

De Luca Fine Wines

"Beautiful Taste"

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September &
October 2009



The Harvest Season

Special points of interest:

- Ever been to Napa? Here are our highlights of Wine Country!
- Taste the brilliance of Canada's own Laughing Stock Portfolio.
- Whip up an autumny pear and cheese tart
- Mark your calendars for De Luca events!
- Say Thank You to your hosts in style!

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Warm pumpkin soup, Thanksgiving, yellow leaves, and corn mazes all mark the coming of the autumn harvest season. There are dinner parties to plan, dates to pencil in, and cozy nights at home enjoying the summer's past busy renovations.

The harvest season is also an important time in the world of wine. Although the weather plays an important role in the ripeness and fullness of the grape, harvests are typically conducted from late August to early October in the Northern Hemisphere and from February to April in the Southern Hemisphere.

Icewines, which are mostly produced in Canada, Germany, and the U.S.A. can be harvested as late as January. And although Matua Late Harvest Muscat \$16.69 is not traditionally an icewine, it bridges the gap between a late harvest and an icewine as the juice is frozen prior to fermentation and the ice that forms is skimmed off the top with the consistency of syrup rather than juice. Another harvest wonder is Canada's own Quails' Gate Optima. After a good old-fashioned foot-stomping, these

Totally Botrytis Affected (TBA) grapes shrivel and sweeten to a raisin as a result of the harmless fungus. Optima is ideally served with soft ripe cheeses which harmonize with its baked pear and citrus characteristics.

Other late harvest wines worthy of note are: Dashe Late Harvest Zinfandel \$38.55, Hayes Ranch Moonlit Harvest Pinot Grigio \$14.99, and Bonterra Muscat \$20.49. Jump into the harvest season and test your palate! Wine not?



Harvest Season: Napa Valley 2009

Sweet, Sweet Riesling

Riesling, although a sommelier's best friend, is often misunderstood. It is pure to its varietal and often congratulated on its sweeter notes of apple and pear with deep engaging aromas of honey complemented by light floral undertones. But this understated beauty is not as sweet and true as one may believe; Riesling can be flirty, fun, and dry.

Originating from Germany, the Riesling is best categorized by its style and ripeness. Rejuvenate your thoughts of Riesling by trying a drier bottle. Look for *Troken* on the label (German for "dry") or *Halbtroken* for "half dry".

Riesling is versatility at its best. Try a sweet one with spicy Asian dishes. Try a dry one with salads.

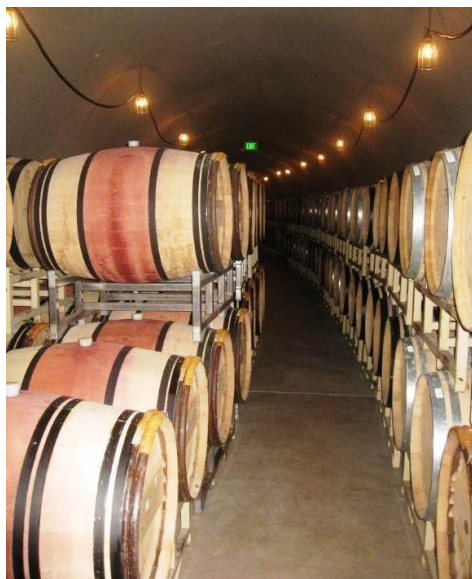
Feature

Weingut Krayer Auslese Riesling \$24.11



Open Thanksgiving Weekend!

De Luca Goes to Napa



They also had the pleasure of visiting two of their existing exclusive labels: Cuvaision and Whitehall Lane. While both have top-of-the-line Napa cabs, they are also well-known for other varietals. Cuvaision is known for its Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Cameros and Whitehall Lane, for its Merlot and Bommarito Cab (\$36.70).

Everything was green and luscious in the valley and it was nearly harvest time. Many of the wineries will be off about 2 weeks from their harvest schedules due to weather conditions as it can differ up to 20 degrees from the hills to the valley floor. But all in all, the wineries are confident that 2009 will be a strong year.

It was quite a luxury to see the grapes so close to harvest time: Chardonnay, Viogner, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, and Zinfandel. Kate and Scott's 2 year old daughter Sadie had fun running through the vineyards and testing some of the grapes off the vine

with the winemakers.

It was also interesting to observe that within two years the presence of greener wine is quite noticeable. Many wineries are becoming solar-powered (such as De Luca's own



Not having visited the Napa Valley in almost two years, Kate and Scott Holden set out to explore the California harvest season. And explore they did! Their goal for this adventure was to source high-scoring, highly allocated, boutique wines for De Luca's own President's Club that will be beginning this fall (stay tuned at delucafinewines.com).

Cuvaision) and many are in their 1st year of a 3 year organic farming certification program. There are not just greener wineries popping up, there are also a growing presence of ready-to-drink wine that follows the Australian trend of the screw-cap. For more pictures of the Napa Valley trip, check us out online!



Laughing Stock Portfolio

Life is full of surprises. Laughing Stock Portfolio is a whole stock of elegantly simple; from the fun bottle lined with stock prices to the complexity of the taste. Adding it as a jewel of Canada's Okanagan is also an undeniable surprise.

Yes, Laughing Stock Portfolio has a bit of everything. It combines five Bordeaux varietals: 61% Merlot, 16% Cabernet Sauvignon, 16% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec, and 2% Petit Verdot.

After winning gold at the Canadian Wine Awards in 2005, Laughing Stock Portfolio 2006 expresses bright ripe fruit with hints of cherry and chocolate mint undertones.

Better yet, this cheeky marketing marvel is an EXCLUSIVE to us @ De Luca. You can try it for yourself at *Wine Stage Manitoba* September 25th & 26th. Can't wait? Pick up a bottle for just \$59.99!



Pear & Cheese Tart

You know you want it... This Pear and Cheese Tart is the perfect slice of autumn and smooth decadence.

I found this gem on WineSpectator.com and decided it was the season's must for two reasons: A. Pears are in season during the fall months and it is important to buy local produce when in season and when available. B. I think soft goat cheese is irresistible. Ok, one more: C. I like making an effortless dish look like rock-star behaviour.

The tart shell was most certainly bought frozen because that is the single most daunting part of this autumn appetizer. Then it was a case of mixing 6oz. of room temperature goat cheese with 1 egg, 30ml of sugar, and 5ml of vanilla. Next stir in 75ml of pine nuts and spread the deliciousness across the bottom of the tart shell.

Concern yourself with how you would like your pears to look on top of the tart. Circular? Edgy? Piled up?

The recipe calls for 2 peeled and cored pears arranged from the outside in a circular pattern. You are the boss of you. Make it work!

Drizzle melted butter on the pears and sprinkle with sugar. Bake the appetizer for 30 to 40 minutes (until the pears look soft and browned) at a preheated 375°F (190°C).

While I will assert the simplicity and elegance of this dish, I won't lie... I am more of a stand-around-and-drink-wine-appetizer-girl. It wasn't finger friendly. Next time I need to whip up a quick fix, I would like to try the Pear and Cheese Tart without the "Tart" part. Assemble the mixture in a shallow pie plate in any case and grab a pretty scoopy spoon to serve on water biscuits.

Now for the important part: the wine. Rich cheese dishes or

cheesecakes pair quite nicely with icewine as the racy acidity balances the sweetness of the fruit. Quails' Gate Riesling Icewine \$39.39 is a strong choice for the tart as its baked apple and pineapple exuberance draws out the richness of the goat cheese. Or am I just saying that as an excuse to finish both the bottle and the tart?



Andy Ryan

From www.winespectator.com



Staff Picks

Scott	Poggotondo Chianti Superiore	\$19.99	Mike	Flor de Crasto	\$13.70
Kate	Laughing Stock Portfolio	\$59.99	Andrea	Hedonist Shiraz	\$26.99
Cam	Laurenz V Friendly Gruner Veltliner	\$21.99	Eric	Jorio Montepulciano D'Abruzzo	\$18.99
Lance	Trio Syrah/Tempranillo/Cabernet	\$25.99	François	Stone Cellars Pinot Grigio	\$13.99
Chrissy	Wild Rock Sauvignon Blanc	\$24.49	Chris	Quails' Gate Riesling	\$39.39



De Luca's Event Schedule

Yes the title is correct. De Luca's autumn event schedule is set and ready to make an impact on your calendar, your social life and your wine intake. Check out our website calendar and make it a part of yours!



Beginning in September, De Luca will host a 5 week Wine Basics course for \$125 which includes the materials and the tastings. Topics include New and Old World Reds and Whites. When this course

winds down, the Wine Basics Italy course winds up for a delicious price of \$125 for 5 classes. Highlights include the exploration of Tuscan and Sicilian wine regions. Both Wine Basics courses are on Thursday nights at 942 Portage Avenue from 7pm to 9pm.

Can't commit to a 5 week class but would love the glowy benefit of wine knowledge? Try our tastings, set up nearly every second Sunday with prices varying from the standard \$20 tasting to the \$45 Cuvaision tasting.

Remember, wine doesn't need to be something that you simply drink with your meal. It can be something you research, explore, and feel passionate about. You can pick up tidbits at our tastings or set aside 5 weeks for a Basics course. And you can feel very welcome to do that with us... @ De Luca

TASTINGS 2pm - 4pm

September 13th
Chile & Argentina \$20

September 27th
California Reds \$20

October 4th
Cline Cellars \$20

October 10th 7pm - 9pm
Thanksgiving Primer \$30

October 18th 6pm - 8pm
Cuvaision \$45

December 6th
Holiday Drinks or Ports \$25

WINE BASICS 7pm - 9pm

Basic Course: Start Sept. 10th
Italy Course: Start Nov. 5th

The 'Thank You' Pack



Priced at a simple \$19.99, De Luca has made the awkward hostess gift -giving- process an affordable and delightful autumn breeze. The problem with buying an ordinary hostess gift are the 'ooh's and 'aah's of how much to spend, which kind of wine would match the meal that you haven't prepared, and how to make your host's jaw drop.

Let's make it easy on ourselves shall we? For

\$19.99, our Thank You pack includes a bottle of either red or white, Hot Garlic Pepper jelly, crackers, and a cheese spreader. Can you go wrong? That way you are covering all bases; whether it is Labour Day weekend, Thanksgiving, a Pumpkin Carving Party, or even Halloween.

But what the heck, if it happens to end up on your party table, my lips are sealed.

