

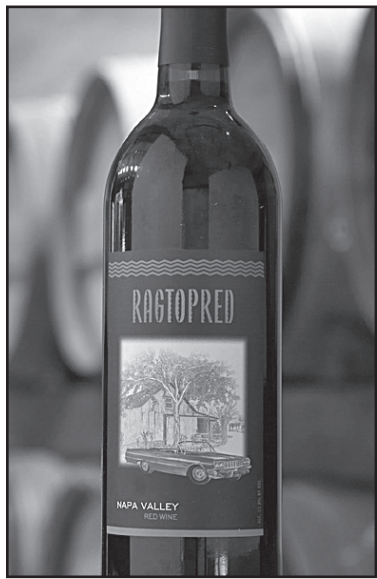


The Wine Corner

Let's hear it for hometown wine

By Pierre DuMont

One of the nice things about living in the Bay Area is the proximity to the wine country. When out-of-town relatives or friends come to visit, we can be in Napa or Sonoma Valley in 90 minutes.



Oakland's Cerruti Cellars produces Rag Top Red, a great value.

But for the past decade a new wine country has been quietly establishing itself even closer to home. Yes, the East Bay is becoming home to a growing number of successful wineries. Oakland, Berkeley and Alameda are becoming outstanding destinations to visit and taste wine and entertain visitors.

Known loosely as urban winemakers, they have banded together to form the East Bay Vintners Alliance. The 22 members of the EBVA recently held a trade and media tasting at the Dashe/JC Cellars facility in Oakland. It was a preview of their big annual event, Passport to Urban Wine Country, held the weekend of March 15-16.

At the trade/media tasting last week I was blown away by the quality of wine the small, often unknown operations were producing. I also admired the adventurous spirit of some of the wineries in making wine from grapes like Alicante Bouchet and Barbera – not household names in California.

So in the spirit of the locovore movement, I am happy to present

to you these "locowines." The following wines were the cream of the crop of the recent tasting of the East Bay Vintners Alliance.

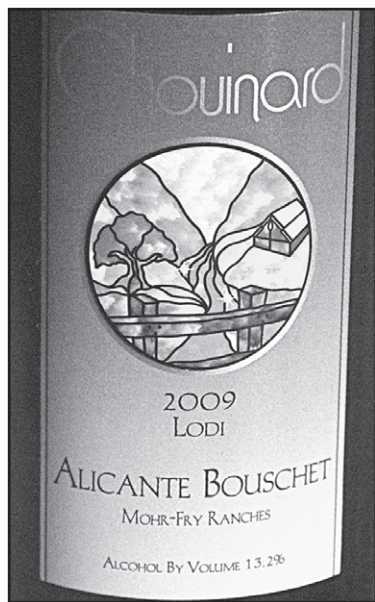
The Passport to Urban Wine Country this weekend is an opportunity to visit 20 wineries and taste the latest of what they are pouring. If you love wine and live in the East Bay, it is an event you shouldn't miss. For ticket information check their website at www.Eastbayvintners.com.

• 2010 Cerruti Cellars Rag Top Red (Great Value)

Cerruti Cellars has a great tasting room on Webster Street near Jack London Square. It is a good place to take visitors who want to do a bit of wine tasting. Cerruti pours not only its own wines but the outstanding Tadal wines from Napa Valley. This wine, crafted from Gamay, Cabernet, Merlot and Petite Verdot, is a juicy fruit-bomb that pleases instantly. It has gobs of cherry fruit with just the right amount of acid to keep flavors crisp and clean. www.cerruticellars.com

• 2009 Chouinard Alicante Bouchet

Castro Valley's Chouinard Winery produced this intriguing wine from 90-year-old vines in Lodi. Though popular in the last century, Alicante is an extremely rare varietal in California nowa-



Chouinard's rare bottling of Alicante Bouchet is fascinating and different.

days. It is unjustly neglected in my book, as I have had outstanding AB wines from California and Portugal. This wine has rich cassis, spice, herbs and a touch of chocolate on the nose. It is packed with fruit and is firm and structured with substantial tannins on the finish. This complex, layered wine will benefit greatly from some time in the cellar. Outstanding effort. www.chouinardvineyards.com

• 2012 Campovida Grenache "Dark Horse Ranch"

I am a huge fan of Grenache and am glad more wineries seem to be producing it. This bottle comes from a vineyard in the Russian River valley. This gorgeous wine offers up blackberry, spice, anise and pepper aromas. It is meaty and medium bodied on the palate with a rich, mouth-coating texture. Delicious to drink now it should last for five years. www.campovida.com

• 2012 JC "The Imposter"

This is a "kitchen sink" blend of Zinfandel, Syrah, Petite Sirah, Mouvedre, Grenache and Roussanne. It is hugely impressive and bursting with dark fruit flavors. The multiple varieties contribute to a tremendous complexity and yet everything comes together harmoniously in the mouth. The finish is long and supple. This wine has the stuffing to last for up to a decade. www.jeffcohen-cellar.com

• 2010 Urbano Cellars Sangiovese

This tiny Berkeley-based winery has produced a very nice California style Chianti. It has lovely vanilla and cherry aromas on the nose with a touch of earth. There is luscious cherry fruit on the medium weight palate. Tannins are resolved on the supple, easy finish. A perfect partner to pizza or pasta. www.urbanocellars.com

• 2011 Dashe Zinfandel Todd Brothers Ranch

Dashe, a pioneer Oakland wine producer, offers a large variety of white, rose, red and dessert wines, but its specialty seems to be high-end Zinfandel. This Alexander Valley bottle carries on its tradition of rich, opulent Zin yet it also shows the acid, structure and balance necessary to keep Zin from being cloying. This wine is delicious now and should be consumed over the next five years. www.dashe.com

see WINE on page 27

Concert

Continued from page 17

Jonah Kim, Cello

Jonah Kim made his solo debut with Wolfgang Sawallisch and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2003. The same year, he also appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra in DC.

He graduated from the prestigious Curtis Institute in 2006 at age 17, and since then has soloed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, New Philharmonia, Symphony of the Americas, Orquestra Sinfónica Nacional, and many others.

Now 24, Kim has accomplished more than many musicians considerably more senior. In 2012 he gave a recital at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater. His recitals have included performances at the Kimmel Center, Kravis Center, Kennedy Center, the Phillips Collections and the Arsht Center. He has appeared on radio and TV programs for WETA, WHYY, WITF, MPBN, WXEL, NPR, NBC, CBS and PBS.

Michael Taddei, Bass

Michel Taddei, Principal Bass of Berkeley Symphony, has a diploma from the Juilliard School's Pre-College division. He was invited to become solo bass of the Lyon Opera in France. His career has included tours as principal bass with the New York City Opera Company, chamber performances with the San

Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Earplay, the New Century Chamber Orchestra, and the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble.

He has also done film score recordings at Skywalker Ranch and is principal bass of San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and at the Mendocino Music Festival.

He is Administrative Director of Music at the Crowden School in Berkeley, and is on the faculty of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra's chamber music workshop. He has toured with Yo Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble in the U.S. and Central Asia, and will rejoin them for a concert this season at the Hollywood Bowl. He has played on over 40 recordings on labels including Decca, EMI, and Erato.

History of Berkeley Chamber series

Earlier chamber music concerts at the Center for the Arts have included violinists Stuart Canin and Rene Mandel and violist Tiantian Lan on September 15, violinist Franklyn D'Antonio, cellist Isaac Melamed, clarinetist Roman Fushansky, French horn player Alex Camphouse and Miles Graber in the second concert on November 3.

Cellist Adaiha MacAdam-Somer and violinist Noah Stricker performed the Concert No. 3 on January 19.

Tickets for the March 16 concert in Piedmont are \$25 and are available in advance online at berkeley-symphony.org, or by calling 841-2800.

Household Hazardous Waste facility open every weekend

The Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste facility in Oakland is now open every week from Thursday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. In the past it has been open only on selected dates.

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There is no cost and no appointment is necessary. Individuals

should bring proof of residency.

The drop off facility is closed the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year.

The Household Hazardous Waste location is at 2100 E. 7th Street at the corner of Kennedy Street, across from the Con Agra Grain towers west of I-880. Additional days are available by appointment. Call 1-800-606-6606 for details. For more information see the website at www.household-hazwaste.org.

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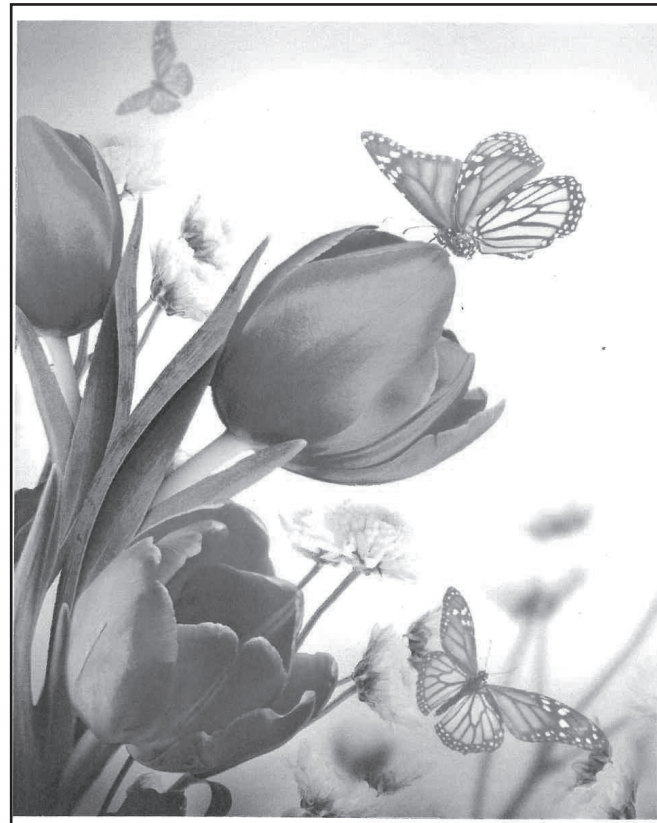
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Wine

Continued from page 22
dashec cellars.com

• 2010 Carica Siren “Kick Ranch”

Charlie Dollbaum crafts this blend of 75% Syrah, 12.5% Grenache and 12.5% Mourvedre at a hanger on the old Alameda Naval Air Station. It shows the Syrah character at first, then the Grenache red fruit and Mourvedre’s earthiness kicks in. It is big and full in the mouth with moderate tannin remaining on the finish. This wine will benefit from up to a decade in the cellar. www.caricawines.com

• 2009 R&B Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve “Lyric of the Vine”

I was first introduced to R&B Cellars some years back as a producer of great value bargain

priced wines. Now I have discovered they have expanded their line to include this luxury cuvee. With grapes sourced from Bingham Ranch in Napa Valley, the wine is aged in 100% new French oak barrels which gives a lovely vanilla scented nose and a complexity and polish not found in unoaked wines. This blockbuster Cabernet needs several years of aging to show its stuff and should last for two decades. www.rbc cellars.com

• 2009 Verve Pinot Noir Russian River

For years Oakland-based Aubin Cellars has been producing outstanding Pinot Noir under the Verve label, drawing from vineyards in the Russian River Valley. This Pinot is finely structured offering up classic rose petal, stone and cherry fruit in a beautifully textured medium bodied frame. It is a well-bal-

anced, food-friendly, Burgundian style Pinot Noir. www.aubin-cellars.com

• 2010 Urban Legend Barbera

Barbera is a delicious, juicy grape from the Piedmonte region of Italy. These grapes grown in Amador County and vintified in Oakland show the grape has great potential in California. The wine is soft and spicy with lovely cherry fruit and spicebox aromas. It has a nice round mouthfeel, and a soft, supple finish. Perfect with BBQ’d meat, pizza or risotto. www.ulcellars.com

• 2010 Lusu Cellars Zinfandel El Dorado

I love the thought that this delicious Zinfandel was created a stone’s throw away in Berkeley. Tiny Lusu Cellars sourced these grapes from a dry farmed, family-owned vineyard in El Dorado

County. It is plush and rich yet also layered and complex with floral, blueberry and plum aromas leading to ripe blackberry and cassis flavors on the palate.

It is perfectly ready to drink now and cries out for roasted or grilled meats. www.lusucellars.com

Barnes

Continued from page 25

ble. The ECB’s do-nothing president, Mario Draghi, is trying to make the problem disappear by redefining it: “Deflation is a self-reinforcing fall in prices that is broad-based across items and across countries.” Translation:

So long as Germany is OK, allest ist gut.

Bracket conclusions: The U.S. is moving along, but closer to 2.5 percent GDP than the mythic 3.5 percent or more modeled by central bank computer and a lot of other smart people. If GDP and jobs don’t accelerate, I suppose the Fed will keep pushing until

they do, if that’s within the Fed’s power.

Those wage and credit flickers of brightness? Those are the precursors to watch.

Lou Barnes is a mortgage broker based in Boulder, Colo. He can be reached at lbarnes@pmglending.com.

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