

# Neapolitan

FOOD | CLASSIFIED



■ Tim Aten's In the Know column will return next week.

Wednesday, January 27, 2016

## 9 hacks to help you drink better wine

### I LEARN BY DEGREES

Aim for a middle ground when it comes to temperature. Good reds taste better with a little chill on them and good whites taste better when they're not ice cold.

### II ADD A TOUCH OF GLASS

Use clean, clear glasses with a good stem. The stem plays an important role — keeping your fingers from warming the wine.



### III AGE WISELY

Drink most white wines young. And these days many red wines are made ready to drink on purchase, too. Big red wines might need a little more time. Wondering how long? That's a hard question to answer because wines vary. Ask for clues at the wine shop or find information online.

### IV DEVELOP A BUBBLY PERSONALITY

Drink more bubbles. And skip the flute. Serve bubbles in a coup or regular wineglass.

### V DARE TO DECANT

Decanting a wine is good all around. Whether young or old, a wine improves when exposed to a little air (which occurs naturally when pouring the wine from the bottle into a decanter). And careful pouring also means you leave any sediment in the bottle.



### VI PRIME THAT WINE

Drinking two wines at dinner out of one glass? Don't rinse the glass with water to make the change. Once the glass is empty, pour in a little of the second wine, swirl it, dump the rinse and you're ready for a proper pour.

### VII PICK SAVVY STORAGE

Store wine on its side and in contact with its cork. And if you've got a wine refrigerator, keep it in there at 55 degrees. If not, look for a spot in a basement or closet that's shaded from heat and light.

### VIII SHOP SMARTER

There's no hacking a really bad wine. Go to a good wine shop to get a head start. If you find a wine you like, make a note of the producer; you'll probably like some of their other wines, too.

### IX RELAX

Learning about and developing an appreciation for wine is interesting, but don't make it a chore. Have fun and enjoy it.



Associated Press

## Annual winter festival bolsters Naples' wine cred

The first time I covered the Naples Winter Wine Festival in 2010, it felt like I had "arrived" as a freelance wine writer.

I mean, this is a big deal. The biggest deal.

Everyone who's anyone in the wine world goes to this event, wines from the most famous estates are on the auction block, and millions of dollars are raised every year. And there I was in a penthouse condo on a Friday night, inhaling the aromas of a dinner prepared by a world-class chef flown in for the occasion. I took pictures of the Chateau

Haut Brion Bordeaux as it sat in stunning crystal decanters, preparing to be poured for people who'd paid thousands to be part of the most exclusive weekend-long wine event in the country, if not the world. Earlier that night I'd met Prince Robert, of Luxembourg, whose family has owned Chateau Haut Brion since 1935.

His Royal Highness was presented with an exceedingly rare 1926 vintage of his chateau's wine by a local wine collector. I have never been so grateful to be a peripheral observer than that night; seeing a bottle that old

being passed from one pair of hands to another nearly sent me into panic attacks that someone might drop it. The bottle handled the transition just fine, but I was still having palpitations as I photographed it; fearful the flash on my camera might harm this precious bit of history.

I somehow summoned all the sang-froid I could muster and managed to sound reasonably intelligent while interviewing royalty. Y'know, no big whoop. The next day at the auction, I

See **GRAPE**, 12D



JULIE GLENN

GOING GRAPE

“I mean, this is a big deal. The biggest deal.”



## Olympian Boitano joins 22 other chefs at Naples Winter Wine Festival

By Chris Silk  
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You know Brian Boitano from the Olympics. He's the guy who won the famous "Battle of the Brians" at the Calgary Olympics in 1988.

But did you know he could cook?

And he's coming to Naples. Boitano joins 22 other chefs this week as part of the Naples Winter Wine Festival. He will be serving up his cuisine at a Friday night dinner hosted by

Denise and Brian Cobb. The theme celebrates attendees who have unexpected passions that folks may not know about, such as gold-medal winner Boitano's culinary talents.

And the menu, he says, is going to be "pretty interesting." There's five courses, complete with dessert and cheese, plus a dazzling se-



Brian Boitano

lection of wines from a pair of Sonoma vintners Lasseter's and Verite.

Post-Olympics, his career has included a Food Network show "What Would Brian Boitano Make?" as well as "The Brian Boitano Project" about his quest to renovate an old family home in Italy.

He loves to cook so much he sometimes serves as celebrity auction fodder, offering the charity-minded a chance to win one of his meals (and not incidentally, the chance to have

### INSIDE

See a full list of the wine festival chefs for 2016 **4D**

dinner with an Olympic gold medalist).

Nothing fazes him, whether it's television cameras or a room full of hungry guests. Post-Olympics, he made a pact with himself to never be nervous again.

At home, Boitano "entertains all the time." He wouldn't be

See **CHEFS**, 5D

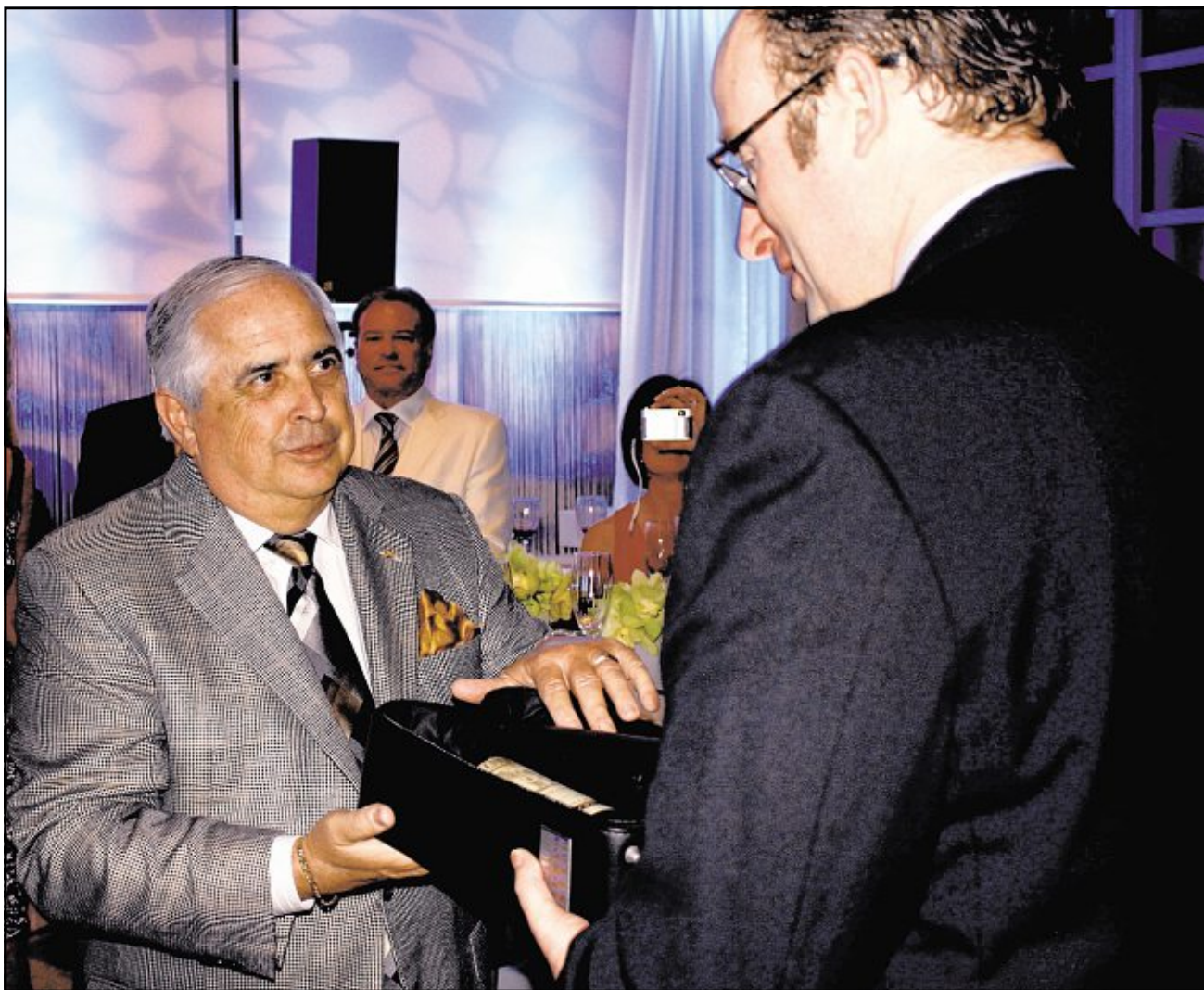
**GRAPE**  
from 1D

was wandering around the grounds outside the tent looking for photos to take and who walks right over, arms extended for an acquaintance hug saying, "Well, hello Julie! So good to see you again"? Yeah, the Prince of Luxembourg himself. It was like William Shatner greeting a Trekkie or Taylor Swift remembering the name of a tween fan.

The following year I was slightly less nervous but equally star-struck when I was able to interview Christian Moueix, the owner of Chateau Petrus in Bordeaux and Dominus in Napa. His merlot, which sells for a few thousand dollars a bottle, was probably the only merlot not damaged by the movie "Sideways," which firmly placed pinot noir at the top of varietal popularity charts. It was a lowbrow concern, but I wondered what he thought of the unseating of merlot as Americans' go-to grape. So sheepishly, I asked.

Moueix told me the makers of that movie had sent him an early script asking him to allow Chateau Petrus to be the iconic wine coveted by the film's lead character. He refused because, he said, "I thought the movie was stupid, and I didn't want to be a part of it." Here I was, giggling with the owner of one of the world's greatest wineries, agreeing that I didn't much care for the movie, either. I've still never tried his wine, but I still have his business card in case I'm ever in Bordeaux and want to stop by.

If a map existed of wine featuring the United States, our little town of Naples would probably have a larger point on it thanks to the Naples Winter Wine Festival. A grow-



Prince Robert of Luxembourg, right, owner of Chateau Haut Brion, is presented with a rare 1926 vintage of his estate's wine at a Naples Winter Wine Festival dinner in 2010. It's a wine he said they didn't even have in the vineyard's extensive winery since few of the older vintages survived World War II.

ing number of California winemakers are making a second home here, and at least two of this year's auction participants have roots in the area.

Jeff Gargiulo, one of the founders of the festival, was originally from Naples, where his family had success in the produce business. He continues to work in produce in the San Francisco Bay area but spends the bulk of his time following his other two passions, winemaking and music, with soul-filling success.

His namesake wines have achieved cult status, meaning they are very



A 1926 vintage of Chateau Haut Brion

difficult to find and fetch several hundred dollars a bottle.

Standing on the open-air stage he built into the back of his Napa Valley property, Gargiulo surveys his vines with a not-too-distant view of his neighbors' vineyards, which round out the top tier of California cult cabernet sauvignon.

More than a vineyard viewing platform, the stage hosts his band the Silverado Pickups, which is composed of seven wine industry friends who share a love for music.

Legendary harvest parties happen here every autumn, but late January is reserved for Naples, where Gargiulo and his wife, Valerie Boyd, host vintner dinners for the wine festival.

A valley away another Naples to California connection is found in the Hamel family that launched Hamel Family Wines in 2010 along the Sonoma Highway.

The cellars were dug into the mountain the winery nestles into, and all of the earth removed for the winding tunnels was used to create the modern yet warm tasting room and facilities.

Brothers John and George are winemaker and managing director, respectively, with their mother and father offering support and guidance. This will be Hamel Family Wine's first year of participation in the vintner dinner part of the festival as a winery.

The Hamels will co-host a dinner Friday with Ann Welsh McNulty, featuring their own wines alongside the wines of Staglin Family Vineyard.

I welcome comments and questions at [juliewriteswine@gmail.com](mailto:juliewriteswine@gmail.com). You can see more of my writing at [julieglenn.com](http://julieglenn.com), and can connect with me on Facebook and on Twitter @juliewriteswine.

# 2016 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

1. ENJOY LIFE MORE
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