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SEPTEMBER 2012

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Supersizes
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the Bay**

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Italy is the Quintessential
Wine Country

A Vine for Every Variety

by PHILIP CUISIMANO

Decanter Magazine recently reported that in 2010, Italy led the world in total volume of exported wine, increasing its overall market share to more than 22%, placing the country in a position of controlling almost a quarter of the global wine market. This is a truly remarkable accomplishment; competition between the key wine producing nations of France, the United States, Germany, Australia, Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Chile and South Africa is always intense but especially so today, in light of current market conditions including the ongoing recession and unprecedented excess supply.

There are many variables that have fueled Italy's ascendancy among wine exporting nations, three of which have had a particularly strong impact.

To the majority of
Italian wine producers
"it is not only business;
it is personal."

First, Italy has been singularly endowed with the capacity to produce an unparalleled variety of quality wine in high volume. Practically any grape grown anywhere in the world can thrive in the rich Italian soil, nurtured by accommodating micro-climates. At the same time, there are some grape varieties that can only be grown in Italy.

Second, Italy's governing wine board, the DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata), is a collaboration of wine producers and government officials which serves to maintain the integrity and traditions of Italian viticulture while allowing for innovation, variation and flexibility. This is a unique system, more process than dictum, which serves to foster creativity.

Finally, Italians are renowned for their hospitality and also for the pride they take in their rich culture. The combined effect of these two attributes makes it difficult for any reputable Italian wine producer to put his or her name on an inferior product; to the majority of Italian wine producers "it is not only business; it is personal".

I suggest that if you are not already on the Italian wine bandwagon that you consider hopping aboard; the wines are exceptional and offer a wide variety of distinctive personalities. The key to becoming more familiar with the wines of Italy is through education and tasting; this leads us to the upcoming *Festa Italiana*.

Festa Italiana, the 34th Houston Italian Festival, will again be located on the beautiful grounds of the University of St. Thomas October 11-14. This celebration of Italian-American culture will feature great food, music, beverages and events for the entire family. Additionally, an "Introduction to Italian Wine" seminar that includes a formal tasting of five representative Italian wines will be conducted throughout the Festa. Regardless of your level of wine proficiency, these seminars will be both illuminating and fun.

More information about the festival is posted on HoustonItalianFestival.com or you can call the Italian Cultural and Community Center at 713.524.4222. Salute!



Wine of the Month

Braida Moscato d'Asti "Sense Nome"

Moscato based wines represent one of the fastest growing categories in today's market. Moscato d'Asti is a classic Italian white wine from one of the most respected wineries in the country, Braida, founded by the legendary Giacomo Bologna. This is a luscious quaff treating the palate to flavors of green apples, pears and leeches in a firm, crisp body while accompanied by a beautiful aroma of fresh flowers. Adding to its elegance is a light touch of effervescence, a style of wine called "Frizzante" in Italian. This wine is a fine accompaniment to Asian cuisine and is a perfect dessert, either by itself or paired with cookies and cake. Of course, it can also be enjoyed as a tasty beverage, anytime. \$23.00

Wines available at Spec's Wines, Spirits, & Finer Foods, various locations. Visit specsonline.com for the store nearest you.

Dining Guide

Yellow Magazine's featured restaurants

JAPANESE

Tokyo One

7465 W. Greens Rd., 281.955.8898
2938 W. Sam Houston S., 713.785.8899
Tokyo One is a sushi buffet restaurant, situated in a fancy boat house with an outside deck. The food is fresh and is constantly replenished. Selections include: salads such as sea weed, beef, squid, salmon and watercress. Sushi includes a variety of rolls and sashimi.

Zushi Japanese Cuisine

5900 Memorial Dr., 713.861.5588
Zushi serves extremely fresh and high quality sushi. Stand out items are the sashimi appetizers served with perfectly paired sauces or any one of the many house specialty rolls.

Uptown Sushi

1131 Uptown Park Blvd. #14 713.871.1200
Uptown Sushi personifies an upscale sushi restaurant located near the Galleria in the swanky Uptown Park Plaza. The menu offers Japanese fusion dishes and a great selection of high-end sashimi and sushi. Side note: Uptown Sushi has "off-the-menu" specialty rolls served daily!

CHINESE

Auntie Chang's

2621 South Shepherd #290, 713.524.8410
Auntie Chang's offers the most flavorful home-style Chinese cuisine around. Although known for their dumplings, any of your favorite classic Chinese dishes are done extremely well.

Hong Kong Food Street

9750 Bellaire Blvd., 713.981.9888
Peking duck and roasted pork hang from cleavers in a front window display giving a Hong Kong street market feel. In addition, the menu is divided into sections including Seafood, Hot Pot, Special Stir Fry, Sizzling and Chef Specials.

San Dong Noodle House

9938-F Bellaire Blvd., 713.271.3945
Authentic hand pulled Chinese noodle dishes are served at a reasonable price. A few favorites include the Roast Beef Noodle soup served in a beef broth accented by ginger and soy, or the oh so addicting pan fried dumplings.

Sinh Sinh

9788 Bellaire Blvd., 713.541.0888
The seafood at Sinh Sinh is quite exciting because everything served comes from live tanks. Prawns, Australian king lobster, King crabs, Coral Leopard trout, Surf clams, Geoduck clams, Trunk clams, Elephant clams, etc...are all featured as live seafood.

THAI

Thai Spice

8282 Bellaire Blvd. 713.777.4888
Thai Spice on Bellaire is a foodies dream. It's a casual place that serves Thai dishes you won't find anywhere else in Houston, with a huge selection of interesting, rare, tasty dishes at excellent prices. A must have is the whole fried tilapia with hot and sour dipping sauce and papaya salad and Tom Yum soup.

Nit Noi

6700 Woodway Pkwy., Suite 580
281.597.8200
Nit Noi means "a little bit" and Thai food lovers pack Nit Noi restaurants and cafes all around Houston. Nit Noi will always be known for their Pad Thai, but other must try dishes include Pad Thai Korat (flat noodles stir-fried with chicken, pork or shrimp with vegetables) and Tom Yum Goong (spicy and sour shrimp soup).

Tony Thai

10613 Bellaire Blvd., 281.495.1711
A sophisticated approach to traditional Thai cuisine, Tony's executes with perfect balance and pizzazz. Tony's Wings, wet or dry, and the Steamed Mussels are popular appetizers. For the main course try the Basil Lamb, Garlic Salmon or the Steamed Fish with Chili.

INDIAN

Kiran's Restaurant

4100 Westheimer Rd. #151, 713.960.8472
This northern Indian style restaurant embodies a fusion approach to its cuisine. With a focus on well balanced flavors rather than spice, the Flaky Halibut Swimming in Watermelon Curry sauce and the Tandoori Platter typify this perfectly.

VIETNAMESE

Kim Son Restaurants

2001 Jefferson (and other locations),
713.222.2461
The menu is the most imposing part of this casual, highly regarded landmark Vietnamese restaurant. There are no poor choices among the 100 or so options. Enjoy finely prepared delicacies as well as the expected fare, such as the pork vermicelli and fried eggroll. Must try is their black pepper softshell crab. Special event facilities available.

Vietopia

5176 Buffalo Speedway, 713.664.7303
Trendy yet elegant, Vietopia delivers top notch Vietnamese cuisine at reasonable lunch prices and a stellar dinner menu. The lounge works perfectly for those who want a less formal dining experience but still want to enjoy quality food.

Mo Mong

1201 Westheimer Rd. #B, 713.524.5664
This Trendy Montrose establishment has a great lunch crowd as well as a packed martini night on Wednesdays. But the real draw is the food-traditional family recipes mixed in with some tasty modern dishes. Must try items include the Mango Spring Rolls, Shrimp and Avocado Spring Roll, Volcano Chicken, and the Bo Luc Lac.

CONTINENTAL

Voice Restaurant & Lounge

Hotel Icon, 220 Main, 832.667.4470
The impressive décor has thoughtfully transformed the space of an old bank lobby into a warm cozy and elegant dining area. Try the Mushroom Soup "Cappuccino", reduction of garlic, onion, crimini mushrooms topped with frothy truffle foam, and the Bryan Farms Roast Chicken, a free range and 100% corn fed chicken.

Colombe d'Or Restaurant and Hotel

3410 Montrose Blvd. 713.524.7999
Built in 1923 and originally the mansion of Walter Fondren, one of the founders of Humble Oil, Colombe d'Or Hotel is considered a Texas historical landmark. Featuring French and Continental fare, we recommend the Carre d'Agneau, individual rack of baby lamb grilled with natural herbs and red wine sauce.

"America's Ethnic Restaurant"-- Bon Appetite



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1503 St. Emanuel – Houston
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