

FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

Odds & ends:
Check out
the 'odd' bins

On occasion, your favorite wine shop may have an odd bins sale.

Treasure-hunt items. One or two bottles of some wine for which there is no longer shelf space. This column is like that. A few treasure ideas we'd like to share.

Quite a Match!

Varying by region and like a play with many acts, Italian dishes represent a wealth of different styles. In the north where cows can graze, dishes are made with butter. Southern dishes use olive oil because it's too hot for cattle. When you stop to think about it, Indian cuisine is similar.

Quickly, now, what's Italy's best-known wine? You said Chianti, didn't you? There's hardly an Italian dish that doesn't harmonize with Chianti.

So, why wouldn't a Chianti offer similar pleasures with Indian cuisine? In fact, it does!

Actually, we hadn't considered Indian cuisine as a match with Chianti until Amit Makhecha, owner/partner of Rangoli Indian Cuisine on East Walton Blvd., Auburn Hills, suggested it. Rangoli recently acquired a liquor license and has created a short but savvy wine list to match the restaurant's Indian dishes. The favorite wine? Badiu a Colibuvono Chianti Classico. It's sensational with both vegetarian and lamb dishes. Give it a try.

Getting zapped

Each year at the end of January, there's a ZAP (Zinfandel Advocates and Producers) tasting in San Francisco. Statistics over ten years indicate the rising popularity of zinfandel. In 1992, only 22 wineries poured their zinfandels. By 2001, the number jumped to 255 wineries. Last weekend, 287 wineries poured their 2000-vintage barrel samples and current releases at the tasting. Zin is in!

Shiraz popularity soars

According to *Wine Market Report*, a California-based trade publication, the percent share of Australian wine exports has soared in the 12 months ending December 2001. The U.S., importing 26 percent of total Australian wine production, trails only the United Kingdom at 43 percent. This represents a 31-percent increase in volume imports for the U.S., and 22 percent for the U.K. Since 1996, Australian wine exports to other countries have experienced double digit percentage increases. These are wines that English-speaking tongues (palates) really like! In addition to some delicious wines, the understandable labels and sensible pricing add to their popularity.

Searching for Bordenaux

An article in the *Wall Street Journal* last August indicated that Costco devotes 25 percent of its merchandise to what it calls treasure-hunt items. As the largest buyer of Bordenaux wines in the U.S., Costco indicated that its wine buyer prides himself on finding up-and-coming premium wines before they hit the *Wine Spectator* magazine. We can't vouch for

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WINE PICKS

Heartier winter foods take to red blends and cabernet sauvignon. Pick of the pack: 1999 Pine Ridge Cuvée \$50, an outstanding first release blend of 62-percent malbec, 21-percent merlot, and 17-percent tannat.

Top-ranking cabernets: 1998 Stag's Leap Winery \$40; 1997 Fetzer Reserve \$30; 1998 First Brothers \$24; 2000 Greg Norman Estate Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot, Limestone Coast \$17. Best buy: 2000 McManis \$9.50.

Pick of the pack for Alson food: 2000 Gatteria Viognier \$19. Deliciously silky pinot noirs: Pick of the pack: 1999 Archery Summit from Oregon \$11.5.

Others that are yummy: 1998 King Estate Reserve \$35; 1999 Fetzer Reserve, Bien Nacido Vineyard \$28; and 2000 Au Bon Climat \$23.



PHOTO BY BILL BRENNAN

Shared success: Marilyn Rice, left and Pam Salba, owners of Sunshine Treats in Farmington, specialize in muffins and currently are celebrating 13 years in business. They make seven flavors of Hummies.

Sweet 13

Owners of Sunshine Treats celebrate 'Bar Mitzvah'

BY LANA MINI

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February is the month to devour sweets. Sugary, jolly-jammed Polish paczki doughnuts (pronounced poonch-keys) are eaten on the days before Lent, which begins Feb. 13 this year.

And Jews indulge in buttery cookie-like Humantashens (also spelled Hamantashen) — or Hummies — topped with fruit, including raisins, and poppy seeds, in honor of Purim, a one-day celebration that begins this year on the evening of Feb. 25.

Perhaps no one loves baking the Hummies more than two business-savvy, but fun, women who own Sunshine Treats bakery in Farmington Hills.

"We're celebrating our Bar Mitzvah," co-owner Marilyn Rice said with a laugh. "Yep. Thirteen years in business together," founder and co-owner Pam Salba added. "A perfect time to celebrate. With Purim and Humantashen, it's a happy time of year."

You've probably had their Hummies, muffins or cakes and not even realized it. Sunshine Bakery has a small retail storefront bakery that's open to the public, but most of its business is wholesale. The popular desserts are sold at Hiller's market, Marshall Fields, Kroger, Farmer Jack, Westborn, and local independent coffeehouses.

"Our recipes are family recipes," Salba said. "I started out making my grandmother's muffins in a small space that I rented." Co-owners Salba, of Farmington Hills, and Rice, of West Bloomfield, are also best friends whose friendship started 13 years ago too.

But first, let's talk about Hummies.

Sweets for happy times

At Sunshine Treats five Hummie flavors are sold year-round: Apple, cherry, raspberry,

HUMANTASHEN (HUMMIES)

Courtesy of Sunshine Treats
(the taste and consistency is similar to a basic sugar cookie)

1/2 pound butter
1 1/2 cup sugar
2 whole eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon lemon juice
2 teaspoons milk
2 1/2 cups flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
zest of orange or lemon (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream sugar and butter. Add eggs one at a time, cream. Add vanilla, salt, and baking powder. Add flour and milk. Bring dough together in a ball and refrigerate until chilled. Roll on floured board. If dough is too sticky, add more flour. Roll to 1/8 inch thickness and use round cutter or glass to cut circles. Fill with favorite filling or jam and fold. Bake 9 minutes or until golden brown.

Cool and enjoy!

lemon and blueberry. The prune and poppy flavors are made especially for the Purim celebration and are available now. They're hand-made, weighed individually, and baked in small batches.

Cake-like Paczki contain yeast and are fried. Hummies are yeast-free, kosher and are baked.

Salba and Rice, both Jewish, adore the taste of their homemade Humantashen and also respect its orientation. The treats are especially popular during Purim, the merriest of all



Available now: Humantashen, or Hummies, are handmade at Sunshine Treats. The sweet cookie-like treat is filled with berry, lemon, poppy or prune and is especially popular during the Jewish celebration of Purim.

Jewish festivals, and the warm and light-hearted atmosphere of the bakery feels like an appropriate place to visit during the celebration.

"One raspberry Hummie?" said Salba to a regular customer entering the bakery on his lunchbreak.

"Per usual," he said. "And I don't need a bag."

The attitude at Sunshine Treats is a happy one.

The happy time during Purim celebrates a reversal of Jewish persecution in Persia; when punishment was bestowed on Prime Minister Haman for his plans to kill Jewish people. The

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Meltingly good fondue is 'new' again

As with many things in food, drink and fashion, it would seem nothing goes away forever.

My daughter would never be caught without her big fair ball-bottom pants. Brasserie style Martini Bar Restaurants are the new hip-hop places to see and be seen; big stinks and chops are back, so why should we be surprised that fondue pots of the past are bubbling up in the most unexpected places!

I'm thinking fondue had its last hey day in the seventies. I remember in my youth my mother having these "dip-dip-do" style parties when entertaining on her end night. By the mid-eighties when I went through the ranks of culinary school I have no

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KELLY LEWTON

has flourished into a party favorite of present day and has evolved along the way.

According to the *Food Lover's Companion*, second edition, fondue, from French, the French word for "melt," the term has many meanings. Fondue au fromage is a classic dish of Swiss origin consisting of cheese melted and combined with white wine, Kirsch and sonsonings. Bite-size chunks of French bread are dipped into the hot, savory mixture. Fondue bourguignonne is a variation whereby cubes of raw beef are cooked in a pot of hot oil, then dipped into various savory sauces. The third version is chocolate fondue, a combination of melted chocolate, cream and sometimes liqueur, into which fruit or cake may be dipped. The fourth definition is a term from French

cooking in which the term "fondue" refers to finely chopped vegetables that have been reduced to a pulp by lengthy and slow cooking. This mixture is often used as a garnish, usually with meats or fish.

History of fondue

During the cold snowy Swiss winters, many regions became isolated and consequently, fresh food became scarce. Towns people had to rely upon locally made foods. Area cheese makers produced these in the summer months. During winter, these cheeses became dry and unpalatable. Out of necessity

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