

## FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

## Web sites offer wine tutorial

**Y**ou're interested in wine if you're reading this column. Perhaps you also want to learn more about wine, food, growing regions, grape varieties, production methods, visiting wineries, or purchasing wines.

One of the greatest resources for satisfying your wine interests is the Internet. Wineries, magazines, importers, auction houses and wine shops have Web sites that answer questions, sell wines, and help you make a virtual visit to the vineyards.

Allied Domecq Wines USA has launched 10 newly-designed winery Web sites that are interesting and educational. The new Web sites make it easy for you to navigate wine notes, visitor information, and food and wine pairings.

Included are recipe suggestions, if you have a wine in mind, or recommended wine matches for a recipe you've selected.

Each winery Web site has an education section and a Virtual Glass of Wine e-card that you can send to friends and family. If you are looking to purchase wine, there is a convenient "retailer locator" system to find the nearest store where the wine is available. If that doesn't work just click on "contact us" to e-mail a question directly to the winery.

### Wineries

The wineries within the Allied Domecq family of fine wines include:

- Atlas Peak Vineyards - [atlaspeak.com](http://atlaspeak.com)
- Bodegas Balbi - [bodegabalbi.com](http://bodegabalbi.com)
- Buena Vista Winery - [buenavistawinery.com](http://buenavistawinery.com)
- Callaway Coastal - [callawaycoastal.com](http://callawaycoastal.com)
- Clos du Bois - [closdubois.com](http://closdubois.com)
- Cockburn's Port - [cockburns-usa.com](http://cockburns-usa.com)
- Domecq Sherries - [domecq-usa.com](http://domecq-usa.com)
- Harveys Bristol Cream - [harveys-usa.com](http://harveys-usa.com)
- Marques de Arienzo - [marquesdearlenzo.com](http://marquesdearlenzo.com)
- William Hill Winery - [williamhill-winery.com](http://williamhill-winery.com)
- Champagne Mumm - [mumm.com](http://mumm.com)
- Perrier Joutet - [perrierjoutet.com](http://perrierjoutet.com)
- Brancott Vineyards - [montanawines.com](http://montanawines.com)

Do you know what "malolactic fermentation" is and how it affects the taste of wine? Do you know the benefit of having "betryls cineres" in a vineyard? Do you own a wine dictionary? One of the great features of these sites is the glossary of wine terms. You can learn about hundreds of wine terms from [A]lcohol to [Z]infandel without having to purchase an expensive encyclopedia.

Another feature is that once you have entered one winery site, the others can be easily accessed by convenient links. Each site contains colorful photography that gives you a sense of what the win-

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### WINE PICKS

In addition to price, another factor in choosing a Chardonnay that you'll like is knowing your palate preference: Big fruit statement with backed off oak or noticeable oak presence from aroma through the finish.

Among the following Chardonnays, we've noted the oakier versions.

- Excellent:** 2000 Kunde, Sonoma Valley \$16.  
**Very good:** 2000 Jekel \$11; 2000 Beringer Founder's Estate \$12 (oaky); 2000 Fatzer Barrel Select \$13; 1998 King Estate Reserve, Oregon \$20; and 1999 Cinnabar Santa Cruz Mountains \$25 (oaky).  
**Best buys at \$10 or less:** 2000 Bodega Norton (Argentina) \$8; and 1998 King Estate, Oregon \$10.

# Asparagus

## Spearing a spring treat

Spring is a time of change: Change in attitudes, change in wardrobe and most certainly a change in appetite. When spring flowers start peeking through the warmed earth there is a vegetable that follows suit - asparagus.

The appearance of asparagus in local markets represents the beginning of the fresh vegetable season. Asparagus is most closely related to the Lily of the Valley. Historians note that Egyptians snacked on tiny wild asparagus shoots

even before the second pyramid was built in Giza. A plant resembling asparagus is depicted on murals dating all the way back to the Memphis dynasties of the third millennium B.C. It was the Romans, with their robust love of food, who domesticated this cousin of the lily. As the asparagus plant continued to thrive in the Mediterranean and North Africa, the Greeks began to regard it as a medicinal plant rather than a food crop.

Their word "aspharagos" means, "as long as one's throat," a label conferred on the plant because anxious diners often gorged themselves on this delicacy, sliding whole spears down their throats in one greedy gulp.

Michigan's crop

There are more than 120 known species of asparagus grown around the world. Michigan is the third

largest grower of asparagus in

the U.S., producing up to 25

million pounds annually. My

local produce connection,

Glenn Prentice of G. W. pro-

duce, told me that "aspara-

gus grows amazingly

fast." During the growing

season, farm-

ers often have to cut over their fields

two a day. They will joke that they

go in for lunch and come back out to

find the asparagus has grown an inch

or more! Once it is cut asparagus

requires immediate chilling. Only 15

percent of the Michigan crop is sold

fresh. The remaining 85 percent is

sold to processors. Thirty-five percent

will be frozen as cut tips and spears,

and 65 percent will be canned.

### Cooking tips

■ Asparagus should be cooked simply to retain its nutritional value.

■ Blanch in hot poaching water 3-5 minutes.

■ Steam upright 8-10 minutes.

■ Brush with a little olive oil and grill 5-8 minutes.

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Spring dishes: Chef Kelli Lewton stands in the kitchen of Aunt Olive's Good Food 2 Go in Birmingham with an array of asparagus dishes including Asparagus Bruschetta, Balsamic Asparagus, Poached Asparagus, and Asparagus Phyllo Straws.

### Simply irresistible

#### ASPARAGUS BRUSCHETTA

- 1 pound asparagus - stems trimmed and blanched a la dente
- 4 Roma tomatoes - diced medium
- 1 yellow tomato - diced medium
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach - cut in thin strips
- 3 tablespoons fresh basil - cut in thin strips
- 1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons fresh chopped garlic
- 1/4 cup virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Prepare vegetables, herbs and spinach and toss with white balsamic vinegar. Heat olive oil in pan, add garlic and sweat 45 seconds to 1 minute. Toss with other ingredients. Serve with crackers or toasted baguette slices. Makes 1 quart.

(Recipes compliments of Kelly Lewton)

(More asparagus recipes can be found on page B2)

Please see ASPARAGUS, B2

## Chef Kathleen shares tips for 'Cooking Thin' eating well

BY LANA MINI  
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Kathleen Daelemans began her food career in the doughnut business as a teenager - not a good place to watch your weight. Over time she gained 80 pounds and wore a size 22.

That was more than 20 years ago. Now she's a size 8, and a chef at Cafe Kula in The Grand Wailea, a five-star resort in Maui. She also has a home in West Bloomfield.

Daelemans is the author of *Cooking Thin with Chef Kathleen* (Houghton Mifflin, April 2002, \$27) and has a show with the same name that airs 10:30 a.m. Saturday on the Food Network channel. Her recipes have also been published in *Bon Appetit*, *Wine Spectator*, *Gourmet*, *Food & Wine* and *Eating Well*. She's hosting a book

signing 2 p.m. Saturday, May 4 at Border's in Farmington Hills, 30996 Orchard Lake Road.

Neither the book nor the show is about dieting, she says, instead both focus on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. When Daelemans began her career in Hawaii she was surprised to learn the restaurant accompanied a spa in the resort. Being a size 22, she had to slim down fast. She promised herself that if she could keep the weight off, she'd help others do the same.

### Passionate about food

"I'm a woman who battles with my weight and I happen to be a chef who is passionate about food and healthy eating," Daelemans said.

Her recipes are aimed at busy soccer moms and bachelor workaholics who have only 20-30

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**Healthy & fun:** "Cooking Thin with Kathleen" focuses on developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, not on dieting.