

THE VINES THAT BIND

Food-friendly pours

The new year brings a fresh face to the VINO fold, Jake Parrott. The “recovering” wine merchant lists his viticulous loves as “the Loire, northern Italy, Beaujolais, Jura and any wine that speaks of its place.”

And, lucky for us, plenty of wines have been speaking to our Wine Pros as of late.

Parrott has become quite conversant in enological opportunities afforded at the Fair Lakes’ Whole Foods seafood counter. He finds the **2008 Podere Canneta Vernaccia de San Gimignano (\$14)** to be a perfect accompaniment to fried calamari, but suggests the Tuscan white bears “a spicy, hot-stone character to provide depth with or without food.”

A Whole Foods bouillabaisse calls for something stronger. And Parrott finds it in the **2008 Adegas Gran Vinum “Nessa” Albarino (\$15)**, heralding the “spice and floral notes” and “Riesling-like, lime zestiness” as fitting companion for the hearty fish stew.

Kelly Magyarics communes with her latest white at the Brabo Tasting Room, marrying the **2007 Domaine Séguinot-Bordet Chablis (\$52)**—“I love its lemon-y, green apple flavors and minerality,” she gushes—to a bowl of chorizo-baked bivalves.

She found herself admiring the depth of the **2008 Stoneleigh Marlborough Pinot Noir (\$44)** during a recent trip to PassionFish, noting that its “red cherry and berry flavors ... allow the wine to sing next to duck, its spiciness and medium body make it a great match for lamb, and its low tannins and refreshing acidity make it perfect next to many seafood dishes.”



OUR
WINE PROS



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JAKE PARROTT
Wine Aficionado

fresh basil, zesty shrimp paste) at the ready to fashion custom flavor combinations. **2500 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; 703-525-2828. L,D daily ☎ 🍷 🍷**

🍷 RAY'S THE STEAKS \$\$\$

The more spacious layout (two dining rooms; one accepts reservations, the other remains walk-in friendly) means there's more room for commingling of the carnivorous masses, whether they be gourmet beer-draining businessmen or mohawked youths studiously examining sommelier Mark Slater's burgeoning wine collection (100-plus well-traveled bottles, most very easy on the wallet). Deviled eggs heaped with steak tartare and hollandaise provide a clever play on picnic fare. A roast beef-like slab of picahna plays opossum until plunged into a scorching salsa verde [much more satisfying than the pabulum served at many Latin American establishments]. Luscious strips of hanger steak are all-natural juices and unadulterated might [absolutely mouthwatering]. A generous scoop of roasted bone marrow [surprisingly fatty intro, livery finish] and garlicky persillade propel regular steak into another dimension. **2300 Wilson Blvd., Courthouse; 703-841-7297. D daily ☎**

TAP & VINE \$

The tot-friendly respite is the brainchild of sibling restaurateurs Joy and Jay Reinhardt—their flagship restaurant, Restaurant Vero, sits mere steps away. The comfort weavers have crafted the type of a place where charcuterie and gourmet suds live in perfect harmony

with their grilled cheese and chicken fingers brethren. Adult flatbreads (add-ons include: crème fraiche, artichoke hearts, fresh fontina) are perfect for sharing and can help prod curious eaters past standard pepperoni-and-cheese pies. Meanwhile, adults can indulge in a goulash-like stew intertwining pulled pork, potatoes and jalapeno ribs with sour cream [stray goldfish add cheddar-y crunch]. Combat any after-burn with novel craft brews such as Founders Cerise [the Cheerwine of beers], or Flying Dog's Gonzo Imperial Porter [a chocolate beast as unruly as Hunter S. Thompson himself]. **5731 Lee Highway, Arlington; 703-532-1119. L,D daily, L,N Wed-Sat 🍷 🍷**

TUTTO BENE \$\$

Though his restaurant continues to serve disparate dining factions—Italian dishes dominate during the week, while Bolivian delicacies appear on weekends—Tutto Bene owner Orlando Murillo remains single-minded of purpose: keep the customers coming back. One terrific loyalty-builder is the half-portion pasta option, a sampling-friendly solution that makes everyday dining/occasional experimentation a breeze. A crowd-pleaser of a calzone arrives stuffed with hearty rounds of zesty pork, tangy marinara and molten cheese [the precious ricotta and mozzarella payload oozing out from every corner]. The milanese Napoletana delivers breaded veal shrouded in ham and melted mozzarella [stretches from stem to stern and drips over the sides] and nestled in a thin, herb-laden marsala sauce that contrasts against the cheesy richness while lending a homey/natural

undercurrent to the meat. **501 N. Randolph St., Ballston; 703-522-1005. L,D daily ☎ 🍷**

culpeper co.

HAZEL RIVER INN \$\$\$

The down-home restaurant occupies what appears to be an old warehouse [it's proudly billed as the oldest commercial building in historic Culpeper]. A quick scan of the well thought-out menu reveals a wide array of gourmet selections, while a glance around the cozy dining room suggests a much more laidback scene [locals wander in wearing blue jeans]. A New Orleans-style chicken-and-sausage gumbo is simply fantastic [the roux is delightfully spicy]. A smoked salmon and avocado quesadilla delivers soft bite after soft bite of fish, tropical fruit and citrusy lemon aioli. Bison short ribs summons a plate of tender briquettes swimming in a saucy red-pepper ragout, all served with buttery German noodles. White peach and mixed berry strudel arrives blanketed by an intoxicating vanilla bean sauce. **195 E. Davis St., Culpeper; 540-825-7148. L daily, D Thu-Mon, Br Sun ☎**

fairfax co.

ACKC COCOA BAR \$

This snazzy cocoa bar represents the con-