

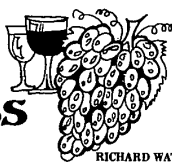


Decisions, decisions,

Looking over the Farmington Community Center offerings for this spring are Barbara Jaques (left) and Betty Ris. The two were among the early birds who picked and choose from more than 60 special events, classes and workshops on the center's spring bro-

chure. Ms. Jaques signed up for the picture framing class, Ms. Ris, needlepoint. Registrations continue until all class loads are filled. Register through the center, 477-8404. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

From the Wine Press



RICHARD WATSON

Alsatian wines hold surprises

In any tabulation of the wine regions of France, at least five great areas are always included: Bordeaux, Burgundy, Chablis, Champagne and the Rhone Valley.

Sometimes forgotten or sometimes appended late in a listing is the never-never land of Alsace — a region too fine to be thus relegated. Actually, it can be argued that Alsatian wines belong more to Germany than France.

Located slightly below the Rhine and Mosel areas, it is in the northeast corner of France on the western slopes of the Rhine River. Prior to 1918, this was German soil.

Further, its grapes are more like

those of Germany, this being a cold climate unsuitable to growing red wine grapes. Even the bottle shapes are the tall sloping ones of the colder north.

As the region is overlooked in listings, so is it on many merchants' shelves. However, white wine drinkers take note. Some very fine values are found in these reliable releases from Alsace, usually costing far less than their regional counterparts. Most will be under \$5 a bottle, some considerably so.

THREE MAJOR WHITE wine grapes are used in the Alsace and, unlike other French wines, they are used to name the wine in the bottle. That is,

one buys these as Riesling, Traminer, etc.

The origins of this naming tradition go back to the 1920s when Alsations were trying to develop themselves as premium growers (they had been exclusively bulk before that) and used this means as a way of distinguishing themselves. Pre-1920, to be Alsatian, rather than Bordeaux, was most undesirable. Today that is changing.

The three basic grapes of Alsace are the White Riesling, the Gewurztraminer and the Sylvaner, or Franken Riesling. The first is the grape of the Rhine country to the north, responsible for the great Rhine and Mosel wines.

IN ALSACE, its fruit is somewhat drier, more acidic, but still a well rounded wine. It is generally closer to the California style Riesling than the German, but when you consider the price of a good Kabinett those Alsations can be good value.

The second, and perhaps most distinguished, grape of the region is the Gewurztraminer. This grape is a subset of the Traminer, which is also grown, "Gerurz," meaning spicy in German, and so it is.

This is the world's most famous region for this grape — with the possible exception of California. It is a grabbing, tart, fruity and almost flowery wine, unlike any other. It must be tasted to be understood.

The third, and least important, varietal is the Sylvaner (or Franken, the terms are interchangeable) Riesling. This is the grape of the Palatinate and Franconia in Germany and produces a serviceable if less distinguished wine than the true Riesling of the Rheingau. It does not age as well but is dependable and somewhat interesting.

While you would not want to build a cellar around Alsatian wines, they do make substantial fare for seafood and fowl meals. And if the rich Rieslings of the north are too lush or costly for you, Alsace is worth a try.

47 is magic number

When Girl Scouts in Troop 226 held their Court of Honor at the end of March, three of them left wearing 47 badges, the maximum number that can be earned.

The achievements of Amy Thomas, Mary Grant and Elizabeth MacLaughlin, was cause for celebration for the troop, and a cause for pride to their leaders Gladys McLaughlin and Elenda Wise.

"We could never have done all we have without the full participation of the girls' mothers," Mrs. McLaughlin said.

"We have more girls who are getting close to earning that number of badges and its because so many mothers help with their area of expertise.

"We had so much help offered on one occasion I had to refuse three offers from mothers who wanted to chaperone on a camp out. I don't think many troop leaders can say that," she said.

There are 27 members in the troop which meets each Thursday in Woodcreek Elementary School, all fifth and sixth graders, many of whom were Brownies together.

Their service projects have been making cancer pads.

Coming up fast in earning all 47 badges are Laura Dumas with 36; Michelle McLaughlin with 41; and Dawn Lejas and Angie Puigini both with 29.

The girls dovetailed their March Court of Honor with an ethnic festival, after researching their family trees.

Fitness classes offered at Western

Walled Lake Community Education Department has a new class this spring for fitness buffs.

The class is scheduled for Tuesday nights at Walled Lake Western High School, and begins April 24. The two-hour class is designed to exercise and

tone muscles. One hour is spent in the swimming pool, and one hour is spent doing Swedish exercises. Sally Peters will be the instructor.

Registration will be held during office hours in Room 5 of the Walled Lake Junior High School.

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