

## Messina Hof winery creates award-winning vintages

### Brazos Valley vineyards offer tours through wine-producing operations

By PATRICK HAYS  
Of The Battalion Staff

In time, the Brazos Valley may be recognized as the source of some of the best wines in the world, if awards and accolades from wine connoisseurs are any indication.

As recently as four weeks ago, Messina Hof wines won four medals at the Orange County Fair. They also have won awards at The American Wine Society competition in Chicago, as well as in San Francisco and at other regional and international competitions.

Messina Hof won about 40 awards for its wines in 1989.

Located a few miles east of Bryan on Highway 21, the Messina Hof winery has been cultivated its vineyards for 13 years.

Paul and Merrill Bonarrigo planted the vineyards in 1977, and they first released the wine commercially in 1983.

Paul Bonarrigo comes from a winemaking family. His grandfather planted vineyards in Messina, Sicily before moving to New York in 1924, where he also started vineyards.

In the Bonarrigo family, the name Paul is given to the first-born son of each generation, and that son is designated the winemaker for his generation.

The name of the winery comes from the background of Paul and Merrill's families. Merrill's descendents are from Hof, Germany. They combined that with the Messina from Paul's family history to get "Messina Hof."

Tours of the winery are offered every day. About 50,000 people took the tour in 1989, and 75,000 guests are expected in 1990. The tour consists of four stops.

The first stop is just outside the main building, which was formerly a convent.

The Ursuline Sisters had lived in Galveston, but moved to Bryan around 1900 after a hurricane. After the nuns left the house, it was converted into a finishing school.

Twenty years later, the house was

"We figured our market was B-CS and Houston and now it's the world."

— Paul Bonarrigo,  
Messina Hof winemaker

badly damaged by fire and was bought by the William Howell Jr. family.

Bonarrigo took over the house in 1977 and began planting his vineyards.

The next stop on the tour is at the grape fields, which encompass more

the rose bushes become unhealthy, protective measures can be taken before the grapes are damaged.

Next on the tour is the vat room. It contains several 3,780-gallon vats, designed to store the wine before it is bottled.

The wine is made in a press where skin and seeds are discarded before being put in the vats. Yeast is then added and fermentation begins.

The last stop is back in the house, where visitors can sample four of the winery's 11 varieties. Among the varieties Messina Hof bottles are Chardonnays, Blushes, Blancs, Sauvignons, Rieslings, Ports and a Zinfandel.

Paul Bonarrigo says the winery sold more than 17,000 cases of its wine last year, and he anticipates selling 22,000 cases this year. Zinfandel is the best selling wine.

The winery advertises locally as well as in Houston, where it has two full-time sales personnel.

Messina Hof's market also has

extended beyond the boundaries of the United States. Last August, the winery sold more wine to Japan than it sold in Texas.

Bonarrigo cited two factors that have given rise to the international market: Texas has strong name recognition, and Messina Hof's wines are moderately priced, he said.

Bonarrigo said he believes the wine industry faces challenges in the future.

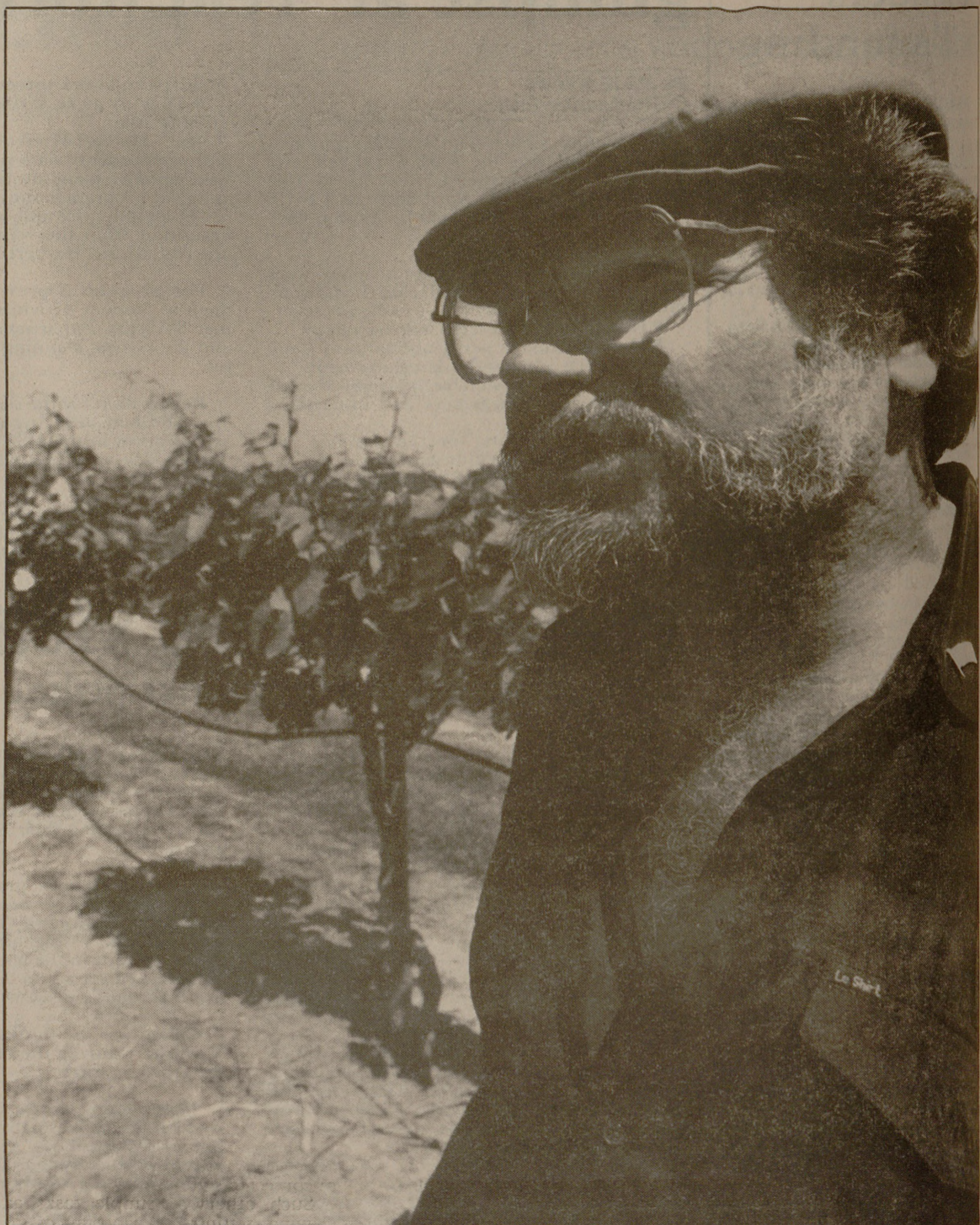
"We're in the adolescent stage of our industry right now," Bonarrigo said.

The winery also needs to determine the scope of its market, he said.

"We figured our market was B-CS and Houston and now it's the world," Bonarrigo said.

Messina Hof wines are available at local grocery and liquor stores, as well as at the winery.

To make reservations for a tour, call the winery at 778-9463.



Battalion file photo

Messina Hof winemaker Paul Bonarrigo foresees the expansion of a worldwide market for his wines. The Brazos Valley wines already have won many regional and national awards.



than 40 acres. The majority of grapes are of the Black Spanish variety and are harvested during the summer.

The grapes are hand-picked by volunteers, only during the hours of 7-10:30 a.m. It takes about a week to harvest all the grapes.

The grape fields are surrounded by rose bushes. Roses are indicator plants — they are affected by the same diseases that can harm grapes, but they show symptoms earlier. If

## Killtones blend rock, blues in distinctive style

By PATRICK HAYS  
Of The Battalion Staff

Take some hard driving rock 'n' roll, throw in some blues, a dash of Texas spice, and some laughter for good measure, and you've got The Killtones, a definite bright spot on the College Station music scene.

Had Binion (guitar, vocals), Steve Kuhn (bass) and Craig Knight (drums) have played together as The Killtones since Summer 1988.

Kuhn said he met Binion and

Knight on the same evening, and that they jammed together a few days later.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

The band has played around College Station since then, and has enjoyed considerable success, opening shows for bands such as Ten Hands and Omar and the Howlers.

Kuhn attributes the group's success to the camaraderie the band members share.

"We're really good friends," he said.

Knight agreed, saying, "I think the objective is 'Have a good time.'"

Their musical influences include Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Grand Funk, Led Zeppelin, Paul McCartney and Living Colour.

Their live shows include about 2/3 cover material and 1/3 original songs, but they said they play unusual covers.

"We're not going to play 'Twist and Shout,'" Binion said.

They plan to move toward playing more original songs in the future.

The band plans to stay together, even though the members live in different cities.

Binion graduated from Texas A&M last May and moved to Austin to pursue a career in music. He joined The Kerouacs last summer, and has played duet shows with Dru Wilson, also of The Kerouacs.

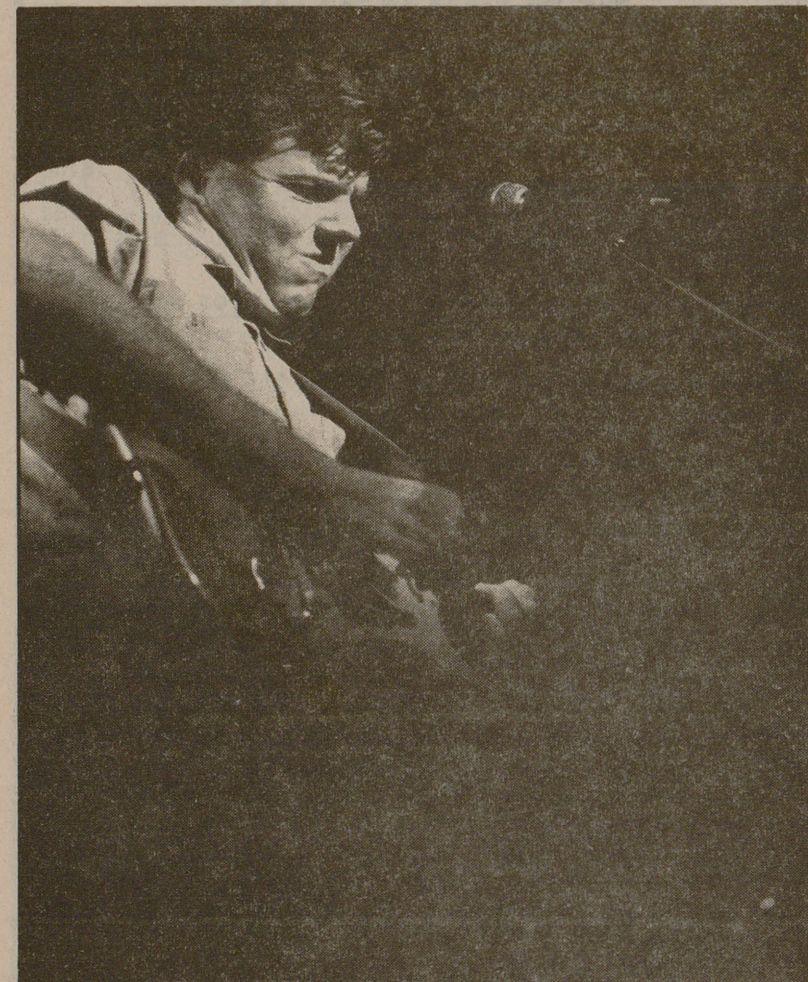
He recently joined Austin band Silent Partners, whose bass player and drummer formerly played with blues artist B.B. King.

Binion makes the trip to College Station each time The Killtones have a gig.

Kuhn will graduate in December and is considering rejoining the Marine Corps — he was on active duty from 1981-85 — but he says he has yet to make his decision.

In the meantime, the band continues to be well received. Crowd response is usually enthusiastic, they said, especially when the band plays songs the audience has heard before.

The future looks promising for The Killtones. Their rock 'n' roll, highlighted with a shot of the blues, should continue to be a treat for College Station music lovers.



Battalion file photo

The Killtones' lead singer, Had Binion, also a member of the Austin band Silent Partners, jams on guitar. Killtones members not pictured are bassist Steve Kuhn and drummer Craig Knight.

## Versatile Killtones give cover classics new sound

By PATRICK HAYS  
Of The Battalion Staff

The Killtones rolled into Waiters Friday night, leaving a path of pure rock 'n' roll in their wake.

The band rocked for more than two hours, mixing original and cover tunes to the delight of dozens of fans.

They opened the show with ZZ Top's "Pearl Necklace," and followed up with Jimi Hendrix's "Spanish Castle Magic." They seemed right at home on stage, and complemented one another's playing well.

Binion proved his versatility as a guitarist. Some of his onstage gestures are reminiscent of Eric Johnson's, and it is clear that he is influenced by the Austin musician.

He gets excellent sound from his guitar, his solos are creative and he has no trouble carrying the band through their set.

The band played several top cover songs, including "The House is Rockin'" by Stevie Ray Vaughan, "Rock This Town" by Stray Cats, ZZ Top's "Arrested for Driving While Blind" and a tune by The Jeff Healy Band.

The best cover of the evening was a very impressive version of Jimi Hendrix's "Hey Joe."

The Killtones original songs were also good, especially "Be With Me" and "Surrounded By Love", which highlights Binion's bluesy vocals.

Bassist Steve Kuhn mixed well with Binion and drummer Craig Knight. Not a moment went by that he didn't have a smile on his face as he maneuvered around the stage.

It was clear that these guys came to play, and that they were determined to have a good time while doing it. I'd have to say they pulled it off.

## Architects, archaeologists collaborate to save Colosseum

ROME (AP) — Pilgrims during the Dark Ages believed that if the Colosseum fell, Rome — and the world — would fall, too.

Now seers of the scientific age are trying to figure out how to keep the symbol of eternity standing.

By modern architectural standards, the ancient amphitheater presents an alarming situation, says Maria Letizia Conforto, an architect with Rome's Superintendency of Archaeology.

Still, she hastens to explain that the 1,900-year-old monument is not about to collapse.

"The ancients must have known what they were doing," she says. "They used enormous amounts of material that in themselves provided a large measure of security."

But the ancients weren't figuring on erosion by pollution and vibration from relentless automobile traffic and subway trains that run nearby.

Particularly worrisome is the 155-foot high outside wall that faces the Appian Hill.

The wall's lower levels were buttressed during the Colosseum's last major shoring-up in the mid-1800s under the direction of the papacy.

But the top lacks supports, and, Conforto says, without a careful inspection, experts can't say whether it might topple.

A year ago, monitoring devices were installed at suspected weak points, Conforto says, but it will take a few seasons of computer-analyzed data to know if expansion and contraction of brick, travertine and tufa are due to changes in weather or are cause for alarm.

Irene Iacopi, an archaeologist from the superintendency, says about \$600,000 is spent annually for simple maintenance, such as removing weeds that sprout in cracks.

The superintendent's office has requested \$44 million for a major overhaul — filling the cracks, installing a permanent monitoring system and cleaning the stone and brick of black crust

caused largely by automobile emissions.

Restoration, as envisioned, would let modern tourists better explore the ancient secrets of the amphitheater, where crowds of up to 50,000 people cheered gladiators fighting each other or wild beasts.

Tourists are not allowed to wander the walled channels under the center stage.

The channels once held scenery that was raised to the stage and lions and tigers that were sent into combat.

The walls of the passageways have lost the support of the central platform that once covered them and have been greatly weakened by moisture, Conforto says.

"We have to clean up the old drainage system," she says. "When it rains, the problems are enormous."

A tunnel once helped drain water, but its opening to the outside was blocked during subway construction in the 1930s.

Restorers want to build a retaining wall that would encircle the stone and brick aisles in the center and lend them support.

Rome's superintendent of archaeology, Adriano La Regina, envisions covering the restored passageways with a removable platform so that tourists can stand center-stage as the ancient performers did and marvel at the arched tiers.

Until the 1970s, visitors could climb to the uppermost level for a grand view of the excavated Forum and the cypress-shaded Palatine Hill where emperors lived.

But the level's steps were worn steep, and other dangers convinced authorities to close the top tier.

Under restoration the path would be made safe for strolls at the top.

Man began damaging the monument long before pollution took its toll.

Builders of several Rome palaces, St. Peter's Basilica and even the banks of the Tiber raided the Colosseum for its fine blocks of travertine.

Monda  
WAR  
HELL  
SCUM  
THAT  
RE  
SWE  
WAL  
THE LINE  
NOT CLAY  
NO IDEA OF  
TO RUN A  
AND HIS RE  
SHOWS HI  
SPA  
\*O!  
PLASTED  
FIRM CON  
FO  
AITMO  
CO  
LO  
fre  
NEW  
nothing  
glasses o  
sion up t  
nearly l  
wear som  
wear  
But  
painted  
cannot  
with con  
"An o  
not give  
sion to c  
reading  
nails or  
says Dr.  
logical c  
Low Visi  
The L  
as the N  
Blind, is  
tion that  
make th  
have it  
low-visio  
impaired  
and less  
Amor  
as magn  
Da  
fo  
SH  
Once ag  
acre dai  
Ke fa  
farmed  
and Ca  
across t  
landscap  
bloodied  
the Civi  
Now  
swept u  
protect  
tiefeld  
velopm  
It is t  
ing fou  
America  
the once  
"Batt  
that ha  
and, sin  
tance t  
potentia  
chief hi  
Service  
War.  
The  
Preserv  
tiefeld  
at Midd  
General  
Confed  
ning bl  
Shenan  
be surr  
dustrial  
In 19  
quisition  
Va., sto  
square  
where t  
two cru  
Just l  
again a  
Frederi  
Nationa