

Markham wines a real value

Every few years since the late 1970s, we have stopped by the humble stone structure of Markham Vineyards just north of the town of St. Helena in the Napa Valley. To be quite blunt about it, we tasted the wines, yawned, mumbled a ho-hum to each other and left as quietly as we entered.

Last year, we blind-tasted the 1987 Merlot and were surprised because it stole the show. Fearing a flash in the pan, we've been tasting Markham regularly and are now prepared to declare the wines consistent, right on target and undiscovered Napa Valley values.

"In 1978, the winery lacked vineyards with premium grapes," remarks winemaker Bob Foley. "It has taken us 10 years of planting and replanting to have vineyards worthy of premium bottlings."

The stone building housing Markham Vineyards was constructed by Bordeaux emigre Jean Laurent more than 100 years ago. It is the fourth most continuously used winery in Napa County. In 1978, Markham Vineyards was founded by Bruce Markham. It was purchased in 1985 by Mercian Corp., a Japanese conglomerate and largest producer of wine in Japan.

TO MATCH its new wine image, the winery is undergoing a massive reconstruction to double the size of its production facility. When the project is completed in 1992, the winery will be 75,000 square feet to accommodate fruit from the winery-owned vineyards. The 85-acre Napa Ranch is planted chardonnay and sauvignon while the 110-acre Yountville Ranch, and the 60-acre Calistoga Vineyard at the base of Mt. St. Helena yield the classic Bordeaux red grapes, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc.

Led by president Bryan del Bondio and winemaker Bob Foley, Markham wines show the excitement of a new breed of California producer, respectful of winemaking traditions



focus on wine
Eleanor and Ray Heald

Last year, we blind-tasted the 1987 Merlot and were surprised because it stole the show.

but willing to experiment and question the old assumptions.

They approach winemaking like a puzzle, fitting together the interlocking pieces of separate vineyards, clones and vinification techniques into an integrated, complex picture.

In addition to outstanding merlot, Markham produces cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc, muscat blanc and chardonnay. "In the future, I'd like to produce varietal semillon," Foley maintains.

"Both Bryan (del Bondio) and I have technical winemaking degrees from the University of California at Davis, but we believe taste buds can measure much more than the lab. Joe Heitz once told me that chemists make lousy winemakers."

"We determine grape ripeness by walking the vineyards and sampling the fruit. We also watch where the birds are hanging out. This gives us more information about grape ripeness than a refractometer."

A CURRENT tasting of the 1989 Markham Napa Valley Chardonnay (15) reveals a wine with apple and citrus aromas happily married to solid merlot, tropical fruit flavors and balanced oak. It's lush and opulent.

"We employ 100 percent barrel fermentation and sur lie aging for eight to nine months," comments Foley. "This greatly improves the wine's breadth on the palate. The cooperage comes from a small barrelmaker in Northern Burgundy who uses Tronçais oak from France's central forest. We are using about 20 percent new barrels each vintage. The oak should just tease the palate and not dominate."

Markham's 1990 Sauvignon Blanc (18) is complexed by the addition of 25 percent semillon. The wine is luscious with a generous mouthfeel and refined finish.

WINE SELECTION OF THE WEEK

1988 Markham Vineyards Merlot (16) is blended with 25 percent cabernet sauvignon offering a solid backbone and unique, complexing interplay with the merlot. This well-structured pour showcases black cherry fruit from start to finish with nuances of fragrant thyme and sage spice in a delicious rendition.

WINE BULLETIN BOARD

Wine Dinner (\$60 per person) with Jim Allen of the Napa Valley's Sequoia Grove Vineyards on Tuesday, June 11, at the Golden Mushroom restaurant in Southfield. Event begins with appetizers at 6 p.m. Three of Allen's lush chardonnays and four of his stunning cabernets will complement the multi-course dinner. For reservations phone 559-4230.

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SUMMER CLASS SCHEDULE

Farmington/Northville/Novi
Plemonese (38500 W. Nord Mile Rd., E. of Haggerty)
(Depending on class enrollment, classes may be condensed after first week)
Early Bird!
T-T 7:30 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
T-T 9:30 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
T-T 11:30 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
T-T 1:30 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
T-T 3:30 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
T-T 5:30 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
T-T 7:30 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
T-T 9:30 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 14 Natalie
Low Impact Exercise
M-W-F 8:30 a.m. 30 hrs \$59 June 10 Sylvia
Unlimited \$64

Mercy Center (26000-11 Mile Rd.)
Gate 4, Door C
M-W 9:30 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 11 Staff
T-T 7:30 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 11 Staff
Faith Covenant Church (14 Mile and Drake)
Low Impact Exercise
M-W-F 9:20 a.m. 12 hrs \$30 June 12 Pam
Unlimited \$46
Babysitting \$1 child \$2 family

Novi Civic Center (45175 W. 10 Mile Rd.)
(Non-resident fee 20%)
Register through Novi Parks & Recreation, you MUST specify if you need babysitting by June 7, 5:00 p.m. to assure getting in the child care program!
M-W 9:00 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 10 Gail
T-T 10:15 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 11 Lisa Z
M-W 7:00 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 10 Linda B
Unlimited \$64

Low Impact Exercise
M-W-F 10:15 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 10 Roseann B
T-T 9:00 a.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 11 Lynn B
M-W 6:00 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 10 Joan S
Unlimited \$64
TEENS 10% Discount

Avondale Community Schools
(Call 852-6620 to register)
Deerfield Elementary (3600 Crooks, bet. S Blvd & Auburn)
Low Impact
T-T 6:15 p.m. 12 hrs \$30 June 11 Ann P
Avondale High School (2800 Waukegan)
M-W-F 9:00 a.m. 18 hrs \$36 June 10 Staff

Rochester
Rochester Hills Racquet Club (Rochester Rd & Avon Rd)
M-W 6:30 p.m. 12 hrs \$30 June 18 Patti W
Sponsored by: Rochester Community Education
Unlimited Special \$41
(Call 375-2546 for more information)
Checks payable to: Rochester Community Schools
Mail to: 180 S. Livernois Rochester 48063
or call 651-4262 after June 8th
12 hrs \$30 18 hrs \$36 Unlimited \$41
Abiding Presence Lutheran Church (1550 W. Warren)
T-T 9:30 a.m. 12 hrs \$30 June 18 Lynette S
Sat 9:00 a.m. 6 hrs \$18 June 22 Suz F
University Presbyterian Church (1385 Adams St. & Avon)
M-W-F 9:10 a.m. 12 hrs \$30 June 18 Staff
18 hrs \$36

Low Impact Exercise
T-T 9:00 a.m. 12 hrs \$30 June 18 Liz Sue B
Babysitting Cost: \$1.25 per child per class
Rochester High School (Corner of Warren & Livernois)
T-T 6:30 p.m. 12 hrs \$30 June 18 Staff

Bloomfield Hills/W. Bloomfield
(Register through Bloomfield Adult Ed., 433-0885)
Wing Lake Elementary (on Wing Lake Rd., NW corner at 15 Mile Rd. (on Condoned))
M-W 6:00 p.m. 16 hrs \$39 June 17 Stacey
Bloomfield Middle School Cafe, on Quanton W of Telegraph)
T-T 8:00 a.m. 16 hrs \$39 June 18 Stacey

Southfield
Franklin Park Towers (27350 Franklin Rd. Club House/Towne Club)
Register through Franklin Park Towers at 354-0170, Mrs. Schurz
M-W 7:00 p.m. 20 hrs \$49 June 10 Nana H
Sponsored by: Novi Community Education
(Register through Novi Comm. Ed., 348-1200)
No class July 1st thru July 12th and Sept. 2nd
New Location!
Novi High School (24062 Tall Rd. S. of 10 Mile)
M-W 7:00 p.m. 18 hrs \$44 June 10 Terry S
22 hrs \$51
27 hrs \$53
33 hrs \$63

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Monday, June 3, 1991 O&E

(O&E)

Aromatic rices gain popularity

AP — Buying rice once meant choosing between white rice and brown. But no more. Aromatic rices such as basmati, texmati, wild pears and popcorn rice are growing in popularity right alongside their traditional cousins. Available in fancy food shops and from mail-order houses, these flavorful alternatives can change an ordinary stir-fry into an extraordinary entrée, or a simple seafood sauce into a fancy gourmet meal.

TYPES OF AROMATIC RICES

• **Basmati:** If rice were judged for beauty, this would be one of the winners for its slender, pear-shaped grains. A staple in Indian cooking, basmati cooks up light and fluffy. Serve it with curries, Oriental dishes and kebabs.

• **Texmati:** This rice is the Texas-grown version of basmati, similar in looks, taste and fluffiness. Serve it with the same foods you'd serve with basmati rice, or try it with gumbo,

spicy red sauces, and roasted or grilled poultry.

• **Wild pears:** No nuts here! The pecan-like aroma and flavor give this delicious rice its name. The grains look like brown rice. For nutty-flavored wild rice, add some pecans when the wild rice is half-done. Try it in pilafs or stuffings to serve with grilled poultry, pork or fish.

• **Popcorn:** You'll think of popcorn when you smell the rice cooking. Its fluffiness makes it ideal for pilafs or rice salads.

COOKING AROMATIC RICES

Follow these basic cooking directions when you plan to serve aromatic rice as a simple side dish. For each cup of rice, bring 2 cups broth or water to boiling. Add rice, then reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes or until the rice is tender and all of the liquid is absorbed.



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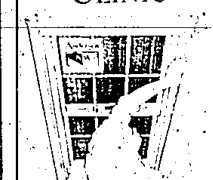
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