

UNFINED AND UNFILTERED: Q&A With Food and Wine Educator Tabitha Stroup

A new event debuted for Wine Club members this year. "In Our Backyard...A Unique Food and Wine Experience" is an exploration of the relationship between food and wine, with an emphasis on locally produced, seasonal foods. The reaction from the two (one in the courtyard, the other in the remodeled cellars) was terrific and we hope to offer them quarterly in 2010.

Hosting both gatherings was Ms. Tabitha Stroup. With a virtual full plate of credentials, Tabitha is the perfect guide for all things consumable. Already a museum patron and preparing family meals by age 10, this NorCal native later went on to graduate with degrees in Food Science and Social Anthropology from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California. Inspired after working in the Santa Cruz restaurant industry for several years, she enrolled at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco. She combines knowledge, a passion for the *localvore* movement and a whimsical sense of humor in her various tasting seminars. This girl delivers the goods! We caught up with the busy Ms. Stroup for the following interview:

Q: Lets start with rules. You have been quoted as saying "rules are for school and work...wine and food is for pleasure." Can you explain a bit further about dismissing or breaking the rules of wine and food pairing?

A: It isn't a matter of breaking them, but what really are these rules? A collection of boundaries that supposed experts have instilled upon us to enhance our wine and food experience. They typically don't take in account a bunch of critical variables...who are you dining with, what season is it, how hungry are you and what is available. It has to do with your own senses and is just as personal as who you fall in love with. You sometimes can't touch, explain or define it, but it is real. If you base culinary decisions on what the magazines or a celebrity chefs think you should experience, well...you're missing the boat.

Q: At the recent "In Our Backyard" events, you occasionally used the word "localvore", which was the 2007 anointed new word of the year by the Oxford English Dictionary. What exactly is a localvore?

A: A *localvore* is a person who tries to consume foods that are in season and regionally grown. This is a lifestyle guide to keep our sights on our backyard agriculture. There is a general 100 mile radius but commonsense is the key. The underlining philosophy is to eat healthier and lessen our carbon footprint. We are fortunate to live in the Santa Cruz-Monterey area where you virtually could visit a farmers market everyday of the week. The *localvore* movement is an effort to enlighten our consumption.

Q: Do you have any food or wine quirks?

A: I absolutely love it when a Santa Cruz Mtns. Chardonnay expresses tropical fruit aromatics, with gentle notes of either banana bread or bananas on the nose...but keep bananas away from me. I hate the textural acid trip in the mouth. Just wrong...but love to find it in the local chards. Go figure.

Q: How do you handle encounters with long-winded, boring wine snobs or foodies?

A: I meet these types every so often. There are times when you just need to let it go and be in the moment....similar to ruining a joke by overanalyzing it. I typically say "sweetie, please pass me the bottle".

Q: Ok, something from the Barbara Walters question bag: What grape variety best describes your personality?

A: Valdiguie, the slightly obscure grape grown primarily in southern France. We're like two gorgeous ham hocks sitting amongst the brambles of a blackberry bush...full of delicacies yet ample full bodied notes to keep you guessing.

Q: If you were forced to leave your beloved Santa Cruz Mtns. Vineyard home, where would you live?

A: Domestically, I could move to Seattle tomorrow. It is a very appealing metropolis with an incredible food and wine community. If I had to get out of dodge and leave the country, I would go sight unseen to Croatia. Basically I could live anywhere that had sheep, goats and grapes.

Q: Is there a word or phrase you tend to overuse during your presentations?

A: Yes, I am guilty of overusing the word "luscious."

Q: Do you have any advice for hosting events during the always hectic holidays?

A: Absolutely. It is far more important who you're spending the time with versus the culinary acrobats you present them. Who wants a kitchen full of dishes like a graveyard of trampled dreams. Keep it simple, keep it seasonal and keep the spirits flowing.

Ms. Stroup has also created the adjoining holiday recipe you can find on the backside...a luscious Raspberry Wine Compound Butter. CHAUCER'S Wine Club wishes you all a happy, healthy holiday season filled with joy and laughter!

Interview conducted, condensed and edited by Jim Vaughan, Western Region Sales Manager

Next Release: CHAUCER'S Raspberry Wine

The fruit for this elegant, dessert-style wine was grown in an orchard near Watsonville, California – a cool region with seasonal morning fog during the summer, ideal for the production of quality berries. The Heritage and Willamette varieties of raspberry grown in this area have a very firm texture and an intense flavor.

Shipment price for 3 bottles

Pick up Members	\$39.24
CA Shipment	\$52.74
Out of State UPS	\$53.50
Freight Forwarder/FedEx	\$60.00
<i>(ID, IL, MI, ND, NH, NV, NY, TX, VA, WI add applicable sales tax)</i>	
Retail bottle price of CHAUCER'S Raspberry Wine is \$15.	
Prices above include CHAUCER'S Wine Club 20% Discount.	

Re-Order Sale:

Purchase 6 or more bottles of your current release, CHAUCER'S Raspberry Wine, and receive a 25% discount. This offer expires March 25th, 2010.

	Retail	Wine Club
Half Case	\$90	\$67.50
Full Case	\$180	\$135

Next Release: BARGETTO 2009 Bella Dolce

Sweet floral aromatics of gardenias, honeysuckle, and yellow watermelon blossoms compose an intoxicating bouquet of nectar. Rich and weighty, the mouth-feel is juicy and full of melons and apricots.

Shipment price for 3 bottles

Pick up Members	\$41.86
CA Shipment	\$55.36
Out of State UPS	\$55.90
Freight Forwarder/FedEx	\$62.40
<i>(ID, IL, MI, ND, NH, NV, NY, TX, VA, WI add applicable sales tax)</i>	
Retail bottle price of BARGETTO Bella Dolce is \$16.	
Prices above include CHAUCER'S Wine Club 20% Discount.	

Changing your account information:

Would you like to substitute your next release, BARGETTO Bella Dolce? Have you changed your address or billing information? Please call or e-mail us by March 15th to prevent any inconveniences or delays in receiving your shipment and special wine club offers. BARGETTO Bella Dolce will be released on **March 25th, 2010**.

(888) 400-9463 / wineclub@bargetto.com

Epicurean Notes - Guest Recipe Diva Tabitha Stroup

CHAUCER'S Raspberry Wine Holiday Compound Butter

By: Tabitha Stroup

Instructions

Ok lets go.....get the mixer out and attach the paddle.

On low speed slowly add chunks of butter until smooth and creamy. Now add a T. at a time of the Raspberry Wine. Let each addition absorb into the butter before the next addition. Now after all liquid is added. TASTE...is it strong enough or gentle enough? If too delicate slowly add T. at a time till the flavours speak to you. Now in a separate bowl have the rest of the ingredients tossed together. Slowly add by hand the dry ingredients and gently by hand mix the butter till just combined. Too much heat from the movement will melt the butter and a mess is sure to follow. When the recipe is all blended and tastes in balance. Put in the fridge with a piece of plastic lightly over the bowl so the butter mix will not adopt the refrigerator smells. Now being the recycling folks that we are you should have a paper towel roll ready for a new purpose. You will need three paper towel rolls cut lengthwise like a half pipe. Line the half pipe cardboard rolls in plastic rap with plenty of over flow so to be able to wrap the butters. Fill the rolls with the compound butter. Wearing gloves helps and use your hands to get the semi chilled butter in all the voids in the roll. So now you have a tube of butter with a half pipe mold. Wrap with the remaining plastic wrap. The logs can now go into the freezer for up to three months tightly wrapped or in fridge up to three weeks.

Now the fun part...On toast, French toast, top roasted sweet potatoes, on corn bread, a disk on a piece of roasted pork tenderloin, rub the skin of a turkey or any game bird with the butter to create a caramelized crust that is sure to wow...enjoy!!!

During the holidays, time is almost never in abundance when entertaining and treating your family to the yummy offerings from the agriculture gods. So here is one great recipe that can be used in a number of innovative ways during the cold winter months when comfort is a must and good food a given.....

Ingredients

- 2lb. sweet cream organic butter at room temp.
- Split of one half a vanilla bean with seed scraped. (put the vanilla skin in a jar of sugar and the most lovely vanilla scented sugar makes coffee, berries or anything a sprinkle is needed for an amazing twist)
- Half cup of room temp. Raspberry Wine
- 1.5C. chopped toasted Walnuts chop fine
- Zest of one lemon and one orange
- Pinch of white pepper NOT BLACK

For more recipes check out www.chaucerswine.com

Everyone wins when you invite friends to join the CHAUCER'S Wine Club. They will receive three bottles of CHAUCER'S wines quarterly and you will receive a complimentary bottle of wine!

