



PRIMA

R I S T O R A N T E 26 N E G O Z I O D I V I N I

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WINE TASTING CALENDAR

Wine tastings are conducted daily during restaurant hours, and are a great way to compare similar wines from different producers, and to sample them with food as well. We typically feature many of the latest wines promoted at PRIMA VINI, making it easy to taste before you buy!

June 3-9 **Damn Good Grenache**
10-16 **Chianti, Montalcino & Montepulciano**
17-23 **Chardonnay-White Burgundy Taste Off**
24-7 **The World of Pinot Noir**

July 8-14 **Aromatic Whites and Pinks**
15-21 **Cabernet, Merlot and Friends**
22-28 **Old World-New World Blind Tasting**

Jazz al bar

Join us on Thursday through Saturday evenings from 7PM to 10PM in our bar. Join us on Thursday through Saturday evenings from 7PM to 10PM in our bar. Thursday night enjoy the *magical* tunes of Mark Stock followed by the Kurt Ribak Trio on Friday and Spencer Chan on Saturday. Sample a few wines, nibble off our small plates menu at the bar and perhaps stay for dinner. The night is young! No cover.

WINE SALES

925 945 1800 or 800 70 PRIMA

MON THRU SAT 10AM TO 7PM (6PM SATURDAYS)
FAX 925 935 0519
www.primavini.com

PRIMA VINI



DINING

RESERVATIONS 925 935 7780

LUNCH MONDAY THRU SATURDAY 11:30AM TO 2:30PM WITH
AFTERNOON REPAST 2:30PM TO 5PM
DINNER FROM 5PM DAILY (including SUNDAY)

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PRIMA

R I S T O R A N T E 26 N E G O Z I O D I V I N I

JUNE 2004 NEWS

MARCHE MADNESS Italian Style

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH

*TUESDAY, September 28TH Price TBA

March Madness in September? No, we're not talking about the roundball and hoops, we're talking Marche (*Mar-ke*), Italy! It's a little region on eastern side of central Italy that borders the Adriatic, just south-east of Tuscany. Peter is there right now in search of culinary inspiration and the recharge his Italian batteries. We've already scheduled a dinner to celebrate the fruits of his quest. In conjunction with local importer and friend Dino Capriotti who will be providing a line up of sensational wines from the region, Peter is going to create a menu of the local favorites he finds. Join us. It will be a meal to remember! Be sure to check out Peter's *Marche* inspired meal on page 11.

For reservations call Lauren at 925-935-7780
lauren@primaristorante.com



my TAKE

Being a native New Yorker, getting used to California and its lack of four distinct seasons was, at first, a bit of a challenge. I'm not complaining, mind you, as most of the time the weather here is wonderful and pretty lousy Back East. Still, it took a long time to get used to the rhythms of the seasonal changes here. In fact, it wasn't until I planted a year-round vegetable garden and watched my favas, arugula and tomatoes do their thing in my back yard that I truly felt acclimated.

We talk about seasonality all the time in the restaurant. I watched Peter send back flats of early figs because they aren't sweet enough for him, or see him sitting with his cooks at a back table trying to find a way to use some incredibly fresh garbanzo beans that just showed up unbidden. It's exciting for me because it makes me reckon with nature in a way that I get precious little exposure to in my work-a-day life in the 'burbs.

The wine side is seasonal too, just in a subtler way. As I plan out my year here in the shop I know that there will be new vintages of Zinfandel to buy in February, Pinot Noir in the early spring, big-deal Cabernet releases in April and October and lots of Burgundy, Piemontese wines and Champagne deals in the fall. But I get particular satisfaction when wine seasonality falls into harmony with the actual seasons. Right now, just in time to for the balmy weather, brand-spanking-fresh dry pink wines are arriving from Europe and Australia.

continued on page 10

COOL
 WHITES
 for HOT
 Summer
 NIGHTS

**2003 TELMO RODRIGUEZ BASA
 D.O. RUEDA \$8.97 NET**

I first had Basa Rueda at a now defunct tapas restaurant in Danville for like \$14 on their list and fell in love. My friends and I drank up their entire supply. Ever since then I've been trying (*to no avail*) to get enough to do something with it here. After my recent trip to Spain, where I met Rodriguez and tasted the wine in situ, I began a stalking campaign that resulted in a decent allocation (*and a restraining order*). Folks, the ultimate summer quaffer is here. Verdello, Sauvignon Blanc and a touch of Viura... but who cares. It's fragrant, dry, lively and very very good. And it's \$9. Any questions? Order soon to avoid disappointment.

**2003 A TO Z PINOT GRIS
 WILLAMETTE VALLEY, OREGON \$10.50 NET**

Another great bargain in a bright, zingy white is this peach-infused Pinot Gris from Oregon. A touch rounder in the palate than the Basa above, A to Z means it will go with anything you can cook from aroncini to zucchini fritters! Lovely with salads, shrimp or scallop skewers and grilled chicken. Proven under laboratory conditions!

**2003 TORBRECK WOODCUTTER'S WHITE (SEMILLON)
 BAROSSA VALLEY \$14.97 NET**

Good Semillon really fills the mouth yet finishes dry and minerally. Torbreck Woodcutter's has all of the weight of your favorite Chardonnay but a whole different set of attractive floral and fig-like flavors. Here's a wine rich enough to match up well with flavorful poultry and pork dishes, halibut, salmon or tuna off the grill and all of your favorite composed salads. An interesting and fun wine.

**2002 SAINTSBURY CHARDONNAY
 LOS CARNEROS REGULARLY \$19.97 NOW \$16.25 NET**

Great price on this benchmark Carneros Chardonnay. Ripe gingery Asian pear fruit with lots of buttery texture followed by a bright, lively finish. An absolutely terrific value in top notch Chardonnay.

**2002 MAK CHARDONNAY, ADELIADIE HILLS \$12.97 NET
 (Awesome Aussie Chard! Sophisticated and a great value.)**

**2002 CARTLIDGE & BROWN CHARDONNAY
 CALIFORNIA \$8.97 NET**

**2002 VILLA MOUNT EDEN CHARDONNAY
 WINEMAKER'S GRAND RESERVE
 BIEN NACIDO \$12.50 NET**

2002 CINNABAR CHARDONNAY, CENTRAL COAST \$13.50

THINK *pink...*

Repeat after me... dry Rose is a goooooo thing. It's aromatic, fun-to-drink and very food friendly. It is not the sticky, sweet stuff of our youth. And often a spectacular deal. Here are several we'd heartily love to recommend for your drinking and dining pleasure this summer.

**2003 PROTOCOLO ROSE
 VINO DE LA TIERRA CASTILLO D.O. SPAIN \$5.50 NET**

Lovely, and ridiculously cheap! I mean how can you not?

**2003 SAINT ROCH LES VIGNES
 COTES DE PROVENCE, FRANCE \$8.97 NET**

As pretty to look at as it is to drink, this is perfumed and lively.

**2004 TURKEY FLAT ROSE
 BAROSSA VALLEY, AUSTRALIA \$14.97 NET**

Don't let the fact that this is called Rose fool you! This is a hefty wine by anyone's standards and really, really delicious! ARRIVES EARLY JULY 2004

**2003 DOMAINE TEMPIER BANDOL ROSE
 \$25.97, 23.37 BY THE CASE**

The grand-daddy of them all from one of the warmest vintages in history. Wow.

under **20.**

HOT REDS FOR
 COLD CASH



**2002 CASTANO HECULA
 (MORISTELL-SYRAH), YECLA \$9.50 NET**

Another Spanish sweetie, this time from the arid limestone-y southeastern region known as Yecla. Yecla, like neighboring Jumilla is made up of old head-pruned Moristell (*aka Mourvedre*) vines that flourishes in the desert-like heat and benefits from the area's drastic temperature drops at night. Here Moristell takes on a lovely blueberry-plum character with hints of wet earth, lavender flowers and smoke. Easy drinking yet nicely complex and food-worthy. Not to be missed. 25 cases.

**2001 LEVERONI MERLOT
 SONOMA VALLEY \$11.97 NET**

This is some pretty damned serious Merlot for twelve bucks! Those friends of yours that routinely want Merlot and nothing but will love the sweet, creamy dark berry fruit but even your most finicky wine friends will dig the sophisticated aromatics and the lovely texture. A no-brainer red for the money.

**2003 WOOP-WOOP SHIRAZ
 SOUTH AUSTRALIA \$10.50 NET**

**2003 WISHING TREE SHIRAZ
 SOUTH AUSTRALIA \$8.50 NET**

Juicy Shiraz like these are a must-have for the long, hard summer months you have looming ahead of you. You can't possibly hope to survive those arduous evenings of ribs and burgers with only Bud Lite to wash 'em down now can you? Let us hook you up with some of the best drinkin' stuff around. Woop Woop is a shade lighter in body and more elegant than the Wishing Tree which is slightly more rustic and less driven by fruit.

**2002 MAURO MOLINO
 BARBERA D'ALBA \$13.50 NET**

Good Barbera should have a lot of sweet and a touch of sour too. It should provide lots of earthy plum and flowery flavors and keep your mouth refreshed and ready for more. That's what makes it so wonderfully food friendly. Mauro Molino's is augmented by a soupcon of nice wood to the proceedings making even more suitable for barbecued fare like grilled chicken or grilled swordfish topped with an olive tapenade. This is a great value in a wine with the pretensions of seriousness but a price that invites experimentation.

**2001 d'ARENBERG 'CUSTODIAN' GRENACHE
 McLAREN VALE \$14.97 NET**

Just last night great friends and neighbors Jeff and Joanne (*Congrats guys! Guess Joanne won't be drinking for a while*) brought out a 1998 Custodian to go along with some fresh-caught grilled salmon from Monterey. Yummy! I wondered aloud when the 2001 would be coming out and lo-and-behold, a sample turns up the very next day! And check out the great price! They've realigned the product stable at d'Arenberg, moving the Custodian in line with wines like the Footbolt Shiraz thus bringing the price down over \$5 a bottle. Put another way, there is no reason NOT to buy a case of this absolutely delicious Grenache and drink it all summer long.

[VISIT US ONLINE @
 www.primavini.com]

BACK YARD

BARBECUE' IN

SOME OF OUR FAVORITE SUMMER SIPPERS



**2000 d'ARENBERG d'ARRY'S ORIGINAL
'GRENACHE-SHIRAZ'
McLAREN VALE MAGNUMS \$34.97 NET**

The scene... Your backyard. A warm night in June. Dozens of midriff-bared writhing, gyrating women. Muscular guys-no shirts. Really loud Dropkick Murphy music. A disco ball in the gazebo. But instead of Coors Lite Silver Bullets, get this, you're pouring libations from these really cool magnums of d'Arry's Original. The dudes are really digging the ripe, sweet Grenache-fruit. The chicks love the structure, complexity and the way it tastes with the party food. Hey, don't pour that all over yourself! You're wasting perfectly good wine and it'll stain! 15 six-bottle cases and potentially hundreds of hours of pure, unadulterated fun available.

**2001 BUCKLIN ZINFANDEL, OLD HILL RANCH
SONOMA COUNTY \$29.97, 26.97 by the case**

Many of our first transcendental experiences with Zin were with Ravenswood Old Hill. I remember a stunning Old Hill from 1985 drunk at ten years old that blew me away. Well, it turns out that a family called Bucklin owns this spectacular century-old vineyard and they began to make some wine themselves beginning with the 2000 vintage. Their debut was a major hit at our ZAP dinner here last year as were Will and Ted Bucklin. The Bucklin's 2001, however, is a step beyond even that. Here is a sleek, sophisticated Zin that will age as gracefully as those old Ravenswood bottlings but will also taste harmonious and balanced all along the way. This is a delicious bottle of Zin!

free DELIVERY ❁

To simplify your life, PRIMA offers free delivery in the Diablo Valley and Lamorinda areas on wine orders over \$300. For orders less than \$300, it is only \$9.50

**2001 FINCA SANDOVAL (93% Syrah-7% Mourvedre)
D.O. MANCHUELA \$29.50, 26.55 by the case**

Another one of my favorite discoveries in Spain, Finca Sandoval is the project of famed wine writer Victor De La Serna (*a.k.a. 'the Robert Parker of Spain'*). De La Serna purchased land in the hot Manchuela growing region and planted it to Syrah, Touriga Nacional, Mourvedre and Grenache, the clones of which he obtained from the Perrin family of Beaucastel in Chateauneuf du Pape. You will love the inky color and the nose of sweet blueberries, camphor oil and violets. The palate is extraordinarily dense with hot bubbly road tar, chocolate and briar patch notes adding spice and complexity. I can see using it this summer alongside grilled pork chops, duck breasts and even sweet and spicy ribs. An absolutely delicious wine that will keep well too.

Notice... We are to receive a few cases more of the 2001 Vall Llach Priorato in mid-June. This 96 point-Parker wine is absolutely one of the most amazing bottles we've had from anywhere this year. About \$83 a bottle before discount.



2002 CAZAR PINOT NOIR, SONOMA COAST \$17.97 NET

Grilling salmon? We can help. Any food with grill marks and Pinot Noir make an absolutely smashing combination. Here's a wine that brings some considerable value to the Pinot Noir equation as well top-notch quality. Cazar is Bill Hunter, the mind behind the beautiful Chausseur wines. Rich without losing the essence of the varietal and very spicy in the mid-palate, this is lithe, lively and quite a good drink for the money.

SO MUCH PINOT NOIR... SO LITTLE MONEY!

2002 PATZ & HALL PINOT NOIR, SONOMA COAST

Call for a very special price

Also new Pinot Noirs from the likes of Martinelli, Testarossa, Pisoni, Rozak, Melville, Penner-Ash and more. Call for an updated list - 925 945 1800.

summer school

Clearly there is a thirst for knowledge (*so to speak*) out there! Both the first two sessions of PRIMA's wine classes have been sell-outs. We're pleased now to be able to offer Sessions Five and Six.

Classes run for six consecutive Monday evenings from 6-8 PM and are limited to 15 attendees per session. Your \$330 tuition includes not only the pearls of wisdom offered by veteran wine educators John Rittmaster and Assistant Wine Director Frank Rothstein but also all the tasting wine (*A LOT of wine*), guest lectures by members of the trade and some tasty antipasti too. These fun and informative classes are very popular and we look forward to seeing you. Call or e-mail for a syllabus.

* If you are not able to attend all of the classes of a given session, your tuition may be split several ways. \$330 guarantees you or your designated friends, a seat at the table for the six weeks.

Session Four... July 12th to August 16th **SOLD OUT**
The World of Pinot Noir

For information call John at 925-945-1800 or
john@primawine.com

SESSION 5: September 6 to October 18

MONDAY NIGHTS 6:00-8:00PM

THE BORDEAUX VARIETIES:

CABERNET SAUVIGNON,

ITS FRIENDS AND ITS RELATIVES

Instructor, Frank Rothstein

Assistant Wine Director, PRIMA

SESSION 6: October 25 to November 29

MONDAY NIGHTS 6:00-8:00PM

THE WINES OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND

SOUTH AFRICA

Instructor John Rittmaster

Wine Director, PRIMA

I *viva* ITALIA



**2001 CANONICA A CERRETO CHIANTI CLASSIC
CASTELNUOVO BERARDENGA DOCG**
\$15.97, 14.37 by the case

You can tell by the color that this is from the sandy, gravelly Castelnuovo Berardenga area grafted on to the southeast corner of Chianti Classico as opposed to the galestro-laden soils of the main region. The wine is a beautiful purple as opposed to the ruddier red of the rest of the DOCG. And it smells and tastes purple-y too: all lavender flowers, dried grapes and blueberries. And elegant too. Bright acidity, crisp tannin and a svelte sweet finish. Great Chianti at a greater price.

2002 SASSETTI-PERTIMALI ROSSO DI MONTALCINO
\$27.50, 24.75 by the case

The ruinous weather in Tuscany during the harvest of 2002 has presented you with a unique opportunity. The best producers in the region decided not to make their top wines and instead concentrate on making good 'normales.' At Pertimali this means no Brunello at all in 2002. Instead you get an incredibly good Rosso using all of the best Montosoli hill fruit that's normally reserved for the big boy. In other words you have a chance to experience the quality of one of the region's most sought after wines for well under half the normal price. Fully ripened and pleasantly earthy, this will drink great for at least 5 to 8 years.

2000 SEGHEGIO BAROLO LA VILLA
MONFORTE D'ALBA \$49.50, 44.55 by the case

The press has already gone hog-wild on the 2000 vintage with one publication even going as far as giving the vintage a perfect 100 point score! We like 2000 for its classic sense of balance rather than for the sheer brawn the last vintage of the century (1997) delivered. You'll like the Seghesio young but love it once it has had at least seven years in your cellar. Here is a textbook expression of Nebbiolo with spicy, tarry Burgundy-like notes, just whiff of barrique and some nice supple tannins bringing up the rear. Great price too.



BORGORGNO BAROLO COLLECTION

We recently had the opportunity to taste and purchase some amazing old Barolo Riservae from the cellars of the historic Borgogno winery. The property, now owned by the Boschis family of Dolcetto fame, makes a single wine from a combination of crus within the Cannubi zone. Old style stuff, no new oak or roto-fermenting here! Just pure Nebbiolo fruit, spice, tar and roses. We chose wines from the 1952, 1974 and 1982 vintages. These bottles have been moved a grand total of 15 feet over their entire life before being packed and air-freighted to the U.S. The amazing things are their consistency of style and how remarkably they've aged. If poured blind, I doubt I would have been able to tell the 1952 from the 1982. We've purchased small amounts of all three vintages for the restaurant but if you want some for your cellar, we can arrange it. They're very fairly priced.

Please call John at 925 945 1800 for more information.

Call or e-mail us for a list of the other 2000 BAROLI and 2001 BARBARESCI we're expecting to arrive this summer and fall.

And don't forget about 1999 BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO either. Our list is long and the wines are great!

And a host of other great TUSCANS are arriving soon. GUIDALBERTO from SASSICAIA, TASSINAIA and LUPICAIA from TERRICCIO, 2001 VINO NOBILE from POLIZIANO and more.

@PRIMAVINI.COM

TRY E-MAIL

Interested in hearing the latest goings-on at PRIMA before anyone else? Want to know when your favorite wine is released? Do you prefer your newsletter to be delivered on-line? Call us at 945-1800 or e-mail us at: info@primavini.com to be notified of the latest and greatest all at the touch of a button.

Seeing RED

2003

BORDEAUX FUTURES CAMPAIGN

The summer of 2003 was extraordinarily hot in Bordeaux producing wines of incredible ripeness and structure. But not everyone easily coped with these extreme circumstances. Like the also-hot but seminal 1961s, there will be hollow, tannic and forgettable wines made. But like 1961, 2003 will produce scores of modern classics. You will be able to obtain wines of amazing quality for less than \$20. The big-boys will be fairly well priced too, even with the Dollar in the dumps against the Euro. We're vetting the vintage like never before and buying only the gems. Payment in September 2004 with delivery in 2006. Call or e-mail for the current offering.

BURGUNDY PRE-ARRIVALS

We have a list of both red and white Burgundies arriving over the next few months. We have names like Girardin, Chevillon, Roty and Sauzet on offer right now. Call for the updated list.

NEW WORLD wonders



2002 DuMOL CHARDONNAY
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY \$44.97, 40.47 by the case

2002 DuMOL PINOT NOIR
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY \$55.97, 50.37 by the case

It gets tiring to read (*and even write*) "the new releases from X winery are even superior to last year's" because we all know that one's favorite wine in the wine business is the one you are trying to sell. But there is something to the hype with DuMOL. The 2002s both show a level of intensity over and above even their seminal 2001s.

The Chardonnay just flat out rocks. Exotic citrus and floral aromas enliven a palate rich with crême brulee and honey. Minerally too, like Puligny-Montrachet.

The Pinot Noir gets a major lift this vintage from two new vineyards sites in the cool Green Valley. They bring additional brightness to what is already the epitome of the 'Russian River cinnamon, spice and everything nice' style. Gorgeous mid-palate of sweet, sweet wild berry fruit. Drinks well now but will pick up the trademark DuMOL earth and truffle nuances with another two years in the cellar.

A steady stream of delicious 2001 California Cabernet-based wines has been coming through our doors. It's a great vintage for mainstream favorites like Whitehall Lane, Joseph Phelps, Duckhorn and others (all in stock, mind you) but 2001 has also produced some really fun wines that are new to us. Here are two new-bies that been epiphanies for us this spring.

2001 STEWART CABERNET SAUVIGNON
NAPA VALLEY \$49.97, 44.97 by the case

2001 CLOUD VIEW PROPRIETARY RED TABLE WINE
NAPA VALLEY \$59.97, 53.97 by the case

Paul Hobbs is the winemaking force behind Stewart's classic expression of Napa fruit. Chewy and dense, the Stewart impresses for its muscular frame and dark, dusky fruit. Made from Michael Stewart's own Stag's Leap fruit with dollops of prime Stagecoach and Beckstoffer fruit thrown in for good measure, this is the archetype of the curranty, sleek Napa Valley Cab.

The Cloud View on the other hand, is based on Merlot and Cabernet from Pritchard Hill. This one is all about sleek, character-ful mountain fruit. The one word that pops into mind here is 'dense,' like a black hole of chocolate! With neighbors like Long Vineyards, David Arthur, Chappellet and Bryant Family, we are talking pedigree here. A very impressive wine with persistence and class.



Hung Out TO DRY

A LAUNDRY LIST OF IN-STOCK DOMESTIC WINES
WORTH CHECKING OUT...

2002 PATZ & HALL CHARDONNAYS AND PINOT NOIRS

2002 MARTINELLI CHARLES RANCH CHARDONNAY

2002 SHAFER RED SHOULDER RANCH CHARDONNAY

2001 LAGIER-MEREDITH SYRAH

2002 CAROL SHELTON WILD THING AND KARMA

2001 BRYANT FAMILY CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2001 ETUDE MERLOT

2001 ARNS CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2001 CHAPPELLET PRITCHARD HILL CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2002 D'ARENBERG HEAVY HITTERS

Last year turned out to be a fiasco with our supply of d'Arenberg as both the Wine Spectator and Robert Parker gave them nosebleed scores leading to their instant evaporation from the market. We anticipate much the same kind of chaos when the press hits for these 2002s as well. Winemaker Chester Osborn has already come out and said that he much prefers these to last year's. Dead Arm will be characteristically scarce again but that doesn't mean you can't get in on the d'Arenberg fun this year. All are extremely limited and we urge you to call soon to avoid disappointment... pre-arrival pricing.

2003 D'ARENBERG MONEY SPIDER ROUSSANNE
McLAREN VALE \$19.97 NET

2002 D'ARENBERG LAST DITCH VIOGNIER
McLAREN VALE \$19.97 NET

The whites here have improved every year and the Money Spider in particular is a unique treat as good by itself as it is with food. Both are yummy.



2002 D'ARENBERG DERELICT VINEYARD
GRENACHE, McLAREN VALE \$32.37 NET
An old vineyard picked late, incredible intensity for Grenache! Custodian on steroids!

2002 D'ARENBERG STICKS & STONE
TEMPRANILLO, GRENACHE, SOUZAO
McLAREN VALE \$36.45 NET

This is HUGE wine with an earthy, old world feel to it. A must-have from the portfolio.

2002 D'ARENBERG IRONSTONE PRESSINGS
GRENACHE-SHIRAZ-MOURVEDRE, McLAREN VALE \$59.50 NET

2002 D'ARENBERG COPPERMINE ROAD
CABERNET SAUVIGNON, McLAREN VALE \$59.50 NET
These two need no introduction. Reserve yours now!

PENFOLD'S TOP WINES ARE ARRIVING MID-JUNE

Call now to get in on these spectacular new wines from one of Australia's best wines... subject to allocation.

2001 PENFOLDS BIN 707 CABERNET SAUVIGNON \$75.50 NET

2001 PENFOLDS YATTARNA CHARDONNAY \$56.25 NET

2001 PENFOLDS MAGILL ESTATE SHIRAZ \$42.75 NET
(very highly recommended)

2001 PENFOLDS RWT SHIRAZ \$69.75 NET

1999 PENFOLDS ST HENRI SHIRAZ \$31.97 NET
(one of Aussie's great cellar candidates)

1999 PENFOLDS GRANGE... \$225 NET
(call for availability)



Help COURTNEY FIGHT AIDS

Courtney Farris is one of PRIMA's most popular servers and bartenders. She impresses us every day with her unflagging congeniality, sincerity and hospitality. In addition to her toils at PRIMA, Courtney is an 'A' student preparing herself for a career in business. Courtney's community altruism also extends to the fight against AIDS. She's up at the crack of dawn and running on into night logging some 500 miles plus in preparation for the 2004 Honolulu Marathon taking place on December 12TH. Her efforts are geared towards raising money for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, which will provide HIV services and prevention programs in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties as well as the developing world.

Courtney is committed to raising at least \$3000 by August 31ST. Any contribution you could make to this most worthwhile cause would certainly be appreciated.

Nothing is too small. To help sponsor Courtney simply sign on-line to www.aidsmarathon.com and click on 'sponsor a runner.' Her Runner number is 4013. Or you may look her up by last name (Farris) and area (San Francisco).

my TAKE CONTINUED...

With all the fresh produce around, an idyllic dinner at Chez Rittmaster consists of a cold bottle of Rose (*Tempier tonight because it's Friday, Saint Roch the other night because it wasn't*), a salad dressed with fresh Meyer lemon and some good olive oil, maybe a grilled piece of chicken and some crusty bread. Well, that's my fantasy anyway. In reality, with our schedules and all, we're eating a lot of take-out Chinese and Mexican. But I do have to say the Roses taste just as good with that stuff.

My grandmother is turning 100-years old in June (*that's 400 seasons!*) and I'll be back in New York for that. I look forward to enjoying the 'uniqueness' of a summer Back East that only 90 degrees and 90% humidity and shad flies can provide!

So, as spring waxes into summer, remember to stop and smell the Grenache.....Grenache Rose that is.

JOHN RITTMASER *Wine Director & Owner*

VIVA ITALIA ROAD TRIP

September in Piemonte with John Rittmaster
September 13TH-19TH, 2004

PRESENTED BY LA VITA VERA ITALIA

\$2695 per person includes everything but your airfare to Milan

LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS

Discover the glories of the early fall in Piemonte with PRIMA Wine Director John Rittmaster. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity includes harvest time visits to some of the premier producers of Barolo and Barbaresco as well as cooking and language schools, great meals, tons of local color and a wonderful time for all.

For more information, a tentative itinerary or to make reservations please call Denise Pardini at 866-519-8837 or check out www.lavitaveraitalia.com and mention the PRIMA trip.



One day my cooks and I were putting together the evening's menu while nibbling a piece of pecorino, some bread and a chunk of prosciutto that had been cooked in tomato sauce. Oscar looked thirsty but we were too busy to go hunting around so we grabbed the Rosso Piceno we use for cooking and poured little half glasses to see us through our snack. It was one of those "Wow-this-is great" moments. We all left the table with a renewed sense of how much the simple table wines of Italy can shine given their proper context.

Rosso Piceno is just one of the lovely gifts of south-central Italy's Marche (*Mar-ke*) Region. San Leo style quail grilled with rosemary, robust sheep's milk cheeses, stuffed and fried Ascolone olives, rabbit braised with tomato and sage, pork stuffed with fennel and truffles, fish 'brodretto' from the Adriatic, fresh bean and pepper salads, plates of Carpegna prosciutto and melon are some of the many other treasures of the diverse culinary landscape of "le Marches." Although relatively unexplored by the American tourist, this dynamic agricultural area produces many of the flavors we have come to know as quintessentially Italian. We see some wonderful wines from the Marche though they get little attention here. With rare exceptions, it is context that illuminates the true nature of these wines.

When I planned my visit to Italy this summer, I decided to include Marche as a destination. Dino Capriotti of Vinity Wines who hails from the region, not only offered to help me find my way, he asked his brother to take me under his wing. It looks like I'll be getting an insider's tour of the local restaurants, farms and wineries and will have the opportunity to meet Dino's family – an honor I had not anticipated! If Dino and my occasional lunches together are any indication of what the Capriotti household is capable of, I'm sure I'm in for a treat! In September, I will team up with Vinity and offer a dinner to showoff my discoveries from the Marche. I hope many of you will join us to taste and enjoy! In the meantime, here is a spring rabbit dish we make using Verdicchio, one of my favorite Marche wines.

in the KITCHEN with PETER

PETER CHASTAIN *Chef & Owner*

Sonoma Rabbit

BRAISED WITH FAVA
BEANS, SAGE, GUANCIALE
and VERDICCHIO

Serves 4-6

- 3lb. Rabbit/disjointed (*don't like rabbit? Use game hen or chicken*)
- 8 oz. Niman Ranch Guanciale (*cured pork jowl*) diced small... ask your butcher
- 10 cloves fresh garlic/germ removed
- 1/4 bunch. Italian Parsley/leaves only plus 1 small handful of sage/leaves only
- 2 cups shucked fava beans
- 1 cup best whole peeled tomatoes/chopped coarsely
- 1/2 bottle Marche Verdicchio (*try Bonchi from our wine shop*)
- Salt and pepper
- 2 cups homemade chicken/rabbit broth
- 1/2 cup Extra Virgin Olive oil

- 1) Season rabbit well on all sides and sauté in olive oil over a moderate heat until golden brown.
- 2) Chop together on a board the guanciale, garlic, parsley and sage. Add it all to the pan and cook to golden.
- 3) Add wine and reduce slowly until only 1/8th of a cup remains.
- 4) Add tomatoes and broth.
- 5) Simmer slowly for approx. 40 minutes or until rabbit is tender

After a light antipasto this dish is best served with a fresh salad and a few bottles of the wine to wash it all down. Enjoy!