

## FOCUS ON WINE



RAY &amp; ELEANOR HEALD

## There's liquid gold in them thar hills!

Looking for gold in the 1850s, fortune seekers headed to California's Sierra Foothills. By 1856, money gushed and lifestyle demands for the best food and drink could buy reached a pinnacle. The rush to plant grape vines nearly equaled the rush to discover gold.

By the mid-1860s, a full-fledged pioneer wine industry had been created in the redlands and granite soils of the Mother Lode Country. Back then, more wineries operated there than in the rest of California.

Boom times ended when mines ran dry, late in the 19th century. This downturn was followed by the first phylloxera outbreak, devastating most vineyards. Wineries that survived had their backs broken by Prohibition. But that's the past. The present is bright and the future exciting.

### Ironstone Vineyards

The word bargain is no longer associated with wines from California's north coast counties of Napa and Sonoma. But it is alive in former Gold Rush country such as Calaveras County. A boy of more popularly priced wines are the discovery from today's Gold Rush hills.

Visitors to the region take a step back in time into mining towns such as Murphy's, where you find Ironstone Vineyards and a wine Mother Lode.

Ironstone bills itself as "unique in all the world." We asked Stephen Kautz, Ironstone's president to explain this. As starters, he cited 100 percent family ownership; California family vegetable farming dating back to 1923; and grape growing since 1968. Vineyards planted to chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc and zinfandel were farsighted for their time. Today, Ironstone farms about 6,000 acres of grapes.

At first, grapes were sold to other wineries. In 1982, Ironstone had its first vintage, but a major turning point in quality and recognition came in 1988 when the Kautz family hired talented winemaker Steve Miller and gave him a state-of-the-art facility that included underground caves.

So proud of its wines and facility, the Kautz family made their location a destination winery and entertainment center, with an in-house bakery, a cooking school, banquet center for 1,600 and one of the top 10 winery gardens in the United States. An amphitheater under construction will be completed in Spring 1999. Indeed, there's more than wine at Ironstone!

### Good values

But the wines? Very good and all under \$10. Do we now have your interest?

Please see WINE, B6

### Wine Picks

■ **Picks of the week:** 1996 Hartford Court Pinot Noir, Dutton Ranch-Sanchetti Vineyard, Russian River Valley \$35 each; two excellent, rich and voluptuous Russian River Valley fruit intensity with more evident oak than 1996 Hartford Court Pinot Noir, Fanchetti-Wood Road Vineyard \$30, full of elegance and finesse. Both are excellent and a matter of style preference.

■ **Wines to buy and cellar:** 1995 Geyser Peak Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon \$30; 1995 St. Supery Meritage, \$40; 1995 Venetia Meola Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon \$24; 1995 Stage's Leap Winery Petite Syrah \$24; 1996 Fisher RCF Merlot, Napa Valley \$30; 1996 Fisher Coach Insignia \$30; and 1996 Archery Summit Estate Pinot Noir (inaugural release from Oregon) \$75.

■ **Value picks:** 1998 Rosemount Shiraz-Cabernet \$8.50; 1997 Canyon Road Cabernet Sauvignon \$8; and 1996 Preston Fault \$12.

### LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- 2 Unique
- Main Dish Miracle

# RISE AND SHINE OATMEAL

## START YOUR DAY WITH A WARM TUMMY

BY MELANIE POLK  
SPECIAL WRITER

If cold, dark winter mornings aren't enough reason to seek the comfort of a steaming bowl of oatmeal, then consider that January is National Oatmeal Month - a worthy observance for a food that's both wholesome and extremely popular.

A single cup of oatmeal provides four grams of total dietary fiber, including two grams of cholesterol-lowering soluble fiber. The grain is also an excellent source of such nutrients as thiamin and magnesium.

There are several basic types of oatmeal, which differ in cooking time and texture rather than taste and nutrition. Steel-cut (also called Scotch or Irish) oats are oat groats (oat grains without their hulls) that have a coarse, chewy texture and take up to 20 minutes to cook; rolled oats, which are groats that are steamed and flattened between steel rollers, cook more quickly; quick oats are cut into small pieces before rolling and cook in only a minute; and instant oats are precooked and pressed, so they need only boiling water to reconstitute them. Oats should be stored in a dark, dry spot in a well-sealed container. If humidity is a concern, refrigerate oats for up to a year.

For breakfast, it's hard to beat a bowl of oatmeal, especially when combined with fruit. Cook some up with grated apple and cinnamon, or serve it with sliced banana.

Beyond breakfast, oats are a great addition to dishes like meatloaf, stew or soup for adding substance and thickening. Use oats as a coating for oven-fried chicken breasts or fish. Seasoned oats make a super stuffing for vegetables, and they also make a good coating for pan-roasted potatoes, carrots and other vegetables.

Oats are the base for a variety of sturdy breads, biscuits and cakes, and oatmeal cookies are a delicious way to get extra fiber in your diet. Use oats in fruit crumbles, low-fat pie crusts and brownies as well.

Melanie Polk is a registered dietitian and Director of Nutrition Education for the American Institute for Cancer Research.

See recipes inside.



QUAKER OATS

### F U N F A C T S

- January is Oatmeal month because we buy more oatmeal in January than during any other month of the year. In January 1998, we bought 36 million pounds of oats - enough to make 360 million bowls of oatmeal.
- Adults 65 years of age and over eat the most oatmeal - an average 79 bowls a year. Kids 12 and under eat, on average, 50 bowls per year and are the biggest consumers of flavored instant oatmeal.
- Of those people who eat instant oatmeal, 55 percent combine the oats and liquid and cook it in the microwave.

- While 86 percent of all oatmeal is eaten at breakfast, 6 percent of oatmeal is eaten at dinner.
- We add something to plain oatmeal 92 percent of the time. The top five favorite oatmeal toppings, in order, are: milk; sugar; margarine/spreads/butter; fruit, mostly raisins and bananas; and syrup/honey.
- Among the more unusual oatmeal toppings cited by National Eating Trends are: sesame seeds; coconut; pistachios; sunflower seeds; whipped cream and whipped topping; and cottage cheese.

Information compliments of The Quaker Oats Company

## Pick weight-loss and health goals that are right for you



SENSIBLE  
LIVING

BEVERLY  
PRICE

As you enter January of the new year, what are you thinking about when it comes to your health? Although you may establish weight loss and health goals for the new year, will you follow them through?

There are so many weight loss programs out there beckoning you to sign up. They sound tempting when they promise, "20 pounds of weight loss in one month." However, will they help you change your eating habits?

Most weight loss programs not only fail to address the emotional issues behind why you may be overeating, but they also have very little to offer in the way of nutrition education. How do you evaluate the "best" weight loss program for you? Let's explore some of the advice that the experts have to offer.

In the book and audio tape, "Thin for Life," by Anne Fletcher, she describes characteristics of individuals who kept their weight off for three or more years. Most of the individuals she sur-

veyed had lost and gained back their weight several times, and had been overweight since childhood. After years of struggling, they found an approach that was right for them.

Just because something worked for a celebrity does not mean it is right for you," writes Fletcher. They may have gone through a program or met with a dietitian, but ultimately, the "plan" was their "plan." It was not just a "menu to follow."

### Why diets don't work

This is why so many "diets" don't work. They simply provide a safety net so you don't have to make any effort. The diet does the work for you, so you do not have to think at all. But when the diet is over, you are left wondering, "Now how do I maintain my new weight on my own?" As Dr. Stephen Guillo says in his eye-opening audio tape, "Thin Tastes Better," "If you don't solve your emotional problems as well as deal with your food cravings while

you are 'dieting,' they will still be there when you lose your weight."

He goes on to explain that eventually, you will gain back the weight you have lost if you did not deal with your food issues during the weight loss process.

Canadian best seller, "You Count, Calories Don't," by Linda Omichinski, founder and president of HUGS International, Inc. developed an empowerment approach to health which is embraced by defeated dieters.

Forget the scale, calorie counting and fat gram levels

- Learn how to tune into your body for signals that mean enough & more
- Discover individual patterns for food and activity levels that maintain personal energy
- Find the strength to accept yourself just as you are and get on with life.

One of my clients, Sharon Sweet, who successfully achieved her weight loss goal said, "This is not my only

goal. Now that I achieved one goal, I need to work toward my next nutrition goal."

You never get to a final place. You are always perfecting and exploring new avenues when it comes to your health. So, when evaluating a personal weight loss program for 1999, whether it is a group or one-on-one guidance from a health professional, make sure that your potential program meets your individual needs. If you do not see progress in terms of behavior change within six weeks, don't be afraid to enlist the help of a mental health professional in order to help you get to the root of your eating behavior. Happy New Year.

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. Look for her column on the first Sunday of each month in Taste. Visit her website at [www.nutritionsecrets.com](http://www.nutritionsecrets.com).

See recipes inside.