



### By Gary and Sue Grant Frog's Tooth Vineyards

Blustery winter winds entwine their icy fingers around our doorsteps and tap, tap, tap at our frosty bedroom windows. "The susurrantion of the breeze through the trees reminds us of Mother Nature's dual personality: the Yin of sun kissed summer that empowers exuberant growth and also of the Yang of tumultuous winter that dares us to step outside the door so she can knock us out of our Nikes. So, what's a home bound human being to do while "Miss N" is in the throes of an Arctic storm?

For one thing, lay off the superfluous literary prose. As you might have guessed, Gary is working (*i.e. drinking beer and eating red meat*) in the winery while I alone sit at the keyboard, staring at the cursor and wondering what I can talk about while his attention is elsewhere.

For a second thing, I can share with you one of the secret joys of winter: a cozy fireplace, a must-read best seller, and a 2 ounce glass of port. Gather round, kiddies, and let's get started.

The origin of port wine is also a study in duality: politically a footnote in "Anglo-Franco history and economically a response by marketing to consumer demands. During the 18th century Britain and France were having one of their typical spats. This resulted in French wines being banned on the merry old isle. Thirsty Brits needed a new source to fill their decanters so they turned to their long time ally, Portugal.

However, the warm Portuguese summers contributed to the growth of bacteria that spoiled the wines before they ever made it to British market. The clever winemakers solved this problem and increased their profit margin by fortifying the wine with alcohol in the form of brandy. This sweet, strong drink satisfied the British consumer and they quickly added it to the favorite's list.

Now you have passed Port 101 and are almost ready for your first field trip. However, before boarding the bus I have to tell you that a "true port" can only be produced in the Duomo Valley of Portugal according to an agreement that was reached by Portugal, the European Union, and the United States. "I's" being dotted and "T's" being crossed we now can proceed. Typical Portuguese ports are blended with a combination of Touriga Nacion-

al, Touriga Francesca, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Barroca, or Tinto Cao. We rebels in the New World express our feelings about the conventional way things are done by creating a "port" (Just don't call it that!) from Zinfandel, Syrah, or whatever strikes our fancy.

The addition of brandy, a process also called fortification, is the distinguishing feature of a port. The resulting higher percentage of alcohol will be noted on the wine bottle. You can consider two other characteristics of port wine: the style and the color. One style of port is vintage. The production of truly fine port is based on climate and the optimum conditions only occur every 3 - 4 years.

The vintner usually blends fruit from the same region during the "vintage" year to produce a vintage port. The most basic style is ruby (*Sounds like the color-maybe something was lost in the translation process.*) This is a young, spirited wine that the British used to drink with lemonade (*A precursor to sangria?*)

The next style is "Vintage Character". That may or may not be as good as vintage port (*Hey, the boys need something to do during the 2 - 3 years when the climate isn't perfect!*) This style is followed by Late Bottle Vintage (*LBV*). This wine is bottled later than vintage port in an attempt to create a softer wine that can be enjoyed earlier than a traditional port.

All of the above named styles of port are a dark, plummy red. The second characteristic I mentioned is color. Tawny ports are another category. Look for an amber color, and read the label. A tawny that describes itself as a 10 year old port will be the genuine item.

Thanks, Sue, for taking the reins on this article while I was busy doing my "wine-making" thing. All I need now is the roaring fire, my glass of port and a good cigar. Okay, maybe not the cigar. How about a nice wedge of aged Gouda cheese? *Until next time, Gary and Sue.*

Send us your comments, favorite recipes and stories to [fromthevine@pacbell.net](mailto:fromthevine@pacbell.net) or write to us c/o Gold Country Times, PO Box 897, Sutter Creek, CA 95685.

"Wine, one sip of this will bathe the drooping spirits in delight beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise and taste." ~ John Milton

Calaveras County Fairgrounds, Angels Camp, CA. 1pm to 4pm Food - Wine - Vines & Sensory Fun! Taste select pairings of gourmet hors d'oeuvres and cheeses, prepared by 'Chefs of Calaveras' paired fine wines crafted by Calaveras Wine Makers. Saturday, March 13.

## One "Sweetheart of a Weekend"

Located at your favorite CWA tasting rooms! Participants will enjoy special barrel tastings, new wine releases, and an array of delicious palate pleasing appetizers! Come on out and join us, meet some of our great winemakers, make new friends and raise your glass in toast to your sweetheart on Valentine's Day and to the people who helped make this country great!

February 13 & 14, 2010, 11:00am to 5:00pm. The cost of admission to participate in this event is the \$10 purchase of a CWA logo wine glass. Glasses will be available for purchase at the following tasting rooms: Renner Winery in Copperopolis Town Square off HWY 4; Twisted Oak Winery on Red Hill Road off HWY 4; Chatom Vineyards on HWY 4; Brice Station Winery on HWY 4 East of Murphys; Tanner Vineyards on Main Street in Murphys; Frog's Tooth Winery on Main Street in Murphys (East end); Val du Vino Winery on Main Street in Murphys (West end).

The event will take place rain or shine! Designated drivers are encouraged and will receive complimentary non-alcoholic beverages. Participants must be at least 21 years of age.

## The Calaveras Winegrape Alliance

Dates and venues for their 2010 Events have been set! For complete details and to purchase your discounted pre-sale tickets, [www.calaveraswines.org](http://www.calaveraswines.org), today! **February 13 & 14** - Presidents "Wine" Weekend; **March 12 & 13** - Winegrape & Gourmet; **March 13 & 14, April 17 & 18, May 22 & 23 and June 26 & 27** - Passport Days; **April 10** - Calaveras Tri-Tip Shoot Out; **June 5** - California Tri-Tip Shoot Out; **July 30** - Vineyard Tour & BBQ; **October 2** - Grape Stomp; **November 13** - Holiday Festival of Wines. 866-806-WINE.

**Wines of the World-2nd** Wed of the month (*unless otherwise noted*); **Grape Grower's Education Meetings-1st** Friday of the month (*unless otherwise noted*), Murphys Historic Hotel. More info at: [www.calaveraswines.org](http://www.calaveraswines.org)

## Spring Obsession Celebration at Ironstone Vineyards

The annual "color parade" kicks off in March with an explosive burst of over 300,000 daffodils in bloom that signal the coming of Spring and herald in our festival of food, wine, art and Daffodils. In celebration of the coming of Spring, Ironstone Vineyards will play host to a number of events February and March, 2010. "Spring Obsession" is a theme that centers on the renewal of life, nature and spirit. Numerous organizations are partnering with Ironstone Vineyards to make this month filled with opportunities to learn and celebrate the elements of life, nature and spirit.

Below, please find a tentative schedule of events scheduled for this "Spring Obsession Celebration."

### February 26, **Take it to Heart Luncheon**

Fundraising luncheon with local celebrities serving guest for tip money raising funds to go to Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital Foundation.

February 27, "**Health Fair**" Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital to hold a full day health fair. This Community event is sponsored by Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital. March 3, 10, 17, 24. **Talking Health** with Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital. Health awareness Topics with Special Guest Speakers from Health Professionals on Health & Wellness Seminars.

March 6 & 7, **Ironstone Vineyards Annual Spring Obsession, Art Show & Wine.** Weekend of events to bring Art & Health together. Art Auction with proceeds benefitting the American Cancer Society. Reception & Dinner.

March 9, 18, 23, **Quantum Leap Coaching Seminars**, Soul Collage Discovery 3/18, Passions and Priorities 3/9 & 23

March 9, **Dr Andrea Sullivan Seminars**, New Technology for Wellness & Anti-aging

March 16 & 19, Johanna Atman, PH.D.CMT **Whole Life Therapies Healing & Personal Growth** Evening Wellness Symposium Full day workshop

March 12, 13 & 14, **Daffodil Society National Convention & Show** presented by the Northern California Daffodil Society, International Daffodil Competition and Convention Reception & Dinner.

March 19, **Sierra Study Group Educational Event**, Full day seminar on Health and Wellness. "Food is Elementary" by Dr Neil Nedley MD.

March 20, **Murphy's Irish Days**, Ironstone Vineyards partners with Murphys Business Association to shuttle guest form parking at Ironstone to Downtown Murphys. Bus guest back up to Ironstone to celebrate Sierra Green & the Daffodils.

March 20 & 21, **Ironstone's Sierra Green**, Healthy Dwellings, Recycled and energy-saving products, Water Wise Landscaping and Garden Demonstrations, Seed Exchange, Green Business, Eco Building & Design by Central Sierra Ecological Building Association, Sustainability Agricultural. CSEBA workshops: Sponsored by Central Sierra Ecological Building Association. Green built home tour: Sponsored Central Sierra Ecological Building Association. Children's Activities for Sierra Green.

March 20, **Fundraising Dinner**: Sponsored by CSEBA, Guest speaker TBD.

March 21, **Sierra Green / Spring Equinox**, A day of Celebration, the soul & spirit of Community.

March 25, **Wellness & Stress Seminar by John Adams**. Full day seminar by Dr John Adams.

March 27, **Mark Twain 6 Mile Road Run or Walk** for The American Lupus Society: Sponsored by Mark Twain Saint Josephs. Run/Walk along Six Mile Road.

March 27, **Fundraiser** Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital: The Grand Finally Event for Mark Twain St. Joseph's Hospital, Barn Dance and Auction, fundraising event to raise money for their Foundation. Ironstone Vineyards, 1894 Six Mile Road, Murphys, CA 95247. Phone: 209.728.1251. [www.ironstonevineyards.com](http://www.ironstonevineyards.com).

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**Christmas Eve Cafe Specials, Dec 24**  
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**Learn to Skate Clinic**  
**Jan 3, Feb 7, March 14**

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