

Antarctic Pinot Noir: New Zealand's Serious Red • Ribolla & Dolcetto: Edgy New Napa Wines

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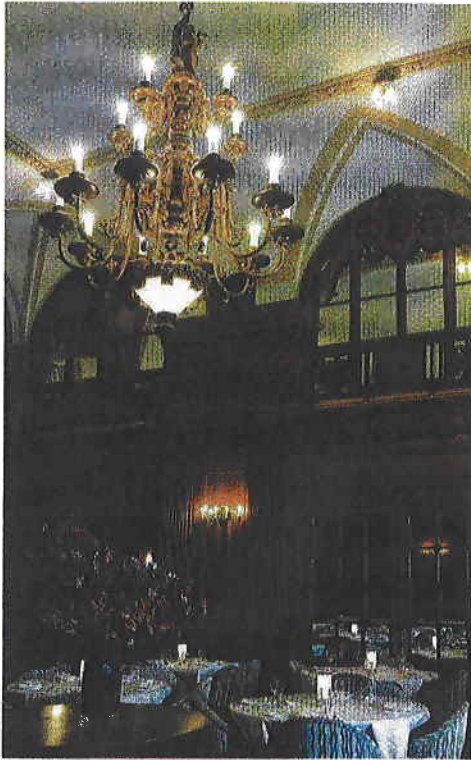


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NY: THE OAK ROOM

The Plaza Hotel's *Oak Room* has always had atmosphere; it's not hard to imagine F. Scott Fitzgerald swilling Martinis in the mahogany-paneled men's bar, or Cary Grant drinking in the chandeliered dining room after wrapping *North By Northwest*. Now, after a \$400 million renovation of the hotel and restaurant, the menu and wine list may live up to the space. Chef Joël Antunès, formerly of *Joël* in Atlanta, brings a modern Mediterranean touch to the menu, adding dishes such as snails *Anti-boise*, a shallow bowl of meaty mollusks in an orange rind-scented sauce highlighted with capers and olives, to classics like tournedos Rossini. Joshua Nadel, once a sommelier at *Cru*, has brought the wine list into the 21st century as well, proudly featuring unusual (and affordable) wines such as Sigalas Santorini alongside the expected array of Burgundy and Bordeaux. If you're on a budget, you might still stop into the bar for a Mid-Day Reviver (Rittenhouse Rye tweaked with maraschino liqueur and absinthe) to gaze at the cityscape murals that Everett Shinn painted nearly a century ago. —T.Q. THOMAS

The Oak Room, 10 Central Park S., NY; 212-758-7777, oakroomny.com

news in brief

The Japan Sake Brewers Association in Kyoto awarded **Roger Dagorn**, sommelier at *Chanterelle* in NYC, the title of Sake Sommelier. He is one of only 17 specialists worldwide.



The **Culinary Institute of America** at Greystone in St. Helena inducted seven wine industry leaders into its **Vintners Hall of Fame**. They include Gerald Asher, wine writer for *Gourmet*; Frederick and Jacob Beringer, founders of Beringer Vineyards; Jack and Jamie Davies of Schramsberg; Jess Jackson of Kendall-Jackson; Carole Meredith of Lagier-Meredith; Justin Meyer, co-founder of Silver Oak Cellars; and Warren Winiarski of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars.

Fetzer Vineyards of Hopland, CA, and **Kunde Family Estate** of Sonoma received a 2008 Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award on November 25. The award is California's highest environmental honor.

Copia, the Napa-based wine and food center, filed for bankruptcy on December 1. The center had closed without warning on November 21 and remained closed as of press time.

Ashley Hepworth was named winemaker at **Joseph Phelps Vineyards**, and **Theresa Heredia** has been named winemaker at **Freestone Vineyards**, the Sonoma Coast winery owned by Joseph Phelps Vineyards.



The **Professional Culinary Institute (PCI)** in Campbell, CA, will open a campus this February in Orlando, Florida. The new campus will offer a certified sommelier program designed by **Andrew McNamara, MS**, sommelier at *L'Escalier at The Breakers* in Palm Beach and one of *W&S' Best New Sommeliers* in October 2008.

Webster Marquez was promoted to winemaker at **C. Donatiello Winery** in the Russian River Valley. Marquez previously worked under **Troy McEnery**, who has been named winemaker at Bradford Mountain and Healdsburg Ranches.

Chateau Montelena Winery announced in November that the winery's sale agreement with **Michel Reybier** of Reybier Investments has been terminated. Montelena's current owners, the Barrett family, will retain ownership of the estate.



Jennifer Simonetti-Bryan, a national educator for Rémy Cointreau USA, became the fourth woman in the United States to earn the title of Master of Wine (MW) this past November. **Benjamin Lewin** is the other US candidate to have earned an MW title this year. Lewin, a molecular biologist and the founding editor of *Cell*, recently completed a book, *What Price Bordeaux?* In all, there were 15 candidates worldwide to receive the title this year.

The **Grape Growers of Ontario (GGO)** received a CAD \$4 million subsidy from the provincial government this past October. This will assist growers affected by an unexpected surplus that resulted from a rainy season, sales declines and the failure of Niagara Vintners, a regional co-op.

CORRECTIONS

In the December '08 issue, a 90-point Williams Selyem Pinot Noir was listed with a Rutherford Napa Valley appellation. The correct appellation is Sonoma County. In the same issue, the vineyard holdings of Henriot Champagne were misstated: It owns 2.5 acres, and purchases the rest of its fruit.

photo of Roger Dagorn by Loré Rhodes