



## 'Lunch Hour' staged

The Nancy Gurwin dinner theater production of the Jean Kerr comedy "Lunch Hour" continues Saturday nights at the Mama Mia Restaurant and Lounge, 9361 Cooley Lake Road, Union Lake. Among cast members are Joe Lanne of Farmington Hills (top, left); Sandra Sutherland of Southfield; Dick Coe of West Bloomfield (left), and Tom Christopher of Bloomfield Hills. The cast also features Debbie DeCoco Sokorak of Milford. For further information and reservations call 363-1535.



## More bubbly coming from coast

There is little duller reading than a report of numbers involving change and volume, especially in the world of wine. This column avoids such things when possible. Wine is, after all, a subject that should transcend all that.

However, I recently secured some numbers that are in themselves fascinating for what they tell of our drinking habits today and probably tomorrow — at least, for those who are addicted to sparkling wine. So, here we go.

We all acknowledge that California makes very decent cheap (sometimes inexpensive) sparkling stuff. We and the Spanish seem to have a good hold on that corner of the market. No contest.

But in the world of premium sparkling wine, we in America look to France. Right?

Only, it would seem, partly so.

**BOTH THE GROWTH** over the last 10 years in champagne process ("fermented in this bottle") and the projected growth over the next 10-or-so are indeed awesome. A lot of people are gambling that quality California sparkling wine is a good production investment. Let's look at the data.

In retrospect, 1973 was the key year. At that time, total production of quality bubbly in California was a mere 150,000 cases. Then France's Moët-Hennessy announced Domäne Chandon's arrival in the world via the acquisition of 1,150 acres of prime Napa land to plant to champagne grapes (pinot noir and chardonnay) and to build a winery.

Its original production estimates for 1977, its first year, was 20,000 cases, fairly ambitious even then. Such has been its success that in 1982 its production hit 105,000 and for 1985 projections are 400,000 cases.

During this interval, other bubbly makers have been racing ahead as well, knowing that the market for \$11-17 wines is there. Kerbel had been under 100,000 cases a year in the early 1970s. The spurt in sparkler growth has moved them to a level of 650,000 in 1982.

Hans Kornell has announced its intention to make 85,000 cases a year and has diversified its offerings and has begun to vintage-date some of its releases (possibly only with large-scale production). Tins Schramberg has expanded its facilities and will significantly expand to the 12,000-case level.

TWO LARGE established wineries are going se-



wine

**Richard Watson**

riously into the sparkling business (they had done only small quantities before). Mirassou and Chateau St. Jean, Monterey Vineyard and San Martin will follow soon, and Wente Brothers will be releasing the first of an extensive offering of sparklers.

Piper-Sonoma has just opened its new facilities that will in time be making 100,000 cases a year. At least half a dozen others have serious plans and/or wine in the cellar already. Those that I know about include Veniana, Iron Horse, S. Anderson and Scharffenberger.

Added to all this volume business is the increased use of proper champagne grapes for these wines: pinot blanc, pinot noir and chardonnay. This quality assurance bodes as well as anything for the future in California. Only Kornell holds out, continuing to use the riesling grapes of his native Germany.

Who can foresee the market by the end of this decade? Clearly, there will be huge quantities of premium bubbly which, if it is not priced out of sight, will hold up well when compared to what the French send in. And it is good, easily comparable to the French offerings on a dollar-for-value scale. We'll all be "drinking stars" soon to help consume our share, a most delightful prospect.

## Jazz stars featured

Tickets are on sale for two concerts under the auspices of Eclipse Jazz.

The only Michigan appearance of fusion band Weather Report will be at 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, at Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor.

Tickets are \$9.50, \$8.50 and \$7.50 reserved. Tickets are on sale at the Michigan Union Ticket Office and all CTC outlets. For more information call 763-6922.

A tribute to American composer Duke Ellington will be presented, starring percussionist J.G. Heard and his Orchestra, at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 2, in the Michigan Union Ballroom, 530 S. State St., Ann Arbor.



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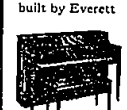
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