

FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

## Vineyards change with the seasons

A recent interesting voicemail contact from a reader asked for more information on "seasons of the vine." The caller was a gardener and wondered if grapevines were similar to other fruit-producing plants. Since March is the start of the vine cycle, here's a snapshot of vineyard activities.

**Spring**  
Bud break occurs in spring. If there's a cold night, tender new growth must be protected from frost. This means that wind machines may operate. If you've visited California wine country, those are the machines that look like big fans sitting in the middle of vineyards. Some vintners sprinkle the vines with water. Either method maintains a sufficiently high temperature to save the future crop.

Late in this season, cover crops that grow between the vine rows, are mowed. Mowers can't reach directly under the vine trellis or between vines, so they are cultivated manually by workers using hoe plows. Disking of last year's canes, pruned during the winter, may also be a vineyard activity.

**Summer**  
Exposing grape clusters to dappled sunlight is done through leaf stripping, a labor-intensive, manual activity. Not only does this field work create more flavorful grapes at harvest time, but it creates better air circulation. It's important that grapes are dry. Moisture clinging to grapes can lead to bunch rot or to mildew, a fungus common to roses and other garden plants.

Another mildew fighter is sulfur dusting. Although pungent, sulfur is a safe organic compound. This is also the time vineyard workers keep an eye out for spider mites and leaf hoppers. These pests feed on grape leaves, thereby reducing the vine's ability to ripen a crop.

**Autumn**  
Grapes for sparkling wines, picked at lower sugar levels, are actually harvested in August. Unless an unusually hot summer accelerates grape ripening, harvest for still wines begins in September. Picking at the precise moment is critical and in some vineyards, this is an around the clock activity, conducted by mechanical harvesters or manually with the aid of flood lights.

Birds love ripe grapes as much as winemakers. If too many birds become a problem, nothing is stretched over the vines to protect them.

After harvest is complete, cover crops are again planted between the vine rows. These crops help control erosion caused by winter rains.

Winter

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## WINE PICKS

According to the latest InfoScan Wine Update of U.S. wine sales, the Pinot Gris/grigio category (French or Alsace name/Italian for the same grape) is up 52 percent in volume sales vs. the same period in the prior year.

The 2000 King Estate Reserve Pinot Gris \$20 (Alsace style); and 2000 King Estate Pinot Gris \$15 (pinot grigio style) are outstanding examples from Oregon.

■ The 1999 Bringer Knights Valley Aluvium Blanc \$16 gets our nod for pick of the pack white wine blend.

■ 1999 Mondavi & Frescobaldi Lucente \$28 illustrates the excellent harmony achieved when sangiovese and merlot from Tuscany's finest vineyards are blended. Delicious.

# Lean and green

## Meatless event aims at improving community

BY LANA MINI  
STAFF WRITER  
lmini@oc.homedcomm.net

Karen Hagglund, of Royal Oak, shed more than 50 pounds after cutting all animal flesh and animal bi-products from her diet. Tom Milano, of Detroit, feels a stronger sense of inner peace since adopting the same lifestyle.

Jim McNellis, of Canton, is a vegan too and said his reasons are ethical. McNellis said he also loves the taste of vegan food.

All three vegans are volunteers for the Great American Meatout being held from 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, March 17 at the Gerry Kulick Community Center, 1201 Livernois in Ferndale. Admission is free.

Event sponsor is the Institute for Plant Based Nutrition based in Farmington Hills, a nonprofit group that promotes vegan diets for good health. Nationwide, vegan food groups are hosting Meatouts on the same day.

At the Ferndale event, IPBN is offering meatless recipes and food samples from area restaurants. Also physicians, nutritionists and philosophers will discuss the benefits of eliminating animal products from the diet, including fish, chicken, cheese, eggs, gelatin, whey, marshmallows, etc.

Milano's talking about vegan diets and peace and Kerri Saunders, Ph.D. will discuss recipe modification for improved diet and cancer prevention.

"We'll have food from area vegetarian and vegan restaurants including samples of pasta with 'meatless' meat balls, vegan cookies, vegan Indian food and a lot more," Hagglund said.

Participating meatless restaurants and stores are Buday's Tasty Health Deli in Berkeley, Updi Indian restaurant in Farmington, Atom's Cafe and also The Sprout House in Grosse Pointe, to name a few.

At the Meatout, the food selection will vary from spicy to mild.

Tzi Chi, a Buddhist group in Detroit, will bring mild vegan food made in traditional Buddhist style — without spice or garlic.

The specialty is soy-based imitation meats, fishes and chicken.

"It's the monks at Buddhist temples who've invented these great imitation meats," Meatout volunteer Maida Genser said.

Today more than monks cook

**Vegan: Jenney Gordon wears a bikini made to look like cabbage to help spread the word about the health and environmental benefits of a vegan diet. Gordon will be a volunteer at the Great American Meatout next weekend. Here she's holding a sample of wraps made from imitation tuna, and one with roasted red pepper hummus and quinoa tabbouli from Buday's Tasty Health in Berkeley.**

meat substitutes. The foods are sold in most major supermarkets and are made by mainstream corporations like Green Giant and Morning Star.

### Good taste and good health

Genser said that after her husband suffered a heart attack they both went vegan upon a nutritionist's advice. They got their protein from beans, legumes, tofu and imitation meats. Their diet is also beneficial because their protein intake isn't excessive, so they've reduced their risk of osteoporosis. Too much protein robs the bones of calcium, said Dr. Neil Bernard, M.D. of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. Americans have the highest osteoporosis rate worldwide even though it also has the highest calcium consumption rate worldwide: Bernard said the increasing osteoporosis rate can be linked to excessive protein.

To get a daily dose of calcium, the Gensers enjoy foods such as broccoli, spinach, figs, turnip greens, fortified orange juice, tofu and oatmeal.

In 2000, U.S. residents consumed an average of 69.4 pounds of beef, 52.5 pounds of pork, 76.9 pounds of chicken, and 17.8 pounds of turkey, according to the USDA.

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STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZALUTSKY

## Closing of meatless restaurant leaves vegans craving for more

BY LANA MINI  
STAFF WRITER  
lmini@oc.homedcomm.net

Michigan's only vegan Chinese restaurant, Mei Ling, closed recently and one-by-one, email-by-email, word hit vegetarians throughout metro-Detroit.

Quick web sites owned by vegans — people who consume no animal flesh, dairy or animal bi-products — posted the bad news. Mei Ling of West Bloomfield was unique because it was completely meatless and dairyless and its meals contained vegetarian imitation meats.

The meat-like taste and texture of the soy and wheat-based fake meats were Mei Ling's secret that restaurant patrons assumed would disappear with its closing. No more sweet 'n' sour imitation chicken, no more marinated imitation beef stir-fries and no more sesame fake shrimp — or so it seemed.

Sunday Harvey, of Milford, was determined to enjoy those foods again. The strict vegan makes intricate home-cooked meatless meals; for example she uses imitation chicken to make hearty country-style pot pies. Mei Ling's 15 Mile Road at Haggerty location wasn't centrally located and Harvey called the

owners to learn if the restaurant would re-open elsewhere.

Lei Ting's opened in downtown Milford on Main Street with at least 20 vegan choices, but it also has meat on the menu. Owner Tom Ling said he also plans to open a Mei Ling 2 complete, possibly in West Bloomfield, but said details are not finalized yet.

"We've had many vegan groups and vegetarians ask about Mei Ling," he said. "We know people miss it. At Lei Ting, we offer many of the same vegetarian favorites."

"There are meatless vegetarian selections on the menu," Harvey said. She

enjoyed the flavor and textures of the food, but wished the new Lei Ting restaurant didn't offer meat. Vegans often complain about sifting through primarily meat-based menus for just one or two choices and that's why Mei Ling was so loved, Jim McNellis, of Westland, said. Many vegans liked the taste of the meat, but avoid it for health or ethical reasons. The National Restaurant Association lists vegetarian food as one of the top 10 fastest growing dining trends and most restaurants offer at least a couple vegetarian of

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