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### **UP AND DOWN THE WINE ROADS**

LAST WEEK STARTED OUT with a glorious, teeth-staining session on Tuesday at the CIA's Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies. The occasion was the annual St. Helena Appellation wine tasting. Pat Garvey (Flora Springs Winery) led an almost full house of members of the press through tastings of red wines, mostly cabernets and zinfandels. The St. Helena Appellation membership includes over 60 wineries and growers which may make it the largest appellation membership in the valley.

Last Sunday was the opening of the exhibit in the Vineyard Room at the Robert Mondavi Winery of selected, enlarged photographs, (ranging in size from 21 by 28 inches to 40 by 30 inches, and priced from \$1,600 to \$6,000) from Bill Tucker's new book, "NAPA: Behind the Bottle." Almost everyone whose portrait is in the book was present. Words of praise of the portraits floated throughout the Vineyard Room. Reportedly, the printer of the book (who has earned many awards) said that Tucker's book was the best he has ever printed. One viewer said that Bill Tucker belongs in the same league with great photographers like Ansel Adams, Alfred Eisenstaedt and Yousuf Karsch. I am not going to tell you when the exhibit closes. If you are like me, you will put off seeing it until the last day, then you'll find that something has come up, so you will miss it.

Speaking of books, a new book on Beringer Winery, with emphasis on the beauty of the Rhine House, will be on bookstore shelves next year. The renovation of the Beringer Rhine House has been completed, including the reinstallation of the 41 19th-century stained glass windows, which had been removed and sent away for cleaning, and the refinishing of interior walls and floors. Photographer Charles O'Rear, who has produced a plethora of beautiful books on wine, was commissioned to produce the photographs for this book which guarantees it will be a great one.

If you are planning to do some holiday shopping in Ess Eff and you find yourself in need of a tranquil spot to rest your weary bones and get your second wind, you should visit the Press Club at 20 Yerba Buena Lane in the downtown area. The Press Club is a newly opened, opulent, 9,000-square-foot facility on the bottom floor of the Four Seasons Hotel. The concept, says co-founders Andrew Chun and Jan Wiginton, is to provide the time-strapped tourist with the opportunity to sample wines from top producers in the North Bay wine country in a sophisticated, urban setting. Eight wineries have signed up to lease space in the Press Club, including Chateau Montelena, Miner Family, Pahlmeyer and

Saintsbury. Unfortunately, guests are limited to only sampling wines. A silly law prohibits the servers from pouring a full glass, although full bottles are for sale on the premises. I have trouble visualizing the success of the enterprise under those restraints. But, anyway, the Press Club is worth visiting — if only for its striking decor and ambiance.

Attention carnivores: Hurley's in Yountville will hold its annual Wild Game Week, Nov. 10-15. The menus will feature seared peppered venison, elk, antelope short ribs, braised wild boar, buffalo ribeye, ostrich medallions and rabbit (didn't know cute little bunnies are considered wild game). Then, from Dec. 1-14, Hurley's will hold a crab festival. The menu will feature whole roasted crab, chilled cracked crab, crab cakes, and crab chowder. Reservations are recommended. Phone 944-2345.

If you have a hankering for tastings of beautiful wines (including barrel samples, reserves and library wines), along with wine and food pairing, live music and wine discounts, slip down to the southern end of the valley for the annual Holiday in Carneros, scheduled for Nov. 22-23. Nearly 20 wineries will be holding open houses.

Wannabe a food writer? Founder and director Antonia Allegra will again hold the Symposium for Professional Food Writers from May 11-15 at West Virginia's famous Greenbrier Resort. Again, she has recruited over a dozen of the country's best food writers as faculty for the symposium. For info, call Toni at 963-0777 or Lynn Swann at (800) 624-6070.

The Stags Leap District Winegrowers Association has announced the release of its annual Appellation Collection, which is comprised of 15 cabernets from its member wineries. Call 225-1720 for info or to order the collection. The price is \$1,200.

Mark Your Calendars Item: I know it is several months away, but the way time flies these days, you better circle the date — Saturday, March 14 for the Festa Primavera. The theme this year is On Safari from Zambezi to the Serengeti. This year, Festa Primavera, the annual fund-raiser for the St. Helena Montessori School, will celebrate its 21st year and will be held at the new Silver Oak Winery in Oakville. The event is always one of the year's best whizbang parties.

Peju Province is featuring the work of three female artists who work in a variety of media in a show that will close Jan. 29. One of the artists was born in Guatemala City, another was raised in South Africa, and the third is a native of San Francisco. It will be interesting to see the impact of their cultures on their work.

CABOOSE ITEM: There is much speculation on what segments of the wine industry will be hit if the country moves into a deep recession. So far, the luxury class part of the market seems to be faring well, but that could change. The super premium to premium wines market may be hit. However, one part of the market that looks like it may be totally immune to a recession is Czar Freddy Franzia's Two Buck Chuck empire.

