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## What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Summer Solstice Wine Dinner**
- **Last minute ideas for Father's Day**
- **Book review for "Cork Dork"**
- **Travel advice**

## Summer Solstice Wine Dinner

For the last few years, the Food Studio has hosted a **Summer Solstice Wine Dinner**. This year it will be on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> which was the closest we could arrange to coincide with the actual celestial event. We have waited a long time for summer and now the beautiful sunsets and warm days are upon us. Chef Wendell at the Food Studio has put together a stunning array of six or seven locally sourced and decidedly delicious small plate recipes to stir your soul and provoke a little appreciation for Montana in the summer.

I saw a preview of the menu and I saw words like "local morels", "wild asparagus", "smoked jowl tortellini", "wild salmon", "lamb New York with summer truffle bouillon", "smoked potato", "leek frittata", etc. thrown around with abandon. I wouldn't miss this and neither should you.

It wouldn't be complete without the wine pairings. We have whites, sparklers, rose' and some delicious red to accompany our mid-summer feast. Food, wine and gratuity are included in the **\$89 ticket price**. You can't find a deal like that anywhere.

There will be 40 tickets available so give us a call at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to [bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com](mailto:bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com) to reserve your seats. If you would like a more complete preview of the menu and the wine pairings, check our website or e-mail us at the address above.

## **Father's Day this Sunday**

Father's Day is Sunday and if you are going to do something extra special for your Dad, we can help.

We aren't called The Wine Gallery for nothing. With over 1600 wines in stock, we can certainly find something to toast Father.

If Dad has as many bottles in the cellar as he needs, well there are always wine gadgets like our (made in Montana) wine openers with Dad-ly inlaid icons of Montana animals like bison, bears, elk, moose and fish. You might want to pick the one with a golfer on it or the one with a dry fly to fit your particular Father's particulars.

We can also put together a manly gift basket with meats, cheeses, crackers and wine. Just call us with your preferences and we can put it together in time for Father's Day.

If you are still stumped but know the perfect gift is at the Wine Gallery, you can let Dad pick out the perfect gift with a gift certificate. He will be able to pick out whatever he wants and you won't have to worry if you got the right vintage.

Father's Day is Sunday so don't dilly-dally!

## **Book review of "*Cork Dork*"**

Wendy Blake has lots of great things going for her. Smart, pretty, a Wine Club member and employee of the Country Bookshelf-- she is a treasure in our community. About six weeks ago she dropped off a copy of Bianca Bosker's *Cork Dork* with a recommendation that I read it. It has been steadily working its way to the top of the pile of books to read and this last rainy Saturday, I started in on it.

The plot of *Cork Dork* is the journey Bosker makes from being a total wine novice to a becoming a Master Sommelier in New York City. I won't give out all the details but here are a few of the high points.

- Wine tasting happens in the brain not in the mouth (see *Neuroenology* by Gordon Spencer I wrote about a few months ago).
- Enjoyment of wine is not only physical but mental and spiritual.
- The best wine you will ever have is on vacation or when you are surrounded by people you love.
- There is no "best" wine.

- There is a slight correlation between price and quality. However, the difference in quality between a \$75 bottle and a \$750 bottle may be only 2%.
- Our brain is hard-wired to enjoy wines we perceive to be more expensive.
- The French Sauterne, Chateau d'Yquem, is mystical and life changing from the first sip. There is no other wine like it.
- The sense of taste is 70% derived from the sense of smell.
- Spitting wine does not let you taste the wine completely.
- It requires a LOT of practice tasting to become a Master Sommelier. I would fear for my liver if I ever attempted it.
- Wealthy New Yorkers don't mind spending \$1,500 per bottle of great wine for dinner. A \$15,000 tab at a Michelin two star restaurant is OK.
- Burgundy as a region is like a bad boyfriend: he treats you like dirt and then shows up with chocolates and flowers at the right time.
- Mastering Burgundy is a passion for masochism. It makes you wonder what trauma a Burgundy fanatic went through—were they not hugged enough as a child?
- Bosker is an entertaining writer but there are more than a few profane passages. In one instance she describes a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc “asparagus fart water with too much grapefruit juice.”
- A Sommelier's ability to name the grape, the region and the vintage in a blind tasting is a not parlor trick (or is it?)
- As sublime as wine can be, it is subjective and therefore victim to an inordinate amount of BS.

Ok, there is a lot of wine geek stuff in the book so I shouldn't give it all away. I should just say it is amusing and well written. Ask Wendy at the Country Bookshelf to put aside a copy for you.

## **International Travel and Bringing Wine Home**

I know it is getting to vacation season because I got an e-mail recently from a college friend who wanted to know if his 18 year old grand-daughter could bring home a few bottles of wine from Italy for him.

First of all, it is **not** legal for travelers under the age of 21 to import alcohol - even as a gift.

Generally, one liter per person may be entered into the U.S. duty-free by travelers who are 21 or older, although travelers coming from the U.S. Virgin

Islands or other Caribbean countries are entitled to more. (See the U.S. Customs booklet, "Know Before You Go" for additional information.) Additional quantities may be brought back, although they will be subject to duty and IRS taxes. Duty is generally 3% of value and the IRS excise tax is generally between 21-31cents per 750ml bottle of wine, 67 cents for champagne, and \$2.14/ hard liquor.

There is no federal limit on the amount of alcohol a traveler may import into the U.S. for personal use. However, large quantities might raise the suspicion that the importation is for commercial purposes, and a Customs inspector could require the importer to obtain an ATF import license (which is required for all commercial importations) before releasing it. If you do intend to travel with a large quantity of alcohol, I suggest you contact the entry branch of the port you will be entering the country through to discuss your situation in advance.

Although it may not be good legal advice I can tell you that U.S. Customs are unlikely to want to fill out forms for the additional cents in revenue they would get from your bottle(s) of wine. It comes down to the practicality of creating a mile long traffic jam and wasting an agent's time to collect such a miniscule amount. My best advice is to declare your wine and let them decide to wave you through. Don't mess with the Feds.

Just a special word about Canada. If you bring wine back from the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia expect to pay that nominal 3 % tax and 25-30 cent duty when you cross back into the U.S. If you take U.S. made wine into Canada you will pay up to 68% of the wine's value in Canadian dollars. That means for a \$35 of Oregon Pinot Noir, you'd pay almost \$24 in duty. (We never charged the Canadians that much when we imported all their whisky during Prohibition so why is wine so steep?)

The total amount of alcohol you may enter the country with is primarily determined by the laws of the state where you will arrive back into the U.S. Each state sets the amount of alcohol a person may bring into the state without a license or permit from that state. In Montana, the number is technically zero. (Since the Montana Department of Revenue did away with the Connoisseur's license the path is easier.) In all practicality, no one from the State check bags to see if you have a bottle or two in with your dirty socks. Other travelers must check with the appropriate state ABC board, as the amounts vary from state to state. I regret that I am unable to provide this information, but I am barely able to maintain Montana information much less each of the 50 State's various requirements.