

Fall/Winter 2008

Fort Worth foodie

The Wine Issue



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Fort Worth foodie

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Just as the perfect bottle of wine enhances the flavors of a thoughtfully prepared meal, the unique restaurants of our city make Fort Worth come alive in our hearts and on our taste buds! What sets Fort Worth apart from the crowd is the true passion behind the independently owned establishments that add to the warmth that keeps us all coming back for more. You get more than a magnificent meal anywhere you go - there's a bit of history behind every bite.

With wine, we also have no shortage of venues to enjoy a bottle either on its own or along side a beautifully composed meal. From tucked away vineyards to downtown hot spots, we are so fortunate to have a myriad of choices with chefs, owners and staff who make us feel like family.



We are also fortunate to have Chefs Caris Turpen and Lanny Lancarte give us an early holiday gift by sharing some of their favorite recipes and wine pairings in this issue. So whether you are in the mood to serve or be served, pick up your wine glass - it's time to toast to good friends, good food and good times!

Cheers!

Crystal Willars
Editor-in-Chief

Healthy Holiday Eating

by Dr. Jason Redler



The holiday season is quickly approaching and many of us have already started making plans for our annual celebrations, which always include plenty of great dishes.

People often worry about putting on unwanted pounds this time of the year, but holidays don't have to mean unhealthy food choices that are high in calories and low in nutrition. With a little planning and smart choices, you can enjoy the holiday season without the unwanted weight gain.

Don't dine hungry! We tend to eat faster and more when we sit down to a meal if we're already starving. Consuming the correct number of meals and snacks at the right time of the day will speed metabolism and increase energy levels. We can all agree skipping meals throughout the day leads to overeating. If you're worried about overeating, then snack on fresh fruits and veggies before dinner to curb your appetite.

Watch your portion size; eat until you are satisfied not until you are stuffed. Walk the buffet or read the menu ahead of time to get an idea of what you really want. Start with a cocktail size plate and fill it with raw veggies and salad to start. Avoid meal choices such as fried foods, dressings, gravy and cream based soups. Fresh food is friendly food. During holiday celebrations desserts are all around and extremely tempting. Don't deny yourself. Just remember to only indulge in small portions and savor every mouthful.

We could all benefit from more energy especially during the hustle of the holiday season so choose meals wisely. Focus on the fun, not the feast!

Dr. Jason Redler has been optimizing the health of people in his Saginaw community since 2006. In addition to his daily practice, Redler Family Chiropractic holds weekly wellness classes with a goal to bring you better health through maximized living. For more information visit www.redlerfamilychiro.com

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Executive Chef / Winemaker

CARIS TURPEN



by Crystal Willars

Stray just a few miles off the beaten path and find yourself at the doorstep of LightCatcher Winery and Bistro with Cinematographer turned Chef/Winemaker, Caris Turpen. There are some similarities between these seemingly unrelated career choices.

"Both are a mixture of art and science put together," Turpen said. "Presentation matters in both of them as well as your understanding of how things work together. It's all organic in its own way."

Already an award-winning winery, it was decided that a menu would be added to attract customers to their tucked away location for more than a wine tasting. However, what Chef Turpen thought would be a simple offering of wine and cheese has now turned into a brilliant bistro-style menu that brings locals in for weekend lunches, winemaker dinners and Jazz Sundays that are a feast for all of the senses.

Drawing from her experiences across the globe, it is immediately obvious that passion is the main ingredient in making this menu so successful.

"I did not go to culinary school," Turpen said. "My grandparents had several small restaurants and I've been cooking for groups of people since I was little – making cioppinos and going to the wharfs in San Francisco to get fresh fish off the boats."

Fresh ingredients still have a starring role in making this superb menu.

"I source as many things locally as I can," she said. "We have our own vegetable garden where we pull herbs and tomatoes. Meats are sourced from a couple of places in Texas for beef, chicken, and game."

A prime example of how the careful selection of ingredients

come together to perfection is the house dressing that lightly coats the LightCatcher Salad. Taking months to develop, special thought was taken to ensure that only the best ingredients composed this item that has received many a request for bottling.

"I got the proportions down," Turpen said. "Then it came down to seeing what adjustments to make because it was all fresh ingredients - where the olive oil came from, what type of lemons we were using, where the tarragon was being harvested from."

This understanding of ingredients and their delicate balance is what Chef Turpen carries into every dish that comes out of the Bistro LightCatcher kitchen. This method also finds its way into the barrel as a balancing act of alcohol, fruit flavors, spiciness, and barrel tones.

"Food is the same way," she explained. "You want to balance your acids and your fats, your sweetness and your savoriness."

Whether it's the special spice blend on their bistro pecans or the marinade for a perfectly seared flank steak with grilled peaches, the food and suggested wine pairings truly do showcase the mindful regard taken into the ingredients that compose each.

"Chefs and winemakers are really purveyors of pleasure and you're entrusting me with my ability to deliver to you something that will enhance you and your ability to take from life what's available," Turpen said.

Chef Turpen is humble and quiet in her approach, but at the core she is a true Texas Wildcatter. You'll find, however, that there is no need to sing her own praises as the food and wine speaks for itself and will continue to call you back for more!

Lamb Shanks Chez LightCatcher

serves two



- 2 large lamb shanks, or 4 small
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 15 oz can diced tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 14 oz can beef broth
- 1 cup Orzo (rice-shaped pasta)
- olive oil
- dried oregano
- dried rosemary
- salt and pepper

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Rinse and dry shanks.
3. Rub shanks with salt, pepper and some garlic, then generously sop with olive oil. Let marinate for 1 hour.
4. Slowly sauté onion in olive oil until translucent, about 10 minutes.
5. Push onions aside. Raise heat and brown shanks.
6. Add remaining garlic during last minute of browning.
7. Add tomatoes and sugar and stir well. Add herbs and wine, stir again.
8. Cover pan. Put into preheated oven and bake for 45 minutes. Remove from oven.
9. Raise oven to 350°F. On stovetop, add broth and bring to simmer.
10. Add orzo and return to simmer. Cover, put back into oven for 30 minutes
11. Remove lid and bake uncovered for another 15 minutes.
12. Remove from oven, let rest 10 minutes.

Wine Pairing: LightCatcher 2004 Barrel Reserve Merlot

Sweet Curry Chicken Chez LightCatcher

serves two

- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 15 oz can diced tomatoes, juice included
- 1 12 oz can coconut milk, stirred to mix thick into thin
- 1 14 oz can chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp 'sweet' curry powder ('sweet' curry is an Indonesian style curry that is very light on chile powder - it is very flavorful but not hot)
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- salt and pepper to taste
- olive oil
- 4 chicken thighs, skinned
- 1 cup texmati or basmati rice

1. Sauté onion in olive oil until transparent.
2. Add garlic and sauté another 2 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes, curry powder, rosemary, coconut milk, chicken broth, sugar, salt and pepper.
4. Stir thoroughly. Simmer covered for 5 minutes.
5. Add rice and stir to cover evenly on bottom of pan.
6. Place chicken thighs on top of mixture, cover.
7. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour.
8. Remove from oven and let sit, covered, for 10 minutes.

Wine Pairing: LightCatcher 2007 Chardonnay

Upcoming LightCatcher Events

December

- Sunday, 7th - Jazz Sunday
- Saturday, 13th - Toys for Tots Christmas
- Sunday, 21st - Jazz Sunday

January

- Sunday, 4th - Jazz Sunday
- Sunday, 18th - Jazz Sunday

February

- Sunday, 1st - Jazz Sunday
- Friday, 13 & Saturday, 14 - Valentine's Dinners
(valentine reservations open in December)
- Sunday, 15th - Jazz Sunday

Winery phone: 817-237-2626
6925 Confederate Park Rd./FM 1886
Fort Worth, Texas 76108
info@lightcatcher.com



FLOW - Pay Attention! It's fun.

As a child of divorce, I spent twelve years shuttling between two households, two sets of values, two realities. When, during my parents' frequent spats, I was pressured to take sides—I froze. How could I choose when I loved them both?

I face a certain dilemma in the wine world that feels similar: on one side are producers declaring, "We must make wines of place! Of character! Uniquely quirky wines that sing of grape and terroir!"

On the other, you've got a multitude of consumers who want nothing of the kind. They couldn't tell a mountain vineyard from a valley one and the last thing they need is a new grape to learn. They want wines of predictability and simplicity, of style and fun.

When I take friends into my cellar and ask them to pick out the most appealing bottles, they almost all go for high-concept wines, the kind that put more care into branding and target audience than into the juice inside.

My friend Stefano Inama, an Italian Soave producer, watches me unwrap a California cabernet called Big Yellow. The accompanying PR calls it, "A smooth, soft ride inspired by a vintage taxi cab."

"How the hell can wine be inspired by a car?!" Stefano roars. His own, after all, is inspired by slowly-evolved native grapes, careful selection of slopes and soils and whatever weather God sees fit to hand him each year. I adore his wine. But I like Big Yellow, too, in a different way. The checker-cab label is cool

and the wine might not be unique or complex, but it tastes good.

So—oh, dear—whose side am I on? I find the answer in Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's classic book, *Flow*, which explores the glorious experience of losing one's self in an activity: Both.

The author makes a distinction between enjoyment and pleasure. Pleasure, he explains, is the passive experience of watching TV, eating a bag of Cheetos, or just having the appropriate brain centers electrically stimulated. Because you invest no psychic energy, pleasure is generally fleeting.

Enjoyment comes from activities of effort, like playing tennis and piano or closing a high-pressure business deal. At the time it might not even be pleasant, but afterwards, you want to do it again. It requires work, often training, and a deep investment of attention. The payoff—a sense of novelty, accomplishment and growth—is what makes enjoyment so satisfying. And why it often leads to flow. Almost everyone gets pleasure eating. But the serious gourmet, analyzing ingredients and noticing nuances we miss, truly enjoys it. Wine quenches your thirst, pleases your mouth and gives a buzz. But if you dive deeper, it can also be your

ticket to flow.

If you find wine geeks annoying or intimidating, or wonder what the fuss is about, think of the specialized knowledge required for your own passions. Knitting, stamp-collecting and big-game hunting all have their rules and lingo.



If you're intrigued about exploring this level of wine but don't know where to begin, here's something fun to try: buy bottles of two or three very similar wines. Doesn't matter if they're jug juice or Chateau Show-Off, as long as they're the same grape, from roughly the same area, at about the same price.

Mark your glasses on the bottom, pour a taste of each wine, and taste back and forth a few times paying close attention to the differences. One might feel harsh, another smooth and creamy. Perhaps one is sweeter, or has more aroma. Notice smells, tastes, tactile sensations, and what happens in your mouth after you swallow.

Then shut your eyes and have a friend mix up the glasses or do it yourself while singing a complicated song to distract your brain while your hands shuffle. Now, without opening your eyes, identify the wines.

If you get it wrong just go back, find more clues, and try again.

It's a simple exercise, but makes you pay attention to the subtleties you never noticed before. You might struggle to find words to describe the differences, and suddenly terms like minerality and chewy don't seem so odd. Mostly, though, you'll feel the satisfaction of expanding your brain and moving forward.

If you're already a committed connoisseur, then your assignment is different: lighten up for once, hail a California cab, and enjoy the smooth ride.



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WHERE TO WINE



For foodies, wine is not just a noun, it's a verb! Wine is more than a bottle sitting on a table - it's about enjoying good food, celebrating a special occasion, gathering with good company, and exploring our palates. We're lucky enough here in Fort Worth to have many places to wine and dine with each offering its own unique experience for all to enjoy.

Brix Pizza & Wine Bar

2747 S. Hulen St.
www.brixpizzeria.com
(817)924-BRIX

A native of Palermo, Daniele Puelo shares a piece of Italy right here in Fort Worth offering wood-fired pizzas and other classic Italian dishes in a contemporary yet casual setting. Wines are available by the glass, bottle, or to take home. Sangria and other cocktails can be ordered by the carafe to share with your table - so make sure to bring some friends along!

D'Vine Wine

4915 Camp Bowie Blvd.
www.dvinewineusa.com
(817)569-WINE

This boutique winery offers wine tast-

ings, retail wine sales, and rental for private parties. You can even make your own batch of wine, beginning with fermentation all the way through bottling and making your own private labels to create unique wedding favors or holiday gifts.

LightCatcher Winery

6925 Confederate Park Rd./FM 1886
www.lightcatcher.com
(817)237-2626

This true hidden treasure produces small batches of fine wines that have won numerous awards both locally and internationally. LightCatcher's bistro-style menu is available Friday through Sunday. Relax and enjoy live jazz on the first and third Sundays of every month - year round!

Papparotti's Wine Room

6100 Camp Bowie Blvd. Suite 22
www.papparottis.com
(817)731-7700

Papparotti's provides a cozy atmosphere with tucked away areas that make you feel more like you are in a private living room than a public wine bar. Live entertainment featuring jazz vocalists is offered on weekends. If you are still looking for a venue for your holiday gathering or other special event, consider inviting your guests into this wonderfully warm setting.

Pop's Safari Cigars and Wine

2929 Morton St.
www.popssafari.com
(817)334-0559

Pop's is a one-stop shop whether you want to enjoy a fine cigar while lounging in a leather chair, share a romantic dinner in the wine room among towering shelves of vino, or if you are in the mood to simply enjoy a burger on the patio. Visit on Mondays for Burger and Beer night, Tuesdays for a free wine tasting, and enjoy live entertainment Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings.



LightCatcher Winery

Put a Cork in It

2972 Park Hill Dr.

www.putacorkinitwine.com

(817)924-CORK

More than just a wine retail outlet, Put a Cork in It provides free themed wine tastings Thursday through Saturday. Explore various regions and varietals to find your favorites and enjoy the company of good friends.

V Lounge

525 Taylor St.

www.thevaultdfw.com

(817)348-9828

Tucked away below ground level of the Tower, you'll find this intimate lounge complete with guitar soloist serenades. Come for drinks with friends or order from the "Eat Late" menu for a selection of tapas and desserts.

WineStyles

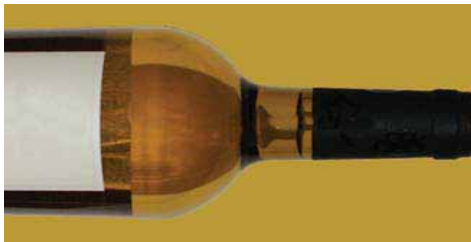
6323 Camp Bowie Blvd.

4825 Overton Ridge Blvd.

2600 W. 7th St.

www.winestyles.net

Wines categorized by flavor and taste make for an approachable wine tasting and purchasing experience. If you are looking for a gift for the wine-lover in your life, complete your holiday shopping list with the wide selection of gift baskets and corporate gifts found here.



Winslow's Wine Café

4101 Camp Bowie Blvd.

www.winslowswinecafe.com

(817)546-6843

This Camp Bowie location was an historic gas station in a previous life. You can still fill up here - but on wine - available for both consumption and retail. Winslow's features wood-fired pizzas in a casual, yet classy atmosphere, complete with a relaxing patio. An outdoor fireplace is soon to be added, making this a perfect spot for a Texas Fall evening.

Z Wine Bar

910 Houston St., Suite 110

www.zambranowines.com

(817)850-WINE

Looking for that hard to find bottle of wine? Let Cef Zambrano be your personal sommelier whether you are enjoying a glass at the bar or for retail purchase. This intimate downtown wine bar has also created a simple but superb menu. If you consider yourself a pizza connoisseur then the Signature Pizza is a must-try!

Looking for somewhere to Bring Your Own Bottle? Check out these local BYOB favorites where you can enjoy great food and bring along that bottle from home!

Café Bella

3548 South Hills Ave.

(817)922-9500

This friendly neighborhood spot fills you up with the traditional Italian favorites at an affordable price.

Nonna Tata

1400 W Magnolia Ave.

(817)332-0250

Authentic Italian cuisine is worth the wait at this Magnolia gem.

Park Hill Café

2974 Park Hill Dr.

(817)921-5660

Park Hill Café serves up the basics of soups, salads and sandwiches as well as a dinner menu that changes daily.

Scampi's

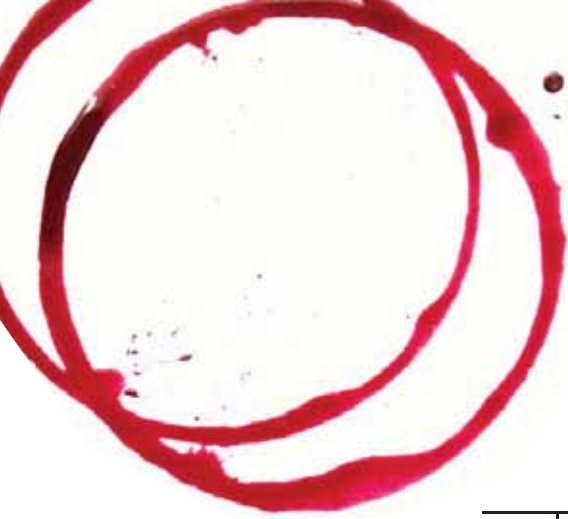
1057 W. Magnolia Ave.

www.scampiscafe.com

(817)927-1887

Visit the heart of the hospital district for Italian lunch and dinner specials. Scampi's also provides a venue for private parties as well as catering.





FOODIE WINE SELECTIONS

By J.R. Clark

Available at *Central Market*

WHITE

Flor Prosecco

A Made in Northern Italy and only available in a couple of areas of the country, Flor Prosecco provides great acidity as well as beautiful fruit up front. Its major claim to fame is that it is the house sparkling by the glass in many of Mario Batali's restaurants, as his partner Joe Bastianich is the importer. Crisp acidity and an elegant body combined with the lemongrass and white fruit up front make it a great accompaniment. This is a sure crowd pleaser and one that will become your favorite.

Tapiz Chardonnay 2008

B 1300 feet above sea level on the rich slopes of Mendoza we find Fincas Patagonias. Tapiz Chardonnay is hand selected from grapes in their vineyard where they enjoy the hot sun of the afternoon and the cold nights Argentina is famous for. This shift in temperature everyday gives

the grapes a high fruit content as well as racy acidity. The outcome is a well-balanced delicious Chardonnay with flavors of peaches and apples. Fermentation for 8 months in oak rounds out the fruit and gives the finished product warm vanilla and toasted brioche flavors.

ROSE

Gordo Rose 2007

C Yecla. To get there you have to fly out to Madrid into Alicante. Hop on a bus and take a 90 minute ride that in the words of my friend Glenn Verk is just a touch smoother than the re-entry of a space shuttle. You find yourself in Yecla which is home to little more than furniture factories, outlets, and its new claim to fame Senorio de Barahonda. With a new winery comes new ideas and one of them is Gordo Rose. A pet project for Araceli Gonzales and Vinos sin Ley, this wine is made from 100% Monastrell (Mourvedre). Stainless steel fermented and not exposed

to any oak, this wine remains sumptuous and round while still maintaining fresh lively flavors of raspberry and wild strawberries. It stands up to turkey and ham but remains a favorite of ours to start off meals not of the holiday type.

RED

Hawkes Cabernet 2003

D Nestled in the southern most part of Alexander Valley is family-owned and operated Homerand Vineyard owned by Stephan and Paula Hawkes. Owned and operated since 1971 they have been turning out wines of great quality for the past 30 years. The 2003 Hawkes Cabernet pours into the glass with deep ruby and purple colors with a nose that spills out blackberry, dust, leather and hints of smoke. On the palate it is rich and full with fruit tannins, touches of cedar smoke and spice. A great gift idea this holiday season for the cab lover in your life that probably has not tried this little gem.



E *Perfil de Mibal 2004*

Not often do I say I have a favorite winery but when it comes to Mibal, they are absolutely on my Mount Rushmore of producers. From Javier, Miguel, and Cristina, this brother, sister, and fiancée farm 100 acres in the Ribera del Duero region of Spain. Tempranillo is king here and it is tough to find a Bodega that does it better than this trio. Their main attraction is called Perfil, profile in Spanish, and represents the trailblazers of winemaking in Central Spain. 450 liters of grapes are packed into 500 liter barrels with the rest of space being taken up by shaved dry ice. Afterwards, the wine is aged in new French oak before being bottled.

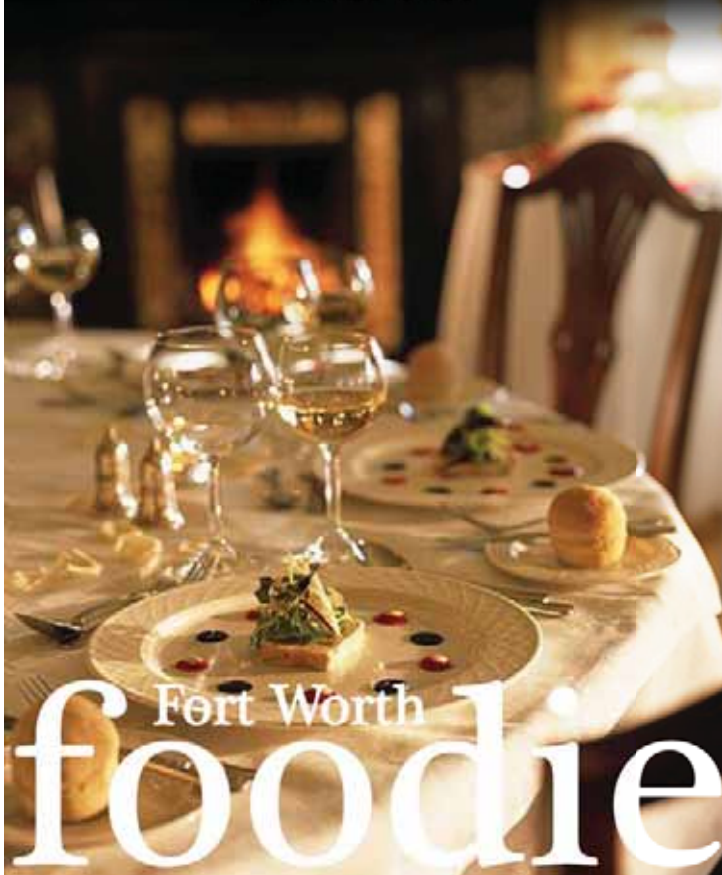
A grand total of 350 six-packs of Perfil are made every year and each bottle is stellar. Rich, bold and full bodied with smoky anise flavors, well integrated but apparent tannins couple with massive amounts of fruit to make this wine well-balanced and a keeper in the cellar of memory to be savored this holiday season.



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These two items will find their way on our menu frequently. The dessert, which tends to be my absolute favorite course of the meal, is something I came up with in culinary school and is still a favorite for many of our guests. I was given an ingredient of raw goat milk and asked to produce a dish. Upon completion of the dish, I made chevre style goat cheese, using lime juice to form the curds instead of enzymes, and reduced some milk to make a traditional cajeta sauce. So the whole dish revolved around the goat milk. It seems to be where most of my inspiration comes from. When I am forced to do something I tend to make things happen.

The second dish is a play on a classic preservation method used in Latin America called escabeche. I added some Mexican ingredients, toned down the amount of vinegar and oil, and made a bit of an accompaniment to the fish instead of engulfing the fish in the ingredients. I dig beets. I eat beets in salads, with seafood, and in risotto - it turns the rice bright red. Root vegetables are the fall harvest and beets are almost always on the menu. The syrup adds a vibrant color to the dish and subtle sweetness to off-set the acidity of the escabeche.

Key Lime Goat Cheese Cake

1 Vanilla Bean
3/4 cup sugar
18 oz goat cheese
1 1/4 cup cream cheese
8 zest of key limes
pinch of salt
4 eggs

1. Cut the vanilla bean in half lengthwise and scrape the seeds into the sugar.
2. Add the goat cheese and cream cheese into a mixer with the paddle attachment, and beat until creamy, constantly scraping sides with a spatula.
3. Incorporate sugar, key lime zest, and salt to this mixture.
4. Slowly add the eggs, one at a time, until texture is smooth.

5. Pour the mixture into nine individual spring form pans.
6. Place the individual pans in a deep pan.
7. Pour an inch of boiling water into pan and place in a 350°F oven. Allow to cook 25-30 minutes, or until custard has set.
8. Leave in the refrigerator overnight. (can hold in the refrigerator for 4-5 days)

Wine Pairing

Veuve Clicquot, Demi Sec

This dessert champagne is a favorite of mine to pair with any form of cheesecake and custard based dessert. The crisp sweetness and effervescence of the wine cut through dense cake and off-set the slightly acidic qualities of the goat cheese and lime.

Black Cod with Beet Escabeche and Beet Syrup

Beet Escabeche

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup diced onions
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 2 cups diced roasted beets
- 2 Tbsp sherry vinegar
- 2 diced chile poblanos
- 1/2 Tbsp dried Mexican oregano

1. Heat the olive oil in a sauce pan over medium heat and sweat the onions and garlic.
2. Add the beets and vinegar and let simmer for 5 minutes.
3. Add peppers and oregano and season with salt.

Beet Syrup

- 1 large beet
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 6 cups veal or beef stock
- 3 Tbsp sugar

1. Peel and medium dice the beets, simmer in water, vinegar, sugar mixture until tender.
2. Strain, reserving the liquid.
3. Return liquid to pan and reduce until a light syrup.

Black Cod

- 4 - 6 oz black cod filets
- salt and pepper
- grapeseed oil

1. Salt and pepper both sides of black cod.
2. In a sauté pan over high heat, put a tablespoon of grapeseed oil.
3. Sear cod on both sides. Reduce heat until cod is cooked all the way through.

To Assemble

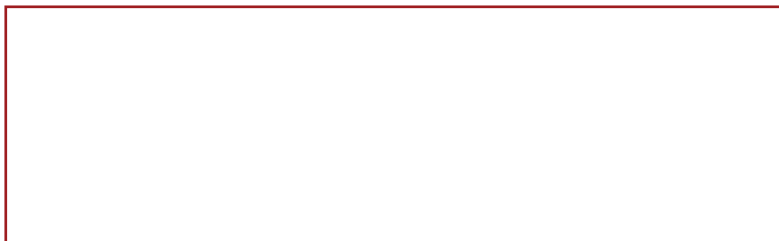
Spoon the escabeche on a plate. Place the cod on top and drizzle the beet syrup around the perimeter of the plate.



Wine Pairing

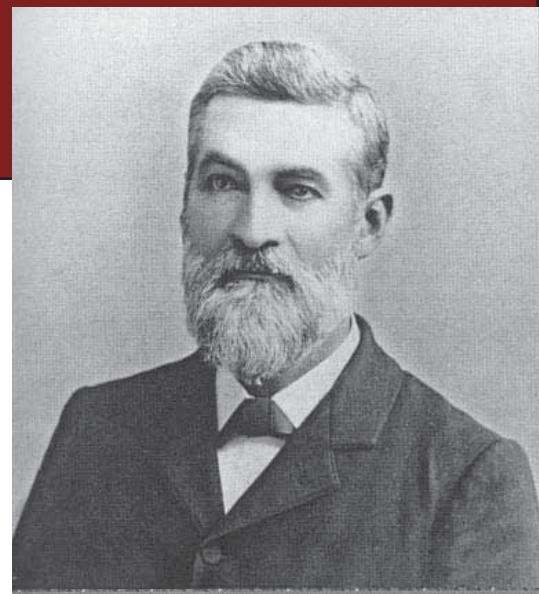
Paco & Lola, Albarino

Any food with vinegar is difficult to pair with wine. However, we have found that high acid wines tend to off-set high acid foods. I would suggest an albarino in this case. It has a good amount of balanced acid and a smooth finish that will work together with this dish.



Texas Wine History

by R.L. Winters



Thomas Volney Munson

History is woven of the fabric of the courage and fortitude of the souls gone before us. Many of these outstanding individuals remain forever unknown, lost in the deep recesses of the past.

Thomas Volney Munson, born in 1843 in Fulton County, Illinois enrolled in Kentucky's new Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1865. Although his aptitude for engineering was obvious, it was his friendship with his mentor, Dr. Robert Peter, which was to chart the course of Volney's life.

While walking the rows of vines with Dr. Peter it occurred to Volney that by recombining the characteristics of certain vines with others he might find a way to improve the performance of the vines.

Dr. Peter provided Volney with thirty clusters from his vineyard, from which Volney preserved the seeds, and made them ready for use. It was with this handful of seeds that Volney was convinced that he could change the world of viticulture by the development of new stable and improved American Grape varieties. Little did he know that not only would his decision change the world of the American Grape, but it was also to change world history.

The Grape Paradise

Encouraged by his brother, Volney made the arduous journey by covered wagon to Denison, Texas. Ever the keen observer and ardent botanist, Volney could not help but notice the abundant species of *Vitis* that flourished in the Red River Valley. He wrote that "I have found my grape paradise!"

What Volney had discovered was the unique climatological and geological phenomena known as an Ecotome. This is the rare combination of conditions that mark the transition zone between several ecological communities - in this case the area between the great eastern deciduous forests and the western grasslands.

The period from 1878 to 1890 was marked by Volney's efforts to locate, map, and take

samples from as many of the varieties as possible. These astounding studies led Volney from the edges of the Canadian frontier, and as far south as Central Mexico. By the time he completed the collection process he covered an astonishing 75,000 miles of travel developing a network of communication with the best minds in Viticulture.

The Great Devastator

By the close of 1870 a mysterious plague had been progressing through the vineyards of Europe for nearly ten years. Progressing at a rate of twelve miles each year, moving from vineyard to vineyard, the plague was quickly devouring the wealth of the European wine industry - the precious vines that had stood for generations.

By 1879 more than one and a half million acres of vineyards were infected and almost half of the acreage was a complete loss. The plague had devastated the regions of Cognac, Vaucluse, the Loire valley, and the Cote d'Or, the very heart of the world's greatest wine region, and was rapidly spreading to Portugal, Corsica, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

The cause of the destruction was discovered to be a minute insect inhabiting the root system of the diseased vines named the *phylloxera vitisana* or "devastating leaf dryer". In a complex life cycle, the insect destroys the roots on the host vine then systematically moves onto the next row. The appearance of the insect was then traced back to grafting rootstocks that were imported from America as part of an ill-fated effort to graft a *Vinifera* on to an American grape.

A Visit to a Quiet Texan

While the French pondered the series

failure of the new grafted varieties, Volney was quietly developing his research on the American grape and producing his first round of super hybrids at his Dennison nursery. Volney was fascinated that pest that was clearly living on the roots of American grapes did little or no damage to American grapes, and when present on the roots of Vinifera (European grapes) quickly brought about the demise of the vine. It was discovered that the anatomical difference in the sheath that covers the roots of American grapes was too thick and durable for the insect to penetrate.

In what amounted to a last ditch effort, the world renowned Montpellier L'Institut National Agronomique, the center of French Agriculture Science, dispatched the famous French viticulturist Pierre Viala with strict instructions to return with "varieties of grape rootstocks found to grow in the marly and chalky formations." It was known that a general area to the southwest contained the type of pre-historic geology, that of the Cretaceous Period, and its accompanying calcareous stone that Viala was searching for. Viala decided to include Texas as one of his stops on his long journey.

By this time the developmental work involving what was to be Munson's Monograph of the American Grape was well known in scientific circles as well as his superior breeding program at his Dennison Texas nursery. It turns out that Viala spent several weeks at Volney's Dennison home and together, on horseback, they explored Munson's "grape paradise" of the Red River.

Volney's penetrating knowledge of the American grape and its evolution was to carry the day. The key to unraveling the mystery wasn't simply substituting just any American rootstock, but rather the application of the knowledge millions of years of grape evolution, and adaptation of the specific Vitis that was to hold the key to answer the question that had plagued Europeans for a decade. For Volney, it was a simple matter of guiding Viala to specific grow-

ing region of a natural hybrid between *Vitis rupestris* and *Vitis candicans* to an American grape variety called Berlandieri.

Viala had followed the route laid out by Volney to a specific place in Bell County adjacent to the Leon River. There, to Viala's amazement was a vast stand of Berlandieri, thriving, and a bright vibrant green, on a ridge of nearly pure limestone debris. Viala knew he was looking at the last great hope to save the beloved vineyards of his nation. Munson's nursery supplied Viala with 15 wagon loads of rootstocks and tens of thousands of cuttings. It was ultimately through the use of Berlandieri and the development of hybrid crosses between resistant American rootstocks and vinifera that the great plague was eventually controlled.

On December 30, 1888 France bestowed its highest honor on this quiet Texan, The Medal of the Chevaliers du Merite Agricole in the Legion of Honor. Nothing less than the status of French knighthood.

In Europe, Volney's stunning contribution was the stuff of legend, but his efforts received little or no recognition here. While the Fort Worth newspapers trumpeted in bold type, the headline, "Texan Leads the World", the early January edition of the Dallas Morning news dismissed Volney as a "vine grower of Texas."

Thomas Volney Munson's contribution to our world lives on today, in that, virtually every drop of fine wine produced in

Europe can trace its lineage back to the Berlandieri or one of the other American hybrids.

Perhaps, the saddest aspect of his life's story was the fact that today he remains virtually unknown in Texas history. After his death most of his correspondence was lost, his nursery closed; vanished under the streets of Dennison, over 300 marvelous hybrids virtually disappeared from the market, his scientific masterpiece the American Grape Monograph, gone (lost by the U.S. Printing Office), and his awards and medals sold to a junk dealer for \$40, gone forever.



Chevalier Medal (center), The Wilder Medal (top), and the Gold Medal from the Paris 1889 Exposition Universelle

In a letter to Nellie Munson, on her husband's death, W.A. Harshbarger of Kansas' Washburn College wrote, "It is given to only the few, nature's noblemen, to render such great service to so many....I can but rejoice with you that he so clearly saw the light, and so steadfastly followed where it led."



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Sparkling Cocktails

by Mac Carder

I love to start my holiday parties with a great sparkling wine. Champagne is the queen of sparkling wine, but there are wonderful alternatives from many other wine regions. One of the best sparkling wine values is Cava from Spain. Cava is great on its own, but its price point makes it especially perfect as a base for sparkling cocktails.

These recipes are very simple and flexible: if you like it sweeter, add more of the flavorings, sugar, or simple syrup.

Kir Royal

1. Add 1 oz chilled red fruit liqueur or red fruit syrup to a sparkling wine flute.
2. Fill the flute with chilled sparkling wine.
3. Garnish with currants or raspberry.

Fraise Royal

1. Add 1 oz strawberry flavor to a sparkling wine flute - Creme de Fraise (strawberry liqueur), strawberry puree, or strawberry syrup.
2. Fill the flute with chilled sparkling wine
3. Garnish with a strawberry

Sparkling Mojito

1. Place one cube sugar and two to four fresh mint leaves in a sparkling wine glass and muddle gently.
2. Squeeze one wedge of lime over mixture and stir. Drop in lime wedge.
3. Fill glass with sparkling wine.
4. Garnish with a second lime wedge.



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