



# NapaLife

**For those who live in Napa Valley –  
and those who wish they did...**

An Insider's Look at Napa Valley

Volume 4 Number 8, Feb 25, 2008

## Vintners' "bake sale" raises \$2.2 million

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Historical Society highlights Napa entertainment  
Opera House welcomes Bellydance Superstars  
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Capitol Steps at the Opera House  
Mushroom dinner at Martini House  
All-day gardening workshop  
*Wine Enthusiast* hosts "Toast of the Town"

Auctioneers Fritz Hatton and Ursula Hermacinski (I thought she retired ☺) sold 200 lots of unique wines in five-, ten-, or 20-case lots to 67 bidders of the 600 trade attendees.

Interestingly, Mark Pope of the Bounty Hunter in Napa was the second highest total bidder.

PNV 2008 was chaired by the Duncan Family, owners of Silver Oak Cellars and Twomey Cellars.

The trade auction was the climax of week-long excitement for wine professionals in Napa Valley.

It started Tuesday prior with the 4th Annual Symposium for Professional Wine Writers at Meadowood Napa Valley. The Annual Vintage Perspective Tasting took place Friday, February 21 at the Rudd Center at the CIA where more than 200 wine trade and media looked at three-year verticals by twelve producers to see how Cabernets Sauvignons, tasted blind, were developing.

Wineries held parties and open houses Thursday and Friday for visiting buyers.

Premiere Napa Valley 2009 will be Feb. 21, and chaired by Bryan Del Bondio of Markham Vineyards. The next big time for local vintners is Auction Napa Valley, the consumer blow out coming June 5-8.

### **Hog Island Oysters coming to Oxbow Market**

As repeatedly forecast here, Hog Island Oyster Company will open a Hog Island Oyster Bar at Oxbow Public Market in Napa.

It is modeled after the highly successful version at the San Francisco Ferry Building Marketplace and will serve fresh-raised oysters on the half shell, gourmet versions of traditional baked oysters, organic salads and a daily local, seafood entrée.

It will be at the Northeast corner of the main market hall along the deck. It should open in September.

Hog Island Oyster Company was founded in 1983 by three marine biologists who shared a vision to raise oysters for the San Francisco Bay Area.

Tomales Bay, a pristine inlet of the Pacific Ocean 50 miles north of San Francisco was the partner's choice oyster-growing location.

Hog Island Oyster Company leases 160 acres in Tomales Bay and raises Pacific, Atlantic and Kumamoto variety oysters as well as Manila clams and mussels.

For more, visit [www.hogislandoysters.com](http://www.hogislandoysters.com).

Oxbow Public Market is open seven days a week, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some food and wine cafés and vendors are open later.

We stopped by on cold, wet Friday night to get teensy ice cream cones for the kids (including the big ones), and even just before closing, it was hopping.

Taylor's was packed, of course, with people even sitting outside under the awning and heat lamps, there was a crowd including what appeared to be many singles at the Wine Merchant bar, and Model Bakery and the Fadded Calf were trying to shut their doors without much luck.

The Market is pretty much complete now, except for the announced coffee roaster and seafood vendor still to open -- and the key front restaurant and mini-restaurant overlooking the deck.

I suspect we'll see some changes, however, as I believe some of the retail concepts may not prove viable. I think new kitchenware makes more sense than antiques, for example.

A few of the spaces may be too big for the level of business, too. Personally, I'd love to see them shrink to add stands offering Greek, Indian, Korean or other Asian food.

For further information, call 226-6529 or visit [www.oxbowpublicmarket.com](http://www.oxbowpublicmarket.com).

### **Enter oyster wine competition**

Speaking of the tasty bivalves, if you think your winery's wines go well with oysters, you can prove it by entering the 2008 Pacific Coast Oyster Wine Competition.

The competition seeks to identify the ten best West Coast wines to go with oysters. Typically "oyster

wines" are dry, crisp, clean-finishing white wines, notably Sauvignon Blanc, but also perhaps Pinot Grigio, crisp, low-oaked Chardonnay or dry Riesling. Judges include food and wine writers, restaurateurs, retailers, oyster growers and other oyster-loving individuals without winery affiliations.

The competition is sponsored by Taylor Shellfish Farms of Shelton, Wash.

The deadline for entries is March 28.

For information go to [www.oysterwine.com](http://www.oysterwine.com) or contact competition organizer Jon Rowley at (206) 963-5959 or [rowley@nwlink.com](mailto:rowley@nwlink.com).

And after Hog Island opens here, maybe we should have our own Napa competition. Aside from many wonderful Sauvignon Blancs, I'd bet on Stony Hill Chardonnay.

### **Fun at Pizza Azzurro**

I almost hate to mention how popular Pizza Azzurro has become since it moved. It's fun to sit at the communal table and talk to other Napans; you're sure to meet some interesting people, and I'm looking forward to them getting some more bar stools, too.

It seems particularly popular with families early in the evening, families, as my daughter points out, who prefer the hip, city vibe to the usual fast-food restaurants.

If you do have kids with you, Pizza Azzurro will make up small individual pies.

### **A question for readers:**

I'm researching the best gardens (open to the public, at least some time), best pizzas, Mexican food and best hamburgers in Napa Valley. Please send along your suggestions.

Send your comments to [paul@napalife.com](mailto:paul@napalife.com).

### **Voting for Zagat guide**

Zagat Survey is asking frequent diners in the Bay Area to rate restaurants, and will give free copies of the next guide to those who help out.

Zagat is now conducting its online survey of San Francisco area restaurants. Surveyors are asked to rate and review restaurants based on their food, decor, service and estimated meal cost.

The survey runs through March 30 at [zagat.com](http://zagat.com).

Those who complete the survey by March 30 will receive a free copy of the Zagat's 2009 San Francisco Restaurants guide when it is published.

### **Perfect Purée debuts retail line**

Now you can make real Bellinis! The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley has launched its retail debut with six all-

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