

Tuesday, July 24, 2001

Barreels of fun

STORIES BY MELISSA SOROLA-BILANO

PICTURES BY E. RAY

Messina Hof winery offers Harvest Weekends for wine lovers

There is a tradition in Europe for neighbors of vineyards to help out during the grape harvest. That tradition continues today in the Brazos Valley at the Messina Hof Winery.

The winery has made a celebration out of harvest time with the 18th annual Harvest Weekends. The festivities, which are held the last two weekends in July and the first two weekends in August, are a time for the community to get involved in the harvesting process.

Paul Bonarrigo, owner and winemaker of Messina Hof, said Harvest Weekend started in 1984 when a group of Texas A&M graduate students, who were familiar with the European tradition, asked to help pick the harvest.

Bonarrigo realized the tradition could be passed on, and Harvest Weekends have continued to grow.

The events start with grape picking. After a brief safety seminar, those over 18 years of age are given a "picking knife," and for one hour to an hour and a half, they pick as many grapes as they can.

The winery has made a contest out of this by rewarding those who find "The Big Kahuna," the largest cluster of grapes.

Throughout the picking Bonarrigo leads the group in songs and stories.

Those looking to reenact the famous "I Love Lucy" grape-stomping scene can do it during Harvest Weekend. Bonarrigo said some past participants have shown up dressed as Lucy and Ethel.

After the grapes are picked participants are welcome to stomp the grapes. They can then set their grape footprints on a commemorative T-shirt.

Harvest Weekends are the best time of year for people to learn about winemaking, Bonarrigo said.

"In one day one can see fruit to juice, juice to fermentation," he said.

Other activities include wine and food-pairing seminars and dinners with other wineries, called "vintner" dinners. This year Kendall Jackson and Beaulieu Vineyards wineries are participating in the dinners.

There are also "murder mystery" dinners and a "God-father Feast," which includes menu items like "Don Corleone Tortellini Salad" and "Clemenza's Rosemary Lemon Sorbet."

Jennifer Simpson, public relations director at Messina Hof, said the dinners all focus on "vineyard cuisine" prepared by

the winery's restaurant, The Vintage House.

Vineyard cuisine incorporates the freshest and finest vegetables, many of which are grown on the winery, Simpson said.

"We also try to incorporate wine in all our items," she said.

Bonarrigo said people from all over the world come to Harvest Weekends and a lot of people plan their visits to Texas around harvest time so they may participate.

This year marks the third year Fred and Karen Grampp, of Austin, have participated in Harvest Weekends.

Grampp grew up on a farm in Delaware where he picked grapes. Harvest Weekends gives him a chance to reflect on those memories.

Grampp said he enjoys grape picking and the atmosphere of Harvest Weekends.

"I like the camaraderie in working with other people picking grapes," Grampp said.

Grampp, who has toured wineries throughout the state and Europe, said that even though grape picking is laborious, it does not seem like hard work when you do it during Harvest Weekends.

"There is no pressure and it is a relaxed atmosphere," Grampp said.

Grampp said he and his wife

have made good friends during harvest time.

"We've established relationships with the staff and other people we've met and it's a good feeling to be with people you like," Grampp said.

Craig Collins, a senior speech communications major and Hospitality Specialist at Messina Hof, said harvest is an exciting time for the winery.

"It is a really big part of the year for us because we get to see how our crop was for the year," Collins said.

The Bonarrigo family has been making wine for 200 years. Bonarrigo's family is from Messina, Sicily and his wife's family originates from Hof, Germany, hence the name Messina Hof.

It is a tradition in the Bonarrigo family for the oldest male in the family to be designated as winemaker for that generation and to carry on the name. Bonarrigo is the 6th Paul in the family.

Messina Hof comprises 40 acres and grows the Lenoir grape to make their signature port.

Reservations are required for Harvest Weekends and prices for activities range from \$19.95 to \$89.95 per person. For more information call the Harvest Hotline at (979) 778-9463 Ext. 34.

Wine and the Kitchen

Those looking to find the right wine to go with their meal can find an expert on the subject in Merrill Bonarrigo, A&M class of 1975 and co-founder of Messina Hof Winery.

Bonarrigo, author of *The Ultimate Wine and Food Pairing Cookbook*, said she has primarily learned by experience about which foods and wines go best together.

Bonarrigo said traditionally, white wines are paired with white meats and red wines with red meats, but now that is not the case.

"Now you pair wine with the strongest flavor on the plate, you pair with the seasonings," Bonarrigo said.

An example of this is pairing spicy foods with sweeter wines, Bonarrigo said.

Wine and cheeses are popular combinations and Bonarrigo said these items would be easy for college students to put together.

Mozzarella and Havarti cheeses go best with dry white wines like chardonnay and sauvignon blanc; Jack, feta and goat cheeses go best with chenin blanc and white zinfandel; red wines like cabernet sauvignon and merlot best compliment cheddar and Parmesan cheeses, Bonarrigo said.

See WINE on Page 6.



Tae Park, an employee at Messina Hof, examines a bunch of grapes during the wine festival this weekend.



Sum 41
All Killer No Filler
Island Records

In a hip-hop world of carbon copy boy bands and prima donna divas, music television and radio stations have found a throwback to the days of '80s and '90s punk metal in Sum 41.

"Fat Lip," the band's first release off of their second studio recording effort, *All Killer No Filler*, bounces along happily in the fusion of rock and rap pioneered and popularized by the Beastie Boys some 15 years ago. But to distinguish Sum 41, imagine them as a troop of beastly boys hopped up on Kool-Aid and Smarties.

To say that the Sum 41 sound is juvenile or illegitimate would be unfair — unfair to those determined bands that first explored the realms of

metal and punk, whose style Sum 41 has embraced.

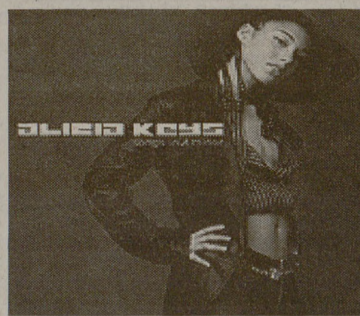
Musically, Sum 41 offers nothing new; in no way are they on the cutting edge of rock-and-roll. The songs are well-played and entertaining, however. The guitar-based album flows smoothly from track to track, incorporating pop-rock intros and choruses with punk-purist friendly verse rhythms that all sound much too familiar.

Other tracks follow with youth-friendly lyrics, speaking on a range of themes like the quest for individuality, non-conformity and complacency.

As for romantic songs, do not look for any sweet odes to virgin maidens on this CD. Lyrics examining the male/female relationship concentrate on mutual confusions and miscommunications, not professions of undying love.

The last song on the disk, "Pain for Pleasure," might just be the most memorable, simply for its different style. This track is a heavy-metal heavyweight in the truest sense. Speedy riffs and devilish lyrics will leave listeners head-banging as they reach for a grown-up CD to break the levity. (Grade C)

— Thomas Phillips



Alicia Keys
Songs in A Minor
J Records

With so many female, teen-pop queens singing about genies in bottles and having love sent to them from heaven above, it is actually nice to see a young female with pure talent and depth in her music. Alicia Keys, a 20-year-old New York native, has released her debut album, *Songs in A Minor*, that has blown everyone away. Keys, unlike her peers Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, produced, wrote and played instruments on the majority of the tracks on her album. She has a rich, soulful sound in her music that can be compared to Etta James or Billie Holiday, but she

has her own unique R&B style.

"Fallin'," her first single, gives just a taste of the exceptional music that is offered on this album. Her piano skills are showcased on each track. The jazzy feel incorporated in "Fallin'" is very soothing, as she sings about how she keeps on falling in love with the same person no matter how hard she tries to resist.

Keys gives us the feel of music that was present in the day of the Harlem Renaissance, but at the same time, she puts a modern twist to many of her tracks. She fuses "old school" and hip-hop on the song, "Girlfriend," where she collaborates with So So Def artist Jermaine Dupri. The track has Keys' piano stylings layered with Dupri's hip-hop dance beats.

It is no wonder Keys is No. 1 on the charts. She has been trying to share her natural talent with the mainstream world for about five years. Keys' talent is truly genuine and definitely unique in this world of pop icons and template songs about teenage love. (Grade A)

— Dino Ramos

A = instant classic B = a cut above C = average
D = don't buy it F = burn in effigy

Box Office

Jurassic Park III stomps other films

LOS ANGELES (AP) — *Jurassic Park III* dominated the competition at the weekend box office, earning \$50.7 million to claim the top spot.

The third sequel in the dinosaur saga has earned \$81.3 million since it debuted Wednesday.

The Julia Roberts comedy *America's Sweethearts* opened in second place with \$30.1 million. Last week's top movie, *Legally Blonde*, fell to third place with \$11.1 million.

1. *Jurassic Park III*, Universal, \$50.7 million, 3,434 locations, \$14,785 average, \$81.3 million, one week.

2. *America's Sweethearts*, Sony, \$30.1 million, 3,011 locations, \$10,024 average, \$30.1 million, one week.

3. *Legally Blonde*, MGM, \$11.1 million, 2,695 locations, \$4,120 average, \$43.4 million, two weeks.

4. *The Score*, Paramount, \$10.7 million, 2,160 locations, \$4,983 average, \$37.1 million, two weeks.

5. *Cats & Dogs*, Warner Bros., \$6.8 million, 3,040 locations, \$2,242 average, \$72.4 million, three weeks.

Hope Pregnancy Centers
OF BRAZOS VALLEY

FACING AN UNPLANNED PREGNANCY?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE.

Free Pregnancy Test • Complete Confidentiality
Pregnancy Peer Counseling Service
Information on Abortion Risks

695-9193 846-1097

205 Brentwood College Station M, W-F 9-5, Tues 9-8
3620 E. 29th St. Bryan M-W, F 9-5, Th 9-8, Sat 8-12

COODER GRAW

TEXAS SUMMER TOUR
THIS THURSDAY

at
SHADOW CANYON

Date Night

Only \$25.00 per couple

Appetizer, 2 salads, 2 entrees, & a dessert to share

at
CENARE
Italian Restaurant

* Only Tuesdays and Wednesdays
No coupon needed

404 University Dr. 696-7311