



THE WINE REPORT, May/June 2004

SOUTH AFRICA ON THE MOVE LITERALLY "The African Queen" hits the road with a boatload of wine

Be on the lookout for a stronger South African presence on store shelves this year. In an effort to introduce and promote the country's wines to the American market, Hemingway & Hale, a wine wholesaler and importing company and one of the largest importers of South African wines to the United States, is using an innovative marketing tool "The African Queen".

It's not the steamer that Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn chugged around in during the classic movie. The "Queen" is a smartly decorated and comfortable 37-foot motor coach that welcomes aboard members of the wine trade to taste a number of South African wines and absorb the country's wine history. "There are no distractions here, like in a store—no phones, no customers, so [salespeople and wine distributors] can really taste the wines," says Cedric Nieuwoudt, CEO of Hemingway & Hale.

"We need to create an awareness of South Africa," says Melissa Dient, a public relations officer for Hemingway & Hale and one of the representatives aboard the "Queen". The African Queen made a three-day stop in Atlanta at the beginning of March, after having traveled through 10 states in three weeks. Says Dient: "The response to the wines and to the African Queen has been fantastic." The African Queen is slated to return to Atlanta in July.

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Those '70s Wines

Winemaking icon Walter Schug opens rare Insignia that he made

Another momentous wine event took place in Atlanta on the heels of The High Museum Wine Auction. Winemaker Walter Schug gathered with a small group of lucky tasters the morning after all the bidding was over to sample wine he made nearly 50 years ago. The original winemaker for Joseph Phelps, who now makes wines under his own name, opened the first six vintages (1974-1979) of the now famous Joseph Phelps Insignia wines.

Through the generosity of Doug Bryant, owner of Sherlock's and Sanders wine shops in Atlanta, about 18 members of the media and wine-shop employees assembled at the Georgian Club the Sunday following the auction. Bryant's father had purchased the magnans several years ago and left them to his son. The younger Bryant, who was not able to attend as he was on a plane to Bordeaux, felt that the 30-year anniversary of the first vintage was reason enough to let his staff taste a little history.

After trying several of Schug's more recent achievements, the crowd was stunned to see how vibrant most of the older wines still were, especially

the 1974. The rapt crowd listened as Schug recalled anecdotes of the vintages and the thinking behind making the first Bordeaux-style wine in California. "It was all a big experiment," Schug said, noting as he looked through his original blending notes that the '74 and '76 vintages were nearly all Cabernet and the '75 Insignia was nearly all Merlot. Underlining how times have changed, Schug reported that a regularized bottle of Insignia (the magnans were library wines made for Schug and Phelps and never sold to the public) went for about \$20 in the 1970s. The 2000 Insignia's price tag: \$155.

—Gil Katers



Walter Schug relaxes through with four of the Insignia he bottled in the 1970s.

South Africa On The Move—Literally

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"We need to create an awareness of South Africa," says Melissa Dient, a public relations officer for Hemingway & Hale and one of the representatives on board the "Queen". The African Queen made a three-day stop in Atlanta at the beginning of March, after having traveled through 15 states in three weeks. Says Dient: "The response to the wines—and to the African Queen—has been fantastic." The African Queen is slated to return to Atlanta in July.

—Suzie Manning



The 37-foot motor coach prowled the highways of America this spring.

Check This Out

Atlanta

May 8—Mother's Day Gourmet package at the Beechwood Inn, located in Clayton, GA. The one-night lodging package includes a romantic wine dinner, breakfast and a gift bag for \$375.30/couple (including tax and gratuity). A two-night lodging package is \$580 (including tax and gratuity). For more information or to make reservations, call (866) 782-2488 or visit www.beechwoodinn.com.

June 20—2nd Annual Father's Day Classic Car Show & Cookout at Wolf Mountain Vineyard & Winery. Feast on grilled burgers, marinated chicken breasts and sausages with salads and all the trimmings. 12-5 p.m. \$25 includes wine tasting, tax and gratuity. Reservations required. (770) 587-0962.

Birmingham

May 21-23—Southern Breeze Coastal Wine Tour in Orange Beach, AL. Celebrate wine and food. Friday: Vintage dinners at Gaubert's Restaurant and Craft Farms' Palmer Dining Room. 7-10 p.m. Grand Wine Tasting at Saubox Cay. Saturday: 1-6 p.m. and Sunday: 1-5 p.m. Hobbies by the Sea. Beaches or Beaches, Beaches Resort. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday. Seminars include Coastal Cuisine (9:30-10:50 a.m.), Riedel Stemware (11 a.m.-noon), Meritage Blending (12:30-1:30 p.m.) and Australian Terroir (2-3 p.m.). Event tickets prices range from \$40 to \$120. (251) 968-4500, ext. 126 or www.coastalwine.com.

Charlotte

May 14-15—3rd Annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival kicks off on Friday with an auction at the Holden Inn Grand Ballroom in Jonesville, NC, to benefit the High Chatham Memorial Hospital. The event begins at 7 p.m. Tickets: food and wine, \$50/person; drawdown, \$100/ticket. For more information, email jpandrick@highchatham.org or visit www.highchatham.org/wine or visitation.htm. On Saturday, the festivities continue at the Municipal Park in Elkin, NC, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. There is no admission fee, although wine tasting costs \$15 at the gate or \$10 in advance. For more information visit www.allamericawineries.com/vv04.

Your calendar of hundreds of other wine-related events begins on page 56. If you have a wine-related event or program, let us publish your information. See page 57 for submission details.