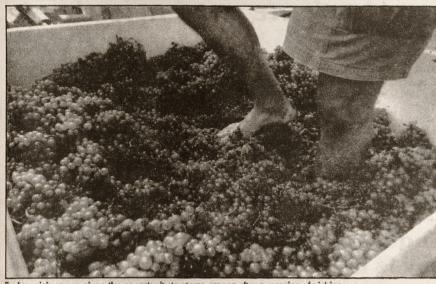
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Lifestyles



Cheers to Harvest '91!

Grape pickers return to Messina Hof Vineyards to snip, stomp and savor this year's crop

With its weeping willows casting over the lake and its cool grass being gently warmed by the sun, Messina Hof Wine Cellars sits exquisitely hidden from the sum-mertime heat of Bryan-College Sta-

Not many people know about this wonderful escape spot – per-fect for a romantic picnic or just a leisurely day spent sitting on the terrace sipping some of the Brazos Valley's most crisp, lively wines.

And while the summer heat withers and dries the greenery around us, the vineyards at Messina Hof are basking in the sun, cultivating berries rich in flavor and aroma - just waiting to be

With good timing, these delicious fruits are not having to wait aminute more. Harvest time at the winery began Friday. And the Messina Hof Pickers Club is con-

verging upon the vineyards to bring in the harvest. Comprised of more than 450 volunteers, the Pickers Club begin every year from mid-July through August 4 to experience grape harvesting. Hand pickers come in from surrounding areas; they are of all ages and may have little or no experience with the art of grape

For husband and wife duo Raisin and Jim Schwerdfeger of Beaver Creek, this season is their first time to pick grapes.

"We've picked peaches and tomatoes before," says Raisin, "but never grapes. The berries are absolutely beautiful and much

sweeter than I thought. Paul Bonarrigo, owner and winemaker, says the grapes ripen

in July.
"The perfect green grape starts to raisin and turns an almost honey It is the shriveled grape that pro- makes for a much finer wine." vides a concentrat

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n of the

fect" grape; the winery has also maintained its old style tradition – hand picking the bunches of grapes off each and every vine.

Bonarrigo's wife, Merrill, says picking the grapes by hand eliminates the stems and leaves, which that make the work worthwhile. cause a bitter flavor.



Norman Watson, a volunteer picker from Cedar Park, slices off a bunch of grapes at Messina Hof's harvest

to raisin and turns an almost honey color," says Bonarrigo. "We're not looking for a perfectly round grape. cess gets most of the extra stuff out, hand picking

Merrill says many of the pickers return in No-"And that is what gives the vember to taste "their" wine - Chenin Blanc, a fresh wine a classic taste."

The classic tastes of Messina
Hof are not only due to the "perform and effervescent tasting wine.

"They (pickers) really feel like this is their wine afterwards," Merrill says.

Returning for his second year, Lester Kinkade of Wharton says it's the fellowship that keeps him coming back.
"I like the fresh air, meeting new people and just

being a part of things," Kinkade said. But for the Schwerdfegers, it's the fringe benefits

"The pay isn't good," says Jim. "We do it for the Pickers must remove any leaves or stems when cutting grapes off the vine

Spaces are still available for anyone interested in the harvest. Pickers should come prepared to do a little grape stomping and wine tasting.

Messina Hof also conducts daily tours of the winery. Tours are free. For more information call (409) 778-WINE.

Story by Yvonne Salce

Photos by Söndra N. Robbins

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Individuals 12 years of age and older with "jock itch" or "ringworm" are being recruited for a research study of an antifungal medication. \$125.00 will be paid to volunteers who complete this study.

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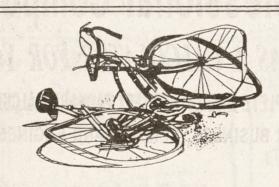
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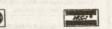
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