

FOCUS ON WINE



ELEANOR & RAY HEALD

Quintessa's a cabernet to savor

As the wine name suggests, five (quint) dramatic hills, a departure for a Napa Valley location, distinguish the Quintessa vineyard's diverse topography. Developed in the early 1990s by viticulturist Valeria Huneus, Quintessa is the ultimate expression of her husband Agustin's vision of an outstanding vineyard in the Rutherford District of the Napa Valley.

Showcasing diversity for maximum development of wine flavors is at the heart of all properties in the Franciscan Estates portfolio. It is well illustrated in the Quintessa vineyard.

Clones, the most talked about vineyard topic in California today, were a new concept in the early 1990s. Valeria had the vision to plant the 170-acre property to seven clones of cabernet sauvignon, six of merlot and one of cabernet franc in 21 vineyard blocks. High density planting, even on terraces, introduces healthy vine stress, which results in lower yields and better concentration of grape flavors. These efforts, along with avoiding chemical controls and using diverse cover crops, have the effect of enriching the soil's natural microorganisms.

With their vineyard offering the panoply of flavors they hoped for, the Huneus' directed their attention to two other essentials, development of 14,000 square feet of caves for aging Quintessa wines and a winery structure in which the wines will be produced. Vintage 2002 will christen the gravity flow, state-of-the-art winery.

Grape-growing excellence has kept us interested in Quintessa since the first vine was planted. We've tasted each vintage since the launch of the 1994. The current release is 1998, a difficult vintage, but one where the excellence of the Quintessa vineyard prevailed, to yield a wine of outstanding complexity, and our favorite of the five vintages released so far. 1998 Quintessa \$95 is a wine that shouts "forget all the bad press about the 1998 vintage." Upfront, in your face, black fruits and brown spices abound in a wine that evolves in the glass to eventually reveal a fragrant cigar box character, associated with the best Bordeaux varietal blends.

There's more to discover in the Franciscan Estates group of wineries. The following are our picks for their top red wines.

■ 1999 Franciscan Oakville Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley \$27 is a well-layered, attractive mélange of red and black fruits. Exceptionally structured mouthfeel finishes soft, silky, and elegant.

■ 1999 Franciscan Oakville Estate Magnificat, Napa Valley \$45 is even better than the highly-acclaimed 1998. High-toned black fruit aromatics with sweet vanilla oak accents introduce a richly-layered wine with a deliciously plump middle, spiked with brown spice notes. Fruit characters last long into the supple finish.

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WINE PICKS

Cabernet/Meritage wines gain more fans each year. Some are pricey, but delicious.

Awesome: 1999 Pine Ridge Andrus Reserve Napa Valley \$135
Excellent: 1999 Mondavi Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon \$125; 1999 Pine Ridge

Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon \$60 (gutsy wine to cellar); and 1998 Beringer Knights Valley Alluvium Red \$30.

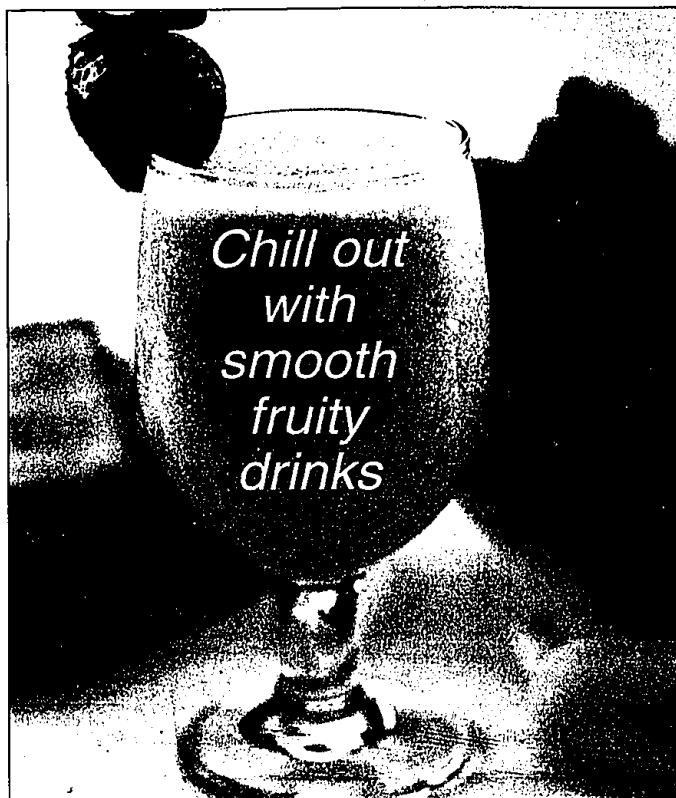
Very good: 1998 Chateau Souverain Alexander Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

\$35; 1998 Hess Collection Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley \$35; and 1999

Rosemont Estate Show Reserve Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon \$24

Very good deal: 2000 Alexander Valley Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon \$20

Give it a whirl



Any fruit: From strawberry to mango, fruit smoothies are the new summer drink. You can order them in many restaurants or make them at home. Below, fruit smoothies are an old drink in Middle Eastern countries and have made their way into the "fast food" world.



FAMILY FEATURES SYNDICATE

BY LANA MENI
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Freshly squeezed lemonade and iced tea are popular summer thirst quenchers, but the hottest drink of the season is

smooth and fruity. Smoothies – fruit blended with sorbet, ice cream, crushed ice, yogurt or milk are high in Vitamin C and calcium. They were a huge fad on the West Coast more than five years ago, and are available everywhere.

Smoothies aren't new, they're rooted in the Middle East, and more common than soda in those countries.

At La Shish in Farmington Hills, smoothies are more popular than soda too. Manager Mohamad Gelnagar said mango, orange and strawberry are some of the most popular fruit combinations. A unique

yogurt drink blended with garlic and salt is really hot for summer months too, he said.

"Orange juice, apple and carrot are nice too," Gelnagar said. "Potassium drinks with celery, spinach and carrots or fresh squeezed lemonade

are also nice."

Fitness USA on Wayne Road in Westland has a juice bar that's open to the public. Protein drinks and smoothies are the biggest sellers. Expect to see smoothies at Olga's restaurants in time. Currently, they're sold at Olga's Kitchen in Birmingham in sweet flavors like banana and chocolate.

Smoothies are no sweat, easy-to-make sippers. Just cut up fruit and blend. Any fruit will do – strawberries, blueberries, bananas and mango add thickness; apples, oranges and watermelon make them more liquid.

Smoothies are no sweat, easy-to-make sippers. Just cut up fruit and blend. Any fruit will do – strawberries, blueberries, bananas and mango add thickness; apples, oranges and watermelon make them more liquid. Ice is a good thickener. Prevent blender lock-up by adding ice, milk, yogurt or ice cream first. Blend for a couple seconds then add fruits one-by-one. Use frozen bananas to make super cold smoothies.

Smoothies can also be put into Styrofoam cups and frozen for a Popsicle alternative.

The first instant smoothie was recently introduced online. Luzianne Smoothies come in a dry mix that contains real fruit.

All that's needed is liquid and either a blender or simple shaker.

STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIES

5 large strawberries
6 oz. light (reduced sugar) fat-free strawberry yogurt, frozen (This is one container of Yoplait)
4 oz. Crystal Light or other sugar-free lemonade
Blend until smooth
Source: www.freesmoothies.com

CANTALOUPE CHERRY

½ cantaloupe (peeled, seeded, and sliced)
½ cup apple or apricot juice
2-3 pitted cherries
½ cup raspberries or blackberries
3-4 ice cubes

Put all ingredients into blender. Blend until smooth consistency is reached!

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Made with orange juice, Luzianne Smoothies contain more than two-and-a-half times the USDA's recommendation of Vitamin C for kids, so it's being marketed as a healthy fast food.

For more smoothie recipes or Luzianne information visit www.LuzianneSmoothies.com.

Be plucky, not clucky, about grilling chicken

BY KEELY KALESKI
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Is it done yet? Grilling chicken can be frustrating. I usually precook chicken parts in the microwave – 4 minutes on each side – then season before grilling to shorten the cooking time. Boneless chicken breasts are harder because they quickly dry out. Marinate breasts to retain moisture and grill over a medium low flame. When one side is done, dip the breast in the marinade before turning over to cook the other side. I've found this works better than basting.

I'll never forget the time I served partially raw chicken to guests. The outside was golden brown, like a cooking magazine picture, but the inside – well it taught me the value of using a meat thermometer.

meter.

Grilled chicken always tastes better in the summer. Here are some tips for successful grilling from Tyson Foods Inc. You can find more information on their Web site www.tyson.com/chicken/faq/grilling.asp.

Lighting up

If using a gas grill, follow the manufacturer's instructions for lighting the grill and setting the cooking temperature. If the grill has lava rocks, wait about 16 minutes after starting the grill to allow the rocks to heat thoroughly.

For charcoal grills, begin by lining the firebox with foil. Pile charcoal briquettes in a mound, drizzle on liquid charcoal starter, wait 1 minute, then carefully ignite the coals. Charcoal can take as long as 30 minutes to reach cooking



VANCE-ANDERSON PRODUCTS CO.

Flavor fiesta: Serve Garlicky Grilled Orange Chicken seasoned with a splash of tequila at your next gathering and guests will say ole.

temperature. To test the temperature, place your palms above the coals or heat source at cooking level. If you have to remove your hands after 2 seconds,

the temperature is hot; after 3 seconds, medium hot; and after 4 seconds, medium. More than 4 seconds indicates the grill has not reached cooking temperature.

Cooking tips

Light charcoal at least 30 minutes before cooking time, then test for the correct temperature before placing chicken on the grill. After the coals have reached cooking temperature, add aromatic woods such as mesquite, cherry, apple or hickory, if desired. Be sure the rack is clean; spray with nonstick vegetable spray or rub lightly with vegetable oil to prevent sticking.

Place the rack about 6 to 8 inches above the heat source. To shorten grilling time, chicken can be partially

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