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Oenophilic Tendencies

By Jeannine Sano

Who gets the wine list?

Jeff Bareilles, sommelier of Manresa Restaurant in Los Gatos, revealed that there is an entire set of unspoken psychological and sociological considerations when it comes to determining who at the table gets that giant book of wines, as well as the implications of who reaches for it and who actually orders the wine. Understandably, the host at the table, whoever that may be, generally takes the wine list and orders the wine. Many restaurants deal with this conundrum by either asking who should get the wine list, or by simply placing it at the center of the table or off to one side, leaving it accessible for anyone at the table to make the move.

When my husband and I go out to eat, I can easily spend 10 or 15 minutes pouring over the wine list. In contrast, nothing could bore my husband more than reading through a list of labels, prices and geographic regions, and he could care less about evaluating the characteristics, vintages and flavor profiles of any particular bottle of wine. He just wants something good to drink, preferably now as opposed to later. Regardless, I rarely take issue when the wine list is automatically handed to my husband.

Occasionally, however, my patience does get tested. At a recent dinner at Fleming's Steakhouse in Palo Alto, despite my asking to see the wine list (conveniently attached to the menu, so at least one hurdle was avoided), and repeated comments by my husband to our server that essentially boiled down to "ask her," the server turned to my husband to ask about our wine selection, the wine bottle was presented to my husband, and the taste was poured in my husband's glass. Our dinner guests, who happened to be familiar with the wine dynamics between my husband and me, could barely contain their giggles when the server persistently refused to deal with me when it came to wine service.

I am generally nonpartisan when it comes to gender politics, and most of the time, I tend to believe that a sense of humor and understanding can alleviate a lot of prickliness, but at that point, things had become so blatant that I could not stop myself from being a bit irritated. Although I fully acknowledge that I throw like a girl, I had not really thought of wine as a male thing.

Maybe I am being overly sensitive? I need a glass of good wine

while I mull this over. Perhaps at one of the following wine events in June:

Silk's, 222 Sansome (at Pine), 415-276-9787, www.mohg.com:

- **Penfolds Wine Dinner**: five-course dinner by chef Joel Huff; Tuesday, June 3, 7-10:30 p.m.; \$180/person

Club Sportiva & On The Fly Showroom, 840 Harrison (at 4th), www.uncorkedevents.com:

- **Uncorked 2nd Annual "Best Of" Wine Tasting** of top-rated wines amidst Ferraris, Bentleys, and Lamborghinis at a luxury car-share club, featuring hors d'oeuvres from A.G. Ferrari, DJ Sol, and a cutting-edge art installation; Wednesday, June 4, 6-9 p.m.; \$50/person in advance, \$60/person at the door

Fifth Floor, 12 4th St. (at Market), 415-348-1555, www.fifthfloorrestaurant.com:

- **Spanish Wine Dinner** featuring Alejandro Fernandez and Tinto Pesquera; Thursday, June 5, 6:30 p.m.; \$150/person

Fort Mason Festival Pavilion, Marina Blvd. (at Buchanan), 650-873-6060, www.thegoldenglass.com:

- **Slow Food San Francisco's 5th Annual Golden Glass Event** featuring over 100 wine producers and 30 food purveyors, including wines from Italy, Spain, Greece, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand; Sunday, June 8, 6:30-9 p.m.; \$50/person in advance, \$60/person at the door (proceeds benefit Slow Food San Francisco School Garden Project and Slow Food USA's Art of Taste program)

Campton Place Restaurant, 340 Stockton (at Sutter), 415-955-5574, www.tajhotels.com:

- **Duckborn Wine Dinner**: Monday, June 9, 7-10:30 p.m.; \$185/person
- **Fritz Wine Dinner**: Tuesday, June 24, 7-10:30 p.m.; \$160/person

South Beach Yacht Club, Pier 40 (at Embarcadero), 510-444-0828, cynthiabloebaum@mac.com:

- **Medium Bodied Red Wine Tasting Class**: Tuesday, June 10, 7-10 p.m.; \$70/person
- **Big and Spicy Red Wine Tasting Class**: Tuesday, June 24, 7-10 p.m.; \$70/person

Ferry Plaza Wine Merchant, Ferry Building (Embarcadero at Market),

415-288-0470, www.fpwm.com:

- **Erna Schein** with Les Behrens and Lisa Drinkward; Wednesday, June 11, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
- **Wine and Cheese Pairing** with Debbie Zachareas, wine director of Bacar, and Peggy Smith, co-founder of Cowgirl Creamery; Tuesday, June 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; \$75/person
- **Hirsch Vineyards** with David Hirsch; Wednesday, June 25, 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Vinfolio, 415-946-1300, www.vinfolio.com:

- **Wilder Side of Pinot**: Thursday, June 12, 6:30 p.m.

Hornblower Cruises, Pier 3 (Washington at Embarcadero), 415-438-8310, www.hornblower-holidays.com:

- **Winemaker Dinner Cruise**: four-course dinner featuring wines of Tom Rinaldi and three-hour bay cruise; Friday, June 20, 7:30-10:30 p.m.; \$159/person

Viognier, 222 East 4th Ave. (at B St.) San Mateo, 650-685-3727, www.viognierrestaurant.com:

- **German Wine Dinner**: five-course dinner paired with wines of August Kessler; Friday, June 20, 6:30 p.m.; \$125/person

Pinot Days, 415-408-3360, www.pinotdays.com:

- **Pinot Tasting and Pairing**: Ottimista Enoteca-Café, 1838 Union (at Octavia); Tuesday, June 24, 6-8 p.m.; \$25/person
- **Winemakers Dinner**: Isa, 3324 Steiner (at Chestnut); Wednesday, June 25, 6-11 p.m.; \$150/person
- **Winemakers Dinner**: Jack Falstaff, 598 2nd St. (at Brannan); Wednesday, June 25, 6-11 p.m.; \$150/person

- **Santa Lucia Highlands and Santa Rita Hills Pinot Tasting**: Fort Mason, Marina Blvd. (at Buchanan); Saturday, June 28, 1-3 p.m.; \$80/person
- **Sonoma Coast and Anderson Valley Pinot Tasting**: Fort Mason, Marina Blvd. (at Buchanan); Saturday, June 28, 4-6 p.m.; \$80/person

- **Russian River and Santa Maria Valley Pinot Tasting**: Fort Mason, Marina Blvd. (at Buchanan); Saturday, June 28, 7-9 p.m.; \$80/person

- **Grand Tasting**: Fort Mason, Marina Blvd. (at Buchanan); Sunday, June 29, 1-5 p.m.; \$65/person

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