

Ottimista Enoteca-Cafe Newsletter

In This Issue

Upcoming Events
 2-for-1 Tuesdays
 Mikey is Back!
 Don's Varietal Adventures

Ciao Melissa,



First of all, a (very belated) Happy New Year! It's been awhile since the last newsletter, so we have a lot to catch up on - like the introduction of **2-for-1 Tuesdays!** Ottimista has never really been the "happy hour-special" place, but something about two glasses of wine for the price of one seems quite civilized, almost *necessary*, on a dreary Tuesday evening.

Also, we are proud to welcome Milla Handley, founder and winemaker of Handley Cellars in Anderson Valley, for the very first winemaker dinner at Ottimista on Thursday March 13th. It's a natural that we'd invite Handley for our inaugural winemaker dinner, given that the Handley wines have been top sellers at Ottimista since day one (their Pinot Noir is practically our house wine!) And you will enjoy getting to know Milla, one very cool lady. She left Napa to make wine in the Anderson Valley in the late seventies, decades before the appellation became known as one of California's most promising new wine regions. Today, Handley is not only recognized as a pioneer for the Anderson Valley but Mendocino's best producer (according to *Wine & Spirits*, Fall 2007). We're excited to be able to showcase a range of Milla's elegant wines, some of which aren't available outside of the winery, complemented by the divine menu Chef Mark has created.

And finally, I'm happy to announce the spring Wine Club PICK-UP Party on Wednesday, March 19th. We're optimistic (naturally) that the sunny days are here to stay, as we've found some great warm weather sippers for this quarter's selection. Hope to see you there!

Ci vediamo presto!
 Melissa & the Ottimista crew

2-for-1 Tuesdays

Every Tuesday in March from 5-7, all wines by the glass are 2-for-1



Tuesdays are generally our least favorite day. Kicking off our work week, with the weekend still ages away, laundry and other boring tasks beckoning, Tuesdays, especially in the rainy season, have been getting us down.

But we're taking action, and hereby proclaim "2-for-1 Tuesdays" at Ottimista! For the entire month of March, between 5-7pm, get any two glasses of wine* for the price of one!

Why should Thursdays have all the fun?

**of equal or lesser value*

Upcoming Events



All events will be held on Ottimista's front patio. Tasting, educational materials and small bites are included. Attendees also receive 10% off wine bottle purchases the day of the event. To sign up for events, please email melissa@ottimistasf.com or call 415.674.8400. Credit card required for event registration. Cancellations must be made 48 hours in advance.

Thursday March 13th, 6:30-9:30pm Handley Winemaker Dinner

Join us for a celebration of food and wine highlighting Handley Cellars, based in Philo, California. Get to know Handley's remarkable founder and winemaker, Anderson

Valley pioneer Milla Handley, while enjoying Executive Chef Mark Young's four-course pairing Menu.

Join Handley and Ottimista for a night of food, friends, and extraordinary wine!

6:30 pm Reception with antipasti
 7:00pm Four-course dinner paired with Handley wines

Cost: \$\$85/pp + tax and gratuity (includes all food and wine)

Wednesday, March 19th, 6-7:30pm
Wine Club Spring PICK UP PARTY

Ottimista Wine Club members are invited to pick up their wine shipment at the spring PICK UP PARTY. We're especially excited about this quarter's selection, which is full of great wines for warm weather sipping! So grab a friend, head over to Ottimista and toast the arrival of Spring with a glass of vino on the patio.

Come by anytime between 6:00 and 7:30 to pick up your wine club shipment and taste the wines, along with small bites from the kitchen. If you're not yet a wine club member but would like to become one, visit www.ottimistasf.com/wineclub.

Please RSVP by Monday March 17th by emailing melissa@ottimistasf.com or calling 415.674.8400.

Complimentary for members.



Sunday April 20th, 3-5pm
Piemonte Wine Tasting & Seminar

Fresh on the heels of the annual VinItaly pilgrimage and his subsequent tour of Piemonte, Ottimista wine director Don Jost will lead an in-depth tasting and discussion on the region of Piemonte.

Home to Italy's two greatest reds, Barolo and Barbaresco, Piemonte is also producing some exceptional whites from grapes like Timorasso and Arneis. It's a region steeped in food and wine tradition. Local specialties like Nebbiolo grapes, used to make the legendary red wines, and the rare white truffles found in the surrounding forests are among the most prized treasures in the gastronomic universe.

We'll cover the basics of Piemonte's history, geography, cuisine and native grapes as we taste six different Piemontese wines paired with a variety of traditional dishes.

Cost: \$55/per person, includes educational materials, wine tasting and small plates.

To sign up for any of these events, please call us at 674-8400, or email melissa@ottimistasf.com.

Mikey is Back!

Bartender Mike Hensley, who's been out for weeks recuperating from a motorcycle accident in which he broke his hand pretty badly, will be back behind Ottimista' bar starting this Friday Feb. 29th. He misses everybody, and claims that he's been using the downtime to improve on his signature cocktail, the *Duck Fart*.

Come by and say hi to Mikey next weekend - and be sure to check out his new and improved specialty cocktail!

Don's Varietal Adventures


"You say Croatina, I say Bonarda"



Let me take a moment here to clear up a conundrum that sprung up with the addition of a lovely Croatina to our bottle list. It's a story that can seem a bit confusing, even by Italian standards, so I'm going to try and simplify it as best I can.

It seems that the Croatina grape used in the aforementioned wine by Vigneti Massa is actually the same grape that is called Bonarda in Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna. This part is pretty straightforward, and it's actually not at all uncommon to see multiple names for the same grape in different regions of Italy.

The confusion arises when we find out that there is actually another grape in Piemonte called Bonarda that bears no relation to the Bonarda of Lombardia or Emilia-Romagna. To further complicate matters, the Bonarda of Argentina, which was thought to be the one from Piemonte, is actually not even Italian! It appears to be the French grape Corbeau, and no one seems to be quite sure how it came to be called Bonarda in that country.



So, the wine that we have right now at Ottimista is definitely a Croatina from Piemonte, which is, as stated above, the same grape as Bonarda from Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna and not at all related to Bonarda from Argentina. Got it?

Never mind - the only thing you really need to know about our Croatina at the end of the day is that it's delicious! It's packed with ripe and rich red fruits and just enough earthiness to let you know it's Italian. And by the way, the name on the label is "Pertichetta" - don't ask!

Salud!
Don

Bon Appetito!

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