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FEBRUARY 2007

SHOPPING + DINING + ENTERTAINMENT + MAPS

WINERY SHOWCASE: ENOTECA VIANSA

For a tasting experience that's similar to what you'd expect in Wine Country itself—sampling several varietals from one winemaker—visit Enoteca Viansa. The elegant urban tasting room of this Tuscan-style Sonoma County winery lets you taste current releases and limited-production vintages. Though there's no food menu, you're welcome to bring along your own snacks, and when you find the wine that tickles your fancy, you can pick up a bottle or a case to send to yourself back home. To prolong the adventure after your trip ends, join the Tuscan Club so you can anticipate the delivery of two or more bottles to your doorstep each month. 334 Grant St. www.viansa.com, 391-0207 Map 1, D5

SPLURGE: NECTAR WINE LOUNGE

The sleek decor is nearly as chic as the wines themselves. Settle in against the clean white walls and dark floors on couches, cushy arm chairs, and bar stools, or at traditional dining tables. A list of more than 800 wines from all over the world evolves constantly, and the list of 50 offered by the glass changes every month. A short menu of sweet and savory small-plate food options comes with suggested pairings for each of the dishes, though you're encouraged to experiment as well. If something really grabs your palate by the collar, the retail counter will be happy to take your order and have the bottles shipped to you at home. 3330 Steiner St. www.nectarwine.com, 345-1377 Map 2, H2

AN ITALIAN TOUR: OTTIMISTA ENOTECA

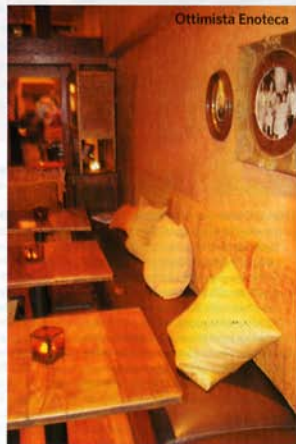
The list of wines keeps a special focus on vintages from small producers in Northern Italy, but it also includes bottles from around the globe; more than 200 are offered by the bottle, 35 by the glass. Even on cool evenings, the heated patio is comfy enough for you to enjoy your glass al fresco. If you're looking for a lateral wine-tasting perspective, two flights are always on the menu—and their contents are changed about twice a week. And don't be afraid to come hungry; a list of small and large plates includes treats such as olives baked in an asiago cheese pastry crust (a definite crowd pleaser) or Petrale sole served with potato-leek chowder. Call or check the website for information about special events this month, such as a decadent chocolate-and-wine pairing with Cocolabella scheduled for February 7. (For more information on Cocolabella, see page 15.) Closed M. 1838 Union St. www.ottimistasf.com, 674-8400 Map 2, H2

HIGH-TECH TASTING: VINOVENUE

Serve-yourself wine tasting might sound like a dangerous idea (6-oz. pours, anyone?), until technology enters the picture. VinoVenue is not so much a wine bar as a bright and airy tasting salon, where you can sample more than 100 vintages from California and beyond. Buy what amounts to a wine debit card, then avail yourself of the automated pouring stations, where you swipe the card and get a 1-oz. taste of the wine of your choosing. If you happen upon one (or more) that strikes your fancy, purchase a bottle to uncork now or later, or to ship to yourself at home. At the bar, you can also sample champagne and dessert wines, or order full glasses of a select list of wines. It's a great way to expand your knowledge of the varietals you know and love, or to introduce yourself to something entirely new. 686 Mission St. www.vinovenue.net, 341-1930 Map 1, D6



Enoteca Viansa



Ottimista Enoteca