

October, 2005

PRIMA

R I S T O R A N T E



N E G O Z I O D I V I N I



PLEASE GIVE A WARM WELCOME TO NICHOLE (DON'T CALL ME) ISE

THE FRESH FACE behind the counter as you walk in to the wine shop is the newest member of the PRIMA VINI team, Nichole Ise (pronounced E-Z and, though, I'm sure she will handle those inevitable comments with the grace and humor with which she has handled everything else in her new job so far, please let's not test that theory). Nichole comes to us with a strong background in wine tasting room retail and production, eclectic preferences in wine and incurable good cheer. In addition to providing you with the friendly expert advice you expect at PRIMA, she'll also be co-coordinating in-store special events and generally pushing us guys around. Look for her and say 'Hi' when you next come in.

THE Holidays (ALMOST) are here!

Changes are afoot, not only in the seasons and our day-to-day habits, but also in our choices of food and wine to enjoy. With the holidays fast approaching, it's time to think about stocking the cellar with appropriate wines, gift buying for your wine-loving friends, and thanking business associates for a job well done. **Wine makes a great gift**, for both the wine aficionados on your list and those recipients who are shy about their wine preferences. PRIMA Vini's wine staff (John, Frank, David, Franco and Nichole) can help you select the perfect wine gift to suit any occasion. **In order to gear up for the holiday onslaught**, we are stocking the wine shop with lots of new wines, which are eloquently described in the following pages. We have also added a new member to our PRIMA Vini wine staff (please note the sidebar welcoming Nichole Ise). The physical layout of PRIMA Vini has changed recently or, at least will be changed; by the time you are reading this newsletter. We have rearranged the front of the store to accommodate more wine accessories and to make that area more hospitable to larger groups.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

GETTING THE MOST FOR
YOUR HARD EARNED BUCK...

Prima Style

Bianco

2004 Tavignano Verdicchio di Castelli di Jesi \$11.50 NET

Everything you could possibly want in a fresh, crisp Italian white, the Verdicchio from Jesi are livelier and brighter than the broader, weightier examples of Metalica. The *Tavignano* is beautifully aromatic and focused on pure, lemon-blossom infused fruit. Tasted at the cantina and at dinner this past summer, it was not only refreshing and fun to drink, I'd take a sip, do a double-take and go, "Hey, this is really nice!" So will you.

2004 Domaine Des Boutines Pouilly-Fuisse \$15.25 NET

From the wonderfully balanced and bright 2004 vintage in the Macon, this is for lovers of the Chardonnay grape in its most elemental form. Beautifully focused, pure Asian pear fruit with a touch of Meyer lemon, hazelnut and mineral that adds interest. There is nothing better than lively, complex White Burgundy to turn an ordinary plate of grilled fish into something extraordinary! We also might have a few bottles of Dominique Lafon's *Heretieres Comte Lafon* Macon in stock. Different wine...thicker and infused with a nutty, grainy lees character. \$21 a bottle.

2002 Ms. Anonymous Chardonnay, Napa Valley \$16.97 NET, SPECIAL SOLID CASE PRICE \$180/\$15 BOTTLE

So you want it big and buttery, do you? Want to revel in the smells of luscious, ripe fruit, coconut gelato, vanilla beans and cloves? Want to coat your palate in unctuous ripe pear-like Chardonnay goodness? Look no further. This is actually this winery's \$38 very well known barrel-fermented Chardonnay in the guise of a special bottling for a major hotel chain that wasn't able to use all they contracted for. In other words, this is a phenomenal deal! Better clear out some space in your cellar for this one!

FREE DELIVERY

To simplify your life, PRIMA offers free delivery in the Diablo Valley and Lamorinda areas on wine order over \$300. For orders less than \$300, it is only \$10.50



2004 Loosen Bros. 'Dr. L' Riesling ObA Mosel-Saar-Ruwer \$11.97 NET

Here is the anti-Chardonnay. Bracing, racy, low in alcohol and high in refreshment value. Man, do we love this kind of wine here. Round and fruity enough to appeal to your aunt that puts ice cubes in her wine, but with that filtered-through-chalk character that makes Riesling lovers salivate! Yu-u-u-my, extremely food friendly and disarmingly charming!

2004 d'Arenberg 'The Olive Grove' Chardonnay, McLaren Vale \$11.97 NET

Unbeatable price for one of Aussie's greatest values in white wine. Delish!

2004 de Angelis Lacrima Christi Bianco del Vesuvio \$15.97 NET, 14.37 BY THE CASE

I'll keep flogging this until every last one of you tries it! The ultimate seafood wine.

2003 Concannon 'Stampmaker's White' Rhone Blend, Central Coast \$12.97 NET

Terrific blend of Viognier, Roussanne and Marsanne. They sell this in their tasting room for \$18. Highly recommended but limited.



Rosso

2003 Juan Gil Jumilla
\$14.97 NET, 13.57 BY THE CASE

This wine flat out ROCKS! I first tasted this pure Monastrell (Mourvedre) as a barrel sample in Spain last year and made a note in my notebook to keep an eye out for it here. And the finished product is even better than I remembered the sample! Imagine your favorite Cotes du Rhone with a dash more pepper, a glossier texture, a lot less funk and a sense of elegance rarely seen in wines in this price point! Sleek and complex. Oh my, but aren't there some great values coming out of Spain.

2003 Domaine Monpertuis Cepage
Counoise VdP \$9.50 NET

Counoise traditionally was an 'improver' variety, one of the mélange of grapes used in the production of Chateaufort du Pape in the southern Rhone Valley. It has fallen on hard times thanks to the new wave of producers that focus more on using Grenache, Mourvedre and Syrah to the exclusion of everything else. But there are still lovely stands of old vine *Counoise* still out there, including those at **Domaine Monpertuis**. This smells of the hot mistral blowing down through the Rhone Valley and one taste will transport you to a picnic table somewhere in the sun, surrounded by your favorite people and lots of good food. All that contentment for less than a sawbuck!? Therapy costs a helluva lot more!

FREE GIFT WRAP
PRIMA Vini offers Free Gift Wrap of your Christmas gift orders with attractive gift bags and colorful ribbons. We're happy to be your XMAS elves.

2003 Scacciadiavoli Rosso di Montefalco
\$14.97 NET

The Sangiovese- and Sagrantino-based wines of Montefalco, Umbria can be a little, um, different. There's usually more than a hint of untamed tannin and a definitely earthy aspect that can startle you at first. But when made clean and well, the wines of Montefalco are complex like none other and their great grip makes them wonderful accompaniments to a wide range of your good cooking. Scacciadiavoli (Skatch-ee-a-dia-Voli) is a small, elite producer making wines that fit halfway between New World producers like Arnaldo Caprai and Old School funk-meisters like Bea. This is a must try for lovers of Rosso di Montalcino and Rosso di Montepulciano. And you'll get change back from your twenty too!

Other Bargains In Stock

2003 Paul Autard Cotes du Rhone Rouge
\$12.50 NET

Wow! What a fun wine to drink. Cherry liqueur and plum jam with a dash of white pepper. What's not to like!?

2002 d'Arenberg 'D'Arry's Original'
Shiraz-Grenache, McLaren Vale \$14.97 NET

This sturdy Aussie red has a major following around here. Old School red that pleases at every level, even price!



Staff Favorites

Domencq 'Medium Dry' Amontillado Sherry \$14.97 NET, 13.57 BY THE CASE

I spent a few days prancing (editor: OK, Frank doesn't 'prance,' he sort of wobbles) around Jerez earlier this year and came back more enthusiastic than ever about this vastly undervalued drink which works not only at the front or back of the meal, but all through it too. Though we've vastly expanded our offerings at PRIMA to include everything from bone-dry perfume-y Sherries to thick molasses-like dessert wines, I am presently most enamored with this delicious and flexible Amontillado. It's just off dry, but not a bit austere and perfect served cold with antipasti, all by itself or with savory first-course soups, chowders and savory salads. So civilized! So delicious! **-FR**

NY Black Chook Sparkling Shiraz, McLaren Vale \$17.97 NET, 16.17 BY THE CASE

Sparkling Shiraz is a sort of guilty pleasure, like that old *Best of the Bee Gee's* record you should have thrown out years ago and your *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* DVD. What would the neighbors say if they saw you throwing back a bottle of this black fizzy stuff with your burgers instead of Zin? The Aussies are much more sanguine about their pleasures. To them 'Sparkling Burgundy' is just one of those things that turns a 'barbie' into a party. **-DP**



2004 Yalumba MGS, Barossa Valley \$33.97, 30.57 BY THE CASE

This was one of my favorite wines from Negociant's Icon tasting that included Octavius and Armagh. 2004 was a huge vintage in SA, and the influence on this red wine is on the "M"—for Mourvedre, which makes up 60% of the blend. Big, thick, black-peppery Mataro oozes from the glass, along with earthy, blueberry Grenache and black raspberry, acaicia flower, cocoa-infused Shiraz. This is a stand-out wine in a crowd full of top-notch performers, providing a serious wine at a very fair price. **-DP**

2004 Holus-Bolus Syrah, Santa Ynez Valley \$25.97, 23.37 BY THE CASE 10 CASES AVAILABLE

Four winemakers, eight arms, one octopus and a case where too many cooks have only improved the broth! Four of the Central Coast's best known figures in the Syrah game are behind this amazing massive quaff that manages to be brooding and serious yet charming and fun-to-drink at the same time. Every Syrah descriptor I can think of applies here! **-FC**

2002 El Puntido Rioja \$55.97 NET, 50.37 BY THE CASE

Had this wine as a barrel sample in Rioja several years ago and put a big red star next to it in my notes. Tasted it again in bottle with Jorge Ordóñez in San Francisco this spring and it was even better. Now that it has finally arrived in the United States, the once formidable tannins have melded into the wine and the aggressive black road tar has mellowed into lovely dark chocolate. One thing that hasn't changed is this wine's amazingly silky, suave texture: both massive and elegant at the same time. Another way to look at it? Imagine Ramirez da Gazuza with the volume turned WAY up! A fantastic discovery! Very limited. **-JR**

PRIMA Vini's WINE CLUBS

All of PRIMA Vini's Wine Clubs make great holiday gifts, whether given for a specified length of time or ongoing month by month. Contact our staff to arrange for this much-appreciated gift.

FRANCO'S
California
 Chronicles



2003 Dutch Bill Creek Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast
\$19.97 NET, 17.97 BY THE CASE

2003 Dutch Bill Creek Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast \$19.97, 17.97 BY THE CASE

Starting with this vintage, well-known grower *Charles Heintz* has split the production of his own wines into two releases. The first release consists of this lushly textured, pineapple and vanilla infused Chardonnay and a terrific, smoky, dark cherry and cinnamon-rich Pinot. They are both delicious and the Pinot Noir, in particular, is a huge cut above most you will find out there even at twice the price. We're pouring both in the restaurant so come in and taste.

2003 Carol Shelton Zinfandel 'Rocky Reserve' Rockpile AVA
\$32.97 NET, 29.67 BY THE CASE

2002 Cloudview Red Table Wine, Napa Valley \$59.97 NET

Wonderful mountain wine with the barest hint of briar underneath some gorgeous black fruit and sweet, lovely tannin. Superb new venture.

2002 Opus One, Napa Valley \$135 NET

2002 Joseph Phelps Insignia, Napa Valley
\$115 NET/ Solid CASE SPECIAL
\$1200/\$100 BTL (LIMIT ONE CASE)

2004 ZD Chardonnay, Carneros
\$19.97 NET

Just discovered we're a buck cheaper than Costco!

Lewis Cellars Fall Release

- 2004 Napa and Sonoma Chardonnays
- 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

Patz & Hall Fall Release

- 2004 Napa Chardonnay and Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir **\$35.97, 32.37**
- Zio Tony, Durell, Dutton Chardonnays, Alder Springs and Pisoni Pinot

T-Vine Fall Release

- 2003 Grenache **\$26.97, 24.27**
- 2003 Duarte Syrah **\$28.97, 26.07**
- 2002 'T' Meritage **\$44.97, 40.47**

Duckhorn Fall Release

- 2004 Sauvignon Blanc **\$24.97, 22.47**
- 2003 Merlot, Napa Valley **\$49.97, 44.97**



PRIMA long-sleeve, button down shirts \$29.97 NET

We've spruced up our look in the wine shop with these cool Port Authority button-downs. Available in S-M-L-XL sizes in red, burgundy, black, blue, navy or dark green. Join the team... get a shirt... BE HIP LIKE US.

New Arrivals

FROM THE OLD WORLD

From France

2004 Vincent Girardin Rully Vieilles Vignes \$21.75 NET

2004 Jean-Marc Boillot Montagny Blanc Premier Cru \$20.50 NET

Two of our favorite producers are sending us their immaculate 2004 white Burgundies. Stop me if you've heard me say this before: every Chardonnay grape wishes it could be born in Burgundy. And here, in the Cotes Chalonnaise, are fashioned some of the region's best values.

Girardin's wines from Santenay and Rully show all the voluptuousness you'd expect from a wine from further up the Cotes but for \$20-\$200 less a bottle. Here is a lovely old vine cuvee from his best Rully sites. The Premier Cru Montagny is a cuvee we've been buying from **Jean Marc Boillot** for over a decade. It's remarkably consistent. A bit racier and leaning more towards pears than the decidedly tropical feel to Girardin's wine. Great acidity and persistence here and a proven track record in the cellar. We have much bigger selections of both of these guys' wines and we'd be happy to take you as far up the road to Montrachet as you care to travel! Call for details.

2003 Domaine Faiveley Mercurey Rouge 'Domaine De La Croix Jacques \$17.97, 16.17 BY THE CASE (HALF BOTTLES AVAILABLE TOO)

Mercury, in the Cote Chalonnaise, is the kind of appellation that made stellar wines in 2003. Normally hard-as-nails and requiring years and years to mature, this super warm vintage created Mercurey with a thick veneer of beautifully ripe Pinot Noir fruit covering the massive tannins. **Faiveley** is the Mercurey specialist with holdings in the very best crus in the appellation and they've been waiting for a vintage like this for decades! We have a bunch of 2003 Faiveley wines including their fantastically rare Grand Crus. Call for a tour.

PRIMA'S WINE TASTING CALENDAR

Be sure to check out PRIMA's Wine Tasting Calendar on Page 9 to view our schedule of Comparative Tastings. This is a great way to sample and enjoy an interesting variety of wine at a reasonable cost.



2003 Domaine Paul Autard Chateauneuf du Pape Rouge \$31.97 NET, 28.77 BY THE CASE

We've been telling anyone that will listen about how exciting the 2003 vintage is in the Southern Rhone. Now here's a chance to discover for yourself the quality of the vintage without having to pay the big bucks some of the top cuvees of Chateauneuf du Pape are fetching. By the way, **2003 Domaine du Vieux Telegraph** is now in stock in 750 and 375 ml bottles. So is the **2003 Domaine Paillard Gigondas**.

Other Old World Favorites In Stock

2004 Bordeaux Futures

There are some good values here. Call for the list.

2003 Chateauneuf duPape

The big names are on the way but 2003 produced intriguing wine at every price point!

2003 Vintage Port

From the extraordinarily powerful 2003 vintage, we have wines from all of the major players due this fall. If you're wondering if you should put any of these into your cellar, bite the bullet and open a top 1970. Quite an experience, right? And these 2003s are 20% of what that 1970 would cost now.

Viva Italia

A PRIMA California Exclusive

2004 Tavignano 'Misco'
Verdicchio di Castelli di Jesi
\$17.50 NET, 15.75 BY THE CASE

2004 Tavignano 'Libenter' Rosso Piceno, Marches **\$21.97 NET, 19.77 BY THE CASE**

'Misco' is the big brother of the *Tavignano Verdicchio* on the white bargain page. It's made from a selection of grapes culled from a particularly advantageous site in Jesi, fermented on its own natural yeasts and aged for a short time in wood. Less built around bright, lemony fruit and more about texture and creamy complexity this will give you the Chardonnay-like weight you want, but with the hazelnut-y mineral complex you demand from a noble Italian white. Tavignano's *Rosso Piceno Libenter* is also very impressive. Have you ever experienced the salivary critical mass that occurs when you catch an ephemeral whiff of barbecue smoke and something very, very good cooking on it? That's what happens when you put this wine up to your nose! Honest. Then comes the warm chocolate-y texture and broad tannins. With grilled lamb and veal chops this was heaven! Drink now or keep it for a decade.

2004 Zuani Vigne Collio Bianco
\$20.97 NET, 18.87 BY THE CASE

This reminded me of the stunning biodynamic wines of Marcel Deiss in Alsace....super rich, exotic whites made from a field blend of low yielding, immaculately farmed grapes, in Zuani's case, Tocai Fruilano, Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio. This winery, the passion of the estranged daughter of Marco Felluga, Collio's most seminal figure, produces just a small amount of this one wine. Lovely, exotic and mouthfilling in the same sort of way as the best Alsatian but undeniably Italian too. You'll love it with veal, poultry and just about any seafood preparation you can think of. Unique and fun to drink.



YOUR NEXT DINNER PARTY

PRIMA
Ristorante
has several,
comfortable
venues for
your private
dining
experience.
Contact the
restaurant to
discuss your
options and
to schedule
your next
dinner party.



2003 Terre Nere Etna Rosso 'Sottana Calderara' **\$20.97, 18.87 BY THE CASE**

2003 Terre Nere Etna Rosso 'Guardiola'
\$35.97, 32.37 BY THE CASE

Magnums of both coming as well

Nerello Mascalese sounds more like a character in the *Sopranos* than a grape variety but this indigenous variety thrives on the cool slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily, making a wine with an intriguing spicy character and none of the roasted, rustic or prune-y characters that can sometimes plague Sicilian wines from warmer climes. 'Sottana Calderara' comes from the Nerello vines further down the slope at around 700 feet, while the 'Guardiola' comes from the highest, hence coolest spots on the volcano. The former was absolutely delicious, memorable even, with a chili-spiked tuna, fresh tomato and giant tube pasta dish. It will do nothing but get better for the next 6 or 8 years. 'Guardiola' on the other hand, is what a Grand Cru Burgundy might taste like were it from Sicily! Cellarable for a decade or longer too. The magnums would be unbeatable at your next neighborhood spaghetti and meatballs fest!

2001 Luigi Pira Barolo DCGG
\$39.97, 35.97 BY THE CASE

This was my flat out winner of the 'Straight Barolo Of The Trip' award, or, the wine 'Most Likely To Wind Up On J.D.'s Wine List.' Located just a few steps from Serralunga, Pira's cantina commands an incredible view of the 'Grand Crus' of Serralunga and Monforte d'Alba including their own holdings of 'Rionda,' 'Marenca' and 'Margheria.' It is from these great vineyards that this 'straight' Barolo is fashioned. My notes said "classically styled, nicely ripened darker fruit, mid-palate is real smooth with nicely submerged tannin, drinks extraordinarily well now but obvious stuffing for the cellar. Excellent quality. The best 'Normale' Barolo to date. ***(+)."

Events

Save the Dates

FALL EVENTS AT PRIMA



WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING...

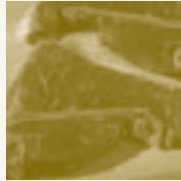
"We keep coming back for PRIMA's unique style of cuisine." T.W.

"The quality of the people is exceptional." A.C.

"The wines by the glass are terrific." M.H.

"The atmosphere is elegant and sophisticated." K.D.

"It's our destination restaurant in Walnut Creek with the best wine list to match the wonderful food." N.S.



October 25
Tuesday

An Evening of Meat & Wine Prima's Niman-Neiman Dinner

6:30 pm Reception
7:00 pm Dinner
\$95 per person plus tax and gratuity

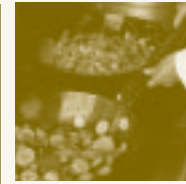
Only a few seats remain at Niman-Neiman featuring the meats of famed Niman Ranch (with Bill Niman himself in attendance) and the wines of *wunderkind* Drew Neiman.

October 28
Friday

In-Store Tasting with Cameron Ashmead from Elderton of the Barossa Valley

5:00-7:00 pm
\$25 per person includes passed antipasti.

Direct from Nurioopta comes young Cameron Ashmead, General Manager of the famed Elderton Winery of the Barossa Valley! He'll be packing the complete line of Elderton's wonderfully full-flavored wines including, of course, the eponymous Ashmead Cabernet and the incredible Command Shiraz.



November 8
Tuesday

The Women of Wine A Tasting, Dinner and Celebration

5:30-6:45 pm
Open Tasting With The Women of Wine in PRIMA Vini.

\$25 per person includes passed antipasti.
RSVP required and attendance limited.

7:00 pm
Dinner at the Queen's Table in PRIMA's Loggia with the Winemakers.

\$95 per person plus tax and gratuity.
Attendance will be limited to 38.

Break bread with some of the most important Women in Wine....a special menu designed to bring out the best in a terrific (and tentative!) line up of wines from guests like Pam Starr, Delia Viader, Lynn Penner-Ash, Vanessa Wong, Carol Shelton, Margeurite Ryan and Kathy Joseph.

Note that due to harvest considerations back in Barolo, Chiara Boschis will not be attending. She is flying out next February along with Sylvia Altare and Enrica Scavino so we can do Women in Wine Redux, The Barolo Divas. Stay tuned for details

Wine Tasting Calendar

October

20-26 The Spanish Inquisition

November

27-2 Cabernet, Merlot & Friends

2 Open House Prima Vini

3-9 Pinot Noir Versus Burgundy

10-16 New Arrivals From Tuscany

17-23 Thanksgiving Day Favorites



November 11
Friday

In-Store Tasting with Champagne Bollinger

5:00-7:00 PM

\$20 includes wine and passed antipasti

Get your weekend off to a great start with frothy glasses of NV Bollinger Brut Special Cuvee, the sleek 1997 Bollinger Grand Annee and the transcendental 1995 Bollinger R.D. Champagne-friendly antipasti will be served. RSVP please.



December 3
Saturday

PRIMA's Annual Champagne Tasting Extravaganza

3:00-4:30 PM

\$88.00 per person, plus tax and gratuity, including light antipasti

Don't miss our annual Champagne blowout featuring 14 different sparkling wines and Champagnes; with a lineup of the finest Brut sparklers followed by a flight of Tete de Cuvees from seven prestigious houses. This is also your chance to purchase your favorites bubbly at fantastically low prices. Come one, come all and let's make a party to remember. Reservations are required so don't hesitate to book early. Salute!





PRIMA'S FOUR GREAT WINE CLUBS

One of PRIMA's four wine clubs is just right for you or someone you owe! Truly personalized service, great wines and great value.

IL CONSORZIO DI PRIMA

3 bottles a month....all about true value at \$49.97 a month including delivery.

THE SUPER CONSORZIO

2 bottles of the world's best, period. Eclectic and exciting...up to \$100, every six weeks.

ANTIPODEA DI PRIMA

2 lovely wines from south of the equator including some of Australia's very best. Up to \$80. Every six weeks.

CONSORZIO DI CALIFORNIA

One bottle monthly from some of California's smallest and best. Up to \$75 a month.

Call 800-70-PRIMA or info@primawine.com for more information.

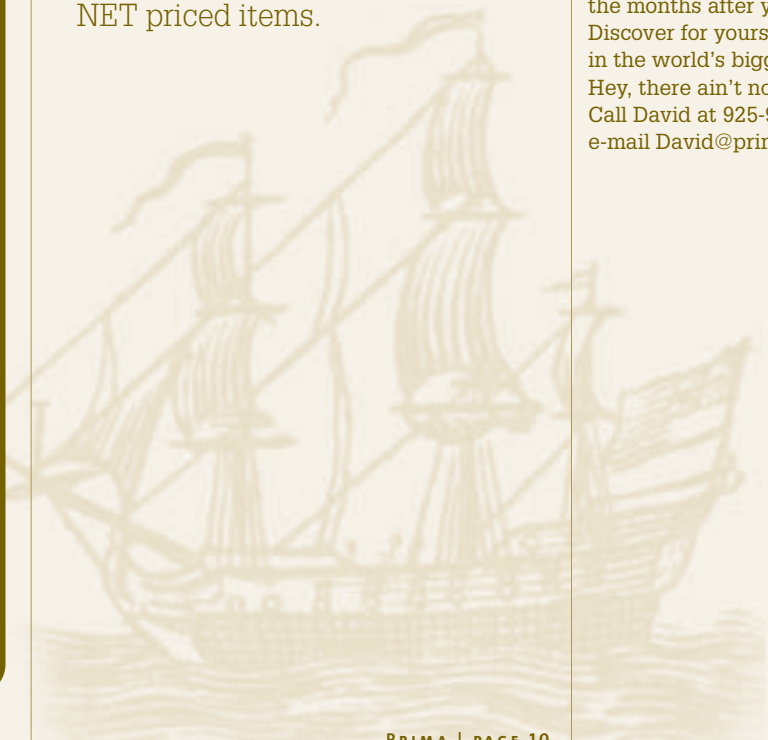
Prima's Wine Club of the Month

Australia di Prima

FORMERLY ANTIPODEA DI PRIMA

- The Oz Meister: David Perry, PRIMA's Man Down Under
- 2 bottles of top class Australian wine delivered every six weeks
- Averages between \$65 and \$85 an issue plus delivery
- Literate newsletter with information you can use, reorder discounts plus 10% off on everything we sell except for NET priced items.

David Perry's stated two goals when he went off to work harvest at **Torbreck** in the Barossa Valley all those years ago. One was to learn all he could about the area and its winemaking and the second was to make PRIMA a major player in the Australian market when he returned. To say he achieved those goals would be an understatement. He not only learned a lot during his tenure at Torbreck, he continues to have his finger on the pulse of the Australian market and is in constant communication with the many friends he made at Torbreck, including many that have gone on to start their own high profile wineries. He's also single-handedly revamped PRIMA's Australian selections and insures that we try virtually every important wine that makes it into this market. Australia di PRIMA (affectionately known here as The Oz Club) was a natural extension of this. Members are constantly being exposed to the state-of-art in winemaking Down Under and have discovered scores of different wines well before the press! In the last two years alone, their have been at least a dozen Oz Club selections that have rocketed to cult status in the months after you've already had your shot! Discover for yourself the vanguard of winemaking in the world's biggest winemaking laboratory. Hey, there ain't no Yellow Tail here. Call David at 925-945-1800, 800-70-PRIMA or e-mail David@primawine.com



In the Kitchen with Peter



Almost anyone can grill a steak. Salt, pepper, cook both sides, plate and serve. You're done. The quality is only affected by the product used. Few variables – great results. Braising foods on the other hand requires a lot more skill, patience and decision-making. Stews, ragus and the various braised dishes that warm us up as the seasons change are the darlings of cooks who really like to be in the kitchen and the bane of those who don't.

In braising the cook makes use of tougher, more irregular cuts of meat, under mature vegetables, left over glasses of wine, stray pieces of cured meat and the by-products of other, more elevated cooking processes. The cook coaxes out flavors from foods, which would otherwise remain hidden. Whether making a shoulder of veal or rendering an over grown turnip edible, the cook's talent and creativity is on stage when it's time to braise.

Braising can be defined in the following way: searing or caramelizing a food then introducing liquid to finish the cooking process by slow simmering.

With many foods there is both visual and flavor value in turning it brown prior to making it chewable, digestible and nutritious (some of the basic goals of cooking). With meats, one sweetens the end result with out the addition of sugar – this savory sweetness, in concert with the other flavors, is the hallmark of good cooking.

In the case of vegetables, bitter flavors mellow and toughness goes away with proper braising. Endive, fennel, root vegetables and many other things are transformed to different and wonderful dishes with this technique.

As we move into colder weather braised dishes have more and more appeal. I'll be featuring some new braises as we get into the season. Always popular are lamb shank, veal osso buco and stracotto; this year we'll also be using osso buco of pork, rabbit, duck and oxtail to name a few. Please let me know what your favorites are.

PETER CHASTAIN
CHEF & OWNER

“Whether making a shoulder of veal or rendering an over grown turnip edible, the cook's talent and creativity is on stage when it's time to braise.”

Here is how we make rabbit sometimes. This is a winner when the fall mushrooms come on. I like it best over soft polenta with a good glass of Barbera or Dolcetto.

Rabbit Braised with Chanterelles & Cippollini Onions

3-5 lb. Rabbit/disjointed – legs, thighs and loin cut into 3 pieces (chicken will work too)

12 cippollini onions/peeled

1 lrg carrot/peeled and diced small

2 celery stalks/diced small

5 garlic cloves/germ removed sliced thinly

1 lb. chanterelle mushrooms/quartered

1/2 cup San Marzano whole peeled tomatoes/diced

1 cup dry white wine with no oak

1 bu. fresh sage/stems removed

1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley

2 cups homemade broth/hot

Salt and pepper to taste

Extra virgin olive oil

1 Season rabbit well with salt and pepper. Heat a deep pan that will accommodate all the ingredients on a high flame. Heat olive oil until just before smoking. Add rabbit pieces and sauté until brown on all sides. Remove to a warm platter and reserve.

2 Place the onions, carrot and celery into the pot and sauté well until you have good color – add some more oil if needed.

3 Add mushrooms, sage and garlic. Season all with salt and continue cooking until the mushrooms are tender and savory.

4 Add tomatoes and white wine. Clean up the pot with a wooden spoon making sure that there are no burnt spots. Place rabbit back in and add hot broth.

5 Reduce heat to a low simmer, cover partially and cook turning occasionally until tender – approximately 30 minutes.

6 Place rabbit on a platter. Increase heat and reduce sauce until syrupy. Add parsley pour over rabbit. Serve hot with some soft polenta.



PRIMA

RISTORANTE  NEGOZIO DI VINI

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Telephone 925.935.7780

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PRIMA Ristorante will be making great use of the space during the holiday season for cocktail receptions and wine tastings, which segues into my next pitch of reminding you to **contact PRIMA to schedule your Christmas or Holiday gathering.** Heather, Suzanne and Gerardo can be reached at **(925) 935-7780** to discuss your menu and wine options, so please call soon to get your preferred date on the calendar. Of course, one big change that you already know about is John and Peter's acquisition of the business, noted in PRIMA's newsletter just over a month ago. Since then, we have installed a new computer system in the wine shop and the

restaurant, upgraded some of the restaurant equipment, including that most necessary of items, a new espresso machine, and acquired some spiffy new PRIMA shirts (see the current newsletter, page 5). GO Team PRIMA!!

We'd love the opportunity to serve you sometime soon, whether it's for a well-deserved lunch with friends, your festive holiday party, or with your wine gift needs. We invite you to stop by PRIMA in the near future to check for yourself what is going on or to participate in any of the exciting wine and food events that we have scheduled. In fact, we are going to give you the perfect opportunity to visit us at an **Open House Celebration on Wednesday evening, November 2nd, 2005**

from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Please stop by PRIMA Vini to hobnob with some of our favorite suppliers and sample their delicious wines (offered at unbelievable prices, by the way) and enjoy some of PRIMA Ristorante's fantastic antipasti. We will also have frequent drawings for an assortment of fun wine paraphernalia, like hats, shirts, corkscrews, etc. The cost to you is just your smiling face walking in the door. **Please RSVP to PRIMA Vini at (925) 945-1800** or drop in if you're in the neighborhood.

See you there!

Cheers,

FRANK ROTHSTEIN
AND THE STAFF AT PRIMA



Dining

Reservations 925.935.7780
or www.opentable.com

Lunch Monday thru Saturday 11:30am to 2:30pm
with Afternoon Repast 2:30pm to 5pm
Dinner from 5pm daily (including Sunday)

Wine Sales

925.945.1800 or 800.70.Prima
or www.primavini.com

Mon thru Sat 10am to 7pm (6pm Saturdays)
Fax 925 935 0519
www.primavini.com



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