

# HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPE VINE

1 APRIL 2009

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

WINE SOCIETY OF TEXAS — 13TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT	2
WHICH TEXAS WINE GOES WITH THE "BIG APPLE"	3
HOMAGE TO A BIG CHEESE IN BRIE	4
POULARDE AU CIDRE ET MOUTARDE	4
HAAK WINERY TO HOST 13TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT IN MAY	5
NEWS FROM MESSINA HOF	6
HERB MITCHELL'S CHICKEN AND RED WINE SAUCE	6
NIKI'S TOP TIPS FOR FINDING THE BEST VALUE WINE	7
OPEN THAT BOTTLE NIGHT	8
EDITOR'S CORNER	9
WINE AND FOOD PAIRING FOR EVERY DAY	9

## PRESIDENTS COMMENTS ON THE LEIBMAN'S WINE EVENT



The Houston Chapter of the Wine Society of Texas had its first event of the year on January 24th. The event was held in conjunction with Leibman's Wine and Fine Foods on Memorial. Enrique Toso, winemaker for Pascual Toso Winery in Argentina, was present to meet and greet, discuss

his wines and sign bottles. Upon arriving there was a small reception with sparkling wine and appetizers. We were then treated to a three course meal, served with the following wines, Pascual Toso Sauvignon Blanc, Pascual Toso Malbec and Robertson's Late

Harvest Riesling. Enrique also shared with us the fact that it is very inexpensive to travel to Argentina and urged us to visit his winery. Our event was sold out with 38 people in attendance. Everyone mentioned that it



Mrs. Leibman

was very well done and we look forward to future Wine Society events.



Enrique Toso—Winemaker

## WINE SOCIETY OF TEXAS – 13TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT



The Wine Society of Texas will be celebrating their 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009 at Haak Winery 6310 Ave. T, Santa Fe, Texas Phone: 409. 925.1401. The event will include a tour of Haak Winery, Silent Auction for Wine Society of Texas Scholarship Fund, and a Food and Wine Pairing.

The schedule will be as follows:

- 6 p.m. – Tour of Haak Winery and small tasting every 10-20 minutes for groups of 20  
Silent Auction begins
- 7 p.m. – Wine and Food Pairing, see the menu below

**Appetizers:**

Toast Point with Smoked Mozzarella and Tomato Marmalade  
Wine: Haak Blanc du Bois Dry

**Salad Course:**

Spring Mix Salad w/ Balsamic, Grape and Pecan Vinaigrette Finished with Goat Cheese  
Wine: Haak Blanc du Bois Reserve

**Main Course:**

Garlic Peppercorn Crusted Pork Loin  
Daikon Radish Mashed Potatoes  
Sautéed Chinese Long Beans  
Wine: Haak Tempranillo

**Dessert Course:**

Cigars and Coffee (playful dessert)  
Wine: Haak Jacquez Madeira

Total Cost - \$65.00 per guest  
Tax and Gratuity included

Reservations must be prepaid at 409-925-1401, ext 105  
Credit card number must be given to hold reservation and must be made by April 26, 2009

- 9 p.m. – Silent Auction closes and winners announced.

For those who will need hotel reservations a group rate of \$104.00 including complimentary breakfast, has been negotiated at Holiday Inn Express, Texas City, 409-986-6700



**WHICH TEXAS WINE GOES WITH THE “BIG APPLE”****A PREVIOUS EVENT ORGANIZED BY MEMBERS OF THE WINE SOCIETY OF TEXAS, HOUSTON CHAPTER.**

It was a brisk fall evening in Manhattan when we arrived at Trio Restaurant and Wine Bar. My wife, Delia and I had arrived in the “Big Apple” the previous day to make sure that all was ready to give New Yorkers what would likely be their first taste of the best ‘juice’ Texas had to offer.

Trio Restaurant proprietor Johnny Ivanac and Houstonians Ed and Sandra Dent (Wine Society of Texas members) graciously made arrangements to bring a selection of Texas wines from two award winning Texas wineries (Messina Hof Wine Cellars – Bryan, Texas; Becker Vineyards – Stonewall, Texas) to pair with Trio’s exquisite cuisine. The event was well attended and staged in the private and intimate, lower dining room at Trio.



Apprehension ran high but these were trusting people, as they appeared to be more “Texas-curious” oenophiles than experienced Texas wine drinkers when they arrived. To start the event, we decided to keep the New Yorkers in their comfort zone with a long pour of Long Island Champagne while we exchanged greetings and got comfortably seated in the dining room.



The first course was a cold seafood salad with clams, New Zealand mussels, calamari, octopus and shrimp served with Messina Hof Barrel Reserve Chardonnay. The salad was followed by Trio’s Strukli: handmade ravioli filled with goat milk ricotta, pine nuts, raisins & salt cod, topped with a roasted garlic beurre fondue served with Becker Vineyards Reserve Chardonnay. The main courses included boneless lamb shank over creamy white polenta paired with Messina Hof Private Reserve Merlot, and grilled sirloin medallions crowned with broccoli rabe and gorgonzola cheese paired with Becker Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Iconoclast 2001.

After the main courses, the dessert included lemon cheesecake with Becker Vineyards Muscat Canelli and chocolates served with Messina Hof Reserve Papa Paulo Port. A quick after dinner poll showed that the attendees were from the New York and New Jersey area (one traveling 50 miles specifically for this wine dinner). Some had read about Texas wines previously, but none had tasted Texas wines before....Now that’s trust! Several attendees indicated that they didn’t even know that Texans made wine, but the event announcement upped their curiosity.

The overwhelming opinion after the dinner was that Texas has some world-class wines that could compete with wines from other better known wine regions. Each wine worked especially well with the food pairing. The Messina Hof Chardonnay had a fresh crispness that augmented the acidity of the seafood salad while the Chardonnay from Becker had a buttery quality that interlaced with the creamy sauce served over the ravioli. Further, the soft, round yet well structured Messina Hof Merlot was a wonderful complement with the rich, flavor-infused braised lamb shank, and the Becker Cabernet Sauvignon married well with the grilled sirloin.

By vote of the attendees, the real hit of the night for the non-Texans were the two dessert wines. Never had they thought that Texas could provide the highly aromatic and floral Muscat and the rich red Port. These were the stars that shone very bright that night deep in the heart of Manhattan. The attendees at this dinner were in full agreement that this Texas wine dinner needs to be held again. Well, members....what do you think?

A special thanks to Russ Kane for this article—check out his wine blog at <http://vintagetexas.com/blog>

## HOMAGE TO A BIG CHEESE IN BRIE

By Meril Markley

Does anyone recall a series on the Travel Channel from a dozen years ago called “The Flavors of France?” In it the host traveled to a region, visited the sights, and filmed renowned local chefs as they prepared signature dishes in their restaurant kitchens. Episode 37 focused on Paris and the region to the east, featuring a dish called *poularde au cidre et moutarde* (chicken with cider and mustard). We loved the series, especially this episode as we could almost smell the chicken browning and the essence of leeks, carrots and onions in a sauce of cider, mustard and cream wafting from the skillet. Yum! My husband, Michael (chef at our house), was able to fashion a version that has become a beloved dish for friends and family. So, in anticipation of a recent business trip to France, we decided to try and track down the restaurant and say thanks, in person, to our hero.

Owing to the wonders of the internet and some cyberspace detective work, I found a hotel and restaurant listed on a French website and sent an inquiry. Chef Christian Berton wrote back and confirmed that yes, he had made the *poularde*, and he was delighted that anyone in America had seen the show, much less remembered his

signature dish. He still owned La Chaum’ Yerres and would welcome us for lunch the following Friday.

On a damp and chilly December morning, we set out with our French friends, Brigitte and Michel, for the town of Chaumes-en-Brie (of cheese renown), about an hour’s drive from Paris. Despite being on the edge of town and surrounded by farmland, La Chaum’ Yerres was anything but a rustic hideaway and instead offered an elegant dining room decorated in shades of pink and rose. At lunchtime it was full – a family celebrating a birthday, businessmen on their way to a meeting, and numerous “regulars” choosing from a menu featuring locally grown items and an extensive wine list.

There was no *poularde* on the menu that day so we opted for a starter of *ris de veau* or veal sweetbreads in a light puff pastry and a main course of wild duck breast (*colvert sauvageon*) stuffed with *foie gras* and prepared at the table in a flaming finale. To accompany our meal, Michel chose a 2006 Pernand Vergeless from the Burgundy Region near Beaune, a deep purplish-red wine with enough heft to stand up to the robust flavors of a duck who has lived in the wild. To finish it all off, Michel opted for *crème brûlée*,



a masterpiece reflecting how local dairy products have distinctive flavors depending on what the cows eat, while Michael had *profiterolles* in a chocolate sauce so intense and fragrant we all had to have a taste.

After the meal, Chef Berton stopped by our table to chat and to tell us about his daughter who lives in Los Angeles. We hope he can stop in Houston on his way to visit her so we can introduce him to “The Flavors of Texas” and the wonders of Texas wines.

For more about La Chaum’ Yerres, photos of Chef Berton and his restaurant, and Michael’s version of the *poularde*, visit [www.mmarkley.com](http://www.mmarkley.com)

Next time – a road trip through Southern France in search of a Count’s elusive elixir...

### Poularde au Cidre et Moutarde

Taken from *The Flavors of France* on The Travel Channel

8 chicken thighs\*  
 1 onion, chopped  
 3 leeks, sliced in rings ¼ inch wide  
 1 bunch organic carrots, sliced in rings ¼ inch wide  
 1 bottle hard cider  
 Dijon mustard  
 Whipping cream  
 Duck fat  
 Pepper  
 Fry chicken in duck fat until lightly browned (about 15-20 minutes), turning as necessary. Remove from pan. Sauté carrots, leeks and onions in the duck fat and chicken juices (5-10 minutes). Put chicken back in pan with the vegetables. Add cider and pepper and bring to a simmer; cover and continue cooking for 45-60 minutes, turning the chicken at least once. Remove chicken and vegetables, separate out the fat from the other juices and add back to pan. Add cream and mustard to the juices to create the sauce. Continue cooking at medium heat for a few more minutes until sauce has begun to thicken. Place chicken and vegetables on a plate with rice and ladle sauce over vegetables and rice.  
 \*Original recipe calls for a chicken cut into parts, but we think thighs work best, and we leave the skin on throughout the cooking process

## HAAK WINERY TO HOST 13TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT IN MAY

Haak Winery is pleased to be asked to give you a big Texas welcome and host The Wine Society of Texas' Anniversary event in May. We hope you all will come see the vineyard, winery and visit with other Texas wine enthusiasts.



Like most Texas wineries, Raymond & Gladys Haak are pioneers for the Texas wine business. Both were born and raised in Texas and their wine interest started in 1969 when Gladys gave Raymond two grapevine plants as a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary gift. Over the years, they have had businesses in instrument fittings, storage warehouses, a convenience store and even dabbled in various inventions. Their love and interest in the wine business endured and in 1999, they designed and built a modern, Mediterranean style facility which reflects the winery's mission statement of offering "A Taste of the Old World in Galveston County". The facility sits on 12 acres including 3 acres of Blanc du Bois grapevines. The Haak's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary is in December of 2009; they have raised five daughters (two of whom work at the winery) and now they are raising a granddaughter.



The winery consists of over 11,000 square feet, including an 1,800 sq. ft. cellar, which is used for storing & aging wines in Oak Barrels. Grapes are purchased at various vineyards across Texas and they currently sell three white wines, two dessert white wines, six red wines, two blush wines and two red dessert wines from their Tasting Room which is open seven days a week and offers free tours and tastings and a gift shop. Their



list of awards continues to grow and recently their 2004 Madeira Jacquez was awarded a Gold Medal, Class Champion and Texas Class Champion in the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Wine Competition.

The winemaker, Raymond Haak, is not getting any younger and so to help continue their legacy, an exhaustive search for an assistant winemaker resulted in them hiring Nadia Hetzel in March of 2008. Originally hailing from Charleston, South Carolina, Nadia earned her degree in Enology and Viticulture at the University of Geisenheim. During her studies she interned at the prestigious Schloss Johannisberg in the wine region of Rheingau in Germany. Having lived in Germany for over 12 years, Nadia also completed a three year apprenticeship as vintner before embarking on her studies at the University. Now Nadia is pleased to be back in the United States where she enjoys learning more about Texas wines and being able to wear a cowboy hat in the vineyard.



The winery hosts many types of events including birthday parties, anniversary parties, company socials, chamber of commerce events, business luncheons and weddings. Just last month, a new wedding chapel, designed by Raymond, was built to enhance the wedding experience among the vines. They offer full service catering for all events including their concerts, festivals and dinner service which is open to the public almost every weekend. Their website contains all the details and can be accessed at [www.haakwine.com](http://www.haakwine.com). The Tasting Room is open Monday – Friday from 11-6 p.m., Saturday 11-7 p.m. and Sunday, 12-

6 p.m. Haak Winery hopes to meet all of you on May 2, 2009.

**NEWS FROM MESSINA HOF**

Spring has sprung and the vines are looking forward to another excellent vintage. Messina Hof vineyard in Bryan had bud break the second week of March. Flowers are blooming everywhere and the bluebonnets this year are amazing. Fields and roadways are carpets of blue.

2009 started with a bang. Messina Hof garnered 15 medals at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and 18 medals including Best of Show White at the San Antonio International Wine Competition. The Pinot Grigio received a Best Buy in the Wine Enthusiast April 2009 issue

and the Private Reserve Chardonnay received a Best Buy in Sante' magazine.

April is a beautiful month to visit the winery. Besides the annual Run thru the Vines held on April 18<sup>th</sup>, there are two "Three Perfect Day" weekends to experience.

Easter weekend is a great time to get out into the country side for a relaxing getaway to the Villa for a Toast the Sunset Friday, Massage-Wine&Dine Saturday, and quiet reflective Easter Sunday.

Wine and Roses Weekend, April 24<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup> celebrates Messina Hof's

32<sup>nd</sup> spring and the beginning of a new vintage. The Spring Release dinner on Friday night features the new wines debuted by winemaker Paul V. Bonarigo complemented with the "Vineyard Cuisine" created by Chef Eric and his Vintage House culinary team highlighting Texas' own Nolan Ryan Beef. Saturday's Wine and Roses festival is a day of wine, live music, grape stomping, "Bounty in our own Backyard" partners who produce all the wonderful produce and artisanal products from the Brazos Valley, and great food. Wine and Roses benefits the Brazos Valley Food Bank.

By Madelyn Fitzpatrick



**HERB MITCHELL'S CHICKEN AND RED WINE SAUCE**

**Ingredients:**

- 1T olive oil
- 1T minced garlic
- 3lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1T paprika
- 1C brown sugar
- 1C zinfandel wine
- Salt and pepper to taste (I also use Tony's)

**Directions:**

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over

medium high heat. Cook garlic in oil until tender. Place chicken in the skillet, and cook about 15 minutes on each side, until no longer pink and juices run clear.

2. Drain oil from skillet. Sprinkle chicken with paprika and 1 cup brown sugar. Pour red wine around chicken. Cover, and simmer about 30 minutes; lightly baste chicken with wine sauce while cooking. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**Messina Hof's Wine and Roses Weekend benefits the Brazos Valley Food Bank.**

Two great chicken recipes in one issue, what a bargain. I have already tried the chicken and cider and it was really good. This week I will try the chicken and red wine.

If you have a favorite wine related recipe, please send it in so that we can share it with the rest of the Wine Society.  
-David Cole

## NIKI'S TOP TIPS FOR FINDING THE BEST VALUE WINE

I know our economy is in a recession but really folks; do we have to succumb to recession wine? I say absolutely not! With all the fantastic values in our market today, no one should ever have to suffer through unsatisfactory juice. But how do we know which wine to choose? What is the best way to find more bang for your buck? And how can we be sure we are getting a quality product? Below I have listed my top 5 ideas on how to find the perfect juice for your budget AND your taste buds.

### 1. Get Off The Beaten Path! Find a new Region and Grape Varietal.....

Instead of reaching for that almost always pricey Napa Valley Cabernet, turn 180 degrees and head onto another continent. Trek deep into South America and look for fab finds in Argentina and Chile. Grab a Sauvignon Blanc or a Malbec instead of a Chardonnay or Merlot. You can even swim across the sea and land in Portugal or Spain to find amazing juice at even more amazing prices. Be adventurous

and you shall reap the rewards.

### 2. Read and Be Enlightened!

Pick up or subscribe to accredited wine magazines and journals such as Wine Enthusiast, Wine Advocate and Wine Spectator. Every month each of these magazines publishes its top rated best buys that help you save money. Pick and choose new and fun bottles without hurting your pocketbook. You can even call around to find who has the bottles you want to try, have them put them on hold and swoop in and out of the store in less than 5 minutes! Great for those who are on the go; not so great for the quintessential wine browser.

### 3. Find a Wine Consultant to Guide You to Greatness!

Get to know your local wine specialist or sommelier. We are here to guide you not only to items we know you like but also to help you discover more fun, daring and adventurous wines. Before you know it, you will be dreaming of wines you never knew how to pronounce

and your wallet will love you too!

### 4. Buy In Bulk So Your Wallet Won't Sulk!

Be conscious of certain price breaks your local wine store offers on bulk purchases. For instance, I always offer 10% off on purchases of 6 bottles or more and 15% off purchases of 12 bottles or more. This can lead to serious savings and less trips to the store which saves on gas as well.

### 5. Everyone Loves a Party!

Want an affordable way to try new wines, munch on free food and party down till dawn? Invite friends over for a potluck wine tasting. Have everyone bring a bottle of wine under \$20 and a cheese or food item that goes well with their wine. Set up a wine and food table and you're ready to live life to the fullest! This is the best way to try new affordable wines before you buy them. Instead of being stuck with bad juice, you get one hell of a mess to clean up! Cheers!

**NIKI NEWMAN IS THE SOMMELIER AT LIEBMAN'S WINE & FINE FOODS. 14529 MEMORIAL DRIVE, 77079**

Niki's top 5 ideas on how to find the perfect juice for your budget AND your taste buds.



## OPEN THAT BOTTLE NIGHT

**THIS WALL ST. JOURNAL ARTICLE BY DORTHY J. GAITER AND JOHN BRECHER IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT "OPEN THAT BOTTLE NIGHT" IS ALL ABOUT. OTBN CAN OCCUR ON ANY DAY OF YEAR AND WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR "OPEN THAT BOTTLE" EXPERIENCES.**

Open That Bottle Night 10, when all of us around the world finally pop open that wine we've been saving too long for a special occasion, was celebrated on Feb. 28. OTBN is a yearly event because we understand that sometimes it takes group support to open a very special bottle of wine. We've always said that the real point of OTBN, though, is that our most cherished bottles should be opened all year long for no reason except that life is worth celebrating every day. We don't do this often enough ourselves, but, when we do, we wonder why we don't do it more often. Consider this:

Our daughters both came home from college for holiday break and we had a wonderful time for a month. On the night before they both left, we decided to eat dinner at our favorite family place, a little Mexican joint where we've spent many nights together over the years. As we drove there, the snow picked up, blowing directly toward the windshield. When we finally got to the restaurant, it was closed for vacation. Because of the weather, we decided we'd better go home, though we had no plans for dinner.

Dottie volunteered that she had some frozen salmon and began to cook. The girls resumed their positions before the television to watch Tivoed episodes of "What Not to Wear" and "Take Home Chef." John checked out the wine cellar and quickly spotted a special wine: Robert König 2000 Rheingau Assmannshäuser Frankenthal Spätburgunder Kabinett Trocken. Germany is known for its white wines, but it makes a small amount of distinctive Pinot Noir -- called Spätburgunder -- and a hotspot for it is around Assmannshäusen, along the Rhine. A few years ago, we were so eager to taste this local specialty that we traveled there, girls in tow, to try the wines. We remember the wines and the warmth of the winemakers; the girls remember the horseradish, mustard and mayonnaise in tubes. We brought back far too many bottles, as we always do.

Spätburgunder is generally fairly light, with more charm than body, and it's not usually a wine we'd suggest for long-term cellaring. We hadn't drunk this wine because -- well, because it's one of those special wines that never get opened. John looked at the bottle. The fill was good, but the wine was quite light in color. He decided it would be perfect with the salmon. When he showed the bottle to Dottie, we both immediately started talking about our trip and that winery. And we both realized that we probably should have opened it some time ago.

We served the wine at cellar temperature. When we poured it, it had a brown and rosy tinge -- another indication that the wine might be past its peak. The nose was terrific: ephemeral, true Pinot fruit; plenty of earth; and, for a red, the most surprising smells of lychee and oranges. The nose also had a little funk, lest we forget it was Pinot Noir.

To our surprise, the wine was delicious, pretty much perfect. It seemed to have virtually no body at first, just taste, and the taste was a lovely balance of elegant, pure fruit and earth. It seemed less a liquid than an idea, so it touched us in very special places. As it opened and warmed, it actually gained a little bit of backbone and minerality. In a world of too many Pinot Noirs that love to strut, this wine was confident enough to lie back and be admired. It was simply beautiful.

Sometimes special wines are even more enjoyable when they're not treated like a big deal, with much anticipation and a feast planned around them. Maybe that's because they -- and we -- can just relax. They can simply taste good without all sorts of hopes and expectations surrounding them. Long after the formal OTBN is over this year, open a special bottle for no reason at all -- which may be the best reason of all.



**THE WINE SOCIETY OF  
TEXAS - HOUSTON**

WWW.WINESOCIETYOFTEXAS.ORG

Wine Appreciation Through Education

Newsletter E-mail:

winesoctxhoustonnewsltr@live.com

**EDITOR'S CORNER**

The articles in this newsletter were created by members and friends of The Wine Society of Texas. Our first quarter publication was three pages long and we have jumped to nine pages in the second quarter.

What do YOU have to contribute? A good food and wine pairing? A favorite recipe with wine? A wine trip that you took to the Texas Hill Country, California or France? Tell us about your "Open That Bottle Night."

Everyone has something to share and adding another page to the newsletter is easy. Approximately 700 words can fit on one page. Pictures are worth a thousand words, but will take up some of this space.

What is a "Wine Bar"? They seem to be appearing everywhere. Some can be really fancy (and expensive) and one that we went to a couple of weeks ago was just an old bar that decided to cash in on the wine bar craze. Next quarter we propose an exploration of this topic. Please send in your reviews of the local wine bars in your area.

Cheers—Tenley Fukui



**WINE AND FOOD PAIRING FOR EVERY DAY**

Jan Frisby sent in this find from the SPECS on 1960.

McManis 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon with Rib Eye

"Sometimes we just like to try random wines to see if they are any good. We were pleasantly surprised to find that for \$10 this was very good. We had it with Rib Eye and it seemed to go well with it. We looked it up on the Web and here is what we found"

*Winemaking Notes*  
Harvest dates for the 2007 Cabernet were from September 17 - October 9th with an average Brix at harvest of

24.6. The average fermentation on the skins for our 2007 was between 7-9 days, the resulting wine was pressed and left to finish fermentation in stainless steel tanks. The wine was then aged on new and used French and American Oak for 4-6 months.

*Tasting Notes*

Mirroring flavors, aromas and a bouquet of Blueberry, Blackberry, Mocha, Milk Chocolate and Toffee, give this wine a wonderful impact on the palate and nose. With the addition of a small amount of Petit Verdot and French Oak aging to further add complexity, the 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon is one of our best Cabernets to date.



*Technical Data:*

Alcohol:	13.5%
Total Acidity:	5.7g/L
pH:	3.6
Residual Sugar:	NA
Appellation:	California
Fermentation:	100% Stainless Steel
Barrels:	New and Used French and American Oak Aging
Vineyard:	Hill Creek, Nestor, Watts primarily