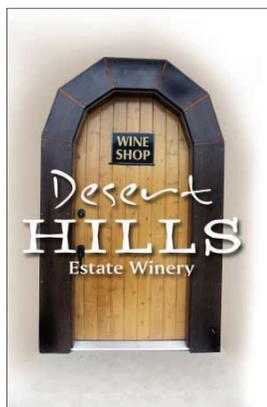


# BC WINE CLUB NEWS

## Soothe Saying Sommeliers

### Feature Winery



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When in Rome, do as the Romans do ... or if your life revolves around wine, when in the U.S. or Canada do as the Wine Spectator advises. So on a recent trip to Chicago, we found ourselves at the Chicago Chop House, one of the few restaurants consistently rated number one by Wine Spectator magazine. One look at the wine list and their reasoning was obvious. A stellar array of wines at every price point imaginable - with a definite favoritism shown to the small lot, boutique, and estate vintages. There was, however, a glaring absence. Not a single Canadian wine was listed!

In order to chart our course that evening, and to ask about the obvious oversight on the wine list, we knew we would have to summon the house sommelier. As fortune would have it, our server turned out to be the wine guide.

Her knowledge of wine was phenomenal and her respect for BC wine clear. She was even informed about our emerging wine region on Vancouver Island, and commented on how our warm summers in Napa North (a.k.a. the Okanagan) over the past couple years will see great things showing up in our bottles.

So why no BC wine? Well, she said, it was difficult enough to import wine from Canada, and for them to get their hands on their favoured small lots or estate wines would be a leviathan task. She said if she had her choice, she would offer her clientele a fine BC Gewürztraminer or a Gamay, varietals she felt were well suited to our climate.

But what of the local haunts? Whose wine list and sommelier stand out? Personally, we have found the **Blue Water Café**, another Wine Spectator fav, to carry a superb selection of BC greats, (including some from this month's featured winery, **Desert Hills**). To assist with your wine selection and food pairing, Andrea Vescovi, Blue Water's Wine Director, is as brilliant as they come. Effortless pairing, coupled with proper presentation, certainly make an evening at this restaurant worth a BC Wine Club member's while. (see profile on page 3!)



Blue Water Café

A well educated, informed and tasteful sommelier can be the difference between a memorable occasion and an expensive mistake. Look for one that caters to your taste, not just your pocketbook, and can steer you towards the right BC wine for your meal preference.

Finally, one last piece of advice from a sommelier - don't smell the cork! Look at the name on it and nod politely if they have indeed brought you the right bottle!



Desert HILLS

An Oasis of Gold Medal Taste

# Desert HILLS Estate WINERY

## Welcome to the Oasis



Talk about forethought, the Toor family had the good sense to purchase 24 acres of prime land on the Black Sage Bench way back in 1988! To be sure, this is some of the most sought after terroir in the wine world and for good reason. The gentle east to west sloping land, in a climate featuring intense summer warmth by day and perfect cooling by night, is a vina-viticulturist's dream.

Brothers Randy, Jessie and Dave began planting in earnest back in 1995. Knowing these grapes were like gold, they sold them to various wineries throughout BC and saw their bounty show up in some of the province's finest vintages. Then, in 2003, the brothers decided to get into the wine business themselves - after all, they knew the right people and they had the finest grapes at their disposal. The result has been nothing short of spectacular! Medal winning wines are the rule, not the exception at Desert Hills Estate Winery. Alas, a dream born in 1988 had become reality!

## A Family Trade

At Desert Hills, the wines are truly a reflection of the Toor brothers interesting and varied background. Born in India, they have a taste for the exotic. Raised in Winnipeg, they are exceedingly friendly, and having grown grapes in the Okanagan since the mid '90's, they know the basis for a fine wine is a great grape!

Randy heads up most business aspects of the vineyard and winery, while Jessie is in charge of concessions. Dave works full time outside the winery but, like the other brothers, spare moments are usually spent working for the winery in some capacity. For each of the brothers, running the winery is a labour of love and their congenial attitude speaks to this.

So, if you're visiting the winery, remember to wear sunscreen (this is desert country after all) and be prepared to get caught up in the brothers good spirit - it's truly contagious!

## We know him as Mr. VQA

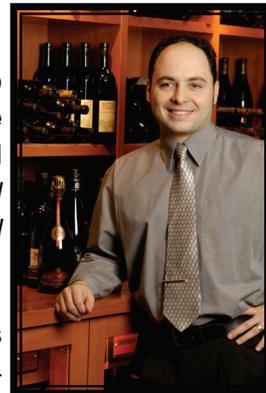
As mentioned, when the brothers decided to get into the wine making business they knew the right people - one of which was Dr. Elias Phiniotis. They had seen what he had created for other wineries and knew his craftsmanship to be extraordinary. Phiniotis, who holds a doctorate in enology, hails from Cyprus and comes from a long line of wine craftsman. He is also known throughout the wine industry as one of the draftsman of the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA), a judging system by which wines are compared to a gold medal standard to see if they measure up. Dr. Phiniotis' wines invariably measure up as his long list of awards attest - and those awards just keep coming. Case in point; this month's multi-award winning selections from Desert Hill!



## Sommelier Profile - Andrea Vescovi

There is little wonder why **Andrea Vescovi's** mantra is that food and wine should bring joy and goodwill to the dinner table; born in Rome-Italy, Vescovi's mother was an accomplished chef and his grandparents were Northern Italian vintners. Thus, Andrea has been seeped in the ways of the vine his entire life and his progression into the hospitality industry was purely natural.

Andrea's past experience with fine restaurants in Vancouver & Whistler, not to mention his aptitude for fine wine and cuisine, made him an excellent addition to **The Blue Water Café** team. Since joining them in June of 2001, Vescovi has garnered numerous awards for his wine program, including Wine Spectator's '*Best of Award*' (for three consecutive years), and the Vancouver International Wine Festival's '*Gold Glass*' award for best wine list (also 3 years running!).



Not content to rest on his laurels, Andrea is continually attending seminars, tastings and collecting fine wines for his cellar. He feels fortunate to have Blue Water's versatile menu at his disposal, affording him the opportunity to offer many different varietals and styles of wine to his clientele. He takes great pride in showcasing the best that BC has to offer, while always remembering his old world roots when assisting patrons with their selections. Vescovi points out that when deciding on additions to their wine list, they always make a conscious effort to uphold their culinary philosophy - that the freshest foods, ingredients and wine should inspire, balance and compliment one another.

A sage philosophy indeed, and with Andrea Vescovi as your guide, Blue Water Café and raw bar is a dining experience not to be missed.

## Temperature - Friend & Foe

We've mentioned how the intensely hot summer days on the Black Sage Bench give rise to some amazing grapes. However, once those grapes are concentrated into finely crafted wines, the same heat that was once a friend can now become a wine's worst enemy.

At this time of year we need to impress upon our membership the need to take great care with their wines; storing them in cool areas with little or no sunlight. For our part, the BC Wine Club will endeavor to ensure our couriers take great care with your wine, protecting it from the elements as much as possible.

The weather is often hard to predict but, in the coming months, if we notice a specific region is in the grip of a heat wave, we may hold off shipping to that area until extreme conditions pass. As well, if you are planning holidays and do not wish your wines to be held by the courier, or left on your doorstep, please contact us and we would be happy to hold on to your wine until you return.

## Swordfish Steak with Sherry Buttered Mushrooms

The perfect main to bridge spring & summer.  
Couple with Desert Hills Gewurztraminer -  
**Manifique!**

### Sherry Butter

- 1/3 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 3 tbsp sherry wine
- 1/2 tsp lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp balsamic vinegar or to taste
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp fresh ground tricolor pepper
- 1 clove garlic, smashed & minced
- 1 tsp minced fresh basil
- 1 lb. sliced fresh mushrooms

### Swordfish

- 4 - 8 oz. swordfish steaks
- 1 cup olive oil
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 2 tsp lime juice
- 2 tsp basil
- 1 cup minced onions
- 1/2 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp pepper

**Mushrooms** - 1) In a large skillet over medium-high heat, combine the butter, sherry, lemon juice, vinegar, salt, pepper, garlic, and basil, and sauté for 1 minute. 2) Add the sliced mushrooms and sauté for about 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until they're cooked to your preference.

**Swordfish** - Pat the fish dry. Mix all marinade ingredients in bowl. Mix well. Put the fish in the marinade for 1 hour. Grill fish on high heat 4 minutes. Turn and grill another 4 minutes. Do not to overcook!

**Nestle the mushrooms next to the Swordfish  
and serve with French-cut green beans**

## FOOD PAIRINGS

## Salt-Roasted Prime Rib w/ Prosciutto Wrapped Asparagus

Truly flavorful, this dish compliments  
Desert Hill's robust Syrah beautifully

15 lb. beef rib roast, ends Frenched if desired

### For Salt Rub

- 2 cups coarse sea salt
- 4 oz fresh thyme
- 4 oz fresh parsley
- 2 oz fresh rosemary
- 2 tbsp. black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp. coriander seed

Preheat oven to 425°. Place all salt-rub ingredients in food processor and process until combined into 'green salt'. Rub roast generously with salt, reserving 1/4 to season cooked meat. Place roast on a wire rack in roasting pan on bottom shelf of oven. Reduce heat to 350° and cook uncovered for 1 hour 15 min. for medium rare. Cook an addition 20 min. for medium. Remove roast from oven and let rest 20 minutes to preserve juices before carving. Season with remaining 'green salt' and serve.

### Asparagus

- 15 asparagus spears
- 1/2 lb. prosciutto, thickly sliced
- 1/2 cup boursin cheese

Snap bottoms off of asparagus, use a vegetable peeler to peel spears and steam them to a point where they are not totally wilted. Refrigerate until needed. Lay out pieces of prosciutto and spread about one tablespoon of Boursin cheese onto each slice. Put chilled asparagus spears on kitchen towels to absorb any moisture. Place one or two asparagus spears in each slice of prosciutto and roll. Refrigerate if not serving immediately.

### Desert HILLS Selections

**Premium Selection - 2004 Mirage** - Gold Medal Winner - Pacific Rim International Wine Competition

**Feature Red - 2004 Desert Hills Syrah Select** - An ultra select small lots vintage with gorgeous robust flavour

**Feature Whites - 2005 Unoaked Chardonnay** - Six medals and counting! A Vancouver Sun featured selection too!  
**2006 Gewurztraminer** - An amazing new release with excellent medal potential!!!

**Companion Red - 2006 Desert Hills Gamay** - Another hot new release for our members!