

UP & DOWN THE WINE ROADS

Stags Leap AVA celebrates 25 years

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If you missed the 25th anniversary celebration on the weekend of April 25-27 of the Stags Leap AVA, you missed three great afternoons of wine and food events. Nineteen wineries opened their doors and pulled corks on bottles of some of Napa Valley's most celebrated wines. Many of the wineries offered drool-inducing foods to accompany their wines. They were perfect days with blue skies and soft breezes to help enjoy the famous Napa Valley hospitality.

Speaking of missing things, we missed the celebration of Madrigal Winery's 20th anniversary this past weekend, although the property is less than a mile from our modest digs. Reportedly, happy guests enjoyed the day of sipping wines, live music and gastronomic goodies.

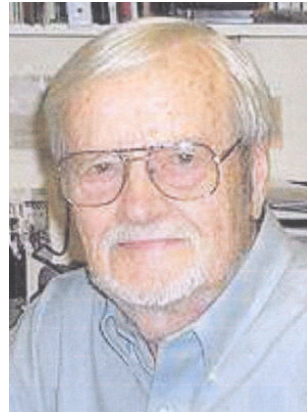
If the paucity of coins in your pocketbook prohibited you from flying to Louisville to view the 140th running of the Kentucky Derby, an electronic viewing at the Long Meadow's Famstead restaurant in St. Helena was an exciting second choice. Attendees, including ladies in huge-brimmed hats and men in seersucker jackets (de rigueur) for the occasion, sipped mint juleps, the official beverage of choice, to watch the equine beauties "Run for the Roses." I guess you know by now that the winner was the California-bred, California Chrome, the first California-bred horse to win the Derby since 1962.

Here is an event coming in the next few days, May 15-18, for pinot noir enthusiasts: the 17th annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival with 45 pinot noir producers from around California participating. Seminars start on Friday night; the Grand Tasting at Goldeneye Winery is on Saturday afternoon, with dinners at numerous wineries in the evening; and open houses on Sunday. For details, contact Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association or go to AVWines.com.

The 2014 BottleRock Festival, scheduled for May 30, 31 and June 1 in Napa, is developing to be a huge festival, and will feature 60 bands on four stages; 40 wineries and dozens of food offerings. The mind-boggling details, including ticket prices, may be viewed at BottleRockNapaValley.com.

Anniversaries, continued: Next month, the Napa Valley Napoleons, a social, literary group that has met four or five times a year at local restaurants for more than 30 years (which may be some kind of record) and are devotees of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, meet to discuss his stories and enjoy communal camaraderie, wines and food. The group was started and is led by retired Michigan State professor Donald Yates, and his wife, Joanne Yates, of St. Helena.

The Robert Mondavi Winery has announced its 45th year of summer jazz concerts. This year's five concerts are scheduled from June 28, with the traditional starter, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, making its 40th appearance. It is followed by Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Five for Fighting (don't



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know where they get those crazy names), David Koz and Friends and Colbie Caillat. Visit RobertMondaviWinery.com for dates and tickets.

Speaking of anniversary events: WineSong, a charity auction and tasting, at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens at Fort Bragg on the magnificent Mendocino coast, celebrates 30 years of benefiting the Mendocino Coast District Hospital.

If you have never attended a WineSong celebration, it is an afternoon of wine, food and music in one of the most beautiful venues in all of California. One hundred wineries from Mendocino, Sonoma and Napa counties and far beyond will pour their elixirs.

The botanical gardens consist of 47 acres of breathtaking beauty of forests, fern groves, riots of colorful flowers, bubbling streams and exquisite views of the Pacific Ocean. Paths wind through the forests and gardens, and music is supplied by trios and quartets along the way. Visit WineSong.org for more info and tickets.

CABOOSE ITEM: HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY! ("My earliest memory of my mother was her taking me in the middle of the night from my warm, warm cot and putting me on a cold, cold pot.")

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