

e-libation



308 West 300 South
(801) 531 - TONY

There is joy in Mudville. Caputo's has been granted an Educational Use Permit from the UDABC. What does this mean for us, the rabble? It means that we will be able to enjoy wine with a meal, much like civilized societies everywhere.

There are cooking classes to be sure, but the range of classes now reaches to the market. I could say "cheese class" or "chocolate class" but it's a much more in depth, a survey, a study, a sensual spelunking if you will. All upcoming classes now offer an optional wine pairing option for a mere \$10. Let the evangelizing begin! **May 10th is a Study of Chocolate** terroir, cacao bean origin and the process that delivers the elegant layered experiences of artisanal chocolatiers such as Cuba Venchi, Pralus and most notably the legendary Amedei. **The cost of the class is \$10.**

May 17th is a tasting of Farmhouse Italian Cheeses. Matt, aka, Salt Lake's Willy XXX Wonka of cheese, leads a guided tour of Italy's rarest offerings. These are extraordinary finds exclusive to Caputos ~ as in five cows, one producer, that's it. **The cost of the class is \$15, with an additional \$10 for optional wine pairing. Call (801) 519-5754 for reservations.**

Having just spent two weeks in Spain, I returned to serendipity. Caputo's had expanded their selection of artisanal Spanish foodstuffs, the range of cheeses was already legendary, but now include a range of ethereally light fruity olive oils, sardines, marcona almonds and genuine paella rice. Matt's obsessiveness extends to an expanded selection of meats as well, with sausages, jamon, Serrano and Iberico ham. And, as he warned me, they will soon have Spain's famed black footed pig, the "Pata Negra". The Spanish do make pig very very well and when Matt is on a mission, great flavors happen.

The best of the best wine stores;

Park City
1901 Sidewinder Avenue
435-649-7254
Metro Salt Lake
255 South 300 East
801-533-6444
Cottonwood
1863 East 7000 South
801-942-2580

May A Salt Lake City guide to all things juicy and delicious in the world of wine

What I will remember most

Like anything worth writing, it came inexplicably and without method. The words hung in the air, long suspended notes, truthful. The body responds positively to harmonics I'm told (key of C if you really care). Things are written when they want to be written, and I don't know what so suspended and unnerved me; perhaps all the spring travel or the odd unexpected creative endeavors or the distractions brought on by women and spring. I blame most of it on women, (a woman specifically) ~ I had been doing just fine with the blinders on, trudging ahead in numbing routine, keeping a simple happiness about me. And then one (woman) reminded me of what it was that was missing. (Did she really have to use the EKG paddles?) **Ouch.**

Fast forward, several bottles of champagne (and white burundy) later. And yes, I'm still acting like a palpitating 9th grader, with my foot lodged firmly in my inarticulate mouth. (Thankfully the deliberate consideration of writing is a balm for my own stupidity.)

I remember the last time I was hit by a car while on my bicycle. It's not the impact so much that hurts ~ there's usually a graceful blur, a smearing bright blast of color and then a finesse-ful relaxation after you bounce across the pavement, shredding your skin and lycra. It's waking up the next morning, those sore and painful movements until you hear again the trilling birdsong grace notes reminding you of simple nuances, bits of life that you didn't see before, or took for granted. The colors become finer ~ think of it as a metaphysical "reboot". I was blind and then I saw.

It's the grace notes we live for, the tonic notes we need. One offers beauty, the other resolution. How can you have one without the other after all? Questions kept pummeling me one after another, willy nilly, throughout the Spring. And spring accumulated its schizophrenic character notes, one then another, rain and snow and sun. Bloom and frost. Contrast creates yearning. I wasn't the only one feeling a siren pull, there was great demand, people wanted knowledge, knowledge of wine. So I wrote and I wrote and I wrote.

Too many sources reduce wine to a mirthless bog of numbers and adjectives, and such are of little help (although if sucking the joy and color from life is your idea of a good time, then by all means ~ go ahead). Learning requires lust, desire, and an absence of distractions. A New York Times wine writer (for whom I generally have little use) offered good advice to those wishing to learn about wine. It boiled down thusly; buy, drink, take notes. A good place to start, but at some point it will make you fall asleep or step in front of a car. It's a simple question, **do you like it or don't you?** It's in the understanding that you've been **moved**, desire and lust motivate the rest. If a wine moves me to lusty palpitation, adjectives & numbers are the last thing on my mind.

Wine's charm **is** its visceral character, the notion that it demands a physical reaction. That physical reaction cascades, setting off other reactions and while drinking alone has its charms, it's hard to fight off the impulse to share those sensations. I've seen the face of bliss, late at night, over a glass of Champagne (**Vilmart Grand Cellier D'Or 1999 \$73**, if you must know). Bliss, yes, Bliss, that's what I remember most, and ~ believe ~ you ~ me, it's a beautiful thing.

Your feedback is welcome and wanted - any thoughts on how I might improve this newsletter are welcome. I want to hear it all — the good, the bad and the ugly. Questions, concerns, thoughts, experiences both fair and foul, let me know at francis.fecteau@gmail.com

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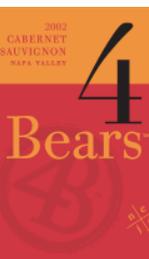
A Salt Lake City guide to all things juicy and delicious in the world of wine.

Read this Book

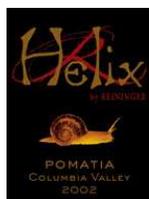
(Must-have reference materials)

I understand the need to know. My father was a tremendous smartass. If I asked him a question, the replies were, to say the least, interesting. “What....you writing a book?”, “You don’t know, do you?”, “Your arms painted on? Look it up”. Some of the best intellectual direction or advice I’ve ever received ~ since the advent of Google anyway. And ever since I’ve always preferred books that contain information that allows me to form a basis for knowledge. Think of it thusly, who would you trust with news reporting? FOX or Walter Cronkite? Straight information wins the day (not FOX if you were wondering). It equips a listener with necessary tools to make a determination on fact. When lust and desire motivate learning, there is a need to attach a name to what is was that set our respective shorts on fire, so to speak. Rather than being told what to think, I favor sources that identify phenomena, much like a Physician’s Desk Reference which then leads to a likely conclusion based on those observable phenomena. So, that said, there are a select few wine books I find invaluable for their organization, depth and clarity of thought. They are indispensable to any budding wine geek; **The World Atlas of Wine by Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson**, **The Larousse Wine Encyclopedia**, and **The Oxford Companion to Wine, again by Jancis Robinson**. They show the maps, attach names, read labels, describe, identify and they have been invaluable to me for the better part of a decade. They do not preach or pontificate and most mercifully of all, they do not vomit meaningless adjectives and numbers. What they WILL do is lead one in the right direction and hopefully from there, one can learn to think.

Goldilocks one better

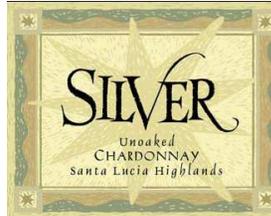


4 Bears Napa Valley Cabernet 2002 (\$11.95) is the negotiant brainchild of two winemakers, formerly of King Estate in Oregon, Will Bucklin and Sean Minor. This means that two supernaturally gifted winemakers bought Cabernet on the bulk market and finished it the way they saw fit. The result is a plush concentrated effort that offers loads of black fruit that only seems to gain in plushness and intensity as it sits open. \$30 Cab in a \$10 bottle ~ What a deal!



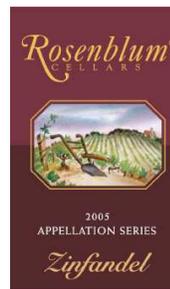
Helix Pomatia Red Table Wine 2003 (\$20) is a beguiling blend of Syrah, Cabernet, Merlot and Cabernet Franc from Walla Walla’s famed Reininger Winery. Balanced sweet black fruit is framed with a sweet blast of toasty French oak. Walla Walla’s climate is a perfect example of how flawless climate creates ideal balance.

Wines that ring

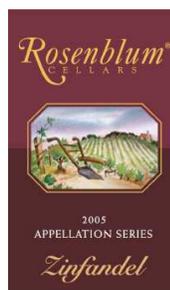


It is, quite simply, the finest unoaked chardonnay made in the United States today, the critical press is uniformly enthusiastic. **Mer Soleil “Silver” (\$33)** is a glorious follow up to the Mer Soleil legend, using the same fruit, it sees no oak and no malolactic fermentation. The resulting wine is brilliantly fresh, pure and bright, and as close to eating fruit from the vine as you can get. And speaking of Spring, **Belle Glos Rose of Pinot Noir 2006 (\$23)** aka “Oeil de Perdrix” has returned. For every bottle sold, **Caymus makes significant donations to the Susan G Komen Breast Cancer Research Foundation**. Great cause aside, this is a brilliant effort, full of peach and strawberry notes with a bracing dry freshness that begs for a blissful spring picnic experience.

Juiciness comes to town



San Francisco Bay



North Coast

The Events; May 29th Monsoon Thai Bistro, The most consistent best deal in wine dinners in town. Few put more effort into creating interesting and interactive food and wine experiences. Food is \$29.95, Wine Pairing is \$20. This is a terrific chance to taste some of the most compelling offerings in the portfolio for a very reasonable price. The extremely rare **Lyons Vineyard Zinfandel 2004 (\$44)** will be featured. Call 801-583-5339 for reservations. On **May 30th at the Metropolitan**, the creative talents of the culinary team will be on display paired with an additional range of wines from the portfolio. It’s a light breezy event held in the newly remodeled bar area of the Metropolitan, price expected to be \$50 for appetizers and wine. Call 801-364-3472 to reserve a spot.

The Wines; cool nights of Spring are still ideal for the sumptuous richness of Rosenblum Reds. New notable values include the **North Coast and San Francisco Bay Appellation Series Zinfandels (both \$16)** These are textbook example of why we love old vine. Vine age keeps yield naturally low, so, in essence, less grapes per vine = more flavor. The concentration and intensity are all there, but thanks to cool nights in the areas, they maintain terrific brightness and acidity. Lots of bold stuff going on here, big heady rich explosive Zinfandel without the sugary goo.

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Family Style

I have seen things at *these* wine dinners that I've never seen. People who've never met actually talk to each other. People pass one another food and share details with complete strangers. They say unusual things, "I don't usually like wine, but I like this...". They take pictures of people they've never met. People act like people who actually enjoy food and wine together, like people who get the point of it all. Me? I usually loathe the concept of a wine dinner (translated it means I'm \$150 lighter and like food and wine that much less). Wine Dinners are, for the most part, joyless and expensive. Mikel Trapp has created a new paradigm. \$25 for food, \$20 for wine. You're in, you're out, no one gets hurt. Welcome to the **Trio Family Style Wine Dinners**, the best idea in wine dinners since sliced bread. **Call for reservations. Next up? May 17th. Trio Family Style Wine Dinners. Once a month.**

Café Trio - Cottonwood
6405 South 3000 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84121
801.944.8746



MARCO FELLUGA

Perhaps one of the most consistently brilliant producers in all of Italy's Friuli, Marco Felluga has fashioned two masterful releases from the 2005 vintage. The **Marco Felluga Tocai Friulano 2005 (\$17)** and the **Marco Felluga Molamatta 2005 (\$19)**. Felluga crafts plush whites with minimal manipulation. My favorite aspect is the creation of intense textures by the simple approach of allowing the spent yeast cells from fermentation (lees) to spend time sitting in the finished wine. Simple. The **Tocai** is creamy, rich, mineral, nutty and intense. The **Molamatta**, a blend of Tocai, Ribolla Gialla and Pinot Grigio, is a masterfully rich creamy blend of grapes that make one wonder why they ever bought Chardonnay in the first place. Dazzle your friends, better still fool them into thinking you spent that much more.



Suzy Selby makes great plush, beautiful, luxurious Pinot Noir, the very epitome of seamlessness, balance and silk. Silk on the palate is a swoon sensation, the tongue likes it (ice cream anyone?) and wines like this coat & linger. **Selby Russian River Pinot Noir '05 (\$29)** has made a return to Utah. Its classic stuff, racy high toned raspberry fruit with classic smoke and black fruit notes. Can't miss.

Humanitas is consistently one of my favorite projects. This **Humanitas Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon (\$15)** is, primarily, GREAT wine for a great price. It offers all one would want from this appellation; plush, sweet, roasted fruit notes accented with sweet dark chocolate. Best part? profits from sales go to the market in which the wine was consumed. Profits are diverted to local chapters of three charities; **Habitat for Humanity, America's Second Harvest and Reading is Fundamental**. You can feel good about your drinking ~ the wine is terrific, the cause is really worthwhile and best of all, its close to home.



Drink
Charitably



It was a long drive to get to LaMancha. (Yes that LaMancha, as in "Man of"). Like much of Spain, LaMancha is a high desert plateau, with day/night temperature swings of 60 degrees. This allows intense ripeness with brilliant definition of flavor (acidity). The soil is inhospitable, mean and infertile and plants don't have much business growing here, but they do. And Tempranillo does exceptionally well. (Soil is a generous word for the shards of red clay and brick-like matter that caused me to turn an ankle) **Mano a Mano (\$10)** features fruit from 65 year old dry farmed Tempranillo vines. You guessed it; the flavors are deep, rich, earthy and intense. This sees no oak and boasts terrifically fresh, rich, crunchy red fruits.

Get the F#\$%k out of Idaho



I scream for Riesling. Please don't be intimidated by the labels. Kabinett means, essentially, "not very sweet". The other hard sounding gobbledygook on the label is simple as well, it indicates a town of origin i.e. "Nierstein" and a vineyard i.e. "Bruckchen". Don't be scared of Riesling. I'm begging. These don't taste like canned fruit cocktail anymore. I promise. 2005 is a LEGENDARY vintage throughout both Germany AND Austria. The wines are remarkable throughout. The initial textures are fat, rich, creamy, almost oily and within an hour of opening, these brilliant efforts develop cut, acidity, brilliance. The finishes are long and lengthy and intense. **J & HA Strub Niersteiner Bruckchen Riesling Kabinett 2005 (\$18)** and **Darting Durckheimer Hochbenn Riesling Kabinett 2005 (\$17)**. These are radiant expressions of minerality, citrus and stone fruit. Let yourself be thrilled.

