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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Wine events coming up**
- **Wine, wit and wisdom**
- **Balance is the key to great wine**

Wine Events coming up

July 8th is the Museum of the Rockies Wine and Culinary

Classic. The Classic affords the opportunity to sample delicacies from over 15 local chefs and nearly 100 wines from all over the world in support of our world class Museum. Sip, savor and support. Call for tickets at 406.994.1998 or email events@montana.edu,

The **July Art Walk will be Friday, July 14th** in Downtown Bozeman. We will be a Miller's Jewelry with some incredible wines including two sparkling wines. What's the celebration? How about Miller's Jewelry celebrating 135 years in business in Bozeman? Miller's has lasted that long because of their excellent selection and superior service. While you are sipping on some bubbly, check out the huge array of Montana Yogo Sapphires and the curated collection of estate jewelry. Come tour the Art Walk and make a point to come by Miller's to toast 135 years in business!!

Wine, Wit and Wisdom

Everett Babcock, Atlanta area wine critic and gourmand ran across some interesting tidbits on wine that he passed on to me. There does not appear to be a copyright to attribute this work so I don't know where to send you to find more. I hope you will enjoy this:

"Sometimes when I reflect back on all the wine I drink I feel shame. Then I look into the glass and think about the workers in the vineyards and all of their hopes and dreams.

If I didn't drink this wine, they might be out of work and their dreams would be shattered. Then I say to myself, 'It is better that I drink this wine and let their dreams come true than be selfish and worry about my liver.'"

~ Jack Handy

"When I read about the evils of drinking wine, I gave up reading."

~ Henny Youngman

"There is no "I" in team. There is an "I" in wine, however so that makes up for it."

"Wine is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy."

~ Benjamin Franklin

"Without question, the greatest invention in the History of mankind is beer. Oh, I grant you that the wheel was also a fine invention, but the wheel does not go nearly as well with pizza."

~ Dave Barry

You can't have an article about alcohol consumption without a few warnings and caution statements:

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may create the illusion that you are tougher, smarter, faster and better looking than most people.

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may lead you to think people are laughing WITH you.

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may leave you wondering what the hell happened to your bra and panties...

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may cause you to think you can sing.

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may cause pregnancy.

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol is a major factor in dancing like an idiot.

WARNING: The consumption of alcohol may make you think you can logically converse with members of the opposite sex without spitting.

And saving the best for last, as explained by Cliff Clavin, of Cheers...

One afternoon at Cheers, Cliff Clavin was explaining the Buffalo Theory to his buddy Norm. Here's how it went:

“Well ya see, Norm, it's like this. A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.

In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Excessive intake of alcohol, as we know, kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of (wine) eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine.

That's why you always feel smarter after a few (glasses of wine).”

“During one of my treks through Afghanistan, we lost our corkscrew. We were compelled to live on food and water for several days.”

Cuthbert J. Twillie (W.C.Fields) in My Little Chickadee (1940)

Balance: The Key to Great Wine

Simply stated, "wine balance" is the manner in which individual wine components work in harmony with one another. The topic is a bit more complex, however, because determining balance is somewhat arbitrary — it may differ dramatically depending on the taster, the type of wine, or the setting.

Wine balance is the synergy of all the components that formulate an enjoyable tasting experience. It involves two of our most important wine enjoyment senses: smell and taste. The sense of smell helps us derive the aroma while the sense of taste tells us about the acid, the sugar, the tannins, the oak and the fruit flavors in the wine. The sense of feel involves the mouthfeel or the tactile sensations in the mouth from the tannins, the alcohol and the body or viscosity of the wine. In a balanced wine, individual component do not overshadow one another.

Current styles and what's in vogue also have an effect on what wine tasters perceive as balanced. In Kansas City, the wines that are younger, fruitier, lower in

acid and higher in alcohol are considered balanced. In Newcastle, England, well-aged wines with less fruit, less alcohol and more acid are considered balanced. In Italy, high acid and more tannic wines are considered ideal.

Lastly, most wines appear to be out of balance if they are served too warm or too cold. Red wines that are too warm will be out of balance because the alcohol comes to the forefront and overpowers the fruit. A bottle of Cabernet at 72 F. (room temperature) will taste alcoholic and tannic. Served at 63 F (cool to the touch) the balance of the berry flavors, tannins, oak and mouth feel are all in harmony and the wine is much more enjoyable.

Likewise with white wine: a white wine just out of the refrigerator will be flavorless and tart. Warmed up to 50 F. the flavors, the crispness and the refreshing character come to the forefront and the wine is much more in balance.

Wine components share an interdependent relationship with their siblings:

- ***Sweetness vs. acidity.*** Most sweet wines require higher acidity in order to remain in balance. That is why Riesling makes such a good dessert wine: the sweetness is balanced out with a crisp acidity that harmonizes the experience.
- ***Tannin vs. acidity.*** Highly extracted red wines like Australian Shiraz or Paso Robles Cabernet benefit from lower acidity to avoid exaggerating the perception of their astringent tannins.
- ***Suppleness vs. harshness*** Wines with proper alcohol levels, ripe fine-grained tannins, and well-balanced acids feel soft and velvety to the tongue and cheeks. Young Bordeaux will almost feel gritty.
- ***Oak vs. aroma and flavor.*** Judicious use of oak integrates quality factors and adds new dimensions to the flavors. Too much oak masks fruitiness and all you taste is wood. Oak is a spice not a sauce.
- ***Alcohol vs. aroma and flavor.*** Too much alcohol provides a "hot" vodka-like sensation on the back of the throat, overpowering the aroma and flavor. Too little will make the wine seem light bodied and more tart.

There are few moments in life more sublime than finding the perfect balance with food and wine. That moment when the food and wine harmoniously fit together so that each and every wine and food component is present and contributes to the meal is absolute nirvana. It's not difficult to find; just enjoy it when you do!