

FOCUS ON WINE

RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

Americans should give German wines a try

I don't like German wines; they're sweet," is a lament we hear all too often. Yet, when the same people who say this, taste a very dry German wine, their lips pucker and they remark, "it's sour." Give them a German Riesling Kabinett category wine from a great estate and they love it. So why don't more Americans like German wines? We have a theory. It's based on what Americans say they like — a dry wine. And somewhere along the line, they picked up the idea that all German wines are sweet. Both concepts are false.

What people who like wine enjoy is not that the wine is dry — it's that it's balanced. A wine with the correct fruit and acid is balanced and delicious.

German wine producers are partially at fault in trying to market the American market with their "trocken" (dry) and "halbtrocken" (half-dry) wines because they thought that was what U.S. drinkers wanted when they asked for dry. Americans tried a trocken wine and puckered up.

With the introduction of vintage 2000 wines, German non-estate wine producers will try to make it simpler using the words Classic category, they are gloriously rich and full-bodied. We recommend:

- 1999 Fitz-Ritter "Piesalto" Bismarckweisse \$29/37.5ml from the Pfalz region.
- From the Rheinhessen, 1999 Heinrich Seebich Neirsteiner Oelberg Eiswein \$22 is a bargain.
- 1999 Fitz-Ritter Duënkheimer Hochberrn Eiswein \$31 is a nectar of the gods.

to Spätlese or Auslese or higher, the wines get richer. They are off-dry, but balanced. Drink these low-alcohol wines with the right foods and they are perfect. In fact, German wines are the most versatile wines in the world.

How to enjoy German wines

With spring here and summer on the way, there is no better time to get introduced or re-introduced to German Rieslings. Wines from the exceptional 1999 vintage are now available. We recently met with top German estate owners, winemakers or representatives who were making a U.S. tour. As we tasted through their balanced offerings, we made mental notes about food pairings and some delicious 1999 wines.

In general, German Rieslings pair well with Japanese food. With sushi, they are refreshing. Any dish with ginger is stunning with a Riesling Spätlese or Auslese.

From the Rheingau region, Schloss Schoenborn QbA \$8.60, fruit with tantalizing mineral notes, is perfect for broiled white fish, sautéed with a citrus-based vinaigrette or light cheese and fruit. With the same foods, the delicate Studert-Prum Bernkasteler Graben Kabinett \$11 from the Mosel would pair equally well.

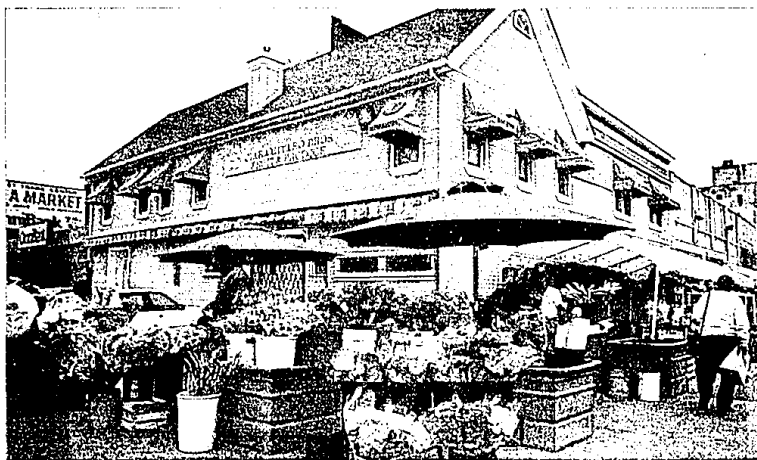
From the Saar region, Dr. Fisher Ockfener Bockstein Kabinett \$11 with apple fruit and a hint of mineral character is suited to any dish with a light sauce, fried Ahjum-seasoned catfish filets, or grilled shrimp. The more complex Dr. H. Thiesch Bernkasteler Doctor Kabinett \$29 or Schloss Schoenborn Erbacher Marco-

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EASTERN MARKET ADVENTURES

Produce shopping becomes fun at the farmers' market

Take It In: Ciaramitaro Bros. Fruit & Produce is among the many vendors who sell freshly cut flowers at Eastern Market. Flats of flowers are also in abundance. Even if you're not in the market for blooms, you'll relish in the sights and scents.



STAFF PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMAYER

Shopping tips

- Wear comfortable shoes, sunglasses and carry only the essentials.
- Consider bringing along a cart for your purchases such as a small cart, Radio Flyer or large fabric shoulder bag.
- Take a quick tour through the market before buying to determine which vendors have the best quality and prices.
- Plan to purchase the most perishable goods near the end of your shopping trip.
- If you see someone carrying something you like, ask them where they bought it and for how much.
- Don't hesitate to negotiate with vendors for the best price — they're used to haggling.
- Bring cash — credit cards and checks aren't typically accepted.
- Early risers get the best pickings, but latecomers often go home with bargains. It's your choice.
- Make a day or half-day of your trip to the market. There's great people-watching, street entertainment, food to graze on and spots for lunch and other shopping.

 BY NICOLE STAFFORD
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Walk in, grab a metal cart, make a beeline towards the spray of the lettuce sprinklers and pick your poison. Sort and select for ripeness and quality. Then, weigh it, bag it, buy it and go.

That's produce shopping for you. That is unless you've decided to take a trip to a farmer's market for fruits and veggies. There, produce shopping comes with participation, observation, entertainment, learning and conversation.

With six open-air stands filled with vendors, dozens of specialty food retailers, several restaurants and other shops — an estimated 45,000 people visit on warm-weather Saturdays — Detroit's Eastern Market promises to be an adventure.

"It's people-watching at its best," says Ed Dereb, chairman and CEO, Eastern Market Merchants Association. "It's a melting pot of all the people and groups of Detroit." Though most Eastern Market visitors come on Saturdays in the spring and

summer, the 43-acre operation, located between Mack and Gratiot avenues, is open everyday except Sunday through-out the year.

There are street musicians like Sweet Daddy Lou who plays blues guitar in front of the Russell Street Cafe.

At any given moment, hundreds of shoppers are traversing the market with red Radio Flyer wagons and other conveyances for their purchases.

In front of Bert's Marketplace on Russell Street, visitors spontaneously dance to a reggae band that's entertaining the crowd. Others savor BBQ ribs and chicken from Bert's

outdoor grill operation. And people who normally grow impatient while in line at the grocery store think nothing of the waiting for the right slice of cheese or lunchmeat at R.J. Hirt's — an anchor store of the market complex.

Yvonne Bussey of Oak Park has finished both her lunch and shopping so sits at a nearby table and simply watches people pass by. Bussey says she's been coming to the market since she was less than 3 feet tall. She visits twice a month to buy produce, flowers and eggs from the Burns Poultry Farm where large white eggs sell for a whopping 75 cents a dozen. Incidentally, all the farm's eggs have been laid within the week.

For Susan Tulupman of

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Spices and stuff: If you love to cook, a visit to the Rafal Spice Company alone is worth a trip to Eastern Market. Store owner Donald Rafal (right) and shop employee John Kingsley get a kick out of naming some of the store's more unusual ingredients, such as Dragon's Blood and Pinhead Gunpowder tea.

Oakland County

- Royal Oak Farmers Market: 316 East 11 Mile Road, two blocks East of Main Street in Royal Oak; 7:00 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, Friday and Saturday (call ahead for Tuesday visits as market is currently undergoing renovations); May-October; call (248) 548-8822.
- Oakland County Farmers Market: 2350 Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford Township; 6:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday; May-October; call (248) 858-5495.
- Rochester Farmers Market: Corner of Third and Water streets, 1 block east of Main Street, in downtown Rochester; 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, May-October; call (248) 656-1954.
- Northville Farmers Market: Northville Downs parking lot at the corner of 7 Mile Road and Shelton in Northville; 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday, May-October; call (248) 349-7640.

Wayne County

- Eastern Market: 2334 Russell Street between Mack and Gratiot avenues off I-75 Freeway; Public Market, 6 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; Wholesale Market, 4 a.m.-noon Monday-Friday; Produce and Retailers, 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday; year-round; call (313) 833-1560.
- Plymouth Farmers Market: On Penniman Avenue at Main Street in downtown Plymouth in The Gathering; 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, May-October; call (734) 453-1540.
- Livonia Farmers Market: Wilson Barn, Middlebelt and West Chicago, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, May 19-September 29 (except June 9); call (734) 522-5039.



Street best: Sweet Daddy Lou plays his blues version of Mustang Sally in front of the Russell Street Cafe in Eastern Market. Patrons line up outside the restaurant for lunch.

Rhubarb: Forgotten fruit brings back old flavors

 BY LEANNE ROGERS
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People don't seem to eat rhubarb much these days for some reason.

Maybe it's because they don't have any growing in their yards and store-bought rhubarb doesn't have much flavor. Or they don't really cook much and have no idea what to do with rhubarb. Maybe it needs to be a family tradition.

It could be fondness for rhubarb is developed in childhood. Growing up in what was then the quite rural Avon Township, now the very developed Rochester Hills, we had rhubarb growing in the back yard. My sisters, Becky and Colleen, and I would pick the stalks, add some salt and eat away.

My grandmother, Mary Walker, or moth-

er, Barbara, would make a rhubarb sauce that they would eat with shortcake — the homemade biscuit style — or make pie.

When my mother remarried and we moved from my grandmother's house, my mother took some rhubarb to the new house where we had an even bigger crop. I was living in an apartment after my mother died, so I couldn't transplant any rhubarb.

I bought my grandmother's house after she died nearly 10 years ago, but the rhubarb had gone to seed. I tried planting some sets I bought, but they never really grew that well — just a few stalks to eat.

Much to my delight, a couple of years ago my friend Rachel Dolson called and asked if I wanted some rhubarb. Her parents had transplanted some from their home in Bridgeport to her house in Rochester Hills.

Rachael's rhubarb was planted on the south side of her house and has grown to enormous proportions. I didn't want to be greedy but since Rachel was the only one in her immediate family who likes rhubarb, I generally leave with a grocery bag full.

Please see RHUBARB, D2

CHAMPAGNE & WINE DINNER - Tuesday, June 5, 2001 at 6:00 p.m.
 CITY LABORERS DELIBERATE'S SUGAR CLASS - Wednesday, June 6, 2001 from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
 JOHN WILSON'S FINEST FISHES - Thursday, June 7, 2001 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
 For details or information, please call 313-441-2100 www.tastetown.com

A portion of the proceeds will benefit
CATCH
 (Not Just An Animal, Check Us Out!)