

Taste

FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

Morgan wines sure let the fruit shine

When it comes to top-notch chardonnay and pinot noir, Morgan, a winery in California's Monterey County, always excels. This sentence does not tell the whole story. First, it might make you believe that Morgan's wines are sourced from vineyards in Monterey County only. This is true for chardonnay and syrah. While Morgan's pinot noir does come from Monterey, some also stems from the Carmelo region. Morgan's sauvignon blanc comes from vineyards in Sonoma County's Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys along with Monterey. Dry Creek Valley, home to California's best zinfandel, is the region from which Morgan gets its share. Added to the these is a great aperitif pour malvaux bianca, an ancient grape with Greek origins, bearing a Monterey designation.

Signature style

But no matter the origin of the grapes, Morgan wines have a signature style. It can best be described as one that lets the fruit shine and is not overdone by oak.

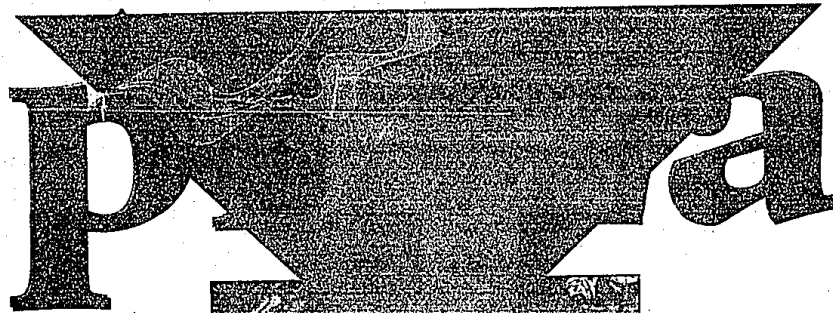
The 1996 vintage of Morgan Malvaux Bianca \$16 is well described as the best wine to replace a martini. Besides serving as an aperitif, it's great with Asian, Vietnamese and Thai cuisines. The 1996 is only Morgan's second release of this wine. The grape, when made in a dry style in Italy, is generally blended with trebbiano. Keeping it 100 percent varietal is an innovation of the 1990s.

The 1997 Morgan Sauvignon Blanc \$12 is almost half Sonoma County fruit and half Monterey. Years ago, Monterey sauvignon blanc was green, herbal and filled with the aromas and flavors of bell peppers. While you can still stumble on a sauvignon blanc like this, it is generally not the case, and certainly not with the Morgan interpretation, which was fermented entirely in French oak and blended with 20 percent semillon. The latter grape variety fills in any chinks to make a round and delicious wine.

Making you a believer in the merits of the Monterey appellation is 1996 Morgan Chardonnay \$21, fermented and aged in 30 percent new oak. It is with this wine that you'll understand the signature style - lots of fruit with gentle oak hints and lots of richness. But it gets better in the 1996 Morgan Chardonnay Reserve \$26. While

Please see WINE, B2

EASY AS PIE



Pizza has been around for ages. Variations are traceable from the Greeks, who ate a bread with toppings called "plakantos," to an Egyptian flatbread eaten in the Middle East over 2,000 years ago, and finally, to a small Italian island known as Napoli, or Naples, where pizza developed into today's familiar pie topped with tomato sauce and cheese.

Legend has it that during trips around the country with her husband Umberto I, Italy's Queen Margherita noticed people eating flatbread they called "pizza." Upon tasting, the Queen was so enthralled with the local peasant dish, she had Raffaele Esposito, a local pizza maker, summoned to the palace to cook for her.

In the queen's honor, Esposito created a pizza in the colors of the Italian flag: red tomatoes, white mozzarella and green basil, which we now know as the classic "Margherita" pizza.

According to John F. Mariani, author of "The Dictionary of American Food and Drink," (Hearst Books, New York, 1983), the term "pizza" is derived from an old Italian word meaning "a point," which led to the Italian word "pizzicare," meaning to "pinch" or "pluck." The word shows up for the first time in a Neapolitan dialect word - "picea" or "piza" - about 1000

Please see PIZZA, B2



QUAKER OATS

Hot off the grill: For something different, try Grilled Garden Pizzas. Topped with fresh tomatoes, bell pepper, and onions, these pizzas are a delicious way to enjoy the bounty of your garden.

Pizza tips from the American Dairy Association:

- Experiment with new cheeses - try using Monterey Jack, Muenster or blue cheese.
- Create original pizzas that draw from ethnic or regional flavors by using easy-to-find, indigenous ingredients:
 - Californian - Brush pizza crust with garlic and olive oil, topped with a tossed Caesar or mesclun salad and shaved Parmesan and Romano cheeses.
 - Cajun - Start with spicy shrimp or andouille sausage, add potatoes and onions and top with Monterey Jack and mozzarella cheese.
 - Greek - Top a grilled pita crust with creamy feta cheese, kalamata olives, tomatoes, cucumbers and red onion.
- For a crisp crust, bake pizzas at high temperature (400°F to 500°F) for 10-15 minutes or until the cheese begins to turn golden brown.
- When adding herbs such as oregano or rosemary to pizza, first gently rub the herbs to release the flavor oils.

For a free copy of pizza recipes from the American Dairy Association, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-sized envelope to: "Pizza Go Home!" c/o the American Dairy Association, P.O. Box 760, Rosemont, IL 60018-7760, or visit the ADA cheese web site at www.ilovecheese.com

WINE PICKS

- Pick of the pack: 1996 Laurel Glen Quintessa Cabernet Sauvignon \$34. A new wine from Laurel Glen, a blend of Napa and Sonoma sourced fruit.
- Outstanding reds from renowned California producers: 1995 Silverado Cabernet Sauvignon \$26; 1995 Fisher Merlot, RCF Vineyards \$30; 1995 Fisher Cabernet Sauvignon Lamb Vineyards \$51; 1996 Wild Horse Merlot \$17; and 1995 Boninger Syrah \$18.
- Great Chilean red: 1996 Veramonte Primus Carmenera \$17. For years, the Chileans thought Carmenera was merlot and labeled it as such. Now that there's been significant California interest in Chile, wine identity has come about. Carmenera is every bit as lush and mellow as your favorite merlot. Try it.
- Approachable, easy-to-drink Italian value: 1990 Antinori Santo Chinitino \$9.
- Keep those chards coming. Some delicious new ones: 1996 Beninger Chardonnay \$15; 1996 Clos Pegase Mixture Vineyard Chardonnay \$20.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Recipe to Share
- Cheers for Beer

Pack or pick up picnic foods for a quick getaway

Picnic is just another word for - getting away from it all. The French call them "pique-nique," which translates to "nothing much."

A picnic can be as simple or complicated as you want it to be. Local specialty food markets and delis offer lots of interesting, delicious sandwiches and salads to go, or you can make your own.

Harvey's Olde Village Deli, 896 N. Mill St., Plymouth is known for their grilled pita wrap sandwiches, but they sell a lot of other made to order sandwiches too.

"We cater to people who are on a budget and have a half hour to an hour for lunch," said Dan Sarb. "People will stop in for lunch and head down to Hines Drive to sit by the water and feed the ducks."

For picnics, Sarb recommends roll-up sandwiches. "They're easy to eat and carry," he said. One of his favorite combinations will remind you of a Greek salad. In a piece of lavash bread place slices of smoked turkey, chopped spinach, crumbled feta cheese, sliced red onion, and tomatoes. Top with Greek salad dressing, roll and wrap.

Florine Halpern of Amayrill Catering in Birmingham suggests this menu for a sunset picnic in the park - Garlic Toasts with white bean skordalia and chopped tomatoes with basil and cheese, topped with a tarragon vinaigrette; grilled chicken breasts with a spicy plum and toasted sesame glaze, rice and lentil salad with dried cherries and tangy balsamic dressing, crunchy Asian slaw with peanut dressing, petit corn muffins and peach/blueberry crisp, or Toasted Almond Good Humor ice cream bars from a park vendor.

Halpern likes picnic foods that are easy to carry and eat. Use her menu as a guide to develop your own. Grill chicken and other meats in the morning when it's cool, and chill to eat later.

"Mason jars are great for picnic baskets," said Halpern. "As much as possible, make everything disposable so you won't have to carry a lot of stuff home."

Here are some tips for picnics from "The Food Lover's Tipiary," by Sharon Tyler Herbst, (Hearst Books, New York, 1994)

- Carry a large plastic bag in case there are no trash barrels.
- Soak sponges in water, then put them in plastic bags, seal, and freeze until solid. In an insulated cooler, they should last for up to 3 hours, depending on the size of the sponges.
- Keep hot foods hot by insulating the containers with a layer of heavy-duty foil, then several layers of newspaper.
- Make portable, disposable salt and pepper shakers by filling separate paper straws with the seasoning, then tightly twisting the ends to close.
- Use a muffin tin as a condiment server, each section holding something different - ketchup, mustard, chopped onions, sliced pickles, relish, etc.
- An egg carton makes a handy container for small, breakable items that need protection such as apricots, plums, tomatoes and deviled eggs (individually wrap them later in plastic wrap).
- If bugs are getting into your drinks, cover the glass with foil, then poke a straw through the foil. See recipes inside.

A change of scenery can do wonders. Take a vacation from your daily routine by planning a picnic in the park. Here are some of our favorite spots:

- Bald Mountain State Park
Off M-24 in Orion Township
- Centennial Park
Downtown Oxford
- Heritage Park
Canton Center Road
(south of Cherry Hill, behind Canton Township Hall)
- Middle Rouge Parkway
11425 Drive east end of Road 11, West of and between 11th and 12th Roads in Northville
- Independence Oaks
Off Sashabow Road, north of Clarkston Road
- Kellogg Park
Main Street, (between Ann Arbor Trail and Panniman), downtown Plymouth. Marc Thomas and Max the Moose will be performing in the park at noon Wednesday, Aug. 13. Call (734) 415-4ART for information.
- Kensington Metropark
2240 W. Buno Road, Milford
- Seymour Lake Park
Seymour Lake Drive, just east of Baldwin Road, Oxford
- Shale Park
Downtown Birmingham

For more information:
 • Huron-Canton Metroparks - (800) 477-2767
 • Michigan State Parks and Travel - (888) 7H-GHEAT
 • Oakland County Parks - (248) 858-0906
 • Wayne County Parks Department - (734) 261-1990

