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FREE

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**MONTECITO
MISCELLANY**



Diane Boss hosts Jean-Michel Cousseau in advance of big upcoming affair at El Encanto, p.6

the orange soufflé they served what is called the finest dessert wine in the world - Chateau d'Yquem 2001. Who am I to argue? It can age to 100 years. That was followed by the oldest, a Bodegas Toro Albala 1946. There were only 825 bottles produced (100 points). Older than some of our readers.

Archie's take on this wine business is, "The shorter I get, the less I can drink. The brain cells I have disposed of by drinking wine, I didn't need." I'll drink to that!

Australian Wine Symposium

The symposium was held at the newly opened Santa Barbara Inn. One of the attendees declared this the best she'd ever attended. It was certainly due to Sparky Marquis, who had come all the way from Australia to bring us his Mollydooker Wines and entertain as well as educate us. Archie had met him on a trip to Australia.

The first thing we learned was a mollydooker is someone who is left-handed in Aussie slang. Since both he and his wife are, they named their winery the same. Next, how long to age a wine? Sparky jokes, "As long as it takes to find a corkscrew." Except his wines have screw tops, so it's even faster. Three out of every 12 bottles of wine spoil because of cork problems. They also use the least sulphites possible, instead, adding nitrogen to preserve the wine. Sparky showed us how to shake the wine to release the nitrogen, which is not necessary after two years.

The Mollydooker Boxer shiraz has been called the best shiraz under \$28 in the world. He also created the number-two wine in the world, according to the *Wine Spectator's* Top 100 list for 2014. The winery makes nine reds



Sparky Marquis at his wine symposium and only one white. We had generous portions of four wines to taste, ending with their most expensive at \$185 a bottle.

Sparky says the key word should be "Wow!" It was. Since he didn't want to haul his wine back to Australia, he gave away all he had to us.

Champagne and Caviar Brunch

Then it was off to Stella Mare's for that Louis Roederer Champagne and Black River Caviar brunch. Graham Gaspar was there representing his caviar farm, which has been around since the early 1990s - the only sturgeon farm in the southern hemisphere, Uruguay. Graham says, "It has been called the finest caviar on the planet." It was a day of superlatives!

Along with all the champagne you wanted, we tasted the first course of Siberian Black Caviar and avocado deviled egg. The second course was

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