

HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPE VINE

SEPTEMBER 2012



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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

BY ED DENT

Chapter News

The last three months were quiet months for the Greater Houston Chapter after a well organized and well attended annual event and state meeting at Messina Hof Winery in Brenham. It was confirmed by our State Treasurer that \$2,530 was raised for the Wine Society of Texas' Scholarship fund from the silent auction, Messina Hof blending competition and donations. This was a quote from one of our Board Members regarding this weekend activity.

"I am really proud of and send congratulations to all the people who worked so hard to make our annual meeting such a success. As many of you know, I count our scholarship program as the WST's crown jewel and this addition to the fund will help greatly in sustaining our annual awards. Kudos to all!"

The month was spent working with the web developer on our chapter website. Based on our progress to date, we should be able to launch it sometime between the first of November and before Thanksgiving. We are in the midst of correcting some things which were wrong. The website will highlight chapter activities, newsletters and those Texas wineries and wine bars affiliated with our chapter.

Another area, we've focused on this quarter is collaboration with the San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy on an informal reception on April 12, 2013 as a prelude to their 13th annual San Jacinto Symposium on the 13th. The Conservancy is a non-profit organization that supports and

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER CONTINUED

funds archaeological projects, marsh and prairie restoration, land acquisition and the annual battle re-enactment. Since wine has been a part of the Texas landscape for as long as there has been a Tejas, it was felt that it was appropriate to serve Texas wines at this reception and have someone speak about the history and growth of the Texas wine industry. A committee from our chapter is currently working with the Conservancy to make this happen.

During the month of October members will be attending The Texas Wine Month Dinner at REEF on October 2nd. They will be pairing Messina Hof wines with their excellent foods. Paul Bonarrigo will be present to talk about his award winning wines. On October 4th other members are invited guests, spending an evening with celebrated architecture and history photographer-writer, Douglas Keister, and Texas wine expert, Denman Moody, at Reflection Lakes Estate in Memorial Oaks. Mr. Keister will share observations and humor from his experiences chronicling the rich history of humanity he has explored in the cemeteries of the world, some of which he described in his 38th book, Stories in Stone. Mr. Moody will discuss and sign copies of his new book, The Advanced Oenophile, a glorious compilation of his experiences traveling and tasting the finest liquids grapes produce around the world. The two-hour event will consist of wine tasting flights guided by Denman Moody, talk and conversation with Douglas Keister, followed by a reception and book signing in the atrium. Wine will be selected by Denman Moody and paired with just the right tastes from Stone Kitchen.

Finally, two of our members are planning a fabulous wine tour of Napa Valley in mid- October, 2013. Hopefully, you will be able to read about all these activities in our fourth quarter newsletter. Other events we are working on include a Food and Wine Dinner at Aldos, a German Food and Wine event, an event at French Country Wine Bar, a return to REEF and our 2013 annual Food and Wine event in January.

NEWS FROM FLAT CREEK ESTATE



The Wines & The Vines

Since our vineyards were first planted in 2000, Flat Creek has been always proactive with research in vineyard disease management for Texas vineyards. Since 2003, we have participated with Texas A&M on Pierce's Disease which has been devastating Texas and California vineyards for over a century. During the last ten years, the collaborative efforts between Texas Grape Growers, Texas Department of Agriculture, California Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, University of Houston, and USDA, has finally developed management protocol in our vineyards to manage the threat of Pierce's Disease. As a result, the incidence of vineyards being devastated by Pierce's Disease in Texas and California has been stopped.

Now another threat to Texas vineyards has shown up with some regularity over the last five years –Cotton Root Rot (CRR). This pathogen has been known to Texas agriculture since the mid 1800's. It was first discovered to attack cotton, but has since been detected on almost all fruit bearing plants, grasses, nut producing trees, and now has been confirmed in Texas vineyards. The pathogen is soil born and can lay dormant literally for centuries. It becomes active during a perfect storm in highly alkaline soils, at high temperatures and moist soil conditions. Once a plant becomes infected, it is only a matter of days before the plant will be dead.

Research on a cure for CRR has been ongoing for over a century, with little known cure for the disease. However, recent research by Dr. Isikite, Texas A&M plant pathologist, has shown some promise with fungicide treatments on cotton. With this research in hand, Flat Creek Estate, in collaboration with Texas A&M plant pathology department, has embarked on a research project to try similar treatments on a vineyard test plot. Dr. Appel and his graduate assistant, Sheila McBride, working on her master's degree in plant pathology, are working with Flat Creek Estate on an experimental plot in our Sangiovese block.

Old infected vines were pulled up and new Sangiovese vines on SO4 root stock were replanted during the first week of April this year. Sheila laid out the block with some vines being the control vines and others being treated with various rates of fungicide application. To date, all vines have survived, grown to the top trellis wire, have been pruned back to the cordon wire and some are already being trained on to the cordon wire. It is observed that some vines are showing inhibited growth, while others are very vigorous, but none to date are showing symptoms of CRR. Since this is a research project, it will be ongoing over the next several years. The conclusion we hope to verify, is that the fungicides that are showing success to date on cotton will prove to be successful on grapevines and can be labeled for grapes as a fungicide for CRR.

NEWS FROM FLAT CREEK ESTATE, CONT.



The Food

Nothing is better than fall in the Texas Hill Country, especially at Flat Creek Estate. Fall comfort foods are sizzling in the Bistro, new wines are being bottled and released, and the weather is finally cooling off after a hot Texas Summer. We invite you to visit the Estate on your journey through the Hill Country. Reserve for one or two amazingly indulgent fall dinners (tickets available at FlatCreekEstate.com)...

October 6th – 3-Course First Saturday Wine Dinner (\$65/Person)

Baked Jumbo Shrimp

Tarragon Herb Butter, Tomato, Shaved Reggiano Parmesan and Grilled Focaccia

Paired with Viognier 2010

Oak Barrel Smoked Duck Breast

Blackberry Honey, Grilled Asparagus and Root Vegetable Rösti

Paired with Syrah 2009

Chocolate Stilton Tart

Candied Walnut Pesto

Paired with Port

October 20th – 5-Course Theme Dinner: Asia (\$75/Person)

Menu to be released October 1st.

October 5 – October 28 – 3-Course Paired Wine Lunch \$40

Join us *every Friday, Saturday & Sunday in October for a Chef's Selected 3-Course Paired Wine Lunch for only \$40!*

NEWS FROM FLAT CREEK ESTATE, CONT.



The Experience

Mark your calendars and expand your palates at one of the many Flat Creek Estate festivals this fall. Our calendar is packed with Wine, Cocktails, Food, Shopping, Music and Fun!!! Let's celebrate a bountiful harvest with great friends and exceptional wines! Purchase your tickets now!!!

Tickets available at buywine.flatcreekestate.com...

Sunday, October 7 - 4pm-7pm - Grape Jam

Grape Jam is scheduled to showcase eight Texas Hill Country Wineries on October 7th (making it the biggest wine festival ever hosted at Flat Creek Estate).

Sunday, November 11 – 4pm-7pm – Mixology Day

We invite you back for Mixology Day in November where our expert wine mixologists Tim & Spring Drake will demonstrate how to “gussy up” your wine for the holidays! VIP guests will receive complimentary recipe books complete with photos of the featured cocktails (additional recipe books will be available for purchase and make great holiday gifts!).

Friday & Saturday, November 23 & 24 – Shopping Spree

Join us on the biggest shopping day of the year for a relaxed shopping experience in the vineyard. Over 20 local artists will display their wares throughout the estate so that you may get your holiday shopping completed while enjoying a glass of wine and listening to the soft sounds of local musicians. *Reservations required for Bistro dining 512-267-6310.*

26TH ANNUAL GRAPEFEST

The winners of the 2012 People's Choice Wine Tasting Classic are:

Chardonnay

- 1st: Messina Hof Winery and Resort, Bryan, TX, Private Reserve Chardonnay, 2011
- 2nd: Texas Hills Vineyard, Johnson City, TX, Chardonnay, 2010
- 3rd: Delaney Vineyards, Grapevine, TX, Chardonnay, 2010

White Varietals, All others (<1.5%)

- 1st: Messina Hof Winery and Resort, Bryan, TX, Father & Son Riesling, 2011
- 2nd: Landon Winery, McKinney, TX, Viognier, 2011
- 3rd: Becker Vineyards, Stonewall, TX, Viognier, 2011

White Proprietary Blends

- 1st: Brennan Vineyards, Commanche, TX, Austin Street Three White Chicks, 2010
- 2nd: Homestead Winery, Ivanhoe, TX, Desert Rose, 2011
- 3rd: Llano Estacado Winery, Lubbock, TX, Viviana, 2009

White Varietals, Sweet (>1.5%)

- 1st: Landon Winery, McKinney, TX, Yellow Rose, NV
- 2nd: Messina Hof Winery and Resort, Bryan, TX, Hill Country Angel Late Harvest Riesling, 2011
- 3rd: Duchman Family Winery, Driftwood, TX, Orange Muscat, 2009

Blush/Rosé

- 1st: CrossRoads Winery, Frisco, TX, My Cheeky Bastard, NV
- 2nd: LightCatcher Winery, Fort Worth, TX, Texas Kiss Merlot Rosé, 2010
- 3rd: Salado Creek Winery & Vineyard, Salado Sweet Blush, NV

26TH ANNUAL GRAPEFEST, CONT.

Cabernet Sauvignon

- 1st: Texas Hills Vineyard, Johnson City, TX, Kick Butt Cab Newsom Vineyard, 2008
- 2nd: LightCatcher Winery, Fort Worth, TX, 10pt Cabernet Sauvignon, 2007
- 3rd: Llano Estacado Winery, Lubbock, TX, Cabernet Sauvignon, 2010

Merlot

- 1st: Messina Hof Winery and Resort, Bryan, TX, Private Reserve Merlot, 2009
- 2nd: Haak Vineyards and Winery, Santa Fe, TX, Purple Porpoise, NV
- 3rd: Sunset Winery, Burleson, TX, Moon Glow Merlot, 2005

Red Varietals, All others (<1.5%)

- 1st: Lost Oak Winery, Burleson, TX, Syrah, 2010
- 2nd: Brennan Vineyards, Comanche, TX, Dark Horse, 2010
- 3rd: Enoch's Stomp Vineyard & Winery, Harleton, TX, Norton, 2009

Red Proprietary Blends

- 1st: Bluff Dale Vineyards, Bluff Dale, TX, Paragon, NV
- 2nd: Llano Estacado Winery, Lubbock, TX, Viviano, 2008
- 3rd: CALAIS Winery, Dallas, TX, Cuvee du Canton, 2010

Red Varietals, Sweet (>1.5%)

- 1st: Homestead Winery, Ivanhoe, TX, Chocolate Rose, 2011
- 2nd: La Buena Vida Vineyards, Grapevine, TX, Redheaded Stepchild Sangria, NV
- 3rd: Bluff Dale Vineyards, Bluff Dale, TX, Nexus, NV

HAAK WINERY IS BOTTLING

Haak Winery is bottling this year's 2012 vintage dry Blanc du Bois wine. This white is our banner white wine and 2012 has produced an outstanding wine resulting from optimum growing conditions all across the southern half of Texas from Enoch's Stomp vineyards in the Longview area, to Jerry Watson's Austin County Vineyard's to Palacios Vineyards in Brenham, Texas. This bottling consists of optimum chemistry at harvest. This dry style of Blanc du Bois was harvested at a pH of 3.45 and a TA of 7.5 g/l to yield a clean, bright and crisp mouth feel with flavors of lemon/lime and a nice long grapefruit finish on the end. This is a wine destined to be enjoyed and paired with our great Gulf Coast seafood or simply with a nice Texas made cheese! This vintage will be released very soon as we have sold out of our 2011 vintage.

Cheers & Ciao!

Raymond Haak

Haak Vineyards & Winery

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HELLO FROM BECKER VINEYARDS!

Our grape harvest usually begins towards the end of July but this year we began two weeks early due to the mild winter we had. We harvested approximately 817 tons of grapes, a few more tons yet to go. The harvest was reminiscent of the 2010 harvest, a bumper crop year. The quality of the fruit has been terrific! Some wines are now aging in the barrels while some are still undergoing barrel fermentation or fermentation in stainless steel tanks.

We have completed renovation on our underground wine cellar. The single vineyard designated Cabernet Sauvignons are barrel aging there as well as older bottled vintages of Becker Vineyards wines stored in the area called "The Library." The Beckers have created an exclusive wine experience for visitors to our Texas Hill Country winery. Gather at the vintage table at The Library doors and taste from the portfolio the Beckers have personally held back – until now. Guests can begin their experience with a behind the scenes tour of our wine production area that culminates with an exotic and delectable wine and cheese pairing. The Library sessions are \$50 for Wine Club members and \$60 to the general public, including tax. Sessions are currently offered at 1 p.m. on Saturdays and seating is limited to 20. The Library is not ADA accessible. You can reserve your seat online at beckervineyards.com or by calling 830-644-2681 x 230.

The Fredericksburg Food & Wine Festival www.fbgfoodandwinefest.com will be October 27 at the Marktplatz, in downtown Fredericksburg. Hours are Noon – 7 p.m. with General Admission \$20.

In November, we will have our new 2011 Cabernet-Syrah Reserve bottled. It will be the first of the "drought year" reds released from Becker Vineyards! New vintages of Moscato, Iconoclast Cabernet Sauvignon, Iconoclast Merlot, and Reserve Merlot, will also be released.

Musician Doug Moreland returns again for our second Annual Pumpkin Chunkin' on November 10th! The event is a complimentary event. The Trebuchet is a medieval contraption used to launch large stones in battle. We will only be using the Trebuchet to "chunk" pumpkins in our field every thirty minutes!

December 1, 2, 8 & 9 will be our Annual Port & Stilton Cheese Tasting at the winery. It's fun to pair the pungent, strong cheese with the rich, bold port! A delicious combination! The event is complimentary; no reservations required!

Our Lavender Haus Reception Hall and Barrel Chai Room are also available to rent for holiday parties, business meetings, birthday parties and weddings. For more information, please contact Cristol Corpus, Private Events Coordinator, at 830-644-2681 x 303 or events@beckerwines.com.

We welcome everyone to join us at Becker Vineyards! We are open 7 days a week (NOTE: Closed only for Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Easter Sunday) Monday thru Thursday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Sundays, Noon – 6 p.m.

Cheers!

Nichole A. Bendele

Continued on p.16

PINING FOR PORCINI AFTER A ROMAN HOLIDAY

BY MERIL MARKLEY

Each time we visit Rome, the more captivated we are by this city of contrasts. There is the obvious juxtaposition of ancient and modern – the sleek buses parked by the Coliseum, the contemporary office buildings grafted onto antique foundations, the impersonators of Roman centurions posing for pictures with tourists. What strikes us most, however, are the contrasts of urban versus rural and of public versus private. These themes percolate just below the figurative surface of the Eternal City and bubbled up at the eateries we visited.

The small town feeling first became evident on an earlier visit to the city when we lodged at the Hotel Villa San Pio on the Aventine Hill. Having picked this residential neighborhood with several boutique hotels (and absolutely no restaurants!) meant we were spared the roar of motorbikes as we awakened each morning to birds singing in the pine trees outside our windows. A short walk farther up the hill from the hotel was the fifth century Church of Santa Sabina with the austere design of a village sanctuary and a faith emergent. We wandered through the garden of orange trees next door to it, from whose edge we glimpsed the distant dome of Saint Peter's Basilica, projecting to the world an urban church triumphant.

We got plenty of exercise striding down the Aventine Hill each morning to the Marmorata tram stop and then back up the Hill each evening after a day of sightseeing. In case we needed fortification for our climb, there was always *Gastronomia Volpetti*, the renowned purveyor of cheeses, olives, cured meats, wines, and gourmet prepared meals channeling the empire's agricultural heritage. Next door was *Pasticceria Barberini*, a magnet for pastry lovers like my husband, Michael.

The schedule of early morning meetings on our trip to Rome this past May meant that staying in our urban oasis was out of the question, but we still longed to recapture the bucolic sensations of the earlier sojourn. A Sunday morning the day before our departure, with Michael battling the sniffles, compelled a restful hour or so on a bench in the expansive Gardens of the



Villa Borghese. Like urban parks in America, it was filled with families strolling, playing games, picnicking, sunbathing, and enjoying a patch of green away from nearby apartments.

For us, the treat was sitting amidst the tall umbrella pines that make this park so memorable and inspired the first

PINING FOR PORCINI AFTER A ROMAN HOLIDAY, CONT.

movement of Ottorino Respighi's 1924 orchestral tone poem, *The Pines of Rome*. Their soaring height and powder-puff-shaped canopies are exotic and intriguing; so different from the pine trees of our neighborhood in The Woodlands. The sunshine shimmering through their branches, the dappled light and shadow playing on the ground, all are evoked in Respighi's music as it shifts from a boisterous mood of youngsters at play to a hushed flute solo eliciting a timeless, pastoral setting. Although his repertoire did not include Respighi, the accordion player some 50 yards down the way pulled at our heart strings as he cycled through a classical hit parade from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* to Mozart's *A Little Night Music*.

Hunger pangs eventually led us to depart and to stroll down the Via Veneto into the heart of urban Rome. We passed many tiny restaurants with their extensions of glass-enclosed seating areas on the sidewalk. Nothing tempted us.



A turn from Piazza Barberini onto Via Sistina led us to Antonio and the Ristorante Leon D'Oro. Antonio was poised out front next to a table supporting a basket brimming with porcini mushrooms. He had either figured us for a couple of famished tourists or foodies in search of a taste of porcinis. Either way, a chat with Antonio (whose English was superb), the promise of the mushrooms and of pasta made fresh that morning by his wife, all proved irresistible. As we learned from him, the Italian porcini season was still a few months off. The mushrooms on which we would feast had come from an erstwhile and remote part of the Roman Empire – Turkey.

Mushrooms are nothing new to the Romans, occasionally portraying the murder weapon of choice in a drama of regime change. At least that's the story about how Nero became Emperor after plotting with his mother, Agrippina, to murder her husband (Nero's stepfather), Claudius, with a dish of lethal fungus. Patricide and intrigue aside, we opted for a plate of sautéed porcini on a bed of arugula. A creation of young and passionate Chef Matteo Alba, the dish was so simple yet utterly delicious. The mushroom slices were meaty with just the slightest hint of crustiness, the arugula crisp and peppery (unlike the "baby" version on offer at our local supermarkets), with just a scant trace of olive oil. The kitchen, being located just a few feet from our table, meant that the lingering aroma of the sautéing mushrooms was still wafting around us as we bit into the first succulent mor-

PINING FOR PORCINI AFTER A ROMAN HOLIDAY, CONT.

sels. We were in porcini heaven, enlivened by a Sangiovese from Tuscany – Podere del Giuggiolo Corte alla Flora (2009).

After a main course of tortellini in cream sauce with mushrooms, for me, and a tender and flavorful Danish steak in green peppercorn sauce, for Michael, we passed on dessert and bade Antonio a fond farewell. Earlier, Michael had spied a gelateria just up the street. Our meal was topped off by another example of this incomparable Italian version of ice cream -- diminutive balls of extra-dark chocolate or hazelnut, packed with intense flavor, and a rich cream flavor notable for the absence of vanilla.

The more formal, public meal we enjoyed was at Vecchia Roma (*Old Rome*), discovered while wandering the former Ghetto after hiking up to the Campidoglio from the Forum. Its tables, spread out in the tiny piazza and covered by broad umbrellas, made the location ideal for a leisurely lunch starting off with *fritto misto*, a plate of delicately battered and fried scallops,



cod, zucchini, red pepper, and cauliflower. Always on the look-out for organ meats, I had as my main course veal kidneys in a sauce of pan drippings with a dash of cream while Michael had veal liver, pan-sautéed to perfection with a similar, but lighter, sauce. Accompanying this was Arnoldo Caprai's Rosso di Montefalco (2009) which we had learned to love the week before in Perugia. We lingered for several hours, enjoying the cool breezes on this sweltering afternoon along with the wonderful wine, while talking to the folks at the next table, Americans who happened to be from our former neighborhood in Los Angeles and for whom this

restaurant was a priority destination. Stumbling upon it, for us, was serendipitous but equally memorable.



The culinary delights of a more private Rome were consumed with gusto at Trattoria dal Cavalier Gino on a tiny street near the Parliament. Our friends, Andrea and Fabiana, Romans through and through, were determined to introduce us to the hearty Ro-

PINING FOR PORCINI AFTER A ROMAN HOLIDAY, CONT.

man delicacies they love but that do not generally grace restaurant menus because mothers (or more likely, grandmothers) make them at home. We loved the lively atmosphere at the trattoria. There were just a few tables, close together, full of friends sharing a meal and a carafe of the house white wine.

A revelation was the traditional Roman pasta dish known as *Cacio e Pepe*. Thick spaghetti is cooked first, *al dente*. Olive oil and cracked black pepper are heated in a skillet. Some pasta water is ladled in and brought to a boil. Then the pasta is added and generous amounts of Pecorino Romano and Cacio de Roma cheeses are sprinkled in until a creamy concoction results. While I subsequently tried to duplicate this simple dish at home, my efforts cannot compete with the perfect consistency and delicious marriage of the tangy sheep's milk cheese and the fresh, spicy pepper at Gino's. There's something about fresh pasta, consumed in Italy with locally made cheeses, that tastes like nowhere else! Michael and I split a plate of Cacio e Pepe, but I would have gladly eaten the whole thing myself, but for the need to save room for the next course.

We followed Andrea's suggestions for what to eat next from the array of tempting, elemental dishes. I opted for oxtail stew, a dish dating back to the time when oxen were still used on nearby farms to plow the fields. It proved a lushly flavored, slightly spicy dish, the meat slow-cooked and tender in a sauce of red wine and tomato. Michael had rabbit, Andrea had tripe, and Fabiana had a veal dish. The only two with room left for dessert, Michael and Fabiana opted for Tiramisu in a superb, creamy, and perfumed version unknown to us in the U.S.

Dire warnings about the collapse of the Euro, concerns about the viability of the Italian economy, scandals at the Vatican, and other alarming headlines assailed us throughout our stay. But nothing could dampen the enthusiasm we feel for the sweet life of contrasts that make Rome eternally special.

Ristorante Leon D'Oro – Via Sistina, 9 (no website)

Trattoria del Cavalier Gino – Vicolo Rosini, 4 (no website, no credit cards)

Ristorante Vecchia Roma – Piazza Campitelli, 18 – <http://www.ristorantevecchiaroma.com>

Gastronomia Volpetti – Via Marmorata, 47 – <http://www.volpetti.com>

Pasticceria Barberini – Via Marmorata 41 (no website)

Next time – An Operatic Leap of Faith after a Memorable Roman Repast

MESSINA HOF TRANSITIONS INTO THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION BY PAUL BONARRIGO VII



BRYAN, TX (September 21, 2012) – Messina Hof Winery & Resort, one of the fastest growing award-winning wineries and resorts in Texas, is enthusiastic as they take new strides toward the future of Messina Hof. Recently announced was the succession of Paul Bonarrigo VII, son of winery Co-Founders Paul and Merrill Bonarrigo, as the CEO of Messina Hof Wine Cellars, Inc.

After working in nearly every department of the company, Paul Bonarrigo VII is well-versed in the business and art of winemaking, and notes that his most valuable experience came from watching his parents build Messina Hof to what it is today. “My father and mother are the two hardest working people that I know. They truly have put their mind, body and soul into building Messina Hof...and they have shown that with enough desire and heart, you can make anything happen.” Looking forward, Paul VII’s vision for Messina Hof is geared toward the future. “I believe that the next few years there will be a larger number of young professionals that make the transition to a wine culture, so we are growing in the direction of being more accessible to the millennial generation.”

Messina Hof has started new and exciting partnerships this year as well including Disney Cruise Lines and The Association of Former Students at Texas A&M University. Disney Cruise Line’s “Disney Magic,” the newest addition coming to the Port of Galveston on Saturday, September 22nd, called for an exceptional Texas wine to be included on its menu. Messina Hof is proud to feature five of its wines on the Disney Cruise Line as it sets sail from the Port of Galveston on its maiden voyage.

Messina Hof is also thrilled to announce the release of six unique Aggie Network Private Reserve wines. A portion of the proceeds will support The Association of Former Students. Wines will be available online and at our Messina Hof Bryan and Fredericksburg Wineries, special events at the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center, and other exclusive locations.

The present and future look very promising for Messina Hof. “Winemaking is art and science combined, and I respect and love the process” said Paul Bonarrigo VII, CEO at Messina Hof. “Leadership is one of my greatest passions, and I consider it a great honor to be able to lead our employees into the next phase of our company.”

MESSINA HOF SWEEPS 26TH ANNUAL GRAPEFEST AWARDS

A four-for-four win at nation's largest consumer-judged wine competition

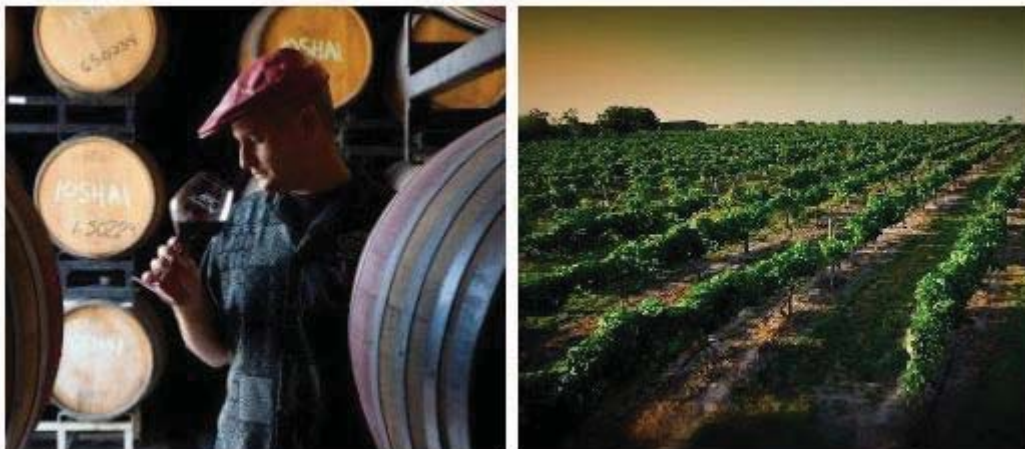
BRYAN, TX (September 24, 2012) Messina Hof Winery and Resort, the fastest growing award-winning winery and resort in Texas, was awarded four prestigious honors at the 26th Annual GrapeFest, held September 13-16, 2012 in Grapevine, Texas, announced Messina Hof Co-Founders Paul and Merrill Bonarrigo.

GrapeFest's People's Choice Wine Tasting Classic is the largest consumer-judged wine competition in the United States. Forty Texas wineries entered into the competition, each registering in up to four categories. Messina Hof won an award in each of the four categories with three first-place wins and one second-place win, finishing higher than any other Texas winery.

"It is such an honor to have such an impressive response from the judges at GrapeFest's People's Choice Wine Tasting Classic. Consumer-judged awards are truly the most meaningful and make all of our hard work and dedication worthwhile. We would like to thank Grapevine and all the great volunteers for helping to make the 2012 such a great event," said Paul Bonarrigo. Messina Hof began participating in GrapeFest and the Texas Wine Tribute Dinner when the festival originated in 1986. Over the years, the winery has consecutively won awards in the white varietals category for their Riesling Father and Son as well as in the white varietals sweet category for their Angel Late Harvest Riesling. This year, Messina Hof was awarded the following:

- **First-Place** in the **Chardonnay Category** with *Private Reserve Chardonnay*
- **First-Place** in the **White Varietals Category** with *Father & Son Riesling*
- **First-Place** in the **Merlot Category** with *Private Reserve Merlot*
- **Second-Place** in the **White Varietals - Sweet Category** with *Hill Country Angel Late Harvest Riesling*

GrapeFest is an annual four-day celebration in the historic Main Street District of Grapevine, Texas. It is one of the largest festivals in the Southwest. It is also packed with wine events such as the Texas Wine Tribute Dinner, a Culinary Pavilion with cooking demonstrations and wine pairings, a Vintners' Auction, grape-stomping, winery tours and a "People's Choice" Wine Tasting. For more information on GrapeFest, visit <https://www.grapevinetexasusa.com/grapefest/>.



**THE WINE SOCIETY OF
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NOTE: I am not in the winery office on Wednesday and Thursday.

Join us for our different winery events throughout the year: October is Texas Wine Month; Nov. 10 is Pumpkin Chunkin' (watch the trebuchet!); Dec. 1, 2, 8 & 9 is our Port & Stilton Blue Cheese Tasting; and Dec. 26 Boxing Day Celebration!

EDITOR'S CORNER

Fall has finally arrived. I believe this is the first day in the 70s since May. In the south we can still barbecue and grill while we plant our fall garden. We had a great event at Messina Hof and have an upcoming dinner at Reef, a future wine tasting with Denman Moody and other dinners planned for next year. Come join us for wonderful wine, gourmet food and catch up with old friends or meet new wine loving friends.

The articles in this newsletter were created by members, winery owners, wine experts and friends of the Wine Society of Texas' Greater Houston Chapter. Thank you for your continued support. We are always looking for additional wine-related articles. What can you share? Perhaps you found a fantastic food and wine pairing, a wine bar with boutique wines or don't mind sharing a favorite recipe incorporating wine. Or tell us about your recent wine stories both local and while you were traveling. Wineries, please inform us how things are going in the vineyards, how is harvest, which is your star wine of the month, etc.

I wish you a great meal on your favorite patio with a glass of Malbec, Riesling, Vouvray or your favorite wine.

Cheers-Tenley Fukui