

## FOCUS ON WINE



RAY &amp; ELEANOR HEALD

## Wizards enhance sales of red wines

In the year 2000, Australian wine sales in the U.S. grew 41 percent. In no small measure, it's due to increasing appreciation of Australian red wines from talented winemakers — the red wizards of Oz.

Recently, much buzz from Australia has centered around the acquisition of Rosemount Estates by the giant of the industry, Southcorp Wines, whose powerhouse brands include the standard-bearer Penfolds, Lindemans (currently the best-selling Australian import), the California joint venture Seven Peaks, along with Coldstream Hills, Seaview, Soppelt and Wynns Coonawarra Estate.

With Rosemount now in the stable, Southcorp emerges as the world player from Oz, with even greater potential to capture a larger share of wine sales in the U.S. A tasting of newly-released Penfolds famous bin collection from the excellent 1998 vintage was impressive. At \$25 and under it's hard to beat these wines. Our favorites shook out in this order: Bin 26 Kalimna Shiraz \$22; Bin 359 Cabernet Sauvignon-Shiraz \$25; Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon \$25; and Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz \$22. From 1999, Bin 2 Shiraz-Mourvedre-Cabernet Sauvignon \$11 is an undisputed best buy.

Soaring popularity of wines from Oz is a result of very good wines at reasonable prices. Because prices are cheap, overall wine production costs in Australia are significantly lower than in California. Not bound by European traditions or a bevy of wine laws, Oz winemakers have freedom to innovate. Big volume brands score with their wine blends. Not just through blending wines from a number of regions for consistent taste year to year, but putting wines of complementary character, such as shiraz, grenache and mourvedre together to craft flavor red wines.

Get to know the little guys  
High volume leaders in the Australian wine industry have been challenged. Classy, stylish and complex red wines are also being produced by the little guys, small producers who only within a year or so, have found importers to bring their wines to the U.S.

Small producers promote regionalism. Like their counterparts in the best wine regions of the world, they realize that there are special places to grow grapes and are revealing this on their labels.

Special places are also rare. Production is low and some of these wines are pricey. We recently went in search of the best from small producers.

What we discovered is not unlike elsewhere in the great world of wine. The pricey stuff was great. In particular, three Clareton Hills Shiraz: 1999 "Pigott Range" Shiraz \$102, 1998 "Lindemans" \$70 and 1999 "Moritz" \$52.50.

From Victoria, 1998 David Traeger Shiraz \$32 had a touch of mint over gentle oak, the character that people rave about in a Heitz Martha's Vineyard Cabernet from the Napa Valley. Some show stoppers were not Shil-

Please see WINE, D2

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Asian basics
- National Salad Month

# Sweet!

Treat Mom to these great dishes on her special day

Mom is always there for you — nurturing your body with food and your soul and spirit with her wisdom. So on Mother's Day (Sunday, May 13), delight Mom with special treats to show how much the family appreciates what she does every day.

Let Mom relax while the family shows its appreciation of her many talents by preparing Sunday brunch. Mom will appreciate the family's efforts and thoughtfulness in creating an elegant and sweet day.

Of course, family members don't need to limit the breakfast or meal for Mother's Day. She'll certainly appreciate the surprise of a simple and pretty meal at any time of year.

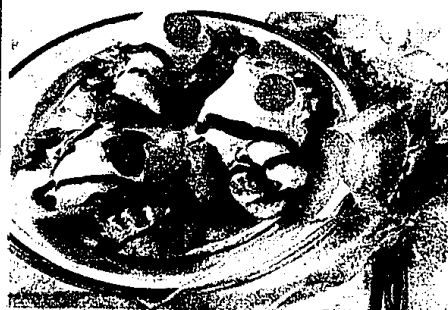
Banana Split French Toast is as delicious as it looks. Marshmallow cherries give this savory brunch entrée a festive look.

### Get festive

For dinner, consider cornish hens for an entrée. Cornish hens are hybrids developed from White Rock and Cornish chickens. They taste like chicken (honest!) and can replace it in most recipes. They create an impressive sight, roasted whole, turning an ordinary meal into an elegant one. Serve the hens with wild rice.

Then there's dessert. Honor Mom with a fancy dessert. Chocolate Angel Cake looks impressive, but it's easy for Dad and the kids to make with a cake mix and a can of tangy cherry pie filling.

Not challenging enough? OK, then there's Pear Spring Rolls with Citrus Dipping Sauce from Loufat & Luscious Desserts (American Heart Association, Clarkson Potter, 2000, \$22.50).



**Sweet combination:** The kids can assist Dad with this Banana Split French Toast. See recipe inside Taste.

### LIVING BETTER SENSIBLY



BEVERLY PRICE

Based on these results, the National High Blood Pressure Education Program now suggests people with high blood pressure should follow the DASH diet for prevention and management of hypertension. The DASH diet includes nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day, which are rich sources of potassium, magnesium and fiber.

Let's look at some of the popular fruits and veggies of the season and unique ways to eat them.

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension clinical trials concluded that a diet emphasizing fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts, while reducing fats, red meats, sweets and sugar-containing beverages can be highly effective in lowering blood pressure.

Watermelon is a favorite of Michelle Soltz of Huntington Woods, who craved it when she was pregnant with her second child, Madeline. "I used to cut it up into little squares and eat it," Soltz said.

Strawberries are enjoyed by Donna Sklar of Farmington Hills, who adapted a strawberry shortcake recipe to create a healthy alternative. (See inside Taste).

"This dessert never fails to delight guests who think it is an extravagance," Sklar said. "I often keep strawberries in the freezer so I have been able to make this for last-minute or unexpected guests."

In salads and side dishes, Sklar enjoys asparagus. She used to tell her children that spring was officially

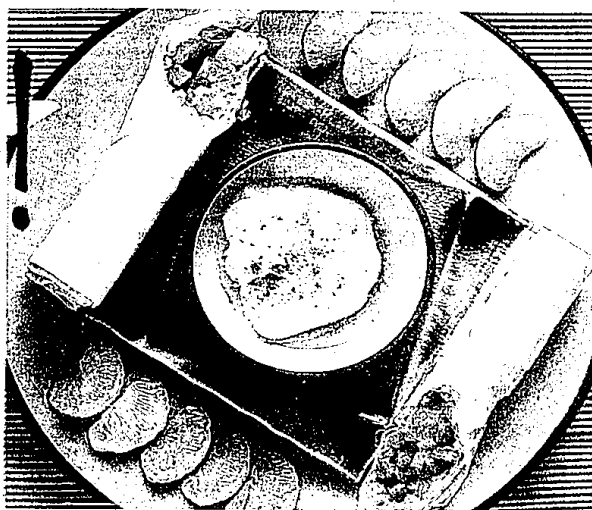
here when asparagus was 79 cents a pound. Sklar adds fresh asparagus to salad, seasons and broils it, or mashes the asparagus and mixes it with mayonnaise. "It's a great on top of pumpkin bread with onion," said Sklar, who learned of this dish from a young Scandinavian couple.

Kiwi, a green delicacy, is enjoyed by my daughter. You can cut a kiwi in half and scoop the halves out with a spoon. It's a great treat while you're on the go. (You can also place it in a plastic bag in your child's lunch box, along with a spoon.)

**Herbs accent dishes**  
For a garnish on salads, chives may be used. Common chives do not have bulbs and hardy chives have many long yellowish, brown bulbs.

Fresh peas are prepared with mint by Kathy Fresia of Huntington Woods. She snips the mint leaves

Please see PRODUCE, D2



**Go ahead, Dad! Want a little challenge? Fix these Pear Spring Rolls with Citrus Dipping Sauce next Sunday for Mom. If the adjacent recipe is too complex or if you want to get the kids involved, try another one of the recipes inside Taste.**



**Take the cake:** This Chocolate Angel Cake can be prepared using package mix and cherry pie filling. See recipe inside Taste.

### Sweet accompaniments

Mom will appreciate a card made by the children with construction paper and crayons and a nice sentimental one or a humorous one, or both, from her husband or special someone, depending on her personality. Dad can buy her favorite flower and place it on the serving tray with her favorite chocolate to enjoy later.

You can really surprise Mom by planting flowers in her garden or as borders in the yard. Grab the ones she likes. Or you can buy a hanging basket for the garage overhang or a container plant to lighten up the porch.

Perhaps Mom lives in a far-away city. She'd love a phone call from her children. Maybe it's a good time to start calling her every week, if you don't already. She'd appreciate it.

See related recipes inside Taste.

When you want a dessert that is not too filling after a hearty, heart-healthy meal, this artfully arranged Asian-flavored sensation provides the finishing touch. You can also pack the spring rolls — with or without the sauce — for something different in your brown bag.

(Please note that you need to thaw the phyllo dough in the refrigerator a day ahead of time.)

### PEAR SPRING ROLLS WITH CITRUS DIPPING SAUCE

- Butter-flavor vegetable oil spray
- 2 medium pears, such as Anjou, Bartlett or Bosc (10 to 12 ounces)
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon chopped crystallized ginger (about one slice) or 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/8 cup mandarin oranges, canned in water or light syrup, drained and finely chopped (optional)
- 1/8 teaspoon ground mace or ground nutmeg
- 8 sheets (about 12 by 16 1/2 inches) frozen phyllo dough, thawed
- 1 11-ounce can mandarin oranges in water or light syrup, drained
- 1/2 cup fat-free or lowfat flavored yogurt, such as mandarin orange, tangerine, vanilla, peach, apricot, apricot mango or raspberry
- Ground mace or ground nutmeg (optional)

Preheat oven to 375° F. Spray a rimmed baking sheet with vegetable oil spray.

Peel pears and chop into 1/4- to 1/2-inch cubes. In a large bowl, combine pears, raisins, walnuts, brown sugar, ginger, cornstarch, lemon juice and 1/8 teaspoon mace.

Keeping unused phyllo covered with a damp dish towel or damp paper towels to prevent drying, lightly spray one side of a sheet of dough with vegetable oil spray. Place short end toward you. Lay another sheet on the first and lightly spray with vegetable oil spray. Spoon about 1/3 cup pear mixture in center, spreading it so you leave about a 2-inch border all around dough. Fold about 2 inches of each long side toward the center of the dough. Starting at one short end, roll dough jelly-roll style to enclose filling (you'll have a cylinder shaped like a spring roll). Lightly spray with vegetable oil spray; place seam side down

Please see PEARS, D2

## Take the pressure off, eat produce

## We want recipes for camping

Trout season's in full swing, and trees and shrubs are budding, and, if you haven't already, you'll check the tent and all the camping gear needed for your summer excursions.

We would like to officially welcome summer with a few camping anecdotes and recipes from readers who enjoy the great outdoors, including fishing, biking or hiking.

If you're an angler who's lucky enough to catch dinner, how do you prepare your trout, panfish or pike? If you don't fish, what dishes do you prepare while visiting our wonderful state parks?

We'd love to hear from you and include you in a future Taste article. Send recipes to Taste Editor Ken Abramczyk, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or e-mail items as text files to kabramczyk@oe.homecomm.net.

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