

UPCOMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24

**LOLONIS WINE DINNER
CAFE TRUMPS, STATE BOTANICAL GARDENS**

Lolonis, wine growers since 1920, became America's first organic winery in 1953, long before the rest of California caught on to the fact that ladybugs and praying mantises did a better job of controlling pests than loads of chemicals. Located in Mendocino's Redwood Valley, the cooler climate does wonders for the ripening of the Lolonis family's grapes, making the intense, balanced flavors of one of my favorite wineries in the U.S. Richard Hudson will represent Lolonis in a wonderful dinner. Richard Hudson will represent Lolonis in a wonderful dinner of 5 wines and 4 courses. Chef Alon Wilson puts a cross-cultural slant on "earthy" dishes, simple foods with complex flavors, utilizing herbs & fruit fresh from the garden in unexpected ways.
6:30 Reception, 7:00 Dinner.
\$55.00 per person, all inclusive.

Call us for reservations at 208-0010.

Shiraz
675 PULASKI ST
SUITE 400
ATHENS GA 30601

JOIN OUR WINE CLUB!

Each month, Emily and the staff here at Shiraz select 3 wines we think are special and that you are sure to enjoy. All wines that we pick come complete with tasting notes and serving suggestions. Though all of the wines may be purchased separately, members receive a substantial discount on their package every month. This package consists of the three wine picks and one of our gourmet items selected for your sampling pleasure. The cost of the wine club package each month is \$45 (the cost separately is \$50-60; this month the value is \$52.50--save \$7.50 just this month!) If you are a member of our wine club, you'll also get the first peek at special items here in the store, as well as a guarantee that you'll receive the 3 wines each month (sometimes they do run out!) Also, each month we will draw a name of a wine club member, and that person will receive his package free that month! Please ask us if you'd like more information or to join--it's the best deal in town! This month, the featured gourmet items are your personal selection of both a Numi tea package and a box of Newtree chocolates. It's a great way to start the New Year in style!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

**A TASTE OF ATHENS
THE CLASSIC CENTER
6 - 9 P.M.**

Tickets available at www.tasteofathens.com

And drop in any Saturday between 1:00 and 5:00pm for our theme tastings.*

**Our tastings are for educational purposes only. All wine must be poured by Shiraz staff, with no more than 2 oz. per wine per person.*

"I think it is a great error to consider a heavy tax on wine as a tax on luxury. On the contrary, it is a tax on the health of our citizens."

--Thomas Jefferson

Shiraz

FINE WINE & GOURMET

"I have enjoyed great health at a great age because everyday since I remember I have consumed a bottle of wine except when I have not felt well. Then I have consumed two bottles."

--- A Bishop of Seville

As the new year rolls around, many of us are making resolutions to improve our health. We have all heard that red wine in moderation is good for the heart, and recent studies now show that tea and dark chocolate have similar health benefits as well. Anti-oxidant rich compounds, flavonoids, found in tea leaves, grapes, and berries (including cocoa berries) work the magic. They improve blood flow to the heart and brain, raise HDL and lower LDL (good and bad cholesterol, respectively), and reduce the threat of a heart attack or stroke. In fact, a team of Australian researchers has concluded that a "polymeal" of wine, fish, dark chocolate, fruit, vegetables, almonds, and garlic eaten every day cuts heart disease risk by a whopping 76%. These seven foods daily (only 4 /wk for fish) will increase life expectancy by an average of 6 1/2 yrs. for men and 5 for women.

Many of us, myself included, are making resolutions to exercise more--but if you really want to help your heart, combine your exercise regimen with 1-2 glasses of red wine per day. Studies show that this moderate intake of wine is as good for your heart as one hour's exercise every day. And in addition, drinking wine duplicates the life-extending benefits of a low-calorie diet! And if you drink tea throughout the day, not only will your mental performance be stronger, your mood will be brighter as well--and it increases metabolism. (Some chocolate has been known to raise metabolic rates as well.)

Is there anything, in fact, that it won't do? Wine is perhaps as good for your brain as it is for your heart. Besides (yes, we found a case study) preventing dementia, there's proof that wine drinkers have a higher IQ than non-drinkers. And they tend to have better verbal skills, speed of thinking, and memory, especially when they drink in moderation. We at Shiraz join our good friends at Kilikanoon who endorse these studies, because we all have "conducted extensive research of our own!"

It is no surprise, then, that "French Women Don't Get Fat." While their "health food" includes butter, whole milk, and good chocolate, they lead far healthier lives than we Americans, despite lack of exercise, etc.... "Eventually, the French shrug and say it must be the red wine." Just look at wine legends Robert Mondavi and Ernest Gallo, both in their 90's and still looking great, thank you very much. In fact, the island of Sardinia, off the coast of Italy, has an unexpectedly high number of residents over the age of 100. The only explanation available is the robust red wines of the region, which they partake of frequently. It goes without saying that these Italians also cook only in olive oil, the healthiest cooking base you can find, and all Em and Jen will use to saute our dinner.

In this issue of our newsletter, we have included wines from organic vineyards (no pesticides or herbicides) and from wineries who employ high-stress methods of horticulture (more stress actually means more of the resveratrol that provides many of said health benefits). We are hosting a wine dinner with America's oldest organic winery. And we are featuring low-fat, healthy recipes for your own kitchen to pair with our wine selections. And if you join our wine club this month, you can try some health-promoting dark chocolate and tea of your own choosing. What an easy and delicious way to have a healthy New Year!



JANUARY 2006

EMILY'S WINE CLUB
SELECTIONS FOR

JANUARY

Kilikanoon Shiraz Killerman's Run 2003 *Clare Valley, Australia*

Kevin Mitchell is my hero. Just one whiff of one of his wines and it is impossible to mistake them for anyone else's. Though the wines are powerful and focused, Kevin has a flair for finesse that most winemakers in Australia have not yet learned. And I am not the only one who is impressed with the wines (or with Kevin) either--Robert Parker said, "This is one of the most brilliantly run wineries in Australia, and the quality of the entire portfolio is impressive thanks to the enviable talents of winemaker Kevin Mitchell...also one of South Australia's "good guys." Good guy indeed, for sharing this gem. The unfiltered, pure fruit has aromas of vanilla, cigars, blackberry, currant, and hints of licorice, clove, and oak. The spiced, dark fruit is full of plums, cherries, blueberries, and layers of coffee and chocolate. It is saturated and mouthfilling, and finishes with lush, rich fruit and full, integrated tannins. Though it is delicious now, it can be drunk over the next 10 years. THIS is the reason Shiraz is the icon of Australian wine. This wine is terrific with steak or portobello mushroom dishes, especially when stuffed with smokey blue cheese. It is also great on its own or with tapas, especially when the clove, oak, and vanilla characteristics open up and evolve into sweet red fruit and a light herbaceous quality. And we love it with our Moroccan Vegetable stew! (I spent half a day at Kilikanoon last January, and it was one of the more memorable experiences of my trip. If you can't pop over to the winery, at least you can enjoy the fruits of Kevin's labor. Ask us about his other wines, including Oracle, Covenant, Prodigal...just don't be surprised if we drool while describing them.)

\$18.99

Plaza de Mulas Malbec 2003 *Mendoza, Argentina*

Why drink a simple Cabernet or Merlot when there are offerings available such as Malbec? Argentina has been making wine for over 400 years, but they have recently tapped into the worldwide market, with a conscious effort to raise their quality level. And since labor and land costs have remained low, the result is some of the best values in the marketplace today. To look for great deals in Argentinian wine, all you have to do is look for the letter M: over 75% of the grapes grown in Argentinia come from the Mendoza region. And the best quality grape in Mendoza is Malbec (although Syrah is quickly gaining in both popularity and value). Another good M to remember is Mulas. Plaza de Mulas, besides being a great place to start a mountain trek at one of the highest elevations for a vineyard in the world, makes some great quality wines from Mendoza, with much more than you would expect for the money. These vines are all Estate, and between 40 and 60 years of age. The nose is full with smoky blackberry, chocolate, smoke, and cigars. Medium-bodied on the palate, it has flavors of spice, blackberry, dark cherry, chicory, and oak, with dried raspberries, dark cocoa, and some spices and herbs to round it out. The exuberant fruit is tamed by 1- and 2-year oak barrels, and the heavy, thick flavors and tannins are matched by a good acid balance. The drying finish with crisp fruit and spice is soft but full, and manages to be creamy as well. Malbec is the quintessential grilling wine. If you can skewer it, wrap it, or just throw it on a grill, Malbec will pair with it. It is also good with rich, hard cheeses, especially with our Chipotle Cheddar or Porter (white cheddar with Guinness). It also works very well with hearty winter stews.

\$9.99

Huber Gruner Veltliner 2004 *"Obere Steigen"*

Traisental, Austria

Gruner Veltliner is the perfect winter white. It excels where other white wines get lost or fall to the wayside next to full, rich cuisine. Perhaps it is the Austrian soil, with slate, granite, and chalk for a base, lending intense minerality to the grapes, that make it so ideal for cold-weather dishes. Maybe it is because it is meant to be drunk with the heartier dishes that are staples in the Austrian diet. Regardless, when the weather changes and I turn to more hearty fare on my own dinner table, Gruner certainly fits the bill. "Obere Steigen," meaning "Upper Step," is sourced from vineyards on terraces, with sandy loam soil, lending powerful, extracted flavors backed with lime, flowers, and white pepper. Markus Huber, the star of the Traisental region and younger than I am, has channeled the flavors of the region and the vineyard with this little beauty. The aromas are fresh, zesty, and lively, with lime peel, white peach, pink grapefruit, and a chalky backbone. The earth-backed flavors continue on the palate with racy acidity and brisk, citrusy flavors with just a hint of spritz. The pepper definitely hits you on the back end, with some sheer juiciness from oranges and limes, along with, of course, liquid minerals. A 1985 scandal, dropping Austrian wine sales, caused the government to enforce one of the strictest sets of wine laws in the world. With vineyards "groomed like a golf course," you'd be hard pressed to find cleaner facilities than in Austria. Interesting when you consider that the most important quality in their wines is the dirt. This wine will handle anything you throw at it, but is exceptional with a Camembert or a buttery Fromager de Clarines. It is also wonderful with seafood, especially in rich sauces, fried chicken! (think Wiener Schnitzel), and red or green curries.

\$14.99

Conn Creek Cabernet Franc 2001 *Napa Valley, California*

Limited Release

84% Cabernet Franc, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon

5% Petit Verdot

Though considered a minor grape, Cabernet Franc is actually one of the parents of the original Cabernet Sauvignon (if Cab Franc was the father, consider Sauvignon Blanc the mother). The truth is, it is a wine whose soul is incredibly difficult to capture. This is why we put a bottle in your hands every time we find one we consider well worthwhile. And this is no exception. Conn Creek uses only established Napa Valley vineyards with a proven track record for Cab Franc to get a rich, intense and elegant style for their Bordeaux-styled wine.. They age individual lots in French Oak for 18 months and then an extra two months in bottle to tame this sometimes overpoweringly floral and aggressively acidic grape, smoothing it out to enhance its ripe flavors and firm tannins. The creamy nose has green pepper, cherry, and raspberry, along with light spice, hints of vanillin oak, and violets. The palate smooths out with rich, dark fruit and curried spices, along with dark dried plums, black cherry, and pomegranate. The finish has cassis, dark dried cherry, sweet spice, and chocolate, with a light herbaceousness and good acid balance, plus a creaminess that adds a pretty note to this otherwise masculine wine. This wine is great with grilled foods, lamb, and cheeses, and our Turkish Winter Stew.

Normally \$29.99; Now only \$21.99
(While it lasts!)

SHIRAZ'S RECIPES FOR

JANUARY

Moroccan Vegetable Stew

Serves 4

1 tbsp. olive oil

1 medium butternut squash (about 2 lb.), peeled and cut into 1" pieces

1 large sweet potato (about 1 lb.), peeled and cut into 1" pieces

2 carrots, peeled and cut into 1/4" slices

1 large onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 can (15 oz.) chickpeas, rinsed and drained

1 can (14 1/2 oz.) stewed tomatoes

1/2 cup golden raisins

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp. turmeric

1/2 tsp. salt (or to taste)

1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper

1 tsp. sweet paprika

1/4 tsp. cayenne

1 1/2 c. vegetable broth

1 c. couscous

1 1/4 c. vegetable broth

Chopped fresh cilantro or parsley for garnish.

In a large non-stick skillet(12") heat oil over medium-high heat. Add squash, sweet potato, carrots, onion, and garlic and cook stirring frequently, until onion is tender and golden, about 10 minutes.

Stir in garbanzo beans, tomatoes, raisins, spices and 1 1/2 c. vegetable broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover and simmer about 30 minutes, or until all vegetables are tender. Prepare couscous as package directs, substituting broth for water.

Serve stew over couscous and garnish with cilantro or parsley. Each serving, about 474 calories, 14g protein, 95g carbohydrates, 6g total fat (1g saturated) 0mg cholesterol, 1,022mg sodium.

Adapted from "The All New Good Housekeeping Cookbook"

TEA

Did you know that you can make any tea decaffeinated? Simply pour hot water over the tea bag, let steep for 30 seconds, and discard the water. Pour fresh boiling water over the same tea bag for a second, decaffeinated, cup. Studies show that up to 90% of the caffeine in tea is infused out in the first 30 seconds of steeping.

Tea also:

- * Boosts the immune system.
- * Increases metabolism, helping the body burn more calories.
- * Hydrates the body, maintaining healthy skin.
- * Inhibits plaque formation in the mouth.

Turkish Winter Stew

Serves 8.

1 lb. lean lamb or beef, cut into small cubes

2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

2 medium onions, chopped

Salt to taste

1 tbsp. all-purpose flour

1/2 c. low-sodium beef broth or water

5 medium waxy potatoes, peeled and cut into large cubes

2 medium celeriac, or parsnips, peeled and cut into large cubes

4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 2" lengths

3 fat leeks, trimmed, rinsed, and cut into 2" lengths

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 tsp. dried thyme, crushed

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

Chopped parsley for garnish.

In a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat, brown meat in a tablespoon of the olive oil, turning frequently. When the meat is browned, reduce heat to medium-low and add the remaining tablespoon of oil and the onion.

Cook, stirring frequently, until the onions are soft, but not brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Add the salt and the flour and stir until the flour has been completely absorbed. Pour in the broth and bring to a simmer. Cook, covered, about 20 to 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Uncover the pan and add the vegetables, stirring to mix them well with the meat sauce. Add a little more broth or water to come just up to the top of the vegetables. Add the garlic, thyme, and black pepper, recover the pan and cook until the vegetables are tender-about 20 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice. Correct the seasonings if necessary. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Each serving, about 254 calories, 15g protein, 32g carbohydrate, 8g total fat (2g saturated), 37mg cholesterol, 79mg sodium.

From "The Mediterranean Diet Cookbook"

CHOCOLATE

Did you know that a mere 3 oz. of dark chocolate daily lowers the average person's cholesterol by 10 points? In addition, it:

- * Improves the health of the arteries
- * Dark chocolate increases blood flow to the brain.
- * Cocoa reduces smoking-related impairments.