

Lifestyles

Saturday, September 14, 1991

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'Best wine of the decade' Messina Hof offers new diversions for Ags

By Martha Rice
Battalion Gameday



Sondra N. Robbins/The Battalion

Where does the "Best Wine of the Decade" come from? France, maybe? Or California? How about Bryan, home of Messina Hof Wine Cellars and Vineyards? Messina Hof touts the 1989 Texas Chardonnay Private Reserve, which received first-place honors in the "Texas/France Shoot-Out," a blind taste test between eight Texas and four French Chardonnays.

This fall, Messina Hof is planning special events every weekend, some correspond to holidays and others cater to visitors attending Texas A&M football games.

"Each weekend will have a theme," said Mike Michaelis, Messina Hof's retail sales manager. "Sometimes Texas artists (including those who have designed wine bottle labels for the winery) will be displaying their work in the lobby. Some weekends, local high school jazz bands will be playing. As it gets closer to Thanksgiving, our themes will turn to the culinary, and local chefs will cook dishes for visitors to sample."

Like the winery's grape-oriented gift shop, which sells condiments made with Messina Hof wine, baskets of pruned Messina Hof grapevine twigs and home wine-making kits, the Messina Hof deli serves pâtés, cheeses, and other foods that compliment wine. Throughout football season, the

Norman Watson, a volunteer picker from Cedar Park, helps cut grapes during Messina Hof's harvest this summer. Messina Hof was gourmet deli will sell box lunches for picnics at the lake near the Messina Hof vineyards before and after games.

Messina Hof Winery took root in 1977 when Paul Bonarrigo and his wife Merrill started a vineyard, despite pessimism from many. People thought only the wild varieties of grapes would grow successfully in Texas. But in fact, Texas has a history of winemaking

awarded first place honors in the "Texas/France Shoot-out," a chardonnay taste competition.

stretching back to the Spanish Conquistadors and missionaries. Bonarrigo's grapes flourished in the fertile Brazos hills, and in its first year, Messina Hof made 5,000 gallons of wine.

Today the winery produces more than 50,000 gallons and has become the third largest producer of Texas wines, and winner of more than 180 awards for excellence in international, national

and regional competition.

It is no accident the Bonarrigos have become successful winemakers. Paul's family traces its ancestry to Messina, Sicily, where a succession of first-born sons practiced the art of winemaking. The Bonarrigos' Messina Hof today grows a variety of grapes to produce such award-winning labels as "Texas Blush," "Vino Di Amore Rosso," and, of course, the "Texas Chardonnay."

Harvesting grapes begins in mid-July, and wine lovers throughout the state vie for the chance to stomp a few grapes that will become wine.

"We give the 100 or so volunteers a knife, a cup of coffee, and a lug (a large basket) and they pick the grapes," said Dwayne Yount, a Messina Hof tour guide. "In the afternoon we have a wine and cheese party, and they (volunteers) get to sample wine from the same kind of grapes they have picked. They get to experience winemaking firsthand."

This weekend, and the weekends of Sept. 28 and 29 and Oct. 26 and 27 feature special A&M football themes. Visitors planning to attend games can relax with a complimentary Messina Hof tour and winetasting. Tours are free, but call for reservations.

The wine cellars are about four miles out of Bryan. To get there, travel east on Highway 21 for 2.5 miles, then turn right on Wallis Road. Follow the signs to the vineyards. For more information, call (409) 778-WINE (9463).

Weekly Roundup

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from this week's biggest news makers on campus. The Battalion wanted to include this feature in its Saturday editions so former students and visitors to campus could learn of this week's events.

Monday, Sept. 9

THOUSANDS ATTEND 1991
OPEN HOUSE

Texas A&M's student organizations were out in force Sunday at the 1991 Open House, giving thousands of students the opportunity to find out about groups with interests ranging from the environmental to opera.

Tuesday, Sept. 10

GEOLOGY TAs SHAKE UP SYSTEM
WITH LIST OF COMPLAINTS

Texas A&M geology teaching assistants are upset about salary differences between first-year TAs and experi-

enced TAs because of confusion caused by the University's budget situation.

The Geology Graduate Student Council presented Dr. Mel Friedman, dean of the College of Geosciences, with a list of grievances Sept. 6.

Dr. John Spang, geology department head, said he is aware of the students' concerns, but recent changes in the budget situation have not allowed the department to finalize any decisions on the issue.

Wednesday, Sept. 11

UNIVERSITY LIMITS NUMBER
OF Q-DROPS

The University's expanded Q-drop period will make Texas A&M students think about classes they might consider dropping, but the new format will help students in the long run, said the University's registrar.

Donald Carter said Monday these changes were made to benefit students and to make running the University more efficient.

Thursday, Sept. 12

FACULTY PAY RAISE CONSIDERED
UNREALISTIC, UNATTAINABLE

The Texas Faculty Associations demand for a 3 percent salary increase in addition to the 2 percent jump already approved by state Comptroller John Sharp is unrealistic for Texas A&M, a University official said Wednesday.

Dr. E. Dean Gage, A&M provost and senior vice president, said the University already has scraped its last penny looking for funds to stem the tide of the current budget crunch.

James Burnside, assistant to the director of the TFA, said the funds for the increase could come from various "unrestricted local fund balances."

Friday, Sept. 13

UNIVERSITY PLANS LESSON
HOUSING CONTROVERSY

Plans to begin demolition of University owned Brazos Duplexes in October are causing less controversy than the original plans announced last April.

The original plans, which called for the complete destruction of the buildings by August, were criticized as being unfair to graduate students. Residents complained the evictions did not allow them enough time to locate housing that fit their limited incomes.

LOCAL POLICE PREPARED FOR
PROBLEMS AT FOOTBALL GAME

Alcohol has become a growing problem at Aggie home football games, and fans better be ready to pay the price if they decide to drink during the games, local law enforcement officials say.

The large amount of alcohol consumed during game day causes some problems, Lt. Bert Kretzschmar, crime prevention officer in the University Police Department, said.

"We see some fights and make a lot of arrests, especially at LSU games," he said.

TEXAS A&M BOOKSTORE

invites you to come and have

Linda Ellerbee

autograph her book "Move On"

Friday, Sept. 13

from 2-3 p.m.

and Saturday, Sept. 14

from 10:30-11:30 a.m.

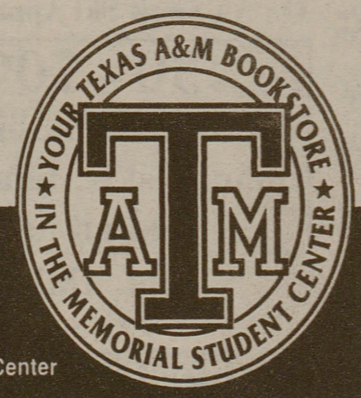
in the TAMU Bookstore -

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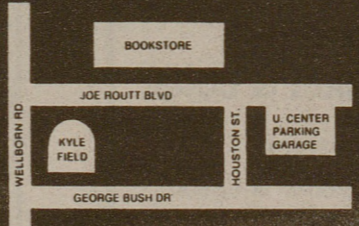


Parking will be available on Friday for anyone who purchases a copy of Linda Ellerbee's "Move On."

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Summer semesters &
between semesters:
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