

# Mutineer

fine beverage...redefined

SPECIAL REPORT:  
**ABSINTHE  
SPECTACULAR**

A LOST WEEKEND AT  
**MAKER'S  
MARK**

**BEER WARS**  
A CINEMATIC DIALOGUE ON BEER



**MAXIMILIAN  
RIEDEL**  
THE MUTINEER  
INTERVIEW

**CRAFT SPIRITS  
OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST**



< HOSPICE du RHÔNE BY LAURA HOLMES HADDAD

May 1 - May 2  
Paso Robles, California

With a bag of Riedel glasses in my hand and purple teeth, I'm just back from the 17th Annual Hospice du Rhône in Paso Robles, California. Held in this laid-back Central Coast town, it's a chance to rub elbows with wine geeks, wine retailers, winemakers, and wine collectors from the U.S., France, and Australia and celebrate the twenty-two Rhône varietals (like Syrah, Mourvedre, Grenache, and Viognier).

The kickoff Rhône-n-Bowl event gives you a clue about the levity that lurks behind the serious wine talk: bowling definitely takes a back seat to the wine, which is lined up on a back table and flows freely all evening. The crowd heads for after-bowling libations at Villa Creek, owned by restaurateur and winemaker Cris Cherry. Watching French winemakers knock back margaritas is certainly a highlight.

Friday morning came early, with two seminars (sommeliers-turned-winemakers and a more technical look at the difference in wine styles in two local growing regions) providing ample technical information for your inner wine geek and a hell of a lot of wine. After a Rosé-fueled lunch, Friday's Rhône Rendezvous tasting was full of library wines and Rhône wines from around the world, including hard-to-get bottles by French winemaker François Villard and a local star winemaker Justin Smith of Saxum Vineyards. Friday night "Dine Around" options included three different winemaker and sommelier dinners at local restaurants.

Saturday began with two morning seminars: a wineglass tutorial led by George Riedel, president of Riedel Stemware, which proved once and for all that plastic cups are not the best way to taste wine), and a viticulture seminar with two top winemakers in the area. Saturday's wine-fueled lunch leads to a live auction will make you drool: magnums of highly allocated wine and winemaker dinners are some of the coveted items. Saturday's always-mobbed Grand Tasting brings even more wineries pouring the good stuff.

True to the name, traditional Rhône varietals are what this festival is all about. No Pinot, no Cabernet, and no Chard sneaks in the gates during Hospice du Rhône. And that's just the way we like it.

The surprise discovery at the festival was D. H. Lescombes. In the 1980s, the Lescombes family started a vineyard there because it New Mexico is on nearly the same latitude as Algeria, where they successfully had grown grapes before war and revolution tossed them out. Southwest New Mexico has more sunlight than Napa or Burgundy, along with cool nights that slow the maturity of grape vines - and land was far cheaper there than in Napa.



PEBBLE BEACH FOOD & WINE

April 16 - 19  
Pebble Beach, California

The second annual *Pebble Beach Food & Wine* was held in the beautiful seaside community of Pebble Beach located about two hours south of San Francisco. The event was spread out across various locations within the rambling property of the Inn at Spanish Bay.

The Lexus Grand Tasting featured over 200 wines from 125 wineries as well as some of the country's top chefs that prepared culinary delights to tantalize your taste buds was more like a small city. Not to be outdone by the wine and beer, Patron

BY JJ BAGLEY

held center stage with a bar mixing various cocktails including a personal favorite of mine, Bloody Marias with fresh horseradish.

After the Lexus Grand Tasting, many of the guests gathered at the Inn at Spanish Bay's outdoor bar over-looking the ocean to talk about the event and enjoy the fire pits. As the sun set lower in the sky the crowd dispersed to various dining spots such as the Lexus Grand Finale Dinner at The Beach & Tennis Club and the Michelin Stars of Los Angeles Dinner in The Ballroom of The Inn at Spanish Bay.

SANTA FE WINE FESTIVAL

July 5 - 6  
Los Golondrinas, New Mexico

"New Mexico" and "fine wine" may seem to be as oxymoronic as police intelligence, jumbo shrimp or prudent banker. Yet, New Mexico, a state famous for perfecting the A-Bomb, is also the home to almost two dozen wineries, two of which qualify as among the best in America.

I was delighted to discover this last July while sipping my way through the Santa Fe Wine Festival at El Rancho de las Golondrinas (a.k.a. The Ranch of the Swallows), a fascinating, restored, 300-year-old ranch that is a short canter from Santa Fe, a town with at least one art gallery for every man, woman and hybrid car.

Countering the impression that New Mexico is

BY NORMAN MARK

a wineless desert, John Berkenfield, the director of planning for Golondrinas, said, "This state is the oldest wine producing region in America. Spaniards planted grape vines here in the 1500s."

Before a devastating drought in the late 1800s, New Mexico produced the most grapes and wines in America. So there.

A white-tented area in the midst of the ranch housed more than a dozen local wineries and attracted 5,000 wine enthusiasts. I'll admit that some of the wines resembled the dog that sang opera - not particularly good, but an interesting try.

Two of the wines were outstanding, the first being Gruet. Gruet produces some of the finest sparkling wines in America, yet when the winery first attempted to interest New York snobs in their product, the owners were greeted with snickers.