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Wine Trail Traveler Newsletter

Autographed Bottles of Wine

On a recent trip to wineries in Temecula, California, we received several autographed bottles of wine. My daughter gave me an autographed bottle of wine she acquired from a winemaker from Eastern Europe while in New York City promoting his wines. I kept that bottle and since it is a red wine decided to let it age in the cellar. But this began to spark thoughts of what to do with autographed bottles of wine. Should you keep them or drink them? Are they more valuable with an autograph?

Winemaker Jon McPherson of South Coast winery in Temecula frequently autographs bottles of wine. During our interview, he signed a bottle for a customer. Jon doesn't believe that an autographed bottle is worth more. He wrote, "Maybe if Robert Mondavi signed it, or Ernest Gallo, that may have significance." Jon wouldn't have any problem drinking an autographed bottle of wine.

Gordy Venneri, winemaker at Walla Walla Vintners in Walla Walla, Washington also autographs wine bottles. He frequently signs bottles for special occasions and charity auctions. Gordy would drink an autographed bottle of wine unless someone famous signed it. "I would drink it unless the winemaker was famous. If the winemaker was famous, I would hold it and then donate it to a charitable auction," wrote Gordy.

Matt Cookson at The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey has his signature on every label. He doesn't believe that most signed bottles are ever opened. At special events, Matt wrote, "We use large format bottles as a card and have everyone at the occasion sign it; it is awesome."

It is not always a common practice for winemakers to autograph wine bottles. Chris Pearmund of Pearmund Cellars in Broad Run, Virginia stated that it was rare that he autographs bottles. Chris wrote that he would keep an autographed bottle rather than drink it.

Owners also sign bottles. Brian and



Autographed wine bottles present a dilemma. Do you open them or keep them?

Sharon Roeder of Barrel Oak Winery in Delaplane, Virginia enjoy autographing wine bottles. They will autograph a bottle whenever asked. They plan to keep the few autographed bottles they have.

Not all owners and winemakers are into the practice of autographing wine bottles. Alex Carr Taylor of Carr Taylor Wines Ltd in Hastings, England does not sign wine bottles. He doesn't believe that it is a common practice in the United Kingdom. If he had an autographed bottle of wine he would drink the wine and keep the bottle if someone important signed it.

Decision time, do I drink or keep my five autographed bottles? At the moment I am thinking of keeping three of them and opening two of them. Two signed bottles by Phil Baily of Baily Vineyard & Winery in Temecula will be opened so we can blog about the wine. Both the 2007 Cabernet Franc and the 2008 Dry Riesling are in bottles commemorating Temecula's 150th anniversary, 1859 – 2009. On second thought, this will be the only time wine is bottled with these labels and since Baily autographed them perhaps I should keep them. This decision to open or not is going to prove difficult.

Less difficult is whether or not to sign the bottles of wine that I recently made. I find it

difficult to give away the first wine I made from a kit. Although it is a fair table wine, I'd rather not autograph any of the bottles. My mead is still in carboys and I'm not certain how it will turn out once bottled. It is the first alcoholic beverage that I made completely from scratch so signing a bottle or two may be entertaining. The dessert Riesling we recently made and bottled was made from an expensive wine kit. It is quite good and I wouldn't mind autographing it but it is from a kit. Perhaps signing bottles will have to wait till next year when we hope to release a wine we will make at the new Vint Hill Winery in Virginia. Of course, time will tell if people like the wine or not, but sites are set high and I'd like to craft a wine that I would be happy to autograph.

T.S.

In This Issue

Autographed Bottles of Wine

Springtime at Wineries

**Produce Your Own Barrel of Wine
on the East Coast
Vint Hill Craft Winery in Virginia**

**Recipe with Wine
Partners**

Springtime at Wineries

We have finally pushed past the doldrums of the winter blues. The sun is longer and warmer now. Nature is beginning to awaken in response. Yellow daffodils, hyacinths and crocuses are adding their vibrant colors amidst the bright shades of green grass and shrubs. A gentle rain washes away the grime of old snow as well as the salt/sand/chemicals off roads. Hope is springing forth. "Hope springs eternal" even in the vineyard.

A visit to a vineyard is likewise delightful in the spring. Depending on the area of the country you are in, you may see the weeping of vines. Weeping is a result of pruning and the sap beginning to run through the branches. Buds are beginning to swell and soon green leaves and tiny white clusters of blossoms will cover the grapevines.



Grapevines springing forth.

This is a perfect time to visit a vineyard and a winery. For those who want to avoid the crowds, spring is a great time to visit. Discover what is happening in the vineyards several months before they will be filled with grape clusters.

A visit to a winery tasting room is also delightful. During spring, wineries release many new wines. Often barrel tastings are available with a discussion led by a winemaker.

Whether you are traveling or at home, look for events at nearby wineries and check them out. If you discover a winery that you particularly like, sign up for their newsletter. Newsletters provide information about events, new wine releases, barrel tastings and winemaker's dinners. It is a great way to know what's going on at a specific winery.

K.S

Produce Your Own Barrel of Wine on the East Coast Vint Hill Craft Winery in Virginia

If you are interested in producing your own barrel of wine, discover Vint Hill Craft Winery in Vint Hill, Virginia. This is an exciting opportunity for wine enthusiasts to learn with hands-on experience about the winemaking process by creating their own barrel of wine. This first winery of its kind in the region will begin with the 2009 harvest. The finished product will be available in 2010.

Vint Hill Craft Winery is the brainstorm of Chris Pearmund of Pearmund Cellars in Broad Run, Virginia. Chris Pearmund wrote in a recent press release, "At Vint Hill Craft Winery, our focus is on winemaking; the skill, art and passion that surround it. Our customers will choose their level of participation at every step of the winemaking process. Wine will be crafted to their specifications, in their style with their name, a label of their own design and, of course, their unique story behind it." Those who choose to create their own barrel of wine will be able to participate as much or as little as, they want in the winemaking process.

Benefits of producing wine at Vint Hill Craft Winery include your choice of grape varietals from California or Virginia, up to date winemaking equipment and a tasting room facility where your wine can be sold if you decide to go that route. Participants may select from several types of wine to make. These include Virginia Chardonnay, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot and California Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Zinfandel and Pinot Noir.

Vint Hill Craft Winery in Vint Hill, Virginia is located in an area that has historical significance. The property was a former army base. The original building, a dairy barn, was built around 1900. During World War II, it was used by the government for decoding radio messages. In response to a question about what measures are being used to be eco-friendly, Chris wrote, "Geo-thermal HVAC, re-using as much as possible of the old materials of the previous used in this 100 year old barn, lighting to paint choices. In a word, as much as we can."

Applications are available to download [online](#). While the cost is not inexpensive, groups may work together to create a barrel of wine and share the cost. After all, a barrel of wine will yield approximately 300 bottles. That amount can go far. Prices begin at 6K and increase with added features including certain grape varietals and length of aging. For information visit the Vint Hill Winery [website](#).

K.S.



Vint Hill Craft Winery is now taking orders for custom made wine that you can produce.

Food and Wine

Recipe with Wine

Santa Margarita Vineyards/Wine Bush East Vineyards
Mediterranean Chicken Breast with Risotto and Sauteed Zucchini.

Ingredients

For the Chicken and Sauce:

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts,
1/2 to 3/4 c of '05 Rhapsody Zinfandel,
1 large Vidalia or Texas sweet onion diced small
3 garlic cloves
1/2 t salt and pepper or to taste
1/4 c of diced green olives stuffed with pimiento
1/2 t of small capers
1 t dried rosemary
4 ripe plum tomatoes cubed
3 T of good virgin olive oil
1/4 of water

For the Risotto: You can purchase 'Ready made' Risotto or make it from scratch.

Arborio rice 2 1/2 c
1/4 t saffron threads
3/4 t salt
3/4 c grated Parmesan cheese
3 T butter
1/4 c finely chopped onion
6 c of chicken stock or two 14.5 ounce cans mixed with 2 c of water
Additional 1/2 c Parmesan cheese for topping

For the zucchini:

2 large zucchini, diced into chunks
2 T olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Cooking Time is 30-40 minutes. Rinse chicken and pat dry. Season with salt & pepper. In a large flame-proof casserole, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add chicken breasts and turn up heat to med-high turning after 5-7 minutes, or until lightly browned on all sides. Remove chicken and pour off oil except for 1 tablespoon.
2. Add the onions, garlic, and rosemary. Cook until onions and garlic are translucent and almost brown. Add the tomatoes, olives, capers, wine and water and simmer until it is reduced and thickened.
3. While the sauce is reducing, keep chicken covered in a warming drawer. Start cooking the risotto. Cooking time is about 25 minutes. In a small saucepan, crush saffron into two cups of chicken broth. Let stand about 15 minutes.
4. In a large heavy pan, melt two tablespoons of butter over medium heat. Add onion and cook until translucent. Add rice and cook stirring it for a minute or so. Stir in 3/4 cup of chicken broth and allow to simmer for 3 minutes. Add the salt, and the saffron-chicken broth mix. Cook at medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until stock is absorbed. Continue to add as much plain chicken stock (broth) as needed always 1 cup at a time.
5. Remove from heat, add the remaining butter and Parmesan cheese. Stir gently folding the cheese until mixed throughout the rice. The risotto is supposed to be lumpy and moist.
6. Back to the chicken, add the chicken breasts back into the flame proof casserole (including the broth which has accumulated) until ready to plate. Keep it covered and warm.
7. Zucchini time: In a medium size frying pan, add the 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Sautee at medium-high heat until tender. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat.
8. Time to plate or serve: First, serve an adequate portion of risotto in the middle of the plate. Add chicken breast to one side, spooning some sauce over it. Add the zucchini to the other side of the plate. Repeat process until all four plates have been assembled. Garnish with finely chopped Italian parsley. Buono appetito!

Recipe serves 4.

Contributed by [Thunderbolt Winery](#), Paso Robles, California.

Wine Trail Traveler Partners

California



Temecula Valley Quality Wine Alliance
951-526-4540



Keyways Vineyard & Winery
37338 De Portola Road
Temecula, California 92592



Thornton Winery
32575 Rancho California Road
Temecula, CA

Colorado



Balistreri Vineyards
1946 E. 66th Ave.
Denver, Colorado 80229



Garfield Estates Vineyard & Winery
3572 G Road
Palisade, Colorado 81526



Garlic Mike's
2674 Hwy 135
Gunnison, Colorado 81230
970-641-2493



Garlic Mike's
103 Rose Lane
Montrose, Colorado 81401
970-249-4381



Two Rivers Winery & Chateau
2087 Broadway
Grand Junction, Colorado 81503



The Wine Country Inn
777 Grande River Drive
Palisade, CO 81526

Maryland



Fiore Winery
3026 Whiteford Road
Pylesville, MD 21132

Michigan



Bucci Ristorante
20217 Mack Ave.
Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan

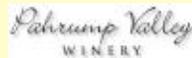


Country Hermitage Bed & Breakfast
7710 US 31 N
Williamsburg, Michigan 49690



Chateau Chantal
15900 Rue de Vin
Traverse City, MI 49686

Nevada



Pahrump Valley Winery
3810 Winery Road
Pahrump, Nevada 89048

New York



The Halsey House
2057 Trumansburg Road
Trumansburg, NY 14886
Phone: 800-387-5590



Masten Designs
2710 Astoria Blvd. Apt. 2C
Astoria NY 11102



North Fork Wine Tours
PO Box 805
Greenport, NY 11944



Three Brothers Wineries & Estates
623 Lerch Road,
Geneva, NY 14456



May 30th & 31st Saturday and Sunday
10:00 am - 6:00 pm
At the York Fairgrounds in York Pennsylvania.

Visit
<http://yorkwinefest.com/>

Wine Trail Traveler Partners

Ohio



Ferrante Winery

5585 N River Road W (State Rt. 307)
Geneva, Ohio 44041



Ferrante Winery & Ristorante

5585 N River Road W (State Rt. 307)
Geneva, Ohio 44041



Grand River Cellars

5750 South Madison Rd. (Route 528)
Madison, Ohio 44057



Laurello Vineyards

4573 State Route 307 East,
Geneva, Ohio 44041



Winery at Versailles

6572 St Rt 47
Versailles, Ohio 45380

Oregon



Kramer Vineyards

26830 NW Olson Road
Gaston, OR 97119-8039



Redhawk Winery

2995 Michigan City Lane NW
Salem, Oregon 97304

Pennsylvania



Paradocx Vineyard

1833 Flint Hill Road
Landenberg, PA 19350



The Winery at Wilcox

1867 Mefferts Run Road
Wilcox, Pennsylvania 15870

Hilton Garden Inn, Kennett Square



815 E. Baltimore Pike
Kennett Square, Pennsylvania 19348
Phone (610) 444-9100

Ontario, Canada

Hilton Garden Inn, Niagara-on-the-Lake



500 York Road
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario
L0S 1J0
Phone 905-984-4200
Toll free: 866-777-9877

Virginia



Barrel Oak Winery

3623 Grove Lane
Delaplane, Virginia 20144



Chateau O'Brien at Northpoint

3238 Rail Stop Road
Markham, VA 22643



Kluge Estate Winery & Vineyards

100 Grand Cru Drive
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902



Miracle Valley Vineyard

3661 Double J Lane
Delaplane, VA 20144



Pearmund Cellars

6190 Georgetown Road
Broad Run, VA 20137



Three Fox Vineyards

10100 Three Fox Lane
Delaplane, VA 20144



Veritas Vineyard & Winery

145 Saddleback Farm
Afton, Virginia 22920



White Fences Vineyard & Winery

170 White Fences Drive
Irvington, VA 22480



The Winery at La Grange

4970 Antioch Road
Haymarket, Virginia 20169