your Glass

ORGANIC WINES, SPIRITS, SAKE AND NOW, PORT



CONO SUR ORGANIC CABERNET SAUVIGNON CARMENÈRE
 Chile **\$14.49** 211185
 This flavourful blend from Cono Sur's certified organic vineyard over-delivers in flavour – dark berries with hints of tobacco and vanilla. It sings with lamb and strong cheeses.



DOMAINE JEAN BOUSQUET MALBEC
 Argentina **\$15.99** 807263
 Loaded with soft, spicy raspberries, cherries, chocolate and whispers of leather, a velvety palate gives way to surprisingly firm tannins and a soft, fruity finish. Try with cassoulet, lamb or burgers.



LURTON TERRA SANA ORGANIC SAUVIGNON VIN DE PAYS
 France **\$14.99** 197442
 Fittingly, terra sana means healthy earth. Refreshing, round and crisp, with snappy lemon-lime and tropical fruit, it's a ripe blend of Ugni Blanc, Colombar and Sauvignon Blanc.



VILLA TERESA ORGANIC PROSECCO FRIZZANTI VENETO
 Italy **\$15.95** 268714
 This organic Prosecco from northeastern Italy is fresh, crisp and delicate, with small bubbles and mineral, melon and pear notes. Perfect any time, day or night, as an aperitif or with oysters.



SHENANDOAH VINEYARD SPECIAL RESERVE ORGANIC ZINFANDEL
 USA **\$19.90** 333062
 This easy-to-love, full-bodied Zin has loads of cherry-blackberry fruit, with appealing chocolate and pepper and easy tannins. Drink with burgers, pizza, steak, stir-fries and cheese too.



RAIN ORGANIC VODKA
 USA **\$41.99** 383273
 Made from white corn, this smooth organic vodka undergoes seven distillations. The result? An intense, well-balanced quaff. Clean, bright, and smooth – enjoy straight up or on the rocks.



YOSHI NO GAWA JUNMAI GINJO SPECIAL PREMIUM ORGANIC SAKE
 Japan **\$17.91** 622944 300 ml
 This crisp, refreshing smooth organic sake is slightly dry, full-bodied, with fruit and floral aromas. Serve chilled in wine glasses and enjoy with sushi, sashimi, sablefish or poultry.



NELSON PADDYWHACK ORGANIC IPA
 BC **\$11.30** 680595 6x341 ml
 Coppery, amber-coloured and hoppy, this India Pale Ale boasts a handsome, fruity, caramel nose and a crisp, long-lasting bitter finish. Yes to curry dishes and spicy prawns.



FONSECA TERRA PRIMA RESERVE ORGANIC PORT
 Portugal **\$31.99** 697177
 This fruity, full-bodied ruby-style port is smooth and warming, with nicely complex layers of flavour and a firm finish. Sip on its own or with hard cheeses.



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ABSOLUT MANDRIN

Sweden **\$24.45** 550749

Smooth, delicious and somewhat sweet, this terrific citrus-infused vodka has the marvellous full flavours of mandarin oranges. Sip it on its own, or mix it up to create some exciting cocktails.



MATERDOMINI LIMONCELLO

Italy **\$30.99** 471623

Made preservative-free by family-operated Materdomini, this intoxicating liqueur owes its beautiful yellow colour to the hand-peeled lemons from which it was created. It's delicious drizzled on ice cream, or try it in a Limoncello Martini!



SOHO LYCHEE

France **\$25.45** 532234

This silky, fragrant liqueur delivers powerful tropical aromas and refreshing flavours of sweet, ripened lychee and white citrus flowers. Enjoy it straight up or in cocktails.

BC LIQUORSTORES

TASTE 55

BONETA'S MEAL



BELGIAN ENDIVE SALAD

BONETA

SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW
SOMETHING RECYCLED SOMETHING... **GREEN**

Yes, green. This plagiarized marriage ditty is the essence of Boneta. Only in this case, the marriage is that of beauty with practical, affordable sustainability.

On first impression, Boneta looks like a piece of art. Although not the only Gastown restaurant to painstakingly peel off a modern façade to reveal historical origins, the surprise that Boneta hides is the way this was done. Its beauty is more than just skin deep.

The restaurant's three owners – Mark Brand, Neil Ingram and Andre McGillivray, who together share 30 years of restaurant industry experience, found their immense passion to create a venue as unique as cuisine they planned to serve would need to be matched to an equally immense bank account.

This is where practicality, creativity and budget – not to mention more than a little help from family and friends – came into play. Who would believe the total renovation of the 1890s building could be completed for just \$89,000 and in a record five and half weeks?

The building at 1 Cordova was originally the Boulder Hotel, but had seen several incarnations over time, including a bank and, most recently, the Meat Market restaurant.

Of course, no one is saying that it was easy. All three partners put in long hours of hard labour, at times hacking and smashing through many layers. And there were surprises along the way: after ripping up the carpet and removing many coats of paint, they discovered 110-year-old, air-dried, eight-inch white oak flooring so dense they

IT'S NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR A RESTAURANT TO FLAG UP ITS ORGANIC CREDENTIALS. BONETA IS TRYING TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY PART OF THEIR OPERATION IS ECO-FRIENDLY.



thought it was concrete. Laminate panelling was stripped off to reveal original tongue-and-groove cedar and beautiful bentwood saloon chairs with embossed seats, dating back to the 1920s, were found hidden away, forgotten for years, within the building itself.

Salvage was a key element in the renovation process. The huge 30-lb mirrors suspended from the ceiling adorned rooms in the Sutton Place hotel in the 1940s. Baseboards recovered from a section of the Windsor Hotel that had been sealed up since the '60s are installed vertically to form the bar and also, of course, as baseboards. The rugged 6" x 12" cedar beams now supporting tall tables were scavenged from the demolition of an old Point Grey house.

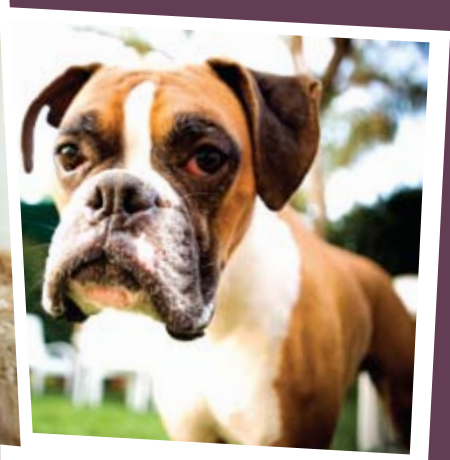
Whereas most local buildings are brick and beam, Boneta's

construction is mostly granite, quarried from Queen Elizabeth Park. The original bank vault, complete with bullet holes in its ceiling (the method used by bank robbers to gauge the thickness they needed to penetrate), is taking on a new life as a wine cooler. Ingram says another vault, with its permanently chilly temperature, will serve as a natural, walk-in wine cellar. What's more, the original gas heating system is still in use, and works like a charm.

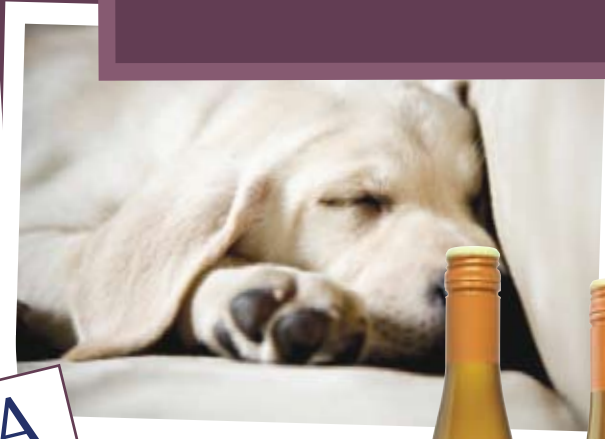
So, after the hacking and smashing, foraging and salvaging, the next phase of the renovation focused on sustainability in choice of materials. Counter tops are made from a material called plyboo – bamboo layered like plywood, three layers deep – which, say the partners, is strong enough to dance on, lasts "for ever" and leaves virtually no carbon

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SEE YA
LATER
RANCH



BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS



sylranch.com



FOR RECIPE, PLEASE SEE PAGE 100

BONETA'S MEAL



BRAISED PHEASANT THIGHS WITH
PORCINI MUSHROOM GNOCCHI

footprint. Check out the stripes – it's both attractive and unique. The solid, yet elegant black dining tables are another optical illusion – they're actually made from paper! The material is paperstone, made from highly compressed layers of recycled paper. Paperstone is dense, durable and heavy – with each 5' x 12' x 1" sheet weighing approximately 600 lbs. It's said to be stronger than steel or hardwood, but is as cost-effective as plywood. And next came creativity. Inspiration to make the "chandeliers" was found at a lighting design show. Inexpensive splitters found at most hardware stores form the base into which freeform combinations of low-wattage light bulbs are inserted. Create any shape you want, hang

them upside down and you have lighting that doubles as an art form. Super-sized canvasses that cover many walls from floor to ceiling are the work of friends and local artists, some with day jobs in the restaurant biz. Last, but possibly most important, there was, and still is, community. There's a saying that it takes a community to raise a child, but that also seems to be true for this particular restaurant. As Andre, Neil and Mark will all attest, they couldn't have done it without the support of friends, family and many helping hands in the neighbourhood.

BC LIQUORSTORES

BONETA'S MEAL

COCONUT TAPIOCA PARFAIT WITH MANGO AND PAPAYA



BALTHASAR RESS RIESLING QBA
Germany **\$15.99** 250506
A refreshing, clean, bright mineral nose with flecks of nectarine, orange and grapefruit is followed by good, solid flavours of honey, stone fruit, red apple and firm acidity – all nicely balanced.



PAIRS WITH BONETA'S APPETIZER
BELGIAN ENDIVE SALAD

CHEF'S CHOICE



VOUVRAY CHÂTEAU GAUDRELLE
France **\$24.99** 309567
Delicate aromas of white flowers are followed by plump, off-dry flavours of peach, apple, lime and honeyed fig, all beautifully balanced with enough acidity to keep it fresh. Serve with salads and assorted appetizers.



LA FIOLE CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE
France **\$34.49** 12286
Big meaty aromas of dried fruit and truffle lead to a silky, rich mouth feel and spicy flavours. Medium-bodied with delicious maturity, it pairs well with any meat dish. 91 Points *Wine Enthusiast*



PAIRS WITH BONETA'S ENTRÉE
BRAISED PHEASANT THIGHS



TORBRECK WOODCUTTER'S SHIRAZ
Australia **\$32.99** 78154
Savoury aromas with smoky spice and black fruit are followed by a round, warm palate with roasted pepper, plum and black cherry flavours that are balanced and well-expressed. A perfect match for the braised pheasant entrée.



MISSION HILL RESERVE LATE HARVEST RIESLING
BC VQA **\$34.99** 668566 375 ml
Wonderful and expressive, this dessert wine has aromas of ripe pear, apple and quince, generous and round tropical flavours, finishing with a touch of honey and mineral. Perfect with fruit salad!



PAIRS WITH BONETA'S DESSERT
COCONUT TAPIOCA PARFAIT



MARCHESI DE GREY MOSCATO D'ASTI
Italy **\$17.99** 595637
Clean and fresh on both the nose and palate, with lovely apple, citrus and mineral notes that follow through to a crisp, lemony and slightly bubbly finish. A perfect dessert wine!



VODKA COCKTAILS BY WEST

SPRING RASPBERRY FLIP

1 ½ oz	(45 ml)	Lukusowa Vodka
½ oz	(15 ml)	raspberry liqueur
¼ oz	(7 ml)	fresh lemon juice
1		egg white
10		fresh raspberries
		lemon zest, for garnish

Muddle and strain raspberries to remove seeds. In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, add all of the above ingredients, then shake vigorously until well chilled. Strain over cubed ice and garnish with lemon zest.



MANGO BRAMBLE

1 oz	(30 ml)	Orchid Mango Liqueur
1 oz	(30 ml)	Banff Ice Vodka
¼ oz	(7 ml)	fresh lemon juice
splash		soda
		kiwi 'wheel,' for garnish

Pour the mango liqueur into the bottom of an Old Fashioned glass. Carefully fill the glass with crushed ice. In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, add the vodka and lemon juice, shaking until very cold. Strain the vodka and lemon over the crushed ice and top with splash of soda. Garnish with a wheel of kiwi.



David Wolowidnyk

Bar Manager at West Restaurant & Bar, has amassed more than 19 years of professional service experience from leading bars and restaurants. He recently was named Canada's premier mixologist by Grey Goose Vodka. West Restaurant & Bar, 2881 Granville Street, Vancouver, 604.788.8938
www.westrestaurant.com.

PINEAPPLE SUNSET

2 oz	(60 ml)	Absolut Vodka
¾ oz	(45 ml)	jasmine green tea syrup (2 parts sugar / 1 part jasmine green tea)
½ oz	(30 ml)	fresh lemon juice
4 cubes		fresh pineapple (3 cm square each)
10		fresh cilantro leaves

Muddle the pineapple and 9 cilantro leaves in a mixing glass, then add the vodka, jasmine green tea syrup and lemon juice. Shake very well until chilled and strain through a tea strainer into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with one cilantro leaf floating on the surface.



SMALL-SPACE HERB GARDENING



Herbs are among the easiest plants to grow. They are incredibly tolerant of neglect and adapt easily to the new realities of small-space and balcony gardens. I'm a big fan of growing herbs in containers, to add value and colour to my patio. When it comes to containers, the larger the better, as they hold more soil, retain more moisture and require less watering – which is especially important in summer. Try to colour coordinate your containers to match your patio décor.

There is a huge trend toward growing

organically, and it's never been easier, with today's wide selection of reasonably priced, quality organic products. When choosing soil for your containers, make sure it's both well-draining and moisture-retaining. I always look for professional blends rather than shopping by price. Many totally organic soils are now readily available, but make sure they will drain well.

Select the varieties of herbs that you use most frequently. Parsley is perhaps the most popular hardy variety. Both the "Double Moss Curled" and the single-leafed "Italian" are delightful in anything from soups and stews to

lightly braised vegetables and egg dishes. They also make a great garnish and both are breath fresheners.

Chives are some of the hardiest and most ancient of all herbs. I love garlic chives added to cheese dishes, salads, herb butters and sour cream dips. In spring the pink, puffy flowers of chives are edible and nice to sprinkle on salads.

Mint can be invasive, but is better behaved in containers. Today's varieties of mints include apple, chocolate, orange and spearmint. Use them freely as garnishes, in drinks and teas or to spice up salads, soups and meats.

by Brian Minter

HERBS ARE AMONG THE EASIEST PLANTS TO GROW. THEY ARE INCREDIBLY TOLERANT OF NEGLECT AND ADAPT EASILY TO THE NEW REALITIES OF SMALL-SPACE AND BALCONY GARDENS.

Oregano and marjoram are plant cousins and very similar in flavour. Both are used in Mediterranean and Middle East cuisines. Oregano is often used in potpourris.

Thyme always has a unique perfume, but lemon thyme is becoming the most popular because of its wonderful flavouring in soups and sauces, especially in Italian dishes. Thyme will also enhance the flavour of fish, poultry and pork.

Basil is the most sought-after annual herb because of its great relationship with the tomato and all its sauces. Many new varieties offer a truly amazing selection of fragrances and flavours and are in constant use in our kitchens.

Basil should never be planted out before mid-June, as it needs to have hot, dry weather to minimize damping off. Some of the key basil varieties are the sweet group, such as Bush, Greek and Spicy Globe, that are an essential in tomato salads, soups and sauces. The Genovese basil varieties are the classic, large-leaf forms originating from the Genoa region of Italy – the pesto capital of the world. These are outstanding in pesto sauces, enjoyed fresh, or for freezing. The latest hot varieties are the Thai basil varieties used in Vietnamese and Thai cooking. The award-winning Siam Queen basil, with its spicy anise/licorice flavour and aroma, is my favourite.

Rosemary is one of the most beautiful herbs, with its many trailing and upright forms and captivating perfume. In warmer areas, it

can stay out all winter with a little protection. A few sprigs will lift lamb and pork, stews and stuffing to a new level. Rosemary Arp is one of the hardiest varieties; R. Roman Beauty is the most delicately shaped; and R. Irene Renzels has the most delightful trailing form for hanging baskets.

A huge favourite for many is cilantro

THERE IS A HUGE TREND TOWARD GROWING ORGANICALLY, AND IT'S NEVER BEEN EASIER, WITH TODAY'S WIDE SELECTION OF REASONABLY PRICED, QUALITY ORGANIC PRODUCTS.

(it is really coriander). Long-cherished for its culinary delights, it's a must for salads, soups, sauces and stews. For a continuous crop, collect its seeds as it bolts – it reseeds easily in containers – and keep planting it every few weeks, for a fresh supply all summer long. For Oriental cuisine, try Vietnamese coriander.

These are by far the most popular and delightful herbs for both lovely perfume on the patio and amazing flavours in your food. However, there are hundreds of other varieties. In winter, you can place small pots of your favourites on a windowsill, but be sure to keep them cool, on the dry side and give them lots of light.

Although herbs alone are a real treat on the patio, I like to value-add containers with a touch of colour and other flavours.

Everbearing strawberries, spilling over the edge or running up a trellis, are a lot of fun, and scarlet runner beans add interest and bear profuse flowers all summer.

To spice up your salads and really impress your guests, edible flowers blend nicely with herbs. Spill some nasturtiums over your pots for a continuous summer supply of colourful and edible flowers. In winter, tiny violas and pansies provide a nice supply of cute, colourful and delicious edible petals.

If you find you have more herbs than you can use during the growing season, believe it or not, freezing is the easiest way to preserve most varieties for later

use. Simply wash cut herbs quickly in cold water, shake off the excess moisture, chop them with a very sharp knife to preserve their oils, arrange them in ice cube trays, add water and then freeze. When you need some flavouring, just drop an ice cube into your dish and viola! The herbs will taste and smell as fresh as the day you harvested them.

Herbs on the patio are such a treat in so many ways: colour, perfume and visual delight, as well as fragrant additions to all your drinks and culinary creations. Start small, and before you know it, it will be hard to imagine your balcony or garden without them. Herbs are among the easiest plants to grow. They are incredibly tolerant of neglect and adapt easily to the new realities of small-space and balcony gardens.

WITH A FAMILY LIKE THIS
REUNIONS ARE

ALWAYS
A BLAST



COOKING WITH GREENS AND EDIBLE FLOWERS

SPRING VEGETABLE PAELLA



OKANAGAN
VINEYARDS RIESLING
BC VQA \$11.99
237859

Apple, peach and pear aromas lead to crisp, intense citrus fruit flavours and a long, ripe finish. Try this well-priced and versatile wine with white meat or vegetarian dishes.



ANTECH CREMANT
DE LIMOUX
France \$24.99 487462

Creamy, with floral, nutty aromas and crisp flavours of green apple, pear and just a touch of honeyed sweetness at the end. A lovely match for many dishes, including this vegetable paella.

ROASTED BABY BEET SALAD WITH LEMON GORGONZOLA VINAIGRETTE



LURTON LES FUMÉES
BLANCHES
SAUVIGNON BLANC
France \$11.99 472555

Following a clean mineral nose with smoky citrus, gooseberry and green peach, the palate is fresh with green melon and grapefruit. Pair it with a strong cheese such as Gorgonzola or with salads.



STONELEIGH
MARLBOROUGH
RIESLING
New Zealand \$17.45
527713

Aromas of lemon, lime and white peach with a hint of thyme and sweet spice lead to fresh and vibrant flavours of intense nectarine and citrus and a deliciously lingering finish.

FRASER VALLEY GREENS WITH RASPBERRY VINAIGRETTE



BABY SPRING VEGETABLE MEDLEY WITH LEMON CHIVE CREAM



JACKSON-TRIGGS PROPRIETORS' RESERVE
SAUVIGNON BLANC
BC VQA \$13.99 593111

Bright gooseberry and grapefruit rind with a touch of mineral on the nose lead to a crisp, round and slightly sweet palate of butter, grapefruit and jalapeño. The finish is refreshing and citrusy.



PINK TRUCK CALIFORNIA
USA \$14.99 491548

Fresh berry and citrus aromas lead to a palate of ripe strawberries, raspberries and pomegranate with a touch of white chocolate and sweet orange citrus on the finish. Terrific with salads!



MISSION HILL RESERVE SAUVIGNON BLANC
BC VQA \$19.99 388629

Open and pungent on the nose with gooseberry, lime rind and a touch of grass, it's rich and full-bodied with fresh, ripe pink-grapefruit flavours and a hint of lemon.



SIMONSIG CHENIN BLANC
South Africa \$13.99 613414

Soft, floral aromas with ripe peach, honey and pear and a round, full palate with hints of mineral and baked pear. Lovely as a sipper or with food.

SOUTH AFRICA WINELANDS IN TRANSITION

Settling into our beachside settee, we should have known better than to order sashimi that had been sweltering all afternoon in plus thirty-degree Cape Town heat. At the time, it seemed like the perfect match alongside bottles of top South African Chenin Blanc, dining al fresco with million-dollar views of the Atlantic Ocean. It wasn't until we were midway through our long-haul flight back to Vancouver that we realized our salmonella slip-up.

A queasy end to an eye-opening tour, but bad stomachs aside, the rest of the experience perfectly captured the modern sensibilities with incredibly picturesque landscapes and amazing diversity, and South African wine.

South Africa is the most ruggedly handsome wine country in the world. It is also perhaps one of the least understood. There are reasons for this. Although its winemaking history dates back hundreds of years, it's not contained in the European bastion of Old World winemaking countries. Then again, neither is it easily grouped into the pubescent pack of New World wine regions. More recently, South Africa's tumultuous political past has had an impact. Apartheid still leaves a bad taste, never mind economic sanctions that simply kept bottles off our shelves. Even since the democratic elections in 1994, the South African section of the liquor store seems to have remained off the beaten path for many wine drinkers. Now, while value is riding high and selection is on the rise, is the time to get to know South African wines.

On our wine safari, we found the variety and diversity of wines staggering. Time and time again, we were introduced to wines that spanked of Bordeaux upbringing with their Old World sensibilities. But then, just as we were getting visions of the Gironde, a massive Shiraz smacked around our palates, reminding us that South Africa could strut in the new world too. Big, jammy, tooth-staining monsters would lurk in the bottles. The only remedy, of course, was to quickly drink a glass

of deliciously bracing Sauvignon Blanc – an up-and-coming specialty of the Winelands.

We would be remiss if we neglected a shout out to South Africa's main red and white grapes. Pinotage, a variety conceived in Stellenbosch, continues to find fans (and a few foes) with its quirky, sometimes leathery, sometimes downright stinky characteristics. South Africa is also undergoing a Chenin Blanc renaissance. A number of winemakers have rediscovered this hearty vine, which was traditionally planted in droves to supply South Africa's considerable brandy production.

An inventory of old vines has led to some stunning Chenins easily able to compete on the world stage.

While the wines are going through major change, the wine industry is also significantly transitioning. With a focus on sustainable development, South Africa became the first country in the world to introduce industry-wide standards for promoting sustainable grape growing and winery practices through its

Biodiversity and Wine Initiative, while the Wine Industry Ethical Trade Association represents an attempt to improve the working conditions of wine industry workers by implementing fair trade practices in the production and supply chain. The Black Economic Empowerment program, aimed at improving the social economy with goals of inclusion and ensuring economic gain, is also being incorporated into winery business practices.

These are exciting times for South African wine, not to mention a great time to be enjoying the wines first-hand. The focus on progression and promising quality in the bottle is commendable. We only hope that South Africa's growth as a wine region leads to more wines within handy reach at BC Liquor Stores. We'll eat sushi with Chenin Blanc in Vancouver any day – while we patiently wait for the next opportunity to visit South Africa's Winelands.

Here's what we tasted on our South African wine safari:



HERE'S WHAT WE TASTED ON OUR SOUTH AFRICAN WINE SAFARI:

GRAHAM BECK BRUT: Let's hear it for Cap Classique, South Africa's answer to France's Champagne. Made in the same traditional style, thankfully, we get Graham Beck's excellent example on our shelves, a rich and elegant Pinot Noir and Chardonnay blend with aromas reminiscent of lemon meringue pie and a pleasant mineral finish.

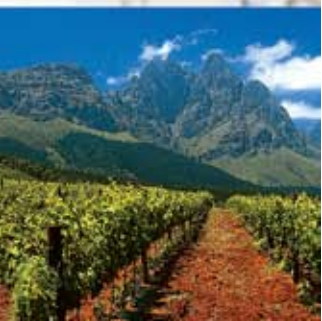
NEDERBURG SAUVIGNON BLANC: The best place to enjoy this zippy SB would be on top of Table Mountain watching the sun set into the sea, but we'll settle for the next best locale: any local patio or backyard. Year in and year out, Nederburg delivers a white that is citrusy (grapefruit), crisp (bell pepper) and easy on the pocketbook.

KWV CATHEDRAL CELLAR CHARDONNAY: The venerable wine co-operative KWV delivers at all price points, with the Cathedral Cellar line always stacking good fruit. Its recently released Chardonnay is no wimp, packed with heady aromas of bruised apples, vanilla and butterscotch. Full-flavoured, full-bodied and generous with the oak, this is the wine for anyone who likes a "modern-classic" approach to the grape.

BEYERSKLOOF PINOTAGE: Pinotage is a uniquely South African grape, created in 1925 by Professor Perold of Stellenbosch University when he cross-pollinated Pinot Noir and Cinsault to produce a hearty hybrid ripe for African vineyards. The resulting wine is, to be diplomatic, full of character. Wine drinkers tend to love it or leave it, but when handled with passion, such as Beyerskloof's, you get a delightfully robust wine showing smoke, plum, and leather.

WINDS OF CHANGE PINOTAGE SHIRAZ: Pointing to South Africa's future, this organic-farmed, fairly traded bottle is produced by a wine company participating in the Black Economic Empowerment program, with a percentage of profits directly funding community development in the village of Sonop. The wine inside is light and easygoing, a fruity red showing black cherry and licorice. Chill it lightly for a great mid-week, conscientious sipper and drink to change!

EXCELSIOR PADDOCK SHIRAZ: Shiraz takes well to the hotter vineyard sites in South Africa, where it can yield wine of rich and powerful fruit. Excelsior's boasts loads of prune and black cherry melded with dark chocolate and toasty oak. Bold but nicely balanced, this is a wine to take the chills out of an early spring evening – preferably served alongside a big roast!



South African Sunshine

A discovery of taste awaits you in every bottle.

Imagine seven days of sunshine, warm air and wonderful wine. The opportunity to meet and mingle with winemakers under the Cape sun. Just a short drive to whale watching and some of the world's most beautiful hikes. A picnic where the two oceans meet. The opportunity is real, courtesy of Wines of South Africa and South African Airways.

Win a Trip for 2 to Stunning South Africa! Check for details in select BC Liquor Stores or enter to win online at www.winesofsouthafrica.ca



ON OUR WINE SAFARI, WE FOUND THE VARIETY AND DIVERSITY OF WINES STAGGERING. TIME AND TIME AGAIN, WE WERE INTRODUCED TO WINES THAT SPANKED OF BORDEAUX UPBRINGING.


SAXENBURG GUINEA FOWL: The history of Saxenburg Wines dates back to 1693, showing just how old a wine region South Africa really is. The winery's Guinea Fowl is a serious Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz blend that carries Old World structure with New World drinkability. Decant this

beauty and you'll be treated to wafts of cherry pits and leather bomber jackets.

DE TOREN FUSION V: "A fusion of five noble varieties," as the back label states, De Toren's flagship red is a quintessential Bordeaux-like blend of Cabernet Sauvignon,

Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Indeed the latest vintage, 2004, would give a number of notable Bordeaux bottles of twice the price a run for their money. Chocolate covered coffee beans, currant, blackberry, this well-balanced wine will age, but is drinking nicely now.



 **GRAHAM BECK BRUT**
\$24.99 607747
South Africa's answer to France's Champagne!



 **NEDERBURG SAUVIGNON BLANC**
\$14.99 382713
Citrusy, crisp and easy on the pocketbook!



 **KVV CATHEDRAL CELLAR CHARDONNAY**
\$16.99 144287
Full-flavoured, full bodied and generous with the oak.



 **BEYERSKLOOF PINOTAGE**
\$14.99 155119
Full of character – a delightfully robust wine showing smoke, plum and leather.



 **WINDS OF CHANGE PINOTAGE SHIRAZ**
\$14.86 667881
Chill it lightly for a great mid-week, conscientious sipper and drink to change!



 **EXCELSIOR PADDOCK SHIRAZ**
\$15.99 183996
A wine to take the chills out of an early spring evening!



 **SAXENBURG GUINEA FOWL**
\$17.99 316992
Old World structure with New World drinkability!



 **DE TOREN FUSION V**
\$44.99 583831
A wine to give some notable Bordeaux bottles a run for their money!

CELEBRATE THE CRAFT.

Whether it's music or beer, enjoy Canada's best work.
Big Rock is a proud sponsor of the Juno Awards.

www.bigrockuntapped.com



Even if you're drinking it for inspiration, Big Rock is best enjoyed responsibly.

NEW

MISSION RIDGE 3L VARIETALS

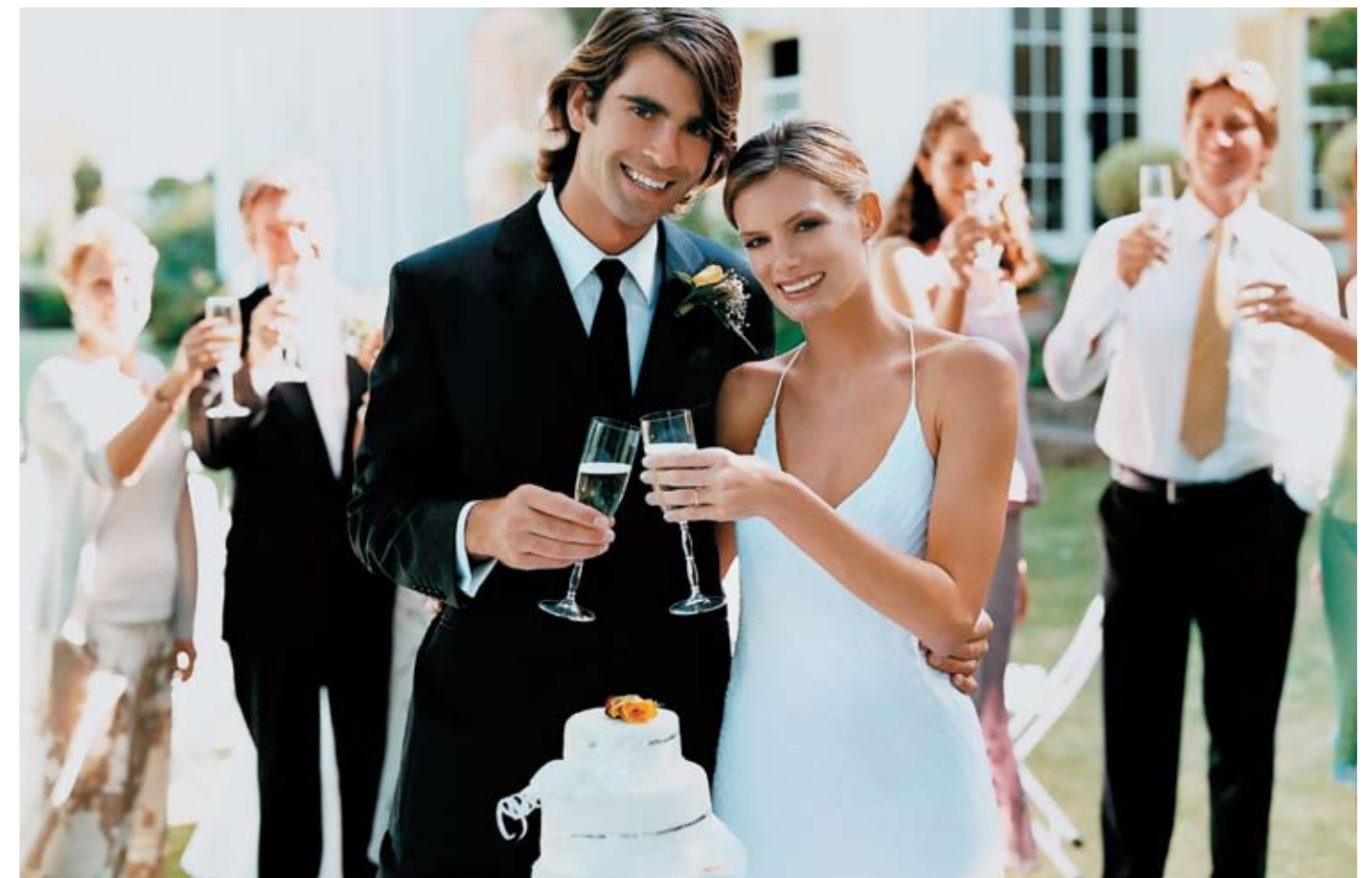
From the best selling BC box wines
3L equals 4 bottles... Great Value!



Shiraz, Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Shiraz.

Wedding Buying Guide

A SPIRITED GUIDE TO WEDDING PLANNING



Weddings. So many details, so little time! And it's got to be perfect. The dream of every bride, groom and their families is to host a flawless event that sends the happy couple on their way to wedded bliss. Behind the scenes, there's more

than a little stress and plans, lists, phone calls and decisions, and more decisions to be made, both big and small. So, unless you're secretly eloping or sneaking away to tie the knot in Vegas, here are a few tips to help you along the way to your perfect day.



THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE
The delight of an embrace isn't just in the kiss. It's in your head, too. Kissing stimulates your brain's pleasure centres and releases endorphins, your body's natural "happy pill." Why argue with science?

The Perfect XOXO



THE PERFECT PAIR
Shiraz and Cabernet entwine with luscious aromas of berry and blackcurrant. Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin come together with notes of passion fruit and gooseberry. All in the perfect embrace.

FIRST THINGS FIRST. SET A DATE AS FAR AHEAD AS YOU CAN, TO GIVE YOURSELVES LOTS OF TIME TO PLAN.

Set a budget. Then start your research. What kind of wedding do you want? Religious, non-religious? Where? Consult a wedding planner or go to a wedding fair for ideas. Bridal magazines can help you find the style of wedding that you want and give you tips on everything from dresses to flowers to menus. If you're planning to do most of it yourself, tap into the recent experience of friends and family. Asking for help will make it easier on everyone, and will make planning the start of your new lives together fun and exciting.

Once you've decided on the date, budget, when and where, you can start planning the rest; like the number of guests, what you're going to have for the meal, and of course, drinks. Typically, the beverages should be planned a month or two before the event.

Unless you are having the reception at someone's home, you may need a Special Occasion License and possibly a Serving it Right Certificate. Enquire with the establishment when you make your booking and, if one is needed, ask a friend or family member to take care of that for you. Details are available at www.bcliqorstores.com or at any BC Liquor Store.

If your reception is in a hotel or restaurant, consult with the food and beverage manager. If you're renting a hall, you'll likely

need to hire a bartender and stock the bar. Here are some basic guidelines and suggestions to consider:

Know your guests – not that you would invite strangers, but if you have an idea of their preferred beverage, it will be easier to decide how much and what to buy.

Provide the basics – wine is usually served with dinner and sparkling wine or champagne for the toasts. Whether the wine is served or placed on the table will determine how much you need to buy. Some couples choose only wine, but knowing what your guests prefer and what your budget will allow will help determine what else you provide.

It's not necessary to have every kind of beverage. The basics and two or three spirits (we suggest whisky and vodka) should cover most tastes. Or you could do something untraditional and offer a martini bar instead!

You may want to include a premium gin or vodka for those who appreciate the "classics."

Provide a selection of additional mixers for variety, non-drinkers or designated drivers and the younger set.

Add some beer and that should do the trick.

Pick a price range that fits your budget. We recommend three products for modest, medium and premium budgets. For wine, pick a red and a white with broad appeal. Select one of your personal favourites or pick up a few bottles and host a wine tasting with your wedding party to select a "winner." Buy cases of each – you never know if you need something for the gift opening or dinner the next day, so it's better to over-estimate. Keep your receipt; you can always return unopened product to your local BC Liquor Store.

For quantities, take the estimated number of guests and allow four to six drinks per person for a total. Consider a bottle of wine has six drinks, a bottle of spirits has 24 and a case of beer has 12. Throw in a couple of extra bottles for backup.

And the final tip – make sure there are local taxis available or book a block of hotel rooms for accommodations, so your guests can enjoy your celebration without driving.

THE EMBRACE OF TWO PERFECT GRAPES

xoxowine.com

The following suggestions include products from five categories (red, white and sparkling wine, vodka and whisky) in three price ranges – good, better and best. All are equally good choices; however, as Orwell said, some are more equal than others!

Mix and match from the different price ranges according to the number and mix of

your guests. You can pick a Scotch from the 'best' range of whiskies, for those who truly appreciate a fine tittle, but choose most of your wines from the 'good' range. For a younger crowd, you may want to add some beer, cider and coolers, and focus more on mixed drinks. For an older, more sophisticated crowd, you could move up the wine to a

higher price point and go lighter on the party-type drinks.

Use these examples as a starting point, talk to friends or a product consultant at your local Signature BC Liquor Store. Remember, buy more than you need – you can always return unopened product after the event.

GOOD

BETTER

BEST

Sparkling



FREIXENET CORDON NEGRO BRUT
Spain **\$14.99** 88591
Case of 12 **\$179.88**



CHARLES HEIDSIECK BRUT
France **\$59.95** 31286
Case of 12 **\$719.40**



DOM PÉRIGNON
France **\$212.98** 280461
Case of 6 **\$1,277.88**

Whisky



WISER'S DELUXE
Canada **\$25.75** 893
Case of 12 **\$309.00**



GIBSON'S FINEST 18 YEAR
Canada **\$44.95** 469114
Case of 12 **\$539.40**



CROWN ROYAL EXTRA RARE
Canada **\$175.00** 666768
Case of 6 **\$1,050.00**

GOOD

BETTER

BEST

Vodka



SMIRNOFF RED LABEL
Canada **\$23.25** 67
Case of 12 **\$279.00**



NOLET KETEL ONE
Holland **\$36.99** 456095
Case of 12 **\$443.88**



GREY GOOSE
France **\$49.99** 547661
Case of 6 **\$299.94**

Red Wine



SUMAC RIDGE PRIVATE RESERVE MERLOT/CABERNET
BC VQA **\$15.99** 214767
Case of 12 **\$191.88**



J. LOHR SEVEN OAKS CABERNET SAUVIGNON
USA **\$22.99** 313825
Case of 12 **\$275.88**



STERLING ESTATE BOTTLED CABERNET SAUVIGNON
USA **\$36.00** 314575
Case of 12 **\$432.00**

White Wine



UNDURRAGA SAUVIGNON BLANC
Chile **\$12.87** 256123
Case of 12 **\$154.44**



STONELEIGH SAUVIGNON BLANC
New Zealand **\$18.95** 293043
Case of 12 **\$227.40**



ROBERT MONDAVI NAPA FUMÉ BLANC
USA **\$29.99** 221887
Case of 12 **\$359.88**

THREE-COURSE SPRING MEAL
VEGETARIAN DELIGHT



POLENTA CAKES WITH TOMATO CHIPOTLE SAUCE



ROASTED PEPPER RATATOUILLE




 **BLASON DE BOURGOGNE PINOT NOIR**
 France **\$21.99** 391227
 Aromas of cherry and raspberry and a pleasing earthy quality, this elegant and medium-bodied wine delivers freshness and soft tannins. Enjoy this versatile wine with a variety of dishes.



 **SMOKING LOON VIOGNIER**
 USA **\$15.96** 128801
 Seductive aromas of rose petal and green tea follow through to flavours of ripe melon, passion fruit, ginger and mineral. Perfect with an appetizer such as these polenta cakes!



 **MASI PASSO DOBLE**
 Argentina **\$17.99** 225813
 Double fermentation by adding dried Corvina grapes to Malbec wine has created a gorgeously lush and full bodied-red with spice, cherry and licorice flavours. A treat to savour with a good meal!



 **NORTON SANGIOVESE**
 Argentina **\$12.99** 496216
 Look for enticing aromas of sweet cherries, licorice, violets and blackcurrants with silky smooth tannins and smoky, peppery, spiced red fruit flavours. A perfect choice for this ratatouille dish!



Wine & Food



BLACKBERRY SHORTCAKES WITH LIME CRÈME FRAÎCHE



ef·fen\e-'fen\ *adj.* Dutch:
1. smooth, 2. even, 3. balanced

EFFEN Vodka is quite simply liquid luxury. This spring we suggest that you pop into Vancouver's Boneta Restaurant and ask our Mixology Ambassador Mark Brand and the team to prepare a perfectly smooth EFFEN Vodka cocktail for you to enjoy. Or better still enjoy the clean, pure taste of EFFEN Vodka in your favourite drink at home.



CHÂTEAU DERESZLA TOKAJI ASZU 5 PUTTONYOS

Hungary **\$46.95** 285643 500 ml
Silky and harmonious, with aromas and flavours of orange blossom and honey and a sweetness that it carries with poise through to a lingering finish, this is a perfect dessert wine! 95 Points *Wine Spectator*



BC LIQUORSTORES



SELBACH OSTER RIESLING AUSLESE ZILTINGER SONNENUHR

Germany **\$27.75** 566802
Gorgeous floral aromas with peach, red apple, orange and a hint of smoke lead to rich, round and fresh flavours of honey, pineapple and lime – all in delicate balance. 90 Points *Gismond*





THE OKANAGAN. ORIGINS OF GREAT TASTE.

From the sun-drench soils of the Okanagan comes the best that Chardonnay has to offer. Whether you're looking for a rich, buttery barrel fermented Chardonnay full of butterscotch, vanilla and caramel aromas or a crisp, lively fruit forward Chardonnay bursting with pear, apple and the essence of tropical fruit, the Chardonnays from the Great Estates of the Okanagan have something to please every palate.

During the month of March, enter for your chance to win a trip for 2 to the Okanagan Fall Wine Festival and experience the essence of Chardonnay for yourself.

greatestesokanagan.com

inniskillin.com

sumacridge.com

jacksontriggswinery.com

nkmipcellars.com



SEAL OF APPROVAL

So what's the deal? An unconventional, opinionated California winemaker famously laid the cork to rest in 2002, staging two simultaneous funerals in San Francisco and New York. Eulogies were delivered and the wake featured copious quantities of screwcapped wines. Increasingly winemakers around the globe are testing and, in many cases, adopting alternate seals for their wines.

Corks have been the dominant closure for wine bottles until recent years, when alternatives increasingly found favour because of cork

taint or TCA, short for trichloroanisole. (A corked wine is shudder-inducing and has a musty, mouldy wet-cardboard smell.) While figures vary depending on who's talking, anywhere from five to 10 per cent of bottles are affected.

Cork producers (they're mostly Portuguese) have been hard at work to overcome the issue and have improved methods to sterilize cork that may help eliminate cork taint.

CORKS HAVE BEEN THE DOMINANT CLOSURE FOR WINE BOTTLES UNTIL RECENT YEARS, WHEN ALTERNATIVES INCREASINGLY FOUND FAVOUR BECAUSE OF CORK TAINT, OR TCA, SHORT FOR TRICHLOROANISOLE.

CORKS AND MORE

About 20 billion closures, worth an estimated four billion dollars, are used each year worldwide to seal wine bottles. Here's a roundup of closures you're likely to encounter:

NATURAL CORK: These still dominate and will never entirely be replaced, no matter what comes down the pipeline. They continue to be the seal of choice for high-end wines and for many Old World producers who value tradition above all else, regardless of cork taint. They believe that wines age best under cork, and they're an effective closure for Champagne and many sparkling wines.

COMPOSITE CORK: This is made from natural cork and fused with synthetics. It looks like particleboard.

SYNTHETIC CORK: Made of high-grade thermoplastic elastomer, these are popular and generally used for modest-priced wines that will be drunk within a year or two.

SCREWCAP OR STELVIN: Screwcaps have come on gangbusters. Winemakers love them, because the wine in the bottle remains exactly as they've made it. Screwcaps make wine more accessible, remove the intimidation factor, and they're a boon for restaurant servers. How popular are screwcaps? They're in every winemaking country around the globe. In New Zealand, nearly 100 percent of wineries use them (corks are available for export markets). Australia is soundly on board, to the extent that Penfolds is using them on high-end whites. And they're on every Tetra Pak wine, marrying modern packaging with clever closure.

CROWN CAP: We love this pop-top (the same as used on beer bottles), now being used on some sparkling wines. Italian Prosecco producer Mionetto is a huge adopter.

ZORK: This cool Aussie seal claims to have "the convenience of screwcap and the pop of a cork." To open a Zorked bottle, break the seal, pull the spiral tab and the Zork pops out. Stick it back in to reseal the wine.

VINO-LOK: This cool glass stopper is used on some German and Austrian wines and is making inroads into the USA and Canada. Twist off the metal cap and underneath is an elegant glass stopper like that on a decanter. The Vino-Lok is being touted as the ideal alternative to cork: it satisfies expectations in terms of both quality and esthetics, and it can be used to reseal the bottle repeatedly.

PULL TAB: These are exactly what you find on beer and pop cans. We've found them on wines from the U.S., Australia, and Italy. Occasionally they're being adapted to bottles such as sake flasks with ring-tab seals.

OTHERS: Closures such as plastic Champagne corks for inexpensive sparkling wine, and plastic taps on bag-in-box wines are common.

WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT?

What have we learned from this "battle for the bottleneck"? If a recent survey in 55 countries is anything to go by, people want closures that are simple, secure and sincere (meaning taint-free).

THE FUTURE

So far, there is no perfect closure. The cork chokehold has been broken and we'll see diversification and variety. Screwcaps will continue to grow but it's unlikely that they, or any other seal, will dominate. Synthetic corks are popular, but they're not the final solution either. What a winemaker uses will depend on whether the wine is for immediate drinking or if it's meant to be aged. To date, corks are the proven seal for wines that are cellared, because they allow oxygen to pass through into the bottle – a requirement of the aging process. Screwcaps are, however, showing excellent results in aging white wines. Winemakers will continue to search, test, and select the closure that best suits their wine.

Regardless of how a bottle is sealed, it's all about the wine and the enjoyment it delivers.



Now in its eighth year, BC Liquor Stores' **Support Dry Grad** promotion has raised **over \$1.6 million** in funds that were donated to local school districts to support alcohol-free grad celebrations throughout the province.

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BC LIQUORSTORES

by David Hopgood



PRIMUM FAMILIAE VINI

Don't let the Latin name fool you. Literally, the First Families of Wine, Primus Familiae Vini represents 11 giants of the wine industry, all family-owned and operated. Open a bottle of wine with dinner and chances are one of these prestigious names is behind it. This prominent group of world-class vintners is recognized and respected internationally for unparalleled wines. This March, they are coming to Vancouver.

Founded in 1990 by Miguel Torres and Robert Drouhin, the group also includes such household names as Château Mouton Rothschild, Antinori, Pol Roger, Hugel & Fils, the Symington Family, Egon Muller, Vega Sicilia and Tenuta San Guido. Worldwide business consolidations have changed the landscape, with founding members Robert Mondavi and Paul Jaboulet resigning and the Perrin family of Château de Beaucastel joining.

But there's more. These industry giants

combine their forces not only in business, but also in benevolent endeavours.

Twice a year, members from each of the families travel to a city to hold a fundraising gala dinner and auction for the various charities they support. The auction offers one only, rare, coveted and collectable case of flagship wines – one bottle from each member of this famous wine fraternity. Events have been held in Singapore and Mumbai, Moscow and Warsaw, Paris, London, Chicago and in Canada in both Montreal and Toronto. This year, it's Vancouver's turn to host this amazing assembly!

The collection case is never sold, although sometimes it is presented to select heads of state – recent recipients include the Spanish and Swedish kings. Otherwise, the only way to obtain this extremely rare collection is to be the highest bidder at the upcoming auction at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver on March 11. Vancouver's auction will support the BC Mental Health Foundation.

The wines presented in the collection case at the auction include one bottle each of the flagship wine produced by each of the Primus Familiae Vini members:

- MARCHESI ANTINORI
- JOSEPH DROUHIN
- HUGEL & FILS
- PERRIN & FILS
- TENUTA SAN GUIDO
- CHÂTEAU MOUTON ROTHSCHILD
- EGON MULLER-SCHARZHOFF
- POL ROGER
- SYMINGTON PORT & MADEIRA
- TORRES
- VEGA SICILIA

For more information on this prestigious group and wine collection to be auctioned, please go to www.pfv.org. For other Primus Familiae Vini wines stocked at BC Liquor Stores visit www.bcliquorstores.com and search by supplier name.

Spring has Sprung!



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Italian Dinner from pages 6, 7 & 9



WALNUT RAVIOLI

Serves 6

- ¾ cup (180 ml) ricotta cheese
- ¾ cup (180 ml) Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
- ½ tsp (2 ml) freshly ground pepper
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) chopped walnuts, toasted
- 36 prepared wonton skins (3" x 3"/7.5 cm x 7.5 cm)
- water
- ¾ cup (180 g) butter
- ½ cup (125 g) chopped walnuts, toasted
- ¾ cup (180 g) Parmesan cheese, grated
- fresh basil, optional

For filling, mix together ricotta and Gorgonzola cheeses, pepper and 3 tbsp walnuts. Drop about 2 generous tsp filling onto 18 wonton skins. Dampen top edges with water. Top each skin with another wonton skin; press to seal. Gently drop ravioli into large pot of boiling salted water. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until ravioli rise to the surface. Drain carefully with slotted spoon. Place 3 ravioli on each serving plate.

Melt butter in saucepan and then heat walnuts in the butter. Spoon butter and walnuts over each serving. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and fresh basil.



UMBERTO'S SPRING LAMB

Serves 6

- 2 ½ lbs (1 kg) whole leg of lamb, cut by the butcher into 8 chunks with bone attached
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 branch rosemary
- 1 handful sage
- 1 handful thyme
- ½ cup (125 ml) red wine vinegar
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 cups (500 ml) chicken stock

Heat a large, oiled pot over medium-high heat. Place the lamb chunks in the pot so that each piece is touching the bottom of the pot and sauté meat uncovered for 20 minutes.

Mince garlic, rosemary, sage and thyme. Once the lamb is browned, spread herb mixture over the meat. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add salt and pepper, oil and vinegar. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes, until the vinegar has evaporated. Add 1 cup of the stock. Cover and simmer for 1 hour. Check periodically to see if the pot is going dry, and add more stock as needed. (You're not trying to create a sauce, just to keep the meat moist.) When the meat is tender, transfer it to a warmed platter and serve.

GRILLED ASPARAGUS WITH LEMON OLIVE OIL AND MINT

Serves 6

- 1 ½ lbs (700 g) fresh asparagus, tough ends discarded
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- sea salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) lemon-infused extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) chopped mint

Brush the asparagus with olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Over hot coals or a gas grill preheated to medium-high, grill asparagus until it takes on a bit of colour. Roll and turn so that it's cooked on all sides. Place on a plate and drizzle with lemon olive oil and scatter with mint. Serve warm or at room temperature.



ITALIAN MACEDONIA

Serves 6-8

Serve with hazelnut biscotti or sweet sugar cookies.

- 3 apples, peeled, cored, and diced
- 3 pears, peeled, cored, and diced
- ½ pineapple, peeled, cored and diced
- 3 bananas, thickly sliced
- 3 oranges, peeled and sectioned
- ½ pomegranate, optional
- 2 cups (500 ml) fresh orange juice
- 1 cup (250 ml) fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup (60 ml) orange-flavoured liqueur
- sugar

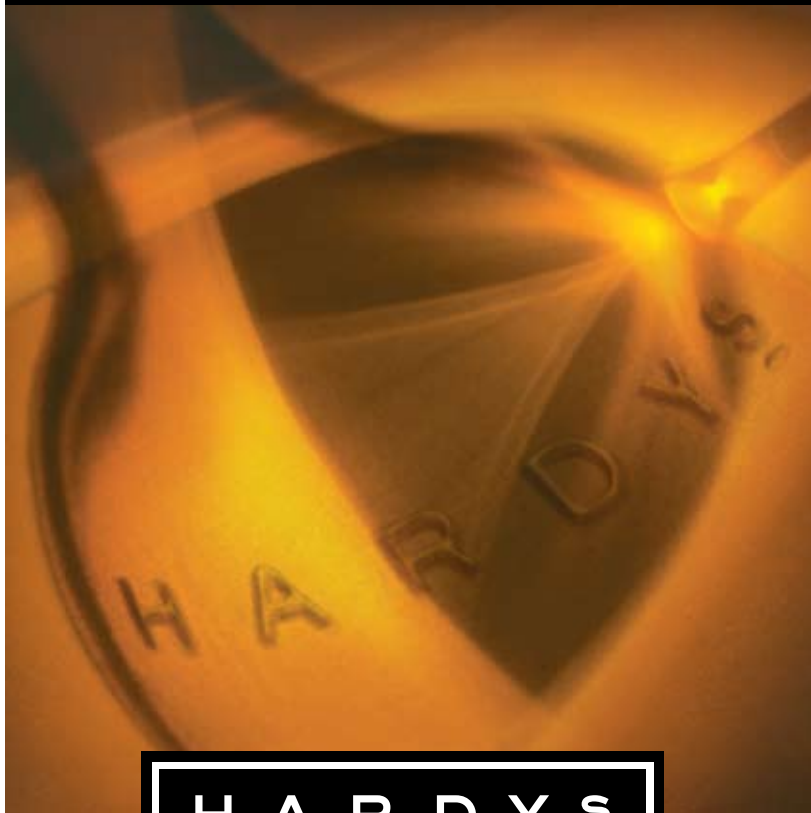
In a large bowl, combine the fruits, juices, orange liqueur and sugar to taste. Cut open pomegranate (if using), remove seeds and add to bowl. Toss gently to mix well. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

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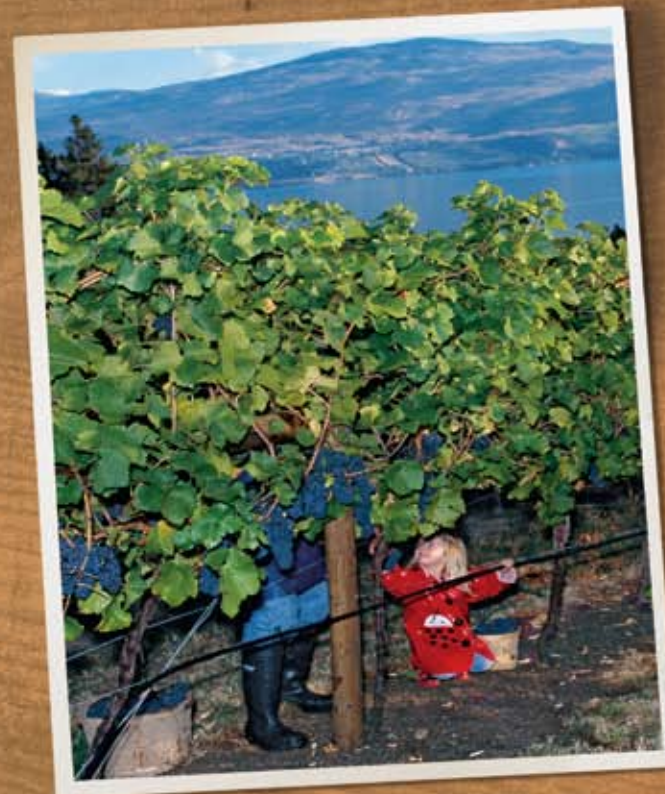
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Healthy Cooking from pages 32, 33 & 35



SPRING RADISHES WITH BUTTER AND SESAME SALT

Serves 4
24 radishes, greens intact
6 tbsp (90 ml) unsalted butter, softened
3 tbsp (45 ml) roasted, unhulled sesame seeds
1 tbsp (15 ml) kosher salt or fleur de sel

Pluck any wilted or very large greens from the radishes, leaving enough greens to look good and act as a handle for the radishes. Trim the root ends and wash and dry well. Place the radishes in a small serving dish; cover and chill until serving. Beat the butter until light and fluffy. Coarsely crush the sesame seeds in a mortar and pestle or coffee grinder. Some of the seeds should remain intact. Combine with the salt and place in a small dish. Direct your guests to spread each radish with some butter and sprinkle it with a little salt.



WARM HALIBUT AND SPINACH SALAD WITH LENTIL AND PANCETTA DRESSING

Serves 4
½ cup (120 ml) French lentils
1 large shallot, finely diced
2 tbsp (30 ml) red wine vinegar
1 tsp (5 ml) Dijon mustard
¾ tsp (3.75 ml) sea salt
½ cup (80 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup (60 ml) pancetta, finely diced
2 tbsp (30 ml) fresh parsley, chopped
1 large bunch fresh spinach, stemmed, washed and dried
4 5 oz. halibut filets, about 1-inch (2.5 cm) thick
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Pick over the lentils and remove any stones or chaff. Rinse well. Place in a large pot and cover generously with water. Bring to a boil and skim off any foam that rises to the top. Turn down to a simmer and cook until the lentils are tender but not mushy.

In a tablespoon of the oil, fry the pancetta over medium heat until crisp and brown. Keep the pancetta in the frying pan. While the lentils are cooking, make the vinaigrette. Combine the shallot, vinegar, Dijon mustard and salt in a bowl. Mix well. Slowly beat in the remaining oil.

Drain the lentils and combine with ¾ of the vinaigrette and the parsley. Set aside for an hour or so.

Preheat the oven to 350 F (175 C) Heat a heavy frying pan over medium-high heat and add the 1 tablespoon (15 ml) oil. Season the halibut filets with salt and pepper and place in the frying pan. Cook until the halibut is golden brown. Carefully turn and place in the oven until cooked through, about 10 minutes.

Toss the spinach with the remaining dressing and divide among 4 plates. Add the lentils to the pancetta in the pan and heat quickly over high heat. Place the halibut on the spinach and spoon the lentil mixture over the halibut. Serve immediately.



RHUBARB COBBLER

Serves 8
3 cups (720 ml) fresh rhubarb, cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces
¾ cup (180 ml) organic brown sugar
1 tsp (5 ml) ground cinnamon
4 tbsp (60 ml) butter, melted
2 eggs, lightly beaten
½ cup (120 ml) milk
1 ¼ cups (360 ml) whole wheat pastry flour
¼ tsp (1.25 ml) sea salt
2 tsp (10 ml) baking powder
1 tsp (5 ml) pure vanilla extract
1 cup (240 ml) organic evaporated cane juice

Preheat the oven to 350 F (175 C). Generously butter a 9 by 13 inch (23 by 33 cm) baking dish. In a medium-sized bowl, combine the rhubarb, brown sugar and cinnamon. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Beat only until smooth. Pour the batter into the buttered baking dish, then evenly spread the rhubarb mixture over the batter. Bake for 40 minutes. Serve warm.

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Sublime Spring Brunch from pages 42, 43 & 45



CLASSIC CAPONATA WITH CRUSTY BREAD AND ARUGULA

Serves 4 to 6

1		large eggplant, unpeeled, 1 ½ lbs (750 g)
		salt
¼ cup	(60 ml)	olive oil
1		medium onion, diced
2 stalks		celery, diced
4		large garlic cloves, minced
½	(28 oz/796 ml)	can seasoned diced tomatoes, drained
1		yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced
½ cup	(80 ml)	seedless golden raisins
3 tbsp	(45 ml)	red wine vinegar
2 tbsp	(30 ml)	capers, rinsed and drained
		freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup	(60 ml)	fresh basil, finely chopped
½ cup	(80 ml)	pine nuts, toasted
		crusty baguette
		coarse Parmesan shavings
1 cup	(250 ml)	fresh arugula leaves

Cut unpeeled eggplant into ½ inch (1 cm) cubes. To release some of the bitter juices, toss with salt and place in a sieve. Top with a plate just small enough to fit snugly inside sieve. Place a weight on top, such as a 28 oz (796 ml) can of tomatoes. Set in sink to drain for 30 minutes. Remove plate. Rinse eggplant with cold running water and pat cubes dry with paper toweling.

Heat oil in large, heavy saucepan. Add eggplant, onion, celery, and garlic. Sauté until eggplant is soft and golden, about 15 minutes. Add tomatoes, diced pepper, raisins, vinegar and capers. Cover and simmer for a couple of minutes to blend flavours. Add salt and pepper to taste. Stir in basil and pine nuts. Set aside. Cut baguette into ½ inch (1 cm) slices. Lightly toast in oven. Spoon caponata onto toasted bread topped with coarse shavings of Parmesan and top with fresh arugula. Serve on a platter.

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Sublime Spring Brunch from pages 42, 43 & 45



SCALLOP CAKES WITH CILANTRO MAYONNAISE

Makes 8 cakes

- ½ cup (125 ml) onion, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
- 1 lb (450 g) sea scallops
- 1 ½ cups (375 ml) panko bread crumbs*
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cup (60 ml) cilantro, chopped
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) each fresh chives and parsley, chopped
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 tsp (5 ml) salt
- ½ tsp (2 ml) fresh ground white pepper
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) peanut oil

Sauté onion in oil just until soft. Cool and transfer to food processor. Add scallops, ½ cup (125 ml) panko bread crumbs, egg, cilantro, chives, parsley, ginger, salt and pepper. Pulse until almost smooth with bits of scallop remaining. Transfer to a bowl. Cover and chill until cold. Mixture will be soft. Place remaining cup panko bread crumbs in shallow bowl. Spoon ½ cup (75 ml) scallop mixture and shape into a 2½ inch (6.5 cm) round flat cake and roll in breading. Transfer to baking sheet. Repeat with remaining mixture. Can be prepared a day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.

To cook, preheat oven to 450 F (230 C). Heat peanut oil in a large skillet. Add a couple scallop cakes at a time and cook just until golden on both sides. Remove to baking sheet. Repeat with remaining cakes. Place browned cakes in oven and bake for 7 minutes until cooked though. Place a couple scallop cakes on a serving plate. Dollop with Cilantro Mayonnaise and serve with steamed baby red potatoes drizzled with butter and dusted with fresh chives.

Cilantro Mayonnaise

- ½ cup (80 ml) cilantro, chopped
- zest and juice from ½ lime
- dash hot pepper sauce
- 1 tsp (5 ml) ground cumin
- ¾ cup (175 ml) mayonnaise

Combine cilantro, lime juice, hot sauce, and mayonnaise in a blender. Whirl until blended.

*Panko are Japanese bread crumbs found in Asian markets, specialty food stores and many supermarkets.

Sublime Spring Brunch from pages 42, 43 & 45

TARRAGON - ROASTED SNAP PEAS AND PEPPERS WITH SOURDOUGH AND GOAT CHEESE GRATIN

Serves 4 to 6

- 2 lbs (1 kg) sugar snap peas, trimmed
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and julienned
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
- 1 green onion, minced
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh tarragon, minced
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) mint, chopped
- 2 salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 oz (125 g) slices sourdough bread, coarsely crumbled
- goat cheese, crumbled

Preheat oven to 375 F (190 C). Combine peas and peppers in a large baking pan. Whisk olive oil with green onion, tarragon, and mint. Drizzle over top and stir to evenly coat. Season with salt and pepper. Bake for 8 minutes or until hot but still crisp. Stir often. Combine bread crumbs and goat cheese and scatter over top. Return to the oven and bake until bread crumbs are toasted and cheese is melted.



LITTLE CHOCOLATE LAVA CAKES

Serves 4

- 7 oz (200 g) dark bittersweet chocolate
- ¾ cup (160 ml) unsalted butter
- 3 large eggs
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla
- ¾ cup (180 ml) powder sugar
- ½ cup (125 ml) all purpose flour
- seasonal fruits and icing sugar, optional

Generously butter 4 (¾ cup/180 ml) ramekins. Stir chocolate and butter in a saucepan over low heat until melted. Cool slightly. Whisk eggs and egg yolks in a large bowl. Whisk in vanilla and sugar. Then stir in chocolate and flour until smooth. Pour into prepared ramekins. Cover and refrigerate if making a day ahead. Preheat oven to 425 F (220 C). Bake ramekins uncovered, 15 minutes if making right away or 18 to 20 minutes if refrigerating overnight. Cakes are done when batter is risen above dishes but centres are still soft. Let rest in ramekins for 5 minutes before turning out. Using a small knife cut around sides of cake to loosen. Place a dessert plate over top and invert. Remove ramekin. Serve warm with seasonal fruits and dust with icing sugar for garnish.

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Boneta from pages 56, 57 & 60



BELGIAN ENDIVE SALAD

Serves 6

- 9 Belgian endives
- 1 cup (250 g) whole pecans, unroasted, unsalted
- ½ cup (125 ml) lemon vinegar
- 1 cup (250 ml) olive oil
- ½ lb (250 g) Gorgonzola cheese
- salt and pepper, to taste

Wash and separate leaves of endives. In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients and toss with your hands. Season with salt and pepper. Serve in a salad bowl.



BRAISED PHEASANT THIGHS WITH PORCINI MUSHROOM GNOCCHI

Serves 6

- 12 pheasant thighs
- 4 cups (1 L) red wine
- 2 carrots, roughly diced
- 4 celery stalks, roughly diced
- 2 medium white onions, roughly diced
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ cup (125 ml) grape seed or canola oil
- 4 slices bacon
- 12 cups (3 L) dark chicken stock
- salt and pepper, to taste

Marinate pheasant thighs overnight with red wine and chopped veggies. The next day, season thighs with salt and pepper to taste. Set marinade aside. Sear thighs in a large pan on medium-high heat.

Preheat oven to 325 F (170 C). In a large pot, bring the red wine marinade to a boil, skim impurities (foam that forms on the top) with a sieve or mesh strainer, add dark chicken stock, garlic, thyme and bay leaf. In a roasting pan, add seared thighs and bacon, cover with red wine liquid and bake until tender, about 3 hours. Remove from oven and cool for 10-15 min. Serve on top of gnocchi.

Porcini Mushroom Gnocchi

- ½ lb (200 g) baked Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1 tsp (5 ml) salt
- 2 tsp (10 ml) porcini powder (or other mushroom powder)
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp (30 g) flour

Pass baked potatoes through a sieve or ricer to achieve a smooth consistency. In a mixing bowl, add all dry ingredients and egg. Combine until perfectly mixed to form dough. Roll dough into a 1" (2.5 cm) round tube, then cut into 1 inch (2.5 cm) pieces. Boil in salted water for 2 minutes until they float. Remove from water and let cool slightly.

Garnish for Gnocchi

- 12 baby carrots, peeled and blanched
- 12 baby turnips, peeled and blanched
- 6 King oyster mushrooms (sliced)
- 12 pearl onions, peeled
- 1 tsp butter
- ⅓ cup (160 ml) Madeira
- salt and pepper, to taste

In a pan on medium heat, glaze pearl onions with Madeira until onions are tender, about 7 minutes. In a separate pan, sauté mushrooms in butter. Add blanched gnocchi, blanched veggies and onions. Mix thoroughly. Season with salt and pepper. Combine with cooled gnocchi.

Serve in a shallow bowl topped with two pheasant thighs.



COCONUT TAPIOCA PARFAIT WITH MANGO AND PAPAYA

Serves 6

- Tapioca**
- 1 cup (250 g) tapioca
 - 16 cups (4 L) water
 - ¾ cup (180 ml) coconut milk
 - ½ cup (80 ml) sugar

Boil tapioca in water for 10 minutes until tender. Drain and rinse under cold water. Add coconut milk and sugar and set aside.

Whipped cream

- ½ cup + 2 tbsp (155 ml) whipping cream
- 2 cups (500 ml) passion fruit juice
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) sugar

Combine cream and sugar in a mixing bowl and whip until fluffy peaks form. In saucepan reduce passion fruit juice to syrup on medium heat. Cool and fold gently into whipped cream.

- 1 papaya
- 1 mango
- ¼ cup (60 ml) roasted almonds, sliced

Peel and chop mango and papaya. Mix together with almonds. Serve in a tall glass by layering tapioca to bottom ½ of the glass, then place mixed fruit and almond mixture to ⅓ of glass and top with 2 tbsp (30 ml) of passion fruit whipped cream.

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Co-Founder, Winemaker



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Greens and Edible Flowers from pages 67, 68 & 69

SPRING VEGETABLE PAELLA

Serves 6 to 8

2		large fennel bulbs, trimmed, cut into 8 wedges (reserve fronds)
8 oz	(250 g)	baby carrots, scrubbed and trimmed
8 oz	(250 g)	red skinned baby potatoes, quartered
½ cup	(80 ml)	olive or grape seed oil
¼ cup	(60 ml)	salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup	(60 ml)	fresh parsley, minced
4		garlic cloves, minced
1 tbsp	(15 ml)	paprika
1 tsp	(5 ml)	saffron threads, crushed
1		medium onion, chopped
½	(28 oz/796 ml)	can seasoned diced tomatoes with juice
2¼ cups	(550 ml)	Arborio rice, rinsed
4 cups	(1 L)	vegetable broth
12 oz	(375 g)	fresh asparagus, trimmed, cut into 1 inch (2.5 cm) pieces
14 oz	(398 ml)	can garbanzo beans, drained
		finely grated zest and juice from 1 lemon



Preheat oven to 450 F (230 C). Toss fennel, carrots, potatoes and ¼ cup (60 ml) oil in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Spread out on a large baking sheet. Roast until tender and brown around the edges, about 30 minutes. Combine parsley and garlic in a small bowl. Stir in paprika, saffron and 1 teaspoon (5 ml) salt and ¼ tsp (2 ml) black pepper. Set aside. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons (30 ml) oil in a large saucepan. Add onion and sauté until soft. Add tomatoes, rice, and parsley mixture. Stir in broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Stir in asparagus and garbanzo beans and heat through. Add roasted vegetables. Season to taste. Transfer to a large platter. Sprinkle with zest and juice from lemon. Garnish with fennel fronds and chopped parsley.

ROASTED BABY BEET SALAD WITH HERBED CROUTONS

Serves 6

24		baby beets, trimmed and scrubbed
12 cups	(3 L)	spring greens, washed and spun dry

Preheat oven to 375 F (190 C). Place beets in a roasting pan and rub with oil. Bake for 20 minutes or until tender. Remove and cool. Rub off skins and trim.

Dressing

¼ cup	(60 ml)	freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 tbsp	(15 ml)	red wine vinegar
½ cup	(125 ml)	extra virgin olive oil
½ cup	(125 ml)	crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
		salt and freshly ground black pepper

Whisk lemon juice, vinegar and ½ cup (125 ml) oil in a small bowl until blended. Stir in cheese. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate.

Croutons

¼ cup	(60 ml)	extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup	(60 ml)	fresh basil, parsley and rosemary, finely chopped
1		garlic clove, minced
2 cups	(500 ml)	bite size pieces French or sourdough bread
		salt

Combine oil, herbs, and garlic in a bowl. Stir to blend. Add bread and toss to coat. Spread on a baking sheet and bake in the 375 F (190 C) oven until bread is toasted. Stir often. Remove and cool.

Serve by lining plates with greens, scatter halved beets over top and sprinkle with toasted bread and herbs. Gently stir dressing ingredients, drizzle over top and serve.



FRASER VALLEY GREENS WITH RASPBERRY VINAIGRETTE

Serves 6

12 cups	(3 L)	mixed salad greens, washed and spun dry
2 cups	(500 ml)	baby romaine
1 head		radicchio, shaved
1 cup	(250 ml)	fresh pea shoots
½ cup		raw sliced almonds, toasted
½ cup	(80 ml)	raspberry vinegar
¼ cup	(60 ml)	fresh shallots, finely chopped
½ cup	(125 ml)	extra virgin olive oil
¼ tsp	(1 ml)	granulated sugar
		salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
		crumbled goat cheese, optional



Combine greens, romaine, radicchio and pea shoots on a large shallow platter. Sprinkle with toasted sliced almonds. Combine remaining ingredients except goat cheese in a deep bowl and whisk together until totally emulsified. Drizzle over top and serve sprinkled with goat cheese.

BABY SPRING VEGETABLE MEDLEY WITH LEMON CHIVE CREAM

Serves 6

¼ cup	(60 ml)	freshly squeezed lemon juice
3 tbsp	(45 ml)	Dijon mustard
2 tbsp	(30 ml)	white wine vinegar
1 tbsp	(15 ml)	unsalted butter
1 tbsp	(15 ml)	granulated sugar
1		large egg yolk
1		garlic clove, minced
½ tsp	(2 ml)	sea salt
½ cup	(80 ml)	whipping cream
2 lbs	(500 g)	baby vegetables (e.g. squash, turnip, sweet peppers)
8 oz	(250 g)	sugar snap peas, trimmed
3 tbsp	(45 ml)	fresh chives, minced



In the top of the double boiler over simmering water, combine lemon juice, mustard, vinegar, butter, sugar, egg yolk, garlic, salt, and 1 tablespoon (15 ml) water. Whisk together making sure the simmering water does not touch the bottom of the double boiler. Whisk for about 4 to 6 minutes or until mixture thickens. Immediately set top of double boiler into a large bowl of cold water to cool. Stir often. In a separate bowl, beat whipping cream until stiff peaks form. Fold lemon cream mixture into whipped cream until blended. Transfer to a small bowl, cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Steam vegetables just until bright coloured but still very crisp. Remove and plunge into ice water to stop the cooking. Drain well and pat dry. Place on a large serving platter. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons (30 ml) minced fresh chives. Stir remaining minced chives into lemon cream and transfer mixture into a dipping bowl. Serve alongside vegetables for dipping.

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FROM OUR INTERIOR TO YOURS.



Vegetarian Meal from pages 80, 81 & 83

POLENTA CAKES WITH TOMATO CHIPOTLE SAUCE

Serves 4 to 6

- 4 cups (1 L) vegetable stock
- 1 cup (250 ml) cornmeal
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) unsalted butter
- ½ tsp (2 ml) salt
- 1 cup (250 ml) Asiago or Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- all purpose flour
- butter lettuce
- fresh basil, finely shredded



To fry polenta cakes preheat oven to 300 F (150 C). Cut polenta into 2½ inch (6.5 cm) rounds. Dust with flour. Fry shapes in a hot oiled skillet until golden on the bottom. Flip and transfer to a baking sheet. Sprinkle with remaining Asiago cheese and place cakes in the oven to melt cheese.

Tomato Chipotle Sauce

- 4 medium size tomatoes, quartered, about 1 lb/500g
- sea salt
- 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 small zucchini, trimmed and diced
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- ¼ cup (60 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp (5 ml) sea salt
- ½ tsp (2 ml) ground cumin
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) brown sugar
- 1 canned chipotle pepper in Adobo sauce, finely chopped

Bring stock to a boil. Slowly add in cornmeal stirring constantly to avoid lumping. Reduce heat to low and stir until very thick, about 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in butter, salt and ¾ of the cheese, until melted. (Reserve remaining cheese for later.) Spread polenta on an oiled baking sheet with shallow sides. Smooth the top. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 275 F (140 C). Place tomatoes on a large, oiled baking sheet. Scatter garlic, onion, zucchini and red pepper around and sprinkle with salt. Drizzle with olive oil and bake for about 1½ hours or just until they are wrinkled and soft. Stir occasionally to prevent them from browning and to ensure even cooking. When vegetables are roasted remove tomato skins and discard. Transfer vegetables to a medium size saucepan along with pan juices and sprinkle with cumin and sugar. Add chipotle and cook uncovered over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture is very thick, about 20 minutes. Add a little more sugar or salt to taste. Can be refrigerated covered, for several days before serving. Reheat before serving.

To serve, rest a couple of cakes against a couple of butter lettuce leaves. Spoon warmed Tomato Chipotle Sauce over top and garnish with shredded basil.

ROASTED PEPPER RATATOUILLE

Makes 10 cups (2.5 L)

- 1 large sweet onion, chopped
- 12 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 red bell peppers, seeded and julienned
- 1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and julienned
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and julienned
- ½ cup (80 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 2 (10 in/25cm) zucchini, coarsely chopped
- 1 lb (500 g) salt and freshly ground black pepper
- unpeeled eggplant, trimmed and cut into ½ inch (1.25 cm) chunks
- ½ cup (125 ml) vegetable stock or tomato juice (optional)
- 28 oz (796 ml) can diced tomatoes, including juice
- ½ cup (125 ml) fresh basil, chopped
- ½ tsp (2 ml) crushed red peppers
- ½ tsp (2 ml) fennel seed, crushed arugula and grated Asiago



Preheat oven to 500 F (260 C). Position oven rack on the top level. Lightly oil a large baking sheet and set aside. Combine onion, garlic and peppers in a large bowl. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons (30 ml) olive oil and sprinkle with a little sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Toss to evenly coat and spread out on a prepared baking sheet. Bake on the top rack in the preheated oven for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally for even roasting. (Be careful when opening the oven as the escaping steam from the roasting vegetables can scald.) Meanwhile, to release some of the bitter juices from eggplant, toss with salt and place in a sieve. Top with a plate just small enough to fit snugly inside sieve. Place a weight on top, such as a 28 oz (796 ml) can of tomatoes. Set in sink to drain for 30 minutes. Remove plate. Rinse eggplant with cold running water and pat cubes dry with paper toweling. Place in large, heavy saucepan along with oven-roasted vegetables, stock, tomatoes and seasonings. Cover. Simmer over medium-low heat for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally until vegetables are done as you like. Serve immediately or cool, cover and refrigerate overnight for flavours to blend. Excellent served hot or cold with fresh arugula and shavings of grated cheese. Can be refrigerated for several days.

BLACKBERRY SHORTCAKES WITH LIME CRÈME FRAÎCHE

Serves 6

- 2 cups (500 ml) all purpose flour
- ½ tsp (2 ml) sea salt
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) baking powder
- ¼ cup (60 ml) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (125 ml) cold unsalted butter, diced
- ½ cup (125 ml) pistachios, shelled
- ¾ cup (200 ml) whipping cream
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 cup (250 ml) crème fraîche
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) granulated sugar
- 1 lime, zest only, finely grated
- 4 cups (1 L) fresh blackberries, or berries in season
- icing sugar and lime zest



Preheat oven to 425 F (220 C). Line baking sheet with parchment. Combine flour, salt, baking powder and ¼ cup (60 ml) sugar in a large bowl. Stir to blend. Work in the butter using your fingertips or a pastry blender just until mixture resembles coarse pea shapes. Stir in pistachios. Pour whipping cream over top and quickly stir until lightly blended. Do not overmix. Gently pat mixture into a 9-inch (23 cm) round. Cut into 6 even-shaped wedges. Place 2 inches (5 cm) apart on parchment-lined baking sheet. Lightly brush with beaten egg. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or until golden. Cool on racks. Whisk crème fraîche with 2 tablespoons (30 ml) sugar until smooth. Whisk in lime zest. Serve biscuits in a pool of crème fraîche with fresh berries scattered around. Dust with icing sugar and some lime zest.



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VANCOUVER AND THE LOWER MAINLAND FEB 25 TO MAR 2

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Italy is the theme region and sparkling wine the theme focus. Contributions from around the world focus attention on varietals producing bubbly wines while guests meander from booth to booth searching for elusive taste treats. www.playhousewinefest.com

**MAR 12
Three Decades of
Faiveley, Le Gavroche**

Le Gavroche Restaurant will host a series of dynamite wine events this spring to celebrate their 30th anniversary. www.legavroche.ca

**MAR 26
British Columbia
Germanic Wines, the
Listel Hotel**

Some of the earliest plantings of vinifera grapes in the Okanagan valley were chosen because of the climatic similarity to Germany. Riesling, for example, has never disappointed. Other regions plant Germanic vines. The BC Wine Appreciation Society organizes tasting events or dinners to further knowledge of our local wines. www.bcwas.com

**APR 2
California Wine Fair,
Vancouver Convention
& Exhibition Centre**

Canada's largest Wine Fair tour celebrates 28 years of toasting the many fine vintages from California's finest vineyards. Bringing tasty wines from northern, central and southern California, this fair adds a sunny touch to Vancouver's wine festival season. www.calwine.ca Tickets www.artclub.ca

by Wendy Taylor

WHAT'S GOING ON

FOOD & WINE EVENTS FROM THE FARMS, VINEYARDS
& KITCHENS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**APR 9
Bordeaux
Extravaganza,
Le Gavroche**

Le Gavroche Restaurant will host a series of dynamite wine events this spring to celebrate their 30th anniversary. www.legavroche.ca

**MAY 6
New Zealand Wine
Fair, venue tba**

With distinctive and intense flavours, New Zealand wines leave their mark of quality on the world wine scene. Vineyards on both the North and South Islands have distinctive climates and provide perfect conditions for signature varietals – Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc. But there is much more to discover at this annual fair. www.nzwine-events.ca

**MAY 23
EAT! Vancouver –
the Everyday Food
and Cooking Festival,
BC Place**

With over 250 exhibits, this show features cooking demonstrations, wine tastings, kitchen displays and much more. BC Place Stadium www.eat-vancouver.com

THE ISLANDS

**FEB 21 TO MAR 9
Dine Around, Stay in
Town – Victoria**

18 days of foodie heaven in our province's capital city. Sourcing bounty from the Saanich Peninsula and the Cowichan Valley, Victoria's chefs will present \$15, \$25 and \$35 menus. Restaurants and menus – www.tourismvictoria.com

OKANAGAN AND THE INTERIOR

**MAR 23
Quails' Gate Library
Tasting**

Ever wondered if BC wines age well? This tutored tasting of Family Reserves and comparison of older vintages from the winery's collection will answer your questions. Quails' Gate Winery www.quailsgate.com

**MAR 30
Taste of Kelowna,
Kelowna Curling Club.**

A sampling of delicious bites from Kelowna's restaurants, wineries, breweries. The largest food fair in the Interior. Proceeds to Kids Care and the Kelowna Food Bank. www.bcrfa.com

**APR 4
Okanagan Fest of
Ale, Penticton
Convention Centre,
250.492.4353**

**MAY 1 TO 4
Okanagan Spring Wine
Festival**

With over 100 fabulous events at wineries, restaurants and vineyards, this small festival announces the grape growing season just as the wines begin to sprout. Visit the websites of Okanagan wineries or www.owfs.com for the entire schedule.



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BC LIQUOR STORES **SPECIAL EVENTS**

JOIN US AT 39TH & CAMBIE, OUR FLAGSHIP VANCOUVER STORE, IN MARCH, APRIL AND MAY FOR THESE COMPLIMENTARY EVENTS.

MARCH

FRI 7
 4:00-8:00pm

CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY WITH RICKARD'S

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Celtic Dancers and a complimentary sampling of Rickard's

Taster's Pack paired with hot and cold appetizers prepared by the Keg Steakhouse and Bar.

FRI 14
 4:00-7:00pm

TASTE CASILLERO DEL DIABLO

Join us for the opportunity to taste award-winning wine, Casillero del Diablo, one of the world's leading wine brands, and enjoy original food pairings from the Gramercy Grill.

SAT 15
 1:00-4:00pm

JAZZ IT UP WITH GRANT'S

Enjoy a complimentary tasting of the Grant's range of whiskeys paired with an appetizer while you enjoy a jazz and blues guitar performance by well-known local musician Rueben Gurr.

SAT 22
 12:00-1:00pm

THE BEST OF FOOD & WINE ON LOCATION

Join Kasey Wilson and Anthony Gismondi on location at the 39th & Cambie Signature BC Liquor Store for a lively discussion about cocktail culture with mixologists Patsy Christie and David Wolowidnyk of West.

SAT 22
 1:00-4:00pm

MIXX IT UP

Are you ready for the cocktail revolution? Here's an opportunity to learn how to improve your bartending techniques and skills with mixologist Patsy Christie.

FRI 28
 4:00-8:00pm

CANUCKS GAME DAY WITH MOLSON

Watch the Vancouver Canucks play the Minnesota Wild and enjoy samples of Molson Canadian served with appetizers provided by Boston Pizza.

SAT 29
 2:00-4:00pm

TASTE OKANAGAN SPRING BEERS

Taste quality beer from Okanagan Spring Brewery, one of BC's original craft breweries. This is also an opportunity for customers to learn how to pair food and beer while enjoying complimentary appetizers.

APRIL

FRI 11
 4:00-7:00pm

TASTE SOL BEER

Escape to the sunshine with smooth and refreshing Sol beer from Mexico while enjoying complimentary appetizers.

SAT 12
 12:00-1:00pm

THE BEST OF FOOD & WINE ON LOCATION

Join Kasey Wilson and Anthony Gismondi on location at the 39th & Cambie Signature BC Liquor Store for a lively discussion on the growing interest in organic food and wine.

SAT 12
 3:00-5:00pm

TASTE BAREFOOT WINES

Come and experience the taste of Barefoot wines served with complimentary appetizers.

SAT 19

THINK GREEN, SHOP SMART EVENT

Get your free, reusable wine bag with your purchase when you shop BC Liquor Stores on Saturday, April 19.

FRI 25
 4:00-7:00pm (TBC)

TASTE SLEEMAN

You are invited to sample Sleeman fine brews while enjoying complimentary appetizers. Join us and learn more about the history of the brewery from Sleeman's Western Canadian Brand Manager.

MAY

SAT 3
 12:00-4:00pm

CELEBRATE CINCO DE MAYO WITH CORONA

Enjoy a live mariachi band and Mexican-style cold appetizers along with complimentary tastes of Mexico's best-known beer!

THU 15
 4:00-7:00pm (time TBC)

TASTE BIG ROCK BREWS

Join Big Rock Brewery and learn more about their brewing methods while sampling an assortment of beers with complimentary appetizers.

FRI 16
 5:00-7:00pm

ROBERT MONDAVI PRIVATE SELECTION PRESENTS "INSPIRED ITALIAN"

Join Chef Dino Renaerts and enjoy the taste of Robert Mondavi Private Selection wines while enjoying complimentary Italian appetizers.

FRI 23
 4:00-8:00pm

TASTE HEINEKEN

Join us and sample the international taste of Heineken beer, available for a limited time in 12-pack cans, paired with delicious snacks. This is also your chance to win a trip to New York City to attend the US Open tennis tournament.

SAT 24
 12:00-2:00pm

BEST OF BC RELEASE SPRING 2008/THE BEST OF FOOD & WINE ON LOCATION

In celebration of the Best of BC wine release (12:00-2:00 pm in all Signature BC Liquor Stores), The Best of Food & Wine, hosted by Tony Gismondi and Kasey Wilson, will be broadcast on location at the 39th & Cambie Signature Store from 12:00 - 1:00 pm. Come sample selected BC wines along with commentary by the Lower Mainland's foremost wine expert and a respected food writer.

SAT 31
 2:00-5:00pm

TASTE OKANAGAN SPRING BEERS

Join Okanagan Spring Brewery and taste quality beer from one of BC's original craft breweries. Learn how to pair food and beer while enjoying complimentary appetizers. Also enter to win a chance to attend the Okanagan Spring Brewery Fantasy Camp!

*Event information is accurate at time of printing. Please visit www.bcliquorstores.com or contact the store for up-to-date information.

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The pioneering production process was discovered purely by accident after renowned brewer, Dougal Sharp was commissioned to formulate a special beer to impart a smooth beery character to the bourbon barrels for flavouring maturing whisky.

After the beer was placed in the barrels, it was to be discarded to make room for the whisky. Months later, the distillery manager discovered that workers were filling empty lemonade bottles with the beer – they had discovered that the beer had been transformed by the oak into a truly great tasting beer.

Using oak to age beer was unheard of, but the end results were unbelievable. The beer was tasted by industry experts and scored an incredible 9 out of 9!

The flavours imparted by the oak barrels (previously used to mature bourbon) lend an incredible depth of taste. Think vanilla, toffee and orange aromas, with a malty, lightly oak palate: smooth and warm in the finish.

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Available at the BCLDB for \$3.25 per 330ml bottle. For product information and where to find Innis & Gunn Oak-Aged Beer, please visit www.innisandgunn.com.




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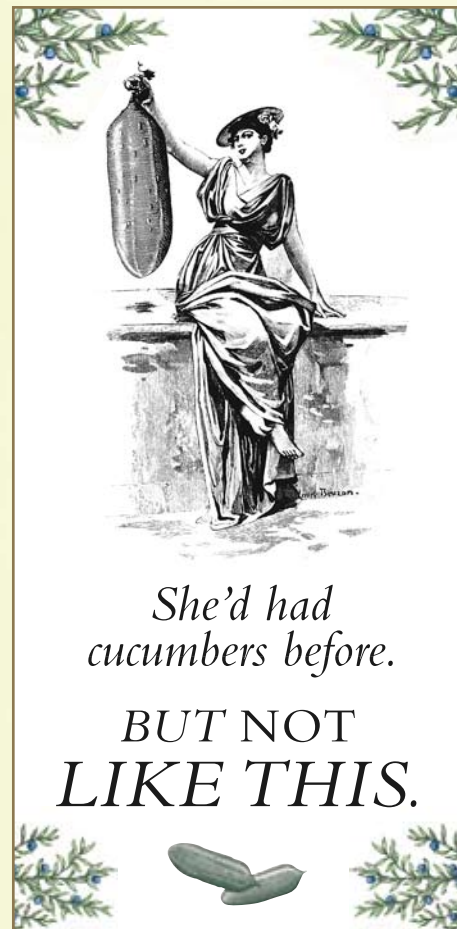


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