

Taste

FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

New Zealand wines make market splash

Some of the best wine regions of the world tout the merits of their maritime climate. Coastal wine regions are warmed by sunlight during the day and cooled by sea breezes at night. Grapes grown in these ideal conditions are referred to as "cool climate."

New Zealand's two main islands (known simply as North Island and South Island), create a long narrow country where no site is greater than 80 miles from the sea. White grapes, in particular sauvignon blanc and chardonnay, and red pinot noir have a happy homeland in New Zealand.

French and English missionaries brought grape vines to New Zealand over 150 years ago, but it was not until the 1980s that New Zealand wines with intense, high level varietal aromas and flavors began to make international waves. Some very good wines from Giesen Estate and Tasman Bay are now making a big splash in our market.

Wine Picks

Take the heat out of the peak of summer with chilled white wines. All of the following whites will complement prawns and shrimp, seared sea scallops, fresh crab, smoked fish, cheese soufle, and Mediterranean-style vegetable dishes.

■ Pick of the Pack: 1997 Preston Vigner 222 is brimming with fresh summer fruit aromas and flavors such as peaches and pears.

■ Take the heat out with: 1997 La Vieille Ferme (France) white Rhone blend \$7.50; 1997 Clos du Bois Sauvignon Blanc \$8.50; 1996 Sini Sauvignon Blanc \$12.50; 1996 Quila Sauvignon Blanc Reserve - nice oak style \$16; 1997 Iron Horse Fume Blanc very stylish \$18; and 1997 Iron Horse Viognier brimming with fresh peach notes \$15.

■ Best buy red from France: 1996 La Vieille Ferme blend of Grenache, Cinsault and Mourvedre sporting new label \$7.50.

Home in New Zealand

Brothers Theo, Alex and Marcel Giesen, owners of the estate, are natives of Germany. Following a desire to go some place "far away," they made New Zealand their new home. Marcel is the schooled winemaker. Theo and Alex assist during the harvest, but market their family wines through-

out the rest of the year.

California native Philip Jones has degrees from California's best universities specializing in grapegrowing and winemaking. After spending 15 years as a consultant to the horticultural industry, conducting research and development in California, he and his wife Cindy sought a smaller population, less congestion and a temperate climate.

"We went to New Zealand, found it a lot like California and fell in love with the country," Jones said. The couple founded the brands Tasman Bay and Spencer Hill (not yet available in this market, but probably soon).

By New Zealand standards, Giesen is large, producing 60,000 cases annually and includes Selwyn River as a Giesen second label. The Jones' operation is 10,000 cases.

Recommendations

■ 1997 Giesen Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, \$14.50 is an unadorned wine highlighting the varietal intensity of the grape and finishing fresh and crisp.

■ 1997 Giesen Estate Chardonnay, Canterbury, \$16 is big and full, but very balanced. Definitely not an

Please see WINE, B2

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- 2 Unique
- Main Dish Miracle



Chill out...

with quick, easy summer desserts

Easy, that's the name of the game for Eleanor Bailey of Redford, especially in the summer when the last thing she wants to do is turn on the oven.

Bailey's Crunchy Fudge Sandwiches are a hit at her husband Bart's company picnic. "I made them a couple of times, and they just disappeared," she said. The recipe is nearly 20 years old, and came from a booklet - "Baking Made Easy," written by Mrs. Marie Silverstein and her students at Pierson Junior High in Redford.

"I like to make desserts more than main dishes," said Bailey, who cooks most every night. Strawberry Fluff is another one of her favorite no-bake summertime desserts. "Most people like strawberries," she said. "It's easy."

The crust is made with store bought angel food cake torn into bite size pieces. It's topped with a mixture of strawberry Jell-O, sliced strawberries and Cool Whip.

Mary Piontek of Redford would rather bake than cook, but every night, no matter what, she cooks dinner for her husband, David, and 18-month-old daughter, Madeline.

"My husband gets a home cooked meal every day," she said. "You can make time for things that are important. Life is centered around meals. They say the kitchen is the heart of the home."

Piontek's Best Banana Pie is a family favorite. "It's easy, and the almond flavor is a nice surprise," she said. "This cream pie is also very light."

Her recipe is three or four recipes combined. "I changed things and added things," she said. "I have a lot of my grandma's cookbooks. People always like this pie. The almond flavor surprises them."

She got the idea from a breakfast she and her husband enjoyed at a bed and breakfast. "They served French toast and bananas soaked in Amaretto. Almond is one of my favorite flavorings. I never thought of combining it with bananas until then."

If you crave chocolate, consider Mocha Frost Dessert (pictured above) - fat-free or low-fat coffee and chocolate-flavored frozen yogurt or ice cream are layered onto a crunchy wheat germ crust laced with cinnamon and brown sugar. The wheat germ adds a delicious nut-like flavor that compliments

the mocha filling.

Lime Twist Daiquiri Pie takes the flavor of one of summer's favorite beverages - the daiquiri - and turns it into a delicious, tropical desert.

The crunchy oatmeal cookie crust is easy and bakes in just 15 minutes. The rum and tangy-lime flavored filling is made with reduced or fat-free cream cheese, condensed milk and whipped topping.

A chocolate-lover's dream, Frozen Chocolate Mint 'Julep' Squares features a minty chocolate ice cream filling in a quick and easy chocolate oatmeal cookie crust. Using fat-free ice cream and whipped topping cuts the fat, but not the flavor. A sprinkling of crispy chocolate oatmeal cookie crumbs is a delicious finale in this triple-layer frozen dessert.

Both of these oat crusts are very versatile. Simply bake either crust and fill with fat-free ice cream or frozen yogurt, layering several different flavors if you prefer. Or swirl ice cream topping through the softened ice cream before spooning it into the crust and freezing.

See recipes inside.

Preserve fruits, vegetables to enjoy later

LIVING BETTER SENSIBLY



BEVERLY PRICE

Harvest time is fast approaching. Now that your garden is growing by leaps and bounds, what do you do with the fruits (vegetables and herbs) of your labor? There are many ways to preserve home-grown produce. The advantage is that you can consume the freshest foods possible in or out of season.

Growing your own produce, and especially herbs, is a highly economical way of obtaining a nutritious diet.

Food preservation methods

Announcing Living Better Sensibly's Healthy Home Cooking program, suggests these methods for preserving the fruits of your labor:

■ Canning - Yields the best quality results with fewest risks. Canning maintains integrity of the product, natural color, fresh flavor and generally high nutritive value.

Canning also prevents moisture loss and reactions with oxygen which, in turn, prevents the activity of food enzymes that can destroy the food. However, Canning also takes time, and requires special equipment. Organization and following directions carefully are very important to avoid the risk of food poisoning.

■ Cold storage or Root Cellaring - Is the easiest, fastest and oldest form of food preservation and perfect for our climate. However, you must have a basement or outdoor cellar. You can create an outdoor storage facility by digging mounds and trenches in

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—Cathy Fresia,

Huntington Woods Seed and Sod Garden Club

the ground, below frost level. Root crops such as beets, cabbage, and potatoes can be stored for up to eight months, unwashed, in cardboard boxes, baskets, crates or containers in a cool and dry atmosphere. Late fall is a good time to use this method.

■ Drying - Fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices can be dried or dehydrated using special equipment. Apples, bananas, cherries, grapes, peaches, nectarines, pineapple and pears are most popular fruits to dry. Vegetables that work well include beans, beets, carrots, mushrooms, peppers, tomatoes, squash.

You can dry foods any time of year. Make baby food at half the cost by adding water to dried fruits or vegetables and then blending them. Drying herbs and spices is very easy. You can hang them, or use a conventional oven or dehydrator.

■ Freezing - Freezing can be done as soon as produce is ripe. You can freeze anything that you would normally eat cooked such as green beans, broccoli, tomatoes, and carrots. Freezing vegetables is both convenient and fast. All you need is a heavy duty pot to blanch your foods and plastic containers or heavy duty freezer bags for storage.

If you're interested in preserving foods, pick up a copy of "The Ball Blue Book: Guide to Home Can-

ning, Freezing & Dehydration." It explains how to safely can, freeze and dehydrate fruits and vegetables. Look for the "Blue Book," wherever canning supplies are sold, or call 1-(800)-240-3340.

Cathy Fresia, vice president of the Huntington Woods Seed and Sod Garden Club, has an organic garden in her backyard. Cathy feels strongly about organic herbs.

"If your herbs are not organic, removal of water in the drying process makes for a high concentration of pesticides in the finished product," she said.

Satisfaction guaranteed

"Canning is the most satisfying form of food preservation," she said. "When I walk downstairs to my basement, I can see the beautifully canned foods that sit on my shelves."

She uses her canned foods for gifts and exchanges home canned products at Christmas-time with friends and family.

Preservation of food has endless possibilities. Learning how to preserve foods can be a very rewarding experience for children. Having a pantry stocked with homemade spaghetti sauce, fruits, and vegetables is a time saver for families on the go. Canned and dried fruits and vegetables can be healthy, nutritious snacks, and additions to tasty meals.

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," Tall 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.