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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **February is Heart Month**
- **Wine Classes start in March**
- **Best Wine Tasting ever?**
- **Dealin' Doug Deals on Glassware**

February is Heart month

Heart disease kills over 630,000 Americans every year. The cost for health care services and lost productivity are staggering. The whole month of February is set aside for raising awareness about heart disease and how to prevent it. The best suggestions for reducing heart disease include: Stop smoking, improve your good (HDL) cholesterol, maintain healthy blood pressure, exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet that includes red wine.

Wine—especially red wine—can help maintain a healthy heart. Drinking red wine regularly may increase your HDL, or high-density lipoprotein states the American Heart Association. HDL is the “good” cholesterol that removes plaques from your arteries, thus lowering blood pressure and improving circulation. The effect of increasing HDL is from the alcohol in the red wine. Over time, this small increase in HDL can reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease.

An added benefit of drinking red wine is that it may reduce blood clots, is another bit of advice from the American Heart Association. Blood clots form when platelets clump together in the blood. Excessive blood-clot formation in the arteries can worsen plaques and increase blood pressure. Resveratrol and other polyphenols found in red wine that may have anti-clotting properties, thus reducing your risk of developing a blood clot and leading to a positive effect on blood pressure.

A serving of red wine at night might also help you relax and relieve stress because it slows down activity in the nervous system. Stress can raise blood pressure and increase your risk for cardiovascular disease. That said, men should not consume more than two drinks per day, and women should limit alcohol intake to one drink per day. Consumption above those levels negates any positive health benefits.

There is no cause and effect data that shows wine can lower blood pressure but wine consumption vs. imbibing beer and distilled spirits shows wine drinking has an

association with lower blood pressure readings. It is difficult to say whether wine drinkers just live a healthier life style and the effects of good diet and regular exercise promote the more normal blood pressure readings or if wine drinking is the cause.

Tiffany, who has scholastic training in nutrition science, recommends the Mediterranean Diet which is rich in fruits, vegetables, fish, olive oil and red wine. She also says that a bit of dark chocolate here and there is also good for overall heart health. Just keep in mind that wine does your heart good.

Wine Glass Care

A few years ago, I wrote an article about the proper way to hold a wine glass. To review: the proper hold is to grasp the glass by the stem not by the bowl. In the article, I pointed out how it sort of bugged me to see so many fingerprints on a wine glass that looked like a Subaru side window slathered with Schnauzer snot. Granted, it isn't a pretty picture but after a recent American Wine Society meeting we ran across some wine glasses that obviously had not come clean in the dishwasher and that prompted a short discussion with our staff about the proper way to clean wine glasses.

The biggest problem for wine glasses is water spots from hard water. To remove the spots, use vinegar or ammonia. (Do not use the vinegar and ammonia at the same time because you will get a salty solution that may further spot your glasses.) The real key to spotless glasses is to thoroughly rinse them in the hottest water you can after using ammonia or vinegar. It also helps to gently dry them with a lint free microfiber cloth. The Wine Gallery stocks these special drying cloths if you need one for your kitchen.

In my house we make it rule not to wash wine glasses at night. Even though this reduces accidental breakage, wine residue can form as the last few drops evaporate from the bottom of the glass. This stain is especially difficult to remove. I have found that the mild scouring powder and oxalic acid in the commercial cleanser, Barkeepers Friend, work well to get those stubborn stains out of the bottom of the glass. A little bit of Barkeepers Friend on a damp sponge is all it takes to get the stain out. Follow that with a hot water rinse and hand drying with a lint free microfiber cloth and you have a sparkling wine glass to put back in the rack.

Wine Classes: What's in it for me?

Did you ever want to know how to pair wine with food that went beyond "White wine with white meat; red wine with red meat"? Have you ever wondered why Pinot Noir grows well in Oregon but not in Washington? How about "What is the difference between California Chardonnay, South American Chardonnay and Chardonnay from Chablis?" Curious about how to evaluate and rate wines? Want to know how and when to decant a wine? Do you want to expand your knowledge of wine varieties and get out of the Sauvignon Blanc/Chardonnay/Pinot Noir/ Cabernet rut? Can you spot the

difference in flavor between French Oak and American Oak? Do you want to get geeky about yeast strains, malo-lactic fermentation and riddling Champagne bottles? Care to know the difference between Bordeaux, Burgundy and Rhone wines? Ever wonder if the shape of a wine glass makes a difference? Do you want to bump up your food and wine pairing skills to make you the envy of your friends?

If any or all of those things are of interest to you, the Wine Gallery can help. We ran a poll and it ran pretty close to 50/50 as to the preference for Monday nights or Saturday afternoons. Tiffany suggested we schedule both sessions and see who signs up. We both thought we would have to set a minimum of 8 people per class to offer the program. Let me give you the details and see what fits your own schedule.

The plan is to hold the classes at the Food Studio. We will be able to spread out and have plenty of room for demonstrations and tasting. Our plan is to have about 90 minutes of class followed by 30-40 minutes of “lab” where we taste wines that show off the salient points of the day’s lesson. The lab session will also allow us to pair wines with assorted cheese and charcuterie prepared for us by the Food Studio.

The first sessions will be Saturday, **March 30 at 1 PM and Monday, April 1st at 7 PM**. Subsequent sessions will be held over the next two months on Saturday afternoon and Monday evenings. Both Saturday and Monday sessions will be identical but offered for the most convenience of your schedule. The first session will cover the basic history and development of wine, how wine is made, tips on tasting, wine evaluation method, and wine etiquette. Later sessions will cover the main wine regions and wine grapes of the world, wine pairing, reading a wine label, wine customs and law, and a host of other topics related to a well-rounded background in wine.

The cost for each session is \$49 and includes the study materials, food pairing and wines for the “lab”. You can sign up by calling 586-8828 or sending an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com.

93 point Tasting Update

Imagine being in a restaurant for a special occasion and reading the wine list to find something delicious for the table. Without ever having the chance to taste the wine first, you must make a decision on a bottle that could cost \$75 - \$99 in one of Bozeman’s better restaurants. How do you know what it’s like? It is a very expensive gamble to just point and hope. So, how can you get a less expensive education?

For what you would pay for just one of those bottles we will be offering wine tasters a chance to taste from our line-up of 50 wines rated 93 points and above at our Annual 93 Point Tasting on March 9th. A wine rated 93 points or higher is an extraordinary wine of profound and complex character displaying all the attributes expected of a classic wine of its variety. Wines of this caliber are worth a special effort to find, purchase, and consume. It would be impossible to taste all of the wines we’ll

show but it only takes a tablespoon of any these wonderful wines to give your taste buds the information you need to make a decision to buy or not.

Our venue will be the Food Studio on West Kagy and the fun will start at 7 PM. Light hors d'oeuvres, cheeses and charcuterie will give tasters the chance to compare these world class wines with food. You can call us at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com to reserve your seat. I know the event is a month away but over half the tickets are already sold so don't dilly-dally too long if you want to get in on the best wine tasting event of the year.

Dealin' Doug deals on Glassware

After doing our New Year's inventory, we found that we have overstocked our glassware section. That is bad news for us, but good news for anybody looking for a deal on glasses or decanters.

We have several sets of **Riedel "O" stemless** glasses that are priced for "**Buy 6 get 8**". This means that eight glasses that would normally retail for \$120 for the set would be priced for \$89.95 for a set of eight. From now till March 31st (or as long as our supply lasts) these sets will be marked at 15% off. If I did the math correctly, the additional discount would make a set of eight Riedel "O" glasses over 35% cheaper or \$43 dollars cheaper than the regular price.

There were also a few extra sets of the **Riedel Vinum Extreme XL Cabernet** stemmed glasses. These big glasses have a one liter capacity and are designed for full, rich red wines. The best price I could find on the internet for these glasses was over \$34 per stem. Our Holiday deal was a "**Buy 3 get 4**" deal for **\$89.95**. These sets are on sale till March 31st marked down an additional 15%. The price we have is 43% below the best deal on Amazon and you won't have to wait for delivery. Dealin' Doug has these sets of beautiful glasses \$57 per set below the best online price. Get them now!!

Last but not least we have some extra decanters. The lovely and graceful **True Ellipse Traditional** decanter is normally \$31.95 and will be on sale for just over \$27 until March 31. Likewise, the **Viski Chrome Decanter** will be marked down from \$26.95 to under \$23 while supplies last. Whether you need a decanter to let a wine breathe or you just want an elegant serving vessel, now is the time to get one for a great price.