

FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

Wine predictions for a new decade

Dry Creek Vineyard in California's Sonoma County launched the first wine of the new millennium at precisely 12:01 a.m. EST Jan. 1, 2000.

Called Epoch Millennium Cuvée \$60, this 1997 vintage wine is a sophisticated, bold and complex blend of 90 percent cabernet sauvignon and 10 percent merlot.

Epoch means the beginning of a new and important period of history. Epoch, the wine, signals some savvy marketing that you'll be seeing throughout the next decade from producers worldwide, especially in some hip and edgy Bordeaux ads. Marketing efforts will be fueled by producer desires for greater market share, new interests in alternative varietals, and the proverbial supply and demand.

Stateside

Wine enthusiasts will continue to discover the new Gallo of Sonoma image. A flight of dynamic wines at great prices are among new releases. At \$12, we're impressed with 1998 Gallo of Sonoma Chardonnay, 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon, 1997 Merlot and 1997 Zinfandel. At \$16, Gallo of Sonoma Pinot Noir is hard to beat. Then, there's Gallo of Sonoma new single vineyard designates 1996 Frei Ranch Vineyard Zinfandel, \$18 and 1996 Barelli Creek Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, \$26.

When we judge these sensibly-priced wines, we wonder how so many California producers can continue to raise prices for, in some cases, wines that are not nearly as good. A few cult wines from California may continue to carry astronomical prices, but that will not be the norm as California grape supplies increase.

As the decade progresses, Gallo will add to its vineyard-designated bottlings, releasing wines from Elmo's Vineyard, Twin Valley Vineyard and Stony Point Vineyard. Watch for them.

Vineyard designation will become more commonplace. West coast producers gained a good handle on wine-grape sites in the 1990s. Those with special characters will be singled out for notice. But many unworthies will be in the mix. Buyer beware.

Family wineries with well-priced bottlings such as Sonoma County's Benziger will also rise in popularity. A family touch in business is appealing.

Family business owners work hard to beat the competition. The Benzigers have with offerings such as 1998 Fume Blanc \$12, 1998 Carneros Chardonnay \$15, 1997 Merlot \$16 and 1996 Zinfandel \$17, 1997 Cabernet Sauvignon \$17 and 1995 Syrah \$17, sourced from two Central Coast vineyards.

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Wine Picks

- We've been critical of thin, under-fruit merlots, but here are some that measure up in taste. A recent tasting put them in order of complexity, which also happens to be by price! 1996 Beinger Banc-off Merlot \$75; 1997 Shafer Merlot, Napa Valley \$35; 1997 Chateau St. Jean Merlot \$22; 1997 Dry Creek Vineyard Merlot, Sonoma County \$20; and 1998 Robert Mondavi Coastal Merlot \$12.50.
- Everybody loves chardonnay. These are delicious: 1996 Ferrari-Carano Chardonnay Reserve \$32; 1997 Morgan Reserve Chardonnay \$28; 1998 Mirassou Chardonnay \$24; and 1998 Geyser Peak Chardonnay, Russian River Valley \$16.
- Change of pace whites: 1998 St. Supery Meritage White \$20; 1998 Zaca Mesa Roussanne \$16; and 1998 Preston Meresane \$13.
- Change of pace reds: 1990 Vin du Mistral Syrah \$30; 1997 Clos du Bois Merlot \$16; 1997 Geyser Peak Shiraz \$16; 1997 Perin Reserve \$11; and 1998 Delas Freres Cotes de Ventoux \$7.50.

LOOKING AHEAD

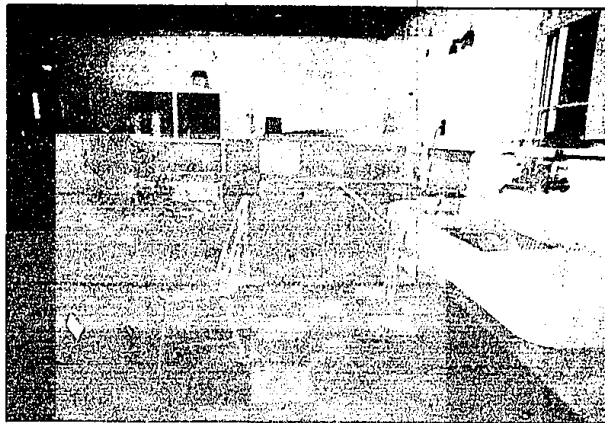
What to watch for in Taste next week:

- 2 Unique
- Main Dish Miracle



STAFF PHOTOS BY TINA HARLEY

Those were the days: (Above) This is a typical kitchen at the turn of the century. There's no electricity or running water. The floor and table are wooden, and the stove is fueled with coal. (At right) This kitchen, typical of ones in the 1930s, would have been considered modern in its time. There's running water, electricity, and a refrigerator, too. Both exhibits are at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn.



Electricity

POWERS UP KITCHEN DESIGN

STORY BY KEELY WYGONIK • STAFF WRITER

Electricity — is perhaps the most revolutionary thing to happen in kitchen design in the past 100 years. It powers our appliances and computers, and is one of the reasons cooks today want more counter space.

Still, the debate continues; which is better to cook with: gas or electric? It is far from resolved. Some people prefer electric stoves, others gas.

Cooking power debates have been going on since the beginning of the 19th century. At Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn you can see a stove from the 1920s that was run on coal and electricity.

Before electricity became commonplace in homes, some companies, such as Maytag, introduced gasoline-powered appliances. Maytag was the first company to offer a gasoline-powered washing machine. Called the Multi-Motor washer, the machine, introduced in 1916, was designed for homes located in areas where electricity was not yet available.

According to information found on the company's Web site, www.maytag.com, within six months of the introduction of the Multi-Motor washer, sales and production of washing machine products doubled, and the washing machine division of Maytag outperformed farm implement production for the first time.

Coal was the most popular kitchen stove fuel in the early 1900s, and for most people, indoor plumbing was a pipe dream. If you wanted water, you pumped it. Things started to change after

World War I. At Henry Ford Museum you can see how.

Design evolution

At Henry Ford Museum you can see early kitchen appliances and the evolution of kitchen design. There are two interesting kitchen displays — one of a kitchen from the late 1800s, and another from the 1930s.

There's a porcelain sink in the 1930s kitchen, but no cupboards above or below it, or counters. The kitchen table top is enamel, just like grandma used to have, and the cupboard is a separate unit — a piece of furniture — not something built into the kitchen.

"Convenience, orderliness, and hygiene" became concerns as the century progressed, and changed the way kitchens were designed. Pointing to the 1930s display, Donna Braden, interim director of

the museum's Experience Design department, notes that the cupboard is raised up off the linoleum floor so that you can clean underneath it. The enamel table surface and linoleum floor are also easy to clean.

As the century progressed, kitchen appliances became more sophisticated. Ice boxes were traded for electrical refrigerators with thermostat controls.

When women wanted advice on what appliances to buy they often turned to *Good Housekeeping* magazine. The Good Housekeeping Institute was founded in 1900 to educate consumers and evaluate products. The Good Housekeeping Seal, which "promises replacement or refund if a product bearing the seal proves to be defective at any time within two years from the date it was first sold to a consumer," has been around since 1909.

John DeGiulio, owner of DeGiulio Industries in Dearborn, has seen a lot of changes in kitchen design over the past 30 years. His company manufactures and installs cabinets for kitchens, bathrooms and offices.

"Kitchens are larger," he said. "People are converting the kitchen into a cooking and eating area. They have more small appliances such as food processors and need more electrical outlets."

Kitchen cabinets, once a free standing piece of furniture, are built in with lots of accessories such as lazy Susans, and drawers with dividers for cutlery.

DeGiulio, and Bill Brohl, a kitchen and bath designer at Kitchen Suppliers Inc. in Canton, have both been receiving more requests for glass cabinet doors and shelves so people can show off their

Please see ELECTRICITY, B2

TRADITIONS

Crown your Twelfth Night celebration with King Cake

Serving King Cake on Jan. 6, the Twelfth Night Christmas, is an ancient and joyous tradition still celebrated throughout Europe and the U.S. to mark the end of the Christmas season.

Also known as the Feast of the Epiphany or the Feast of Kings, this celebration commemorates the visit of the Magi, or three kings. People the world over celebrate the Epiphany by exchanging gifts and feasting.

A beautifully decorated King Cake, made with rich, sweet yeast dough is a cherished part of this age-old tradition. A custom since the Middle Ages is to bake a bean or small trinket, typically a toy or coin, inside the King Cake. The person who finds the item in his or her portion is declared King or Queen of the Twelfth Night celebration.

A paper crown or small gift is often bestowed upon the honorary guest as he or she takes a place at the head of the table.

King Cake recipes and customs are as diverse as the cultures of the world. For example, the famously gaudy King Cake of the New Orleans Mardi Gras season is usually baked from a cinnamon or citron flavored yeast, shaped in a ring and sprinkled with sugars in three symbolic colors — purple for justice, green for faith, and gold for power. A small plastic baby toy is hidden inside the cake.

The Rev. Dominic Garramone, a Benedictine monk, an accomplished bread cook, cookbook author, and host of the popular public TV series "Breaking Bread with Father Dominic," draws inspiration for his favorite King Cake recipe from Spain, where orange and spices are traditional ingredients.

The sweet surprise of eleven chocolate covered almonds, evenly distributed throughout the cake, is a delicious personal touch that is typical of this witty monk with a penchant for chocolate. Hidden inside the twelfth piece, a single coin or trinket is carefully wrapped in parchment paper. The lucky recipient of this piece is declared King or Queen of the day.

Another feature of the cake is a pull-apart "crown" form, which Garramone achieves by dividing the dough into twelve separate pieces. He recommends using a Jell-O ring or mold to hold the pieces together as they rise to a golden crown in the oven. After baking, the cake is brushed with melted butter and sprinkled with sugar. Candied cherries or gumdrop "jewels" are affixed to each point on the crown.

King Cake is traditionally served on Jan. 6 and enjoyed throughout the Epiphany season, which ends with Lent or Ash Wednesday. Variations of this treat are popular during Mardi Gras celebrations all over the world. See recipe inside.



Sweet jewel: Celebrate the Twelfth Night of Christmas on Thursday, Jan. 6, by serving King Cake.