

HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPE VINE

MARCH 2011

THE WINE SOCIETY OF TEXAS 2011 ANNIVERSARY



The Wine Society of Texas®
wine appreciation through education

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Hold the Date

The Wine Society of Texas 2011 Anniversary will be held in Fredericksburg on Saturday the first of October, culminating with a food and wine event at Becker Winery. Plans are being made to tour other wineries in the area, for those who arrive on Friday. The host chapter will be the Hill Country chapter. More details to follow.

WINE JUDGING EXPLAINED BY JEFF BINNEY—GRAPE CREEK WINERY

Having recently received the results of our first competition in 2011 (4 silver and 4 bronze medals at the San Francisco Chronicle, the largest event in the country), I thought it would be fun to take an inside look at how wine competitions actually work. Panels of judges (usually five people) are often composed of individuals from different genres of wine expertise---writers, educators, restaurateurs, producers, distributors, etc. This allows for different perspectives on the same wine. Wines are divided into categories based on grape variety, style and pricing. Examples might include Petite Sirah, Bordeaux blends and Cabernet Sauvignon over and under \$20.00, respectively. The wine is judged 'blind,' i.e. without knowledge of the producer; which creates a very level playing field. They compete against a scale (not each other) with a set number of points possible for categories such as color, clarity, balance, aroma and taste. This means that for a flight of, say, 15 Petite Sirahs there may be 10 medals or none.

On average, about a third of the wines entered might medal, with a typical breakdown being 5% gold, 10% silver and 20% bronze. After the initial medals are awarded, those winning gold may compete against one another for best in class (each individual category) or best in show (all the categories lumped together).

MUSSELING IN ON TRIPS TO BELGIUM BY MERIL MARKLEY

Why would anyone write for this Newsletter about Belgium, a land where beer is king and wine-growing died out in the Little Ice Age? Because Belgian mussels, harvested in the morning and served that evening after steaming in white wine, are as close to heaven as any wine lover can get.

For one of our regular furniture-buying trips to Belgium, where due to creative tax planning some of the best French antiques wind up with local dealers, my husband, Michael, and I decided to spend a few days in Bruges and experience the Venice of the North.

On a hair-raising trip from Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport, ranging from dusk into nighttime on motorways and back roads, through countless construction zones and detours, we had begun to believe we were on a never-ending loop destined instead for Brussels. Encouraged at numerous stops for directions, by sympathetic gas station attendants and bartenders, we arrived hours late and exhausted at the Pand Hotel in the heart of Bruges. Happy to banish our rental car to an 18th century prison, now a parking garage, we longed to enjoy a few days of exploring Bruges as pedestrians.

Owing to what historians could term a fortuitous silting up of the harbor at the head of the water route between Bruges and the North Sea, the city became, literally, a backwater from the end of the 15th century until its "rediscovery" in the early 20th century. A happy accident, the buildings from the economic boom times of the 14th and 15th centuries were never torn down and replaced with more modern structures. Today's tourists experience Bruges in a time warp, as in its heyday when it was one of Europe's most significant commercial and artistic centers.



MUSSELING IN ON TRIPS TO BELGIUM BY MERIL MARKLEY



Bruges-Belfry

Much of Renaissance Bruges, inside and out, is still on display in the paintings by Flemish artists such as Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling at the Saint John Hospital Museum and the Groningemuseum. Van Eyck, as one of the developers and early adopters of oil-based pigments, transformed the ability of artists to achieve verisimilitude. Thanks to Bruges being the northern outpost of Italian banks, works by Flemish masters were snapped up by Florentine financiers and shipped home, fueling a similar revolution in painting south of the Alps.

While telling a grander story, the Flemings revelled in depicting the minutest of details -- strands of squirrel fur on the cuff of a garment, intricately carved animal figures on furniture, golden threads comprising thistle patterns of a cardinal's vestments, the filaments of colorful Caucasian carpets, light reflecting on richly tooled armor. Awestruck, we lingered in front of work after work of incomparable virtuosity, marveling as intended at the status symbols that merchants had amassed. Such wealth enabled commissioning of renowned painters to memorialize the patron's families as onlookers in scenes such as the Baptism of Jesus or the martyrdom of a saint.

Conspicuous consumption was not on our itinerary when it came to eating and drinking in Bruges. Rather, we were bent on enjoying shellfish as the Belgians do. Our quest involved the cherished *moules frites*. While the term could be translated as "fried mussels," it is instead the French-language moniker for steamed mussels with the obligatory side dish of fried potatoes (what we would call "French fries" but never while in Belgium).

Belgians eat more mussels per capita than any other nationality and have developed countless creative ways to prepare them. Not deemed sufficiently sophisticated, or perhaps a bit too messy, *moules frites* do not grace menus at Michelin 3-star restaurants. Enjoyed by the masses, from autumn through spring, mussels are on offer throughout the country at local eateries dedicated to the high-volume consumption of these succulent bivalves and their fried potato cohorts. Extracting the meat from the shell and sloshing it around in the broth along with chunks of toasted garlic bread may not be the most elegant way to dine, but is hard to beat for sheer dining pleasure.

MUSSELING IN ON TRIPS TO BELGIUM BY MERIL MARKLEY

Based on our hotel's recommendation, we headed for the restaurant Breydel-de Coninck at the edge of the square named for Jan Breydel and Pieter de Coninck, medieval heroes of Bruges whose statues stand nearby. Tiny, the restaurant blended bar and seating area filled with diners already well into their mussel experience accompanied by tall glasses of Belgian beer.



We ordered the traditional version, mussels steamed in a mixture of white wine and cream with chopped celery, carrots, onion, and a little garlic. A short while later, cast iron pots arrived at the table, brimming with mussels in their shells. I leaned over and inhaled deeply the intoxicating steam, essence of the sea enhanced by wine and onion. These mussels were the large, meaty, and tender “jumbos,” as the Belgians call the biggest variety, harvested from river estuaries along the North Sea near the Dutch border. Accompanying them was a bowl of fries, the crowning glory of the Belgian method of preparation involving frying potatoes twice to produce the crispy exterior while keeping the interior from going soggy. Served with a little cup of mayonnaise (not of the jar variety) for dipping, we understood instantly why this version of “French fries” is so beloved that there are take-out shops on squares and in train stations throughout the country. Needing to prize each nugget of meat from the shells forces a slow pace of consumption and utter enjoyment of the *moules frites* ritual. Not being beer drinkers, we ordered a bottle of Viognier that proved the perfect accompaniment to the mussels and the garlicky toast.

Hungering for the mussel experience but can't get to Bruges anytime soon? Head for the frozen dinner section at your local HEB for a bag of Central Market brand “Mussels Marinière,” imported from France. The mussels have already been shelled and only need be popped into a skillet along with the frozen pellets that melt into sauce. We recommend adding a quarter cup of heavy cream and cooking for an extra 30 seconds before serving. While the jumbos are simmering, bake the 3 mini-baguettes that came in the same package. All the flavors come together, the kitchen smelling like Breydel-de Coninck. Accompanied by a bottle of Becker Viognier, recreating a great European treat is achieved without leaving your Texas kitchen! Now, if only Central Market could figure out how to recreate authentic (Belgian) fries as well.

Next time, Ghent and visits with a Queen dedicated to all things Belgian.

GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER ANNUAL FOOD AND WINE EVENT

The Greater Houston Chapter of the Wine Society of Texas' Annual Food and Wine event was held on January 23rd at Charivari, recently recognized for Excellence by Zagat Survey with 29 points for food. The theme was "Get Hungry for Hungarian Food." The venue consisted of an authentic five course Hungarian meal, appetizer, and a different Hungarian wine with each course. Phillip Arnoff, Honorary Consulate General of the Republic of Hungary, was in attendance to discuss Hungary, tourism and the Hungarian wine industry.

Overall the members and guests indicated they had a good time and it was a different experience. In taking a poll of the members the favorite courses seemed to be the Smoked Rainbow Trout over Granny Smith with grated Horseradish aux Gratin and Red Beet Salad and the Smoked Goose Filet over Walldorf Salad. The Hungarian wines which we sampled were new to the membership, other than those who had travelled to Hungary. The country's wines still lack balance in comparison to some of their other Central European neighbors, such as Germany and Austria. (See the below listed links for more information on Hungary wines.) The best pairing, in this writer's opinion, was the Smoked Trout and Bodvin, Tokaji Sargo Furmint.



During the event, Jim Dixon, Ned Vedietto and Mer-

ril Markley shared their experiences of visiting Hungary and tasting their wines.

I would like to thank members of the American Wine Society who were in attendance for supporting our event. I would also like to thank John and Marie Schuster for opening up their restaurant on Sunday and treating us to a wonderful evening. Also thanks to the staff for great service. At the event, we were able to collect donations of \$190 for the Wine Society of Texas Scholarship Fund. The big question now, is which country's wines should we pursue in 2012 when we hold our annual Food and Wine Event?

Hungarian Wines

www.vinography.com/archives/2008/07/hungarian_wine_on_my_doorstep.html

www.gotocentraleurope.com/travel-themes/food-wine/hungary.aspx

<http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/food/2009/04/the-wines-of-hungary-the-next-big-thing/>

http://www.hotelonlinehungary.com/hungary/wine_regions.htm



Phillip Arnoff

RESTAURANTS CARRYING TEXAS WINES

Artista – Houston	Pappa’s Seafood House
Cabernet Grill in Fredricksburg Texas	Patronella's - 813 Jackson Hill (BYOW) Houston
Carmelo’s In Houston & Austin	Peche – Kirby and West Alabama (Inwood Estate Palamino-Chardonnay)
Catalan - Houston	REEF - Travis and McGowen Houston
Charivari – Bagby and McGowen	Salt Grass Steak House Nation Wide
Cotton Patch Restaurant Bryan & College Station	T’Afia - 3701 Travis, Houston
Crescent Moon Wine Bar –The Woodlands	Taste of TX
Jack Allen's Kitchen – Austin, Texas	The AT&T Center Austin
Mockingbird Bistro - 1985 Welch Street (McPherson Cellars Viognier)	The Barbed Rose in Alvin
Omni Hotel Houston Post Oak	Volare Italian Restaurant - Brenham

CATALAN WINES USA TASTING

On February 23rd members of our chapter were invited to a tasting and presentation event in the launch of Catalan Wines USA, at The Tasting Room Uptown Park. CATALAN WINES USA (www.catalanwinesusa.com) is the new platform for the promotion of Catalonian wines in the United States, sponsored by the Government of Catalonia’s Spain Trade Office. The platform included a group of 10 wineries which presented three new wines each. Together they offered an interesting mixture of some of the 12 different DO’s of Catalonia. The 30 wines are neutrally imported into the U.S. and stored in a central warehouse in New Jersey, available to be distributed throughout the U.S. market.

We assessed and commented on the wines. Our notes are listed below:

The Catalan area has a long wine making tradition and was the birthplace of the sparkling wine *Cava*, invented in the early 1870s.

Of all the cavas, some of the members truly enjoyed the Rosé Semi Reserva. The few whites we sampled were very sweet except for one.

A Chardonnay, Caligo Essencia, a bronze medal winner in the 2010 “International Wine Competition Vinoble” was very sweet. All of the members indicated they had never tasted a Chardonnay that sweet. It was too sweet for our palates.

Mayol Viticultors has some red Grenache blends which were good but pricey.

Wines offered by Falset-Marca seem to be the biggest hit. The first one tasted was a 2006 Martius Old Vines, 50% Red Grenache, 25% Carignan, and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. Next they served a 2008 Martius Red Grenache which was Red Grenache with 10% Carignan. The last was a dessert wine called 2007 Martius Tradition, 100% Red Grenache. This was a late harvest dessert wine which had been rated 91 in Penin 2009.



MESSINA HOF NEWS

BY PAUL BONARRIGO



Spring has sprung in Texas. WOW, you can watch the plants growing. Each and everyday they grow 1 to 2 inches. Now the Lord needs to provide us with some rain. Budbreak was 2 weeks later than usual thanks to the coldest January in history. It is also one of the latest Easters that we have ever had. The wife's tale is beware of an Easter freeze.

In February we went to Lubbock to check for any winter damage from the coldest freeze that Lubbock has seen since 1991. Thanks to gradual dormancy I am happy to report that all of the plants look great.

The plans for Fredericksburg are coming along. The plans for the B&B will be 4 distinctive suites. We have already found an incredible wine press screw that dates to 900 years. Our completion day in October is still on target.

The new wines for spring release include 2010 Primitivo, 2010 Simillon Barrel Fermented, 2010 Gewurztraminer, 2010 Unoaked Chardonnay and Private Reserve Chardonnay, 2010 Muscato, 2010 Merrill's Vineyard Muscat Canelli, 2009 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, plus 2007 Paulo Shiraz, Just to name a few. Messina Hof Vineyard has undergone a face lift with a new trellis system.

2011 has provided Messina Hof with the opportunity to take our wines to the world. Portugal, Virginia, Italy, and Telluride are just the beginning. It is time for our wines to gain a national and international stage. If we are blessed with another great crop in 2011, then we will need to be looking for out of state markets to sell our wines.

The plans for
Fredericksburg
are coming along.
The plans for the
B&B will be 4
distinctive suites.
Paul Bonarrigo

TEXAS WINE INDUSTRY IN TROUBLE

Please note comments from Russ Kane regarding potential cuts in development funding for the Texas Wine industry. As indicated the amount of money at risk is small in comparison to the return to the industry and the state. Please review and if you see fit, please take the recommended action suggested and pass on to any other wine consumers you know who may have an interest. - Ed

Legislators poised to cut ALL development funding Texas wine. Risk \$1.7 Billion for \$4.5 million cut. For details and background see: <http://vintagetexas.com/blog/?p=4214>

This is a seminal moment for the Texas wine industry. As I said in the blog, legislators just don't understand both sides of the booking ledger. In this taste, the \$4.5 M underwrites and is expanding the \$1.7 B in economic impact. After the cuts, if the 1.7 B slides to \$1.0 that's \$750 M in the hole. Basically, if they zero out the Texas Department of Agriculture budget for Texas wine, they will lose all personnel now connected to research, education, vit/eno extension, and marketing. We will be back at square one and lose all that was built. This is not a cut back, it is a total house wrecking of TDA's wine program. Bet the "booze boys" are loving it. TXWine has fought them at every turn for the past 30 years.

TEXAS WINES THAT MEDALED AT THE 2011 SAN FRANCISCO WINE COMPETITION

Bar Z (Canyon, TX) – 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon – Bronze
Becker Winery (Fredericksburg, TX) – 2008 Claret –
Silver, 2009 Fume Blanc – Bronze, 2009 Pro-
vencal - Bronze

Brennan Vineyards (Comanche, TX) – 2009 Viognier –
Gold, 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon – Silver, Aus-
tin Street Red – Bronze

Bruno & George Winery (Sour Lake, TX) - Fruit Wine –
Silver

Grape Creek Vineyard (Fredericksburg, TX) -2009 Mus-
cat Canelli – Silver, Port – Silver, 2008 Bellis-
simo –Silver, 2008 Cabernet/Syrah – Sil-
ver, 2008 Mosaic – Bronze, 2009 Cabernet
Blanc – Bronze, 2009 Cuvee Blanc – Bronze,
2008 Cabernet Trois

sSource -<http://www.sfwinecomp.com>

WINES WE LIKE FOR \$20 OR LESS

I was recently talking to a member of our chapter who suggested we start publishing a list of wines for \$20 or less which we enjoyed, to share with the membership and our readers. Below you will find our first listing of wines, based on the person's own personal taste or likes. We plan to publish this list in every newsletter regardless of how short or long. Please feel free to submit your recommendations to edent24@aol.com and it will be included.

Becker Vineyard Voigner
Blackstone Pinot Noir
Bottega Moscato Spumante Dolce Wine Sparkling Wine
Chateau L'Ermitage 2010, (White Rhône)
Hedges, Columbia Valley CMS 2008
Flat Creek Estate Bucking Horse White
Francis Ford Coppola Merlot
Grape Creek 2009 Pinot Grigio
Haak Winery 2009 Blanc du Bois (Dry) – Green Label
Louis Martini Cabernet Sauvignon
Messina Hof Barrel Reserve Cabernet Franc
Penfolds, Koonunga Hills Shiraz
Père Anselme Viognier 2004
Pleasant Hill Winery's 2008 Sangiovese
Rutherford Hill Merlot from Napa Valley

HUNGARIAN WINE

Varieties

Hungary is blessed with a plethora of indigenous grape varieties hailing from the Carpathian Basin, that produce the full spectrum of wines, from the fresh and fragrant to the deep and intense. Quite simply they produce wines of original and complex character that you won't find elsewhere. Of the international varieties, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with the two reds often in tandem in blends, undeniably produce some of Hungary's best wines. However, the usually lesser coveted Cab, Cabernet Franc, takes on extra taste dimensions in Hungarian soil. Pinot Gris (known locally as Szukebarát) also captures Hungary's trademark minerality and brings it to the wine in the glass.

Olaszrizling

The most widely planted variety in Hungary has refreshing acids and a bitter almond character. It works well for making fresh and crisp, easy-drinking reductive dry wines, but also can be rich and complex when fermented and aged in oak. Olaszrizling, known as Welschriesling to the Austrians, is not to be confused with Riesling, which is known as Rajnai rizling in Hungarian, although the pair are often blended to great effect by Lake Balaton winemakers. Widespread, with the notable exception of Tokaj.

Furmint

Hungary's most noble white grape variety excels in making everything from bone-dry whites to being the central component of the sumptuously sweet Tokaji Aszús. Its thin-skinned closely-packed medium-sized berries are prone to attack from highly prized "noble rot," i.e. botrytis. This late ripening varietal, which takes up 60% of Tokaj's vineyard, typically provides the elegant, but firm backbone of Tokaji Aszú. Furmint is now firmly established in the region as a full-bodied, often steely, dry white thanks to its ability to extract the volcanic character of Tokaj soil. In the best cases it captures the individual character of a particular vineyard. In Somló it often produces outstanding full-bodied, mineral rich, dry whites that are highly prized on the local market and, like those from Tokaj, age well for years.

Hárslevelű

This Carpathian native combines brilliantly with Furmint in Tokaji Aszú, usually taking up a lesser share in the blend and accounts for some 30% of the region's vines. It typically gives the final Aszú blend more enticing aromas and added depth and spiciness on the palate. Its loosely-packed thick-skinned berries are less likely to be attacked by botrytis in drier years than Furmint, but it's less likely for the noble rot to turn to malignant rot in wet years. Like Furmint, Hárslevelű is also becoming established as a dry white in Tokaj, though it has long been a popular dry white from the volcanic and mineral rich soils of Somló. Linden Leaf, to give the grape an English moniker, is also found in Eger.

Irsai Olivér

Anything but an ancient variety, this early ripening Muscat-like hybrid of Pozsonyi Fehér and Csaba Gyöngye was created in 1930 and shows that Hungarian winemaking also has its roots in the not so distant past. Pungent and perfumed on the nose, then fresh and fruity on the palate with mineral notes in the usual dry finish; Irsai Olivér is made to be drunk young. It is sometimes blended with Chardonnay to give it extra weight and sometimes acidity. However, it is increasingly sought in its single-varietal form and is extremely popular for its impressive price to quality ratio.

HUNGARIAN WINE

Királyleányka

A crossing of Kövérszőlő, i.e. the "fat" grape which sometimes plays a supporting role in Tokaji Aszú, and Leányka, Királyleányka is floral and fruity with plenty of primary grape character. Translated as the "Little Princess", this Transylvanian originating grape has an elegant lightness of touch with plenty of thirst quenching stone fruit notes on the palate. Made in dry and semi-sweet styles, it's very common in Eger, Etyek, Mátra, Mór and Neszmély. It is usually made to be drunk young.

Kékfrankos

Hungary's most widely planted red grape usually forms the backbone of Eger's and Szekszárd's Bikavér blends and also makes expressive and distinctive single varietal wines. With supple tannins and good acidity it is capable of long ageing and is enhanced by maturation in oak. Kékfrankos is abundant in dark cherry and fruits of the forest notes, and often exudes a spicy, peppery character, especially in Sopron and Szekszárd. Like white Olaszrizling, Kékfrankos has succeeded in casting off its mass production image from the collectivisation of the former system and has benefited immensely from later ripening and being harvested in lower yields. Across the border in Austria, it is known as Blaufrankisch where it is also gaining international recognition.

Kadarka

This light colored red is normally low in tannins but has vibrant acidity, rustic and raspberry aromas, and a spicy aftertaste that makes it an ideal easy drinking wine. However, when made from lower yields it can be complex and concentrated with delicious notes of sweet spice present on the otherwise floral and intensely red-fruit rich palate. Kadarka is an important but small component of Szekszárdi Bikavér, prized for the piquant edge it delivers to the blend and has also been replanted in Eger for the same purpose. Kadarka, known in Bulgaria as Gamza, has been present in Hungary since it arrived with Serbs fleeing an Ottoman invasion in the late 16th Century. Up until the 1960's it accounted for two-thirds of red grape plantings, but then was almost wiped out as this tricky to cultivate grape was not deemed fit for the mass production required by communism collectivisation.

Portugieser

This thin-skinned early-ripeners thrives down south in the hottest Hungarian region of Villány. Rustic in character, it makes essentially easy-drinking wines packed with primary and ripe red fruit flavors marked by thirst quenching acids. It is a fresh wine that's generally made to be drunk young. The Portugieser grape was known as Kékoportó until EU regulation decreed in 2004 that the name had to be changed for treading too close each year.

Cabernet Franc

Not an indigenous Hungarian of course, but the grape that typically plays a supporting role to more prestigious Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot is coming into its own in Villány, Szekszárd, Eger and part of Lake Balaton. Cabernet Sauvignon's less decorated sibling produces dense, meaty, and juicy wines with super smooth tannins that can even display even more complexity than Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. This is no mean feat that those two have produced many of Hungary's most acclaimed reds. An earlier ripener than Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc gives off mocha, dark chocolate, red and black fruit aromas and has a soft, but full bodied texture. It is increasingly the key component of Bordeaux style blends. ely to that of the Portuguese fortified wine. It most probably came to Hungary with winemaking Germanic settlers as opposed to the often wrongly assumed Portuguese, and plays a role in Hungarian winemaking something akin to the Gamay of Beaujolais. The first wines from Portugieser are made for St. Martin's day on November 11

“HISTORY IN THE MAKING” AT HAAK VINEYARDS & WINERY

True to their tagline, Haak Vineyards & Winery is not only “history in the making,” but history’s been made and Haak is drinking to it. The Haak 2010 Estate Reserve Blanc du Bois was produced using grapes grown solely from Haak vineyards—a first for this family-owned winery located inside Galveston County. Haak was able to produce enough grape material for the first time since their opening in 2000 from their own estate, to make their award-winning Reserve Blanc du Bois. The grape quickly gained popularity with Texas winemakers because of its resilience to Pierce’s disease and the ability to produce a healthy crop in this warm, humid climate.

“This wine is special because our year-round efforts are actually a part of it,” said Haak’s winemaker, Nadia Hetzel. “We take special care of our vineyards, knowing we can fully steer the quality of the wine by our performance out there each year.”

Every summer, Haak invites the public to come to the vineyard and help harvest in the unforgiving July heat. Everyone who participated last July will be happy to know they can now purchase a piece of their hard work on

“HISTORY IN THE MAKING” AT HAAK VINEYARDS & WINERY

Raymond Haak

store shelves. But when Haak makes history, they don't just stop there.

“Not only were we excited to work with our own grapes to produce an amazing wine, but we also made Haak history by testing a new technique,” said Hetzel. “It’s a technique that was previously known to keep Riesling bright and fruity while allowing it to go through a secondary fermentation. This creates an elegant and aromatic white wine that also exhibits microbial stability. This is a huge plus in our humid climate and helps us keep our sulfite levels down.”

The 2010 Estate Reserve Blanc du Bois completed first and secondary fermentation around the same time (also known as co-fermentation). This allowed for the usual tropical fruit character and added complexity without the typical drawbacks of secondary fermentation, which has a tendency to overpower fruitiness with the buttery creaminess caused by the creation of malic acid. The result is a beautiful white wine with extraordinary balance without being overly supple or muted. While maintaining the wonderful Blanc du Bois character of citrus and grapefruit, this wine entices with overtones of ripe pear and candied pineapple.

Established in 2000, **Haak Vineyards & Winery** is an award-winning, family-owned winery located in Santa Fe, Texas. With Founders Gladys and Raymond Haak and Winemaker Nadia Hetzel at the helm, Haak has become most known for producing two unique wines from two grapes that are new to the wine world, including Blanc du Bois, a grape with Florida origins, and the Black Spanish or Jacquez grape, which produces a particularly distinctive wine, Haak Madeira. The first and only winery in Galveston County, Haak is open to the public where tours and tastings are offered daily.

Nadia Hetzel

Winemaker

Haak Vineyards & Winery

6310 Ave T

Santa Fe, TX 77510

CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE SECOND QUARTER—2011

April 1st

Wine and Stars Dinner at Haak Vineyards – 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset

April 2nd

Jammin in the Vineyard at Flat Creek Estates – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
First Saturday Wine Dinner at Flat Creek Estates – 6 p.m.
Texas Bluebonnet Wine Trail
Food and Wine Dinner at Haak Vineyards – 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

April 3rd

Texas Bluebonnet Wine Trail

April 5th

Israel Wine Tasting at Crescent Moon Wine Bar – 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

April 8th

Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset
Food for Thought Dinner at Flat Creek Estate - 6 p.m.

April 9th

Texas Bluebonnet Wine Trail
Jammin in the Vineyard at Flat Creek Estates – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Brenner's Wine Fest – 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

April 10th

Texas Bluebonnet Wine Trail

April 14th to April 17th

Galveston Island Food and Wine Festival - <http://www.galveston.com/021110/>

April 16th

Texas Bluebonnet Wine Trail
Jammin in the Vineyard at Flat Creek Estates – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

April 17th

Texas Bluebonnet Wine Trail
Wine Appreciation Class at Messina Hof Winery

April 22nd

Spring Release Dinner at Messina Hof Winery – 6:30 p.m.
Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset

CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE SECOND QUARTER—2011

April 23rd

VIP Reception at Messina Hof Winery – 10 a.m. -12 p.m.
Annual Wine and Rose Festival at Messina Hof Winery – 12:00 – 6 p.m.
Jammin in the Vineyard at Flat Creek Estates – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

April 27th – May 1st

Grand Food and Wine Affair in Sugar Land - <http://blogs.wherethelocalseat.com/?tag=/food+and+wine+affair>

April 29th

Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset

April 30th

Czech Festival at Haak Vineyards – 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.

May 6th

Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset

May 7th

First Saturday Wine Dinner at Flat Creek Estates – 6 p.m.

May 13th

Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset

May 15th

Concert at Haak Winery – 6 -8:30 p.m.

May 20th

Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset

May 27th

Wine Down on the Deck at Pleasant Hill Winery – 3 p.m. to sunset

May 29th

Concert at Haak Winery – 6 -8:30 p.m.

June 4th

Food and Wine Dinner at Haak Vineyards – 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
First Saturday Wine Dinner at Flat Creek Estates – 6 p.m.

June 5th

Concert at Haak Winery – 6 -8:30 p.m.

June 6th – June 12th

Wine & Food Week in The Woodlands - <http://woodlandsevents.com/shopping/market-st/wfw2011.html>

June 12th

Concert at Haak Winery – 6 -8:30 p.m.

June 19th

Concert at Haak Winery – 6 -8:30 p.m.



WINELOVERS CAN WIN WINE WITH A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT BY RON SAIKOWSKI / HOUSTON WINE WALK

Posted: Wednesday, March 30, 2011, reprinted with permission of the author.

As the Texas Wine Industry increases its production, Texas wines will be sold more and more through the three-tier system where TABC-licensed distributors distribute those wines.

The three tiers are manufacturing (wineries), the distributor and the retailers (wine shops, wine bars, restaurants, etc.). The problem with most Texas distributors (not all) is that they enter into distribution contracts with Texas wineries and do not perform as promised and/or implied.

Most Texas distributors like to have a large portfolio of wines and really focus on the wines from wineries with large advertising budgets. As a result, those small wineries from Texas, California, and other areas just do not get distributed to the stores since the wine shops and restaurants do not normally know about those wines.

It takes one-on-one sales to introduce those obscure Texas brands. As a result, Texas winemakers hit the road to visit these wine shops, wine bars, and restaurants. I accompanied one such winemaker recently.

Each place we visited was impressed with the quality of his Texas wines and requested one to several cases. The winery then told their distributor about those request, but the wines NEVER got to those retail outlets. As a result, the Texas winery never got the sales after several days of visiting retailers and pouring wine samples for evaluations. So what is a Texas winery to do? It is ALL about the consumer, being YOU!

I have a homework assignment for you with a reward for the best 12 respondents over the month of April. Your homework will consist of trying to get Texas wines in wine shops, restaurants, and in wine bars. Try any one or all of these assignments:

As you shop for wine at your favorite wine shop, review the location and number of Texas wines in those shops. Ask your wine steward why he has so few Texas wines to sell? Normally these wines are in the BACK of the shop. Encourage them to display and sell the Texas wines in the FRONT of the store where customers can purchase them!

When you order that local Gulf Seafood or steak or local cuisine from your favorite restaurant, buy a glass of Texas wine to pair with their food. Local foods pair best with local wines. However, more than likely, the restaurant will either have no Texas wines or a token one or two Texas wines on a very large wine list. If so, ask the manager to explain why this is happening. Doesn't the restaurant believe that local wines should be available to pair with their local foods? I asked the manager at Landry's Restaurant this same question and followed up on their website with the same question. In a week, I had a manager call me inviting me back to the restaurant to try out several of their Texas wines now on the menu!

Ask for a Texas wine when you come into a Texas wine bar. If they have none, ask them to get Texas wines. If they say, we don't have Texas wines because they are not good, please have them contact me. Texas wines are winning awards and have excellent values. However, if that wine bar turns up their nose at Texas wines, then you know you have entered a place of snobbery.

Most places will respond with a statement of "Well, Texas wines do not sell." First, if these Texas wines are not on the wine list, how can they sell? Secondly, what efforts are being done to sell Texas wines? Third, don't local foods pair

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better with local wines?

Now your assignment, please forward me your experiences via email. The top 12 experiences will get an autographed bottle of one of my recently bottled wines. These wines are not available for sale, but will be bestowed on the top 12 homework assignments. By the way, 12 winners will be announced which just happens to be a case! I'll toast to that! Please email me your homework assignments to rsaikowski@comcast.net. My decision will be final with several top experiences to be included in my upcoming wine columns. Class dismissed!

Ron Saikowski writes about wine and wine events for HERE. He may be reached at rsaikowski@comcast.net.

LINK PAGE

I am not certain why, but some of the embedded internet links do not translate correctly when our Microsoft Publisher source document is printed to its final PDF format. To help preserve these valuable reference links provided by our authors, I am going to start including a link page. If you have any problems with any of the internet links in the newsletter, please check here for the original connection.

Thanks, Dave

P.16 [Wine & Food Week](#)

<http://www.wineandfoodweek.com/>

EDITOR'S CORNER

Spring has sprung in Texas. The wisteria and azaleas are in bloom. It's already into the 80s during the day.

The Wine Society of Texas' Greater Houston Chapter had a wonderful Annual Food and Wine Event at Charivari in January. We have great ideas for super wine events through out the year. Please join us for great wine tasting, fine dining, and fun with old friends and new members who are oenophiles.

We've added a few new features in this newsletter such as Bargain Wines Under \$20, Restaurants that Serve Texas Wines, and a Calendar of Wine-related Events. Please let us know how you like our new features or if there is something else you would like us to add.

The articles in this newsletter were created by members, winery owners, vintners, wine aficionados and friends of the Wine Society of Texas' Greater Houston Chapter. Thank you for your continued support. We are always looking for additional wine-related articles. What can you share? Perhaps you found a fantastic food and wine pairing, a wine bar with boutique wines or don't mind sharing a favorite recipe incorporating wine. Perhaps you found a bargain wine for under \$20 that you want to share with the Wine Society of Texas' members. Or share your favorite restaurant that serves Texas wines. Or tell us about your recent wine adventures both local and while you were traveling.

I wish you a sunny spring Texas day, a wonderful meal with a great Vinho Verde or your favorite spring wine.

Cheers-Tenley Fukui

THE WINE SOCIETY OF TEXAS - GREATER HOUSTON

WWW.WINESOCIETYOFTEXAS.ORG

Wine Appreciation Through Education

Newsletter E-mail:

winesoctxhoustonnewsitr@live.com

6 More Common Wine Questions

FROM SERVING TEMPS
TO DEFINING "OFF-DRY"

If you have six questions you would like to have answered about wines, please review them in this article taken from [snooth.com](http://www.snooth.com), dated March 14, 2011, on the six more common wine questions. Found very informative for people at all wine levels.—Ed

Read more: http://www.snooth.com/articles/commentary/6-more-common-wine-questions/?utm_campaign=2924&utm_medium=email&utm_source=all&utm_content=6368#ixzz1Gg9KLei9

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