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2010 VI WINEMAKERS

Written by Traci O'Dea
 Monday, 20 September 2010

PDF PRINT EMAIL

I get to do a lot of cool things for my job—test drive power kayaks in Manuel Reef, sail on regatta-winning boats, SCUBA dive with Reef Check, review multimillion-dollar beachfront homes—

but the one annual event that makes me feel like I'm living in an episode of Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous is the BVI Winemakers Dinners.

Last year, I sampled Champagne Pierre Paillard on a chaise at Baraka Point in Virgin Gorda while watching the sun set, tasted Chef Dwight Hutchinson's watermelon gazpacho beside a tortoise on Guana Island, and dined on fava beans at the Golden Pavilion Villa on Tortola while sitting between Italian winemaker Anselmo Guerrieri Gonzaga and People magazine reporter Kristen Mascia. The staff at each location and the visiting chefs made me feel spoiled, but it's ultimately about the wine, and this year's selection of international winemakers from France, New Zealand, Portugal, Italy, California, South Africa and Germany should impress even the rich and famous.

Meet the Winemakers

Michele Chiarlo vineyard promotes great wine and fine art in the Piedmont region of Italy. A sculpture garden of contemporary visionary art, coordinated by Academy Award-nominated director Emanuele Luzzati, marries the two worlds of wine and the visual arts. **Alberto Chiarolo** will be showcasing the award-winning wines of Michele Chiarlo which include a Barbaresco Reyna that *Wine Enthusiast* voted its sixth best wine in the world for 2010, saying that it has a "great promise of fruit here, which is wrapped within folds of vanilla, ginger, cinnamon and dusty mineral."

New Zealand's Central Otago region is home to the organic Mount Edward vineyard. Winemaker **Duncan Forsyth** serves as an ambassador of the region's wines, boasting about the "delicate" whites and "graceful" reds. *Wine X* magazine describes the 2005 Pinot Gris as "crisp, clean, citrus and tropical fruit with a nice lingering finish," and *Pinot-noir-wines.com* claims the Mount Edward wines rival the best of France, describing the flavour as having "subtle undertones of fruit and earth."

Representing Weingut Ketterm and several fellow winemakers in Germany's Mosel River valley, **Phillip Ketterm** started working at his father's vineyard when he was fifteen. Now 22, Phillip is currently an apprentice as a viticultural engineer. Winemaking on both sides of his family goes back for centuries, and Phillip is proud to carry on the traditions of his ancestors. Weingut Ketterm produces Rieslings, and *Wein-Plus.com* compliments the vineyard by saying "that one understands his trade here."

Miles Mossop, learned his craft from vintners in France, South Australia, Sicily and Napa before becoming winemaker for TOKARA Wines in Stellenbosch, South Africa. TOKARA also hosts a Wine Made Art event which showcases local artists' paintings that use TOKARA wines as the medium. Tasting notes for the 2009 Zondermaam Chardonnay: "fresh and crisp with intense flavours of lemon rind, limes and baked apple."



Portuguese winemaker Dirk Niepoort represents the Douro region. Photo courtesy of Niepoort Vinhos.

Niepoort Vinhos, in Portugal's typically port-producing Douro region, is one of the leaders in the valley's forays into making table wine. **Dirk Niepoort**, fifth generation in the winemaking business at Niepoort, bought the first vineyards for his family's company and has been producing acclaimed wines since a legendary 1990 Robustus. Of the more available 2004 Redoma, *wineorak.com* says, "This is the wine that sums up the Douro for me. Lovely bright, spicy definition to the nose which shows brilliant red and black fruits."

Bouchard Père & Fils has been producing wine in Burgundy since 1731. The venerable vineyard has experienced a renaissance since the 1990s, resulting from a sale to Joseph Henriot coupled with the promotion of **Philippe Prost** to winemaker. Ian McFadden, Director of Fine & Rare Wine at Crush Wine & Spirits says Philippe Prost "deserves a toast for his efforts —Bouchard is back!" Wine critic Stephen Tanzer calls the 2007 Chevalier Montrachet "wonderfully ripe, broad and rich" with a finish "which opens like a peacock's tail."

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Urban winemakers **Shauna and Kent Rosenblum** source their grapes from the best vineyards in California to make their many varieties of Rock Wall wines in a former airplane hangar overlooking the San Francisco skyline. *Wine Spectator's* Tim Fish calls the Rock Wall Zinfandel Sonoma County Reserve "a wild child, zesty and intense, with huckleberry, bold licorice and peppered beef aromas and briary plum, sage and espresso flavours."

The 2010 Virgin Islands Winemakers Dinners will feature international superstar chefs as well. The dinners, as well as select lunches, take place at luxe locales and restaurants throughout the Islands from December 1st through December 7th.

Visit www.winemakersdinners.com for more information.

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