

FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

Bonterra makes tasty organic wines

Organic produce has become more available in modern grocery stores. Thanks to environmentally and socially conscious Fetzner Vineyards, so is organically grown wine under the brand name Bonterra, which translates "good earth."

Farming 700 acres of certified organic grapes, Fetzner is the nation's leader in organic grape growing, and the five-year-old Bonterra brand is one of the most successful using organically grown grapes. Made entirely from grapes certified by the California Certified Organic Farmers are chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, viognier, sangiovese and syrah under the Bonterra label. Plans to add merlot, petite sirah and zinfandel are on the drawing board.

Even the distinctive Bonterra packaging is environmentally friendly. The label is made from kenaf (treeless paper).

Modern organic farming pioneered a little over 30 years ago at the University of California-Santa Cruz. Just over a decade ago, Fetzner Vineyards, Mendocino County's largest winery, embarked on a mission toward organic farming with a five-acre garden created by Master Gardener Michael Maltas. In the Bonterra Garden in Hopland, Calif., it was discovered that natural flavor qualities are affected by chemicals. This was sufficient reason to continue growing produce organically. Today, hundreds of varieties of fruits, ornamental flowers and vegetables are part of the embrace of organic farming.

Leap of faith

"We took a leap of faith," said 41-year-old Bonterra winemaker Bob Blue. "We had the advantage of beginning with organic gardening at our winery in Hopland, Calif. What we learned there, began to be translated into our vineyards in 1987. Actually, all Fetzner did with Bonterra is reclaim a craft we forgot after World War II and victory gardens!"

Under the Bonterra label, Fetzner made wine from organically grown grapes for five years before releasing any wine. Because there really is no solid research or methodology for organic farming, Fetzner had to figure out how the organic garden research it did would translate to grape growing.

"Only one-tenth of one percent of the U.S. Department of Agriculture budget is spent on organic farming research," Blue said. "Organic products are two percent of the food business, but it is growing by 20 percent annually. Fetzner is challenging other

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WINE SECTION

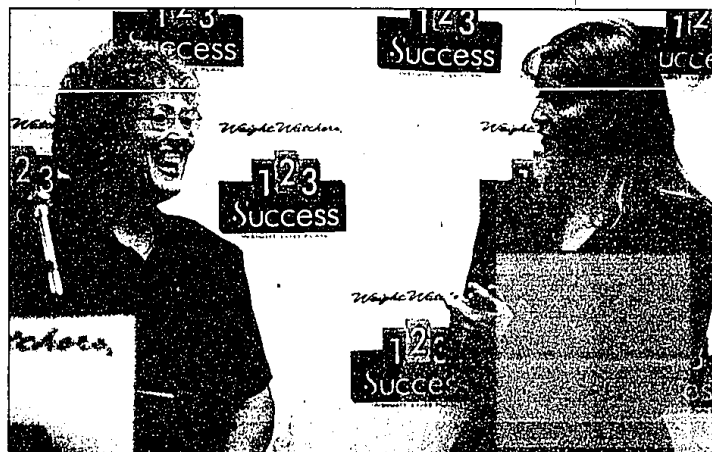
- Pick of the pack: 1994 Clos du Bois Briceau, Alexander Valley, \$23 is 100 percent cabernet sauvignon at its best from a fabulous vintage.
- 1990 Chateau St. Jean Le Petite Etrole Fume Blanc \$13 is great with light seafood dishes.
- Full-bodied chardonnays: 1996 Shafer Red Shoulder Ranch Chardonnay \$34 (a limited quantity at fine wine shops); 1995 Franciscan Cuvée Sauvage Chardonnay \$30 is special occasion, but for half the price, the 1996 Franciscan Chardonnay is pretty darn good. Other great values are 1995 Catalina Pinot Noir Chardonnay, \$22 and 1996 Jemel Gravelstone Chardonnay \$12.
- Superior Italian wines: 1995 San Leonardi Chianti Classico \$14; 1995 Antinori Peppoli Chianti Classico \$19.
- Best buys at \$10 and under: 1997 Tapa Reserve Chardonnay (Chilo) \$10; 1996 Tessera Chardonnay \$10; 1997 Fozzoni Bonville Chardonnay \$8; 1997 CR Merlot Sauvignon Blanc \$6; 1995 Lavane Pinot Noir (Oregon) \$10; and 1997 Rosemount Graciosa Shiraz \$8.50.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- 2 Unique
- Main Dish Miracle

Duchess of York loses weight 1.2.3



Royal congratulations: Sarah, Duchess of York (right) congratulates Joan Rao of Farmington Hills for losing more than 100 pounds.

Sarah, the Duchess of York, gained a few too many pounds, and before long, people were calling her - "The Duchess of Pork."

With help from Weight Watchers, which she joined last June, the duchess began losing weight with the 1-2-3 Success Plan. "She was so grateful, for the first time in her life she was able to control her weight. 'She's happy people aren't calling her 'Duchess of Pork' anymore," said Florine Mark of Farmington Hills, president and CEO of the WW Group Inc. who welcomed her into her Farmington Hills home for dinner Thursday evening, and to Michigan for the International Women's Show at the Novi Center.

Women relate to the duchess because even with her royal connections, she seems so down to earth and fun. Sarah may be a duchess, but when it comes to losing weight and keeping off weight, she struggles just like the rest of us.

"Everyone looks very serious, what would you like to talk about," she said chuckling as she began a press conference Friday morning at the Weight Watchers Michigan Headquarters in Farmington Hills. "Oh, you're so serious. I'm only human. The only difference between you and

me is that I married a prince. I'm a 38, single, working mother."

When the duchess smiles she warms a room like a ray of sunshine on a cold winter day. Her warmth is genuine, and there's no doubt about her sincerity. She loves children, and is a champion of causes to help them. She founded Chances for Children, to help children in the United States, which she founded in 1994.

In a room full of cameras and reporters from Michigan, Toledo and Windsor, 6-year-old Kaelyn Lohmeyer of Toledo caught her eye shortly after she walked in the room.

"Hello, what's your name," she asked. "I miss my girls very much." Later she asked Kaelyn to stand with her at the podium as Kaelyn's mom, Lee Anne, was being honored for losing 124 pounds on the Weight Watchers plan. Kaelyn was a little scared, and stayed close to mom, but afterward, she was all smiles and anxious to show her book, "Budgie Goes to Sea," which The Duchess autographed.

Like Joan Rao of Farmington Hills, the duchess lost weight, but she gained it back.

"My problem started when I was

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Dinner with the Duchess

April 30, 1998



MENU

Appetizer
Assorted Crostini

Sauces
Spring Mix with
Shallot Dijon Vinaigrette

Entree
Vegetable Bundles
Duchess Sweet Potatoes
Poached Salmon and
Mango Salsa

Dessert
Fresh Berries and
Vanilla Yogurt in a
White Chocolate Tulp



Seasonal delight: Pear & Pecan salad features Packham's Triumph pears.

Ugly pears from Africa sweet to eat

They're not pretty to look at, but Packham's Triumph from South Africa are a fragrant, sweet, juicy pear. You'll find them at your local Meijer store and Vic's World Class Markets in Novi and Beverly Hills. Look for the yellow and blue CAPE Packham's label.

"They're an extremely ugly pear," said Barbara Burman, spokeswoman for Cape Fruit in North America, which distributes the fruit. "They're kind of a bumpy pear. They're green and get pale green as they ripen but these are one of the nicest pears I've ever tasted."

It's harvest time on the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa where these pears are grown. Packham's Triumph originated in Australia in the 1890s and is a cross between two other Southern Hemisphere varieties - the Ben Chretien and the St. Germain. It was introduced to South Africa in 1922.

Burman described the fragrance as "a hint of orange blossom." When you cut these pears open you'll notice how white and creamy they are. They aren't mushy.

"People don't realize you don't eat pears like you do apples," said Burman. "They're not supposed to be crunchy. They will be hard when you buy them, because they're not ripe. If you want them to be soft, eat them a few days at room temperature. If you want to ripen pears quickly, put them in a brown paper bag with a banana. The pears will be ripe in two to three days."

Pears will feel soft to the touch when they're ready to eat. Packham pears in stores today were picked about three weeks ago. It takes 17 days for the pears to get from the orchards in South Africa to Philadelphia. The season only lasts about two months, May-June.

Besides tasting good, Burman said Packham's holds up very well. Because they're only available for a short time, she recommends storing them in the refrigerator. They'll keep three to four weeks.

"When you're ready to eat them, take a few out and give them a few days to soften," she said.

Burman said Packham's are very popular in South Africa, but haven't

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Mother know's best - nourish your family

LIVING BETTER SENSIBLY



BEVERLY PRICE

When Elana Sarah Price came into the world on Oct. 5, 1994, a month ahead of schedule, my husband, David, and I were overjoyed and proud to be the parents of this beautiful little girl. Since Elana was a little early, she had not yet developed her "sucking muscles" and had to stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the hospital for 10 days in order to receive proper nutrition. Most importantly, everything else was in check, especially her powerful lungs, which are still her trademark to this very day.

Conceiving Elana wasn't easy either. With a history of endometriosis, it took me over a year to become pregnant. How does this compare with the rest of society? Since the 1940s, fertility rates have decreased by 40 percent, and unfortunately, are expected to continue to decrease. This decrease in fertility has been attributed to chemicals in the air, pesticides and additives in our food supply, and the lack of nutritious whole foods in our diet.

You may ask, as a dietitian, didn't I have a healthy diet from the get go? The answer, of course, is "yes" and "no." My diet in the last 10-15 years is not what I

was raised on. I, as others in my age group, were raised on veal chops, meat loaf, bologna sandwiches on white bread, frozen dinners, "Twinkies" and "Ding Dongs." To name a few items. Who knew better?

Only my friend Dawn Singer's parents, Jerry and Barbara Singer of Farmington Hills who were vegetarian and eating whole wheat and tofu, way ahead of their time. It took my family a long time to figure out why Dawn would come to my birthday parties and refuse to eat the hot dogs that were being served. I found out 25 years later what the story was.

I became a vegetarian in the late 1980s and early '90s. It was a gradual process. During my pregnancy I ate lots of tofu and used flax seed oil religiously. These foods are high in "Omega 3-fatty acids," which has shown to enhance fetal brain development. I also consumed lots of whole grains such as udon noodles and brown rice, leafy vegetables, soy milk, beans and lentils. These foods are high in calcium, and the calcium is more efficiently absorbed from these plant sources than from dairy products. I also ate fruit for snacks, which contain folacin necessary for prevention of spina bifida in the fetus.

Since my husband is a vegetarian too, we decided to raise Elana vegetarian. She has always been a great eater who is not afraid to try new foods. She likes soy milk, soy cheese, tofu, whole grain pasta,

fruits and vegetables, as well as, flax seed meal on her cereal every morning. The juice that she drinks is organic. Yes, she does eat junk food, but knows there's a time and place for it. Elana does very well, she is a peer pressure and makes sure she tells her friends and teachers at nursery school about her eating habits.

"If people would eat healthy, they would have more energy," my three-and-a-half-year-old Elana says. So, on this Mother's Day, think about what you are eating, as well as, what you are feeding your child. If you are pregnant, or thinking about becoming pregnant, you can affect the health of your baby by good nutritional planning. If I am glad I am Elana's mommy, and that I have given her the gift of health, and that my mom, Marilyn Peiss is around to enjoy both of us.

Beverly Price is a registered dietitian and exercise physiologist. She operates Living Better Sensibly, a private nutrition practice in Farmington Hills that offers programs for individuals and corporations. She is the co-author of "Nutrition Secrets for Optimal Health." Tell Tree Publishing Company. Visit her website at www.nutritionsecrets.com. Look for her column on the first Sunday of each month in Taste.

See recipes inside.