



## HOLIDAY WISHES

It has not been the dullest year, but then when are they ever? We have seen quite a bit of turmoil and ups and downs. It seems like it never ends, yet when the Holidays come, everything is made right and hopefully, anxieties calm down, good meals are savored, excellent bottles opened and enjoyed, and peace reigns. I would like to thank our customers for their loyalty and for giving Corti Brothers the opportunity to expose them to new wines, foods, and experiences. May it long continue!

**OUR VERY BEST HOLIDAY WISHES FOR 2013 AND FOR A PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS 2014.**

## TRADITIONAL METHOD RED WINE VINEGAR

There are many vinegars on the market today. Most are forgettable. Real wine vinegar--that product produced from the slow acetic fermentation of sound, low alcohol wine--has become an almost endangered species. But I am pleased to offer this particular vinegar **TRADITIONAL METHOD RED WINE VINEGAR**, the fruit of a project begun in 1977 by BRAD ALDERSON, the now retired general manager of Mondavi's Woodbridge winery in Lodi. I have known Brad since his student days at UC Davis.

Despite common myth, vinegar is not spoiled wine. It is another wine product and it is better made if the wine is sound rather than spoiled. As my grandfather used to say: "It is harder to make good vinegar than to make good wine." The acetic fermentation is essentially bacteriological and temperamental. This means you must know what you are doing to make good vinegar. Historically, it was the late Dino Barengo in Acampo, California, who made the best red wine vinegar in California. Brad's **TRADITIONAL METHOD VINEGAR**, is the successor to Barengo's production. Dino helped get Brad's production off to a good start in 1977.

The "Traditional" in Traditional Method Vinegar is often called Orleans Method, coming from this famous city in the north of France responsible for the largest vinegar production in that country. What it entails is allowing wine to slowly acetify in casks with air holes drilled into the heads and kept at an even temperature to insure complete acetification. Then the vinegar is aged in what some would call a modified solera system, where whatever quantity is removed as finished product is replaced by a slightly younger product in the same amount. Since the original vinegar was started in 1977, some of this product is in all the casks. Since this vinegar has not been sterile filtered, it will throw a natural deposit. Just let it rest and decant if it bothers you.

Good, well aged vinegar is a real joy. It is not thick as is Aceto Balsamico, nor is it sweet. It should be crisp, very aromatic and refreshing to taste. **TRADITIONAL METHOD** is not reduced before bottling, but is at natural strength of 75 grain (7.5% acetic acid.) Thus you use less, but end up having more flavor. It is an impressive vinegar. I was impressed and know you will be also.

**TRADITIONAL METHOD RED WINE VINEGAR** 375ml bottle \$17.99 (#3250) Case/12 \$194.00 (#3250C).

## **OLAVE CORATINA EXTRA VIRGIN OIL FROM CHILE: Mugelli Prize Winner, July 2013**

New Chilean extra virgin oils have just arrived. **OLAVE** is one of the largest olive growing and oil producing companies in Chile and its **ORGANIC CORATINA** varietal entry in the Los Angeles International Olive Oil competition in July 2013 came out winning a Gold Medal, Best of Class, Best of Show, and the Marco Mugelli Prize. The **Mugelli Prize** is the highest award given at the L.A. competition and is the tasters' choice for the best oil from the Best of Show winners. (For complete transparency, I am the Chairman of the tasting, but do not taste.) **CORATINA** is a varietal from southern Italy, from Puglia mainly, that produces intense fruity oils with great character. In Chile it is no exception. With great aromatic intensity and a balanced fruity, fresh olive flavor with high polyphenols that is also well balanced, it stood out from the beginning of the tasting as an exceptional oil and proved its mettle.

Another oil entered, a Silver Medal winner, is the Olave **ORGANIC FRANTOIO**. It also shows its classical varietal character of rich, grassy green-ness and pungency, just as it does in Tuscany. It is different from the **CORATINA** in that it is slightly lighter weight, a medium fruity intensity, but delicious. These Chilean oils show the potential that Chile has in South American virgin oil production. Both are wonderful examples of excellent production technology and the right cultivar in the right place.

**OLAVE ORGANIC CORATINA, Mugelli Prize winner** \$18.99 500ml (#3251) \$102.00 case/6 (#3251C)

**OLAVE ORGANIC FRANTOIO, Silver Medal** \$18.99 500ml (#3252) \$102.00 case/6 (#3252C)

## **POJER AND SANDRI VINEGARS FROM FRUIT AND WINE**

Wine makers **Mario Pojer** and **Fiorentino Sandri** have been making wine in Italy's Trentino region since 1977. Their wines have appeared on these pages before. Now I would like to introduce to you another product of theirs: Vinegars.

**POJER & SANDRI VINEGARS** are not your usual vinegars. They are very special, all made from wine, but not all made from grape wine. Red and white wine vinegar is produced, but remarkable vinegars are produced from fruit wines such as quince, raspberry, elderberry, blackberry, cherry. These wines are produced by crushing the fruit and fermenting it to produce a wine which is then acetified. Thus when they produce raspberry vinegar it is made from raspberry wine, acetified, not grape wine vinegar to which raspberry juice has been added.

The most important thing about the Pojer & Sandri vinegars is that they are a conscious effort to make some of the most delicate, yet forceful vinegars, to be found. To this end, since it is impossible to keep vinegar on the same premise with wine, Pojer and Sandri bought an old **Maso** (farmhouse) in 1998, called **Besler**. **MASO BESLER** is in the Val di Cembra just to the north of where their winery and distillery is. Besler in Ladino (another Romance language spoken in Italy's mountainous arc of the Dolomites and Eastern Alps) means "shepherd's hut." This old site was completely rebuilt to house the vinegar operation and a small agriturismo.

Since the fruit vinegars are expensive to produce and you really don't need a lot to appreciate them, it was decided to package them in spray bottles. This allows you to spray the vinegar on whatever you would like, enhancing the dish with the particular fruit flavor and acetic accent. It may sound gimmicky, but is not. It is merely a modern take on the condiment cruet sets found on all good tables 100 or so years ago. As condiments, they are really wonderful. As vinegars, exquisite. And as a gift for knowledgeable friends, unique. To this end, they have created a table top set of all eight of the vinegars, held in a traditional "Cirmolo" (Arolla Pine wood) caddy so that you have all the different flavors to play with at table. Not only will you find these vinegars exquisite, but also conversation pieces in themselves. **They all sell for \$16.99 each 100ml spray bottle. The vinegars are:**

**VITE:** Both white wine vinegar (#3253), and red wine vinegar (#3254) **MORA:** blackberry (#3255)

**PERA:** Williams pear (#3256) **LAMPONE:** raspberry (#3257) **RIBES:** black currant (#3258)

**CILIEGIA:** cherry (#3259) **COTOGNO:** quince (#3260) **The "Cirmolo" caddy of 8 bottles: \$159.99 (#3261)**

## ANDIS SEMILLON 2012 FROM SHENANDOAH VALLEY, AMADOR COUNTY

**SEMILLON** was an early grape arrival in 19<sup>th</sup> century California. With other varieties, it is responsible for the famous sweet whites of Bordeaux, Sauternes and Barsac, and together with sauvignon blanc, the dry white wines of Graves and other areas in the region. It was very well liked at one time in California for its quality, highly recognizable varietal character, and its production levels. Semillon in Livermore Valley, California, was always famous and the most famous planting was that of Wente where the original cuttings came from Sauternes' Château d'Yquem. In California, semillon produces dry and sweet wines, but it is the dry wines that find the most favor. (Perhaps the most famous sweet Semillon was that called Premier Semillon, produced at Cresta Blanca winery by Myron Nightingale in the very late 1950s by artificially inoculating picked semillon bunches with Botrytis cinerea spores and inducing botrytis on the bunches off the vine. The resulting wine was a real Sauternes type, that when sold, sold for more money than did Yquem at the same time. So much for history.)

**ANDIS WINERY** is a new winery in the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County. It sits on the top of a rise and the striking new building is a prominent and pleasing example of modern winery architecture. The vineyard these grapes come from is the Dillion Vineyard owned by Bill Dillion. The vines are about 30 years old. I believe the first Semillon planted in the Shenandoah Valley may have been at the old D'Agostini winery, now Sobon Estate, where the grapes went into a dry white wine D'Agostini produced called "Sauterne." An early, modern planting was made by Cary Gott at Montevina in the early 1980s. Others followed.

**ANDIS 2012 SEMILLON** is a lovely example of the varietal. It has the noted "white fig" fragranciness described in the classic texts. There is a fullness to the wine that is balanced by very fine acidity and a lingering "figgy" finish. This is the kind of white wine that with some bottle age will develop the characteristic lanolin character for which, when aged, the variety is famous. To prevent any off character due to cork, the wine is bottled in Stelvin caps.

The most famous dry Semillon in the world is that marvel made in Australia's Hunter Valley. There the wine needs several years of bottle age to show its traces. It is, as Jancis Robinson has written, "Australia's gift to the wine world." Corti Brothers still has several vintages of mature Hunter Semillon which you should experience. But right now, you should take a serious look at the **Andis Semillon 2012** for near and future drinking. We have a small quantity left of the **2011 ANDIS SEMILLON**. This wine will show you what the variety is like with a bit more age on it.

**ANDIS SEMILLON 2012**, 12 % Shenandoah Valley, Amador Co. \$17.99 750ml (#3262) \$194.00 cs/12 (#3262C)

**ANDIS SEMILLON 2011**, 12.9% Shenandoah Valley, Amador Co. \$17.99 750ml (#3263) \$194.00 cs/12 (#3263C)

## MESS-CIÛA: A VERY SPECIAL BEAN SOUP FROM LIGURIA

**MESS-CIÛA** (mess-CHEW-ah) is a dish from La Spezia in Italy's Liguria di Levante. La Spezia is practically the end of Liguria where it meets Tuscany and is a notable port. The word in Ligurian means "mixture." It is a mixture of beans and grains to be cooked as a soup, then dressed with salt, pepper, and a bit of Ligurian, or other light fruity oil.

**MESS-CIÛA** is a very special bean soup which is simplicity itself to cook. If you can boil water, you can make this superb dish that is both vegetarian and vegan. This mix contains only beans and grains. You wash and soak the beans and grains; drain, add fresh water and cook. It can be changed to include any other kind of thing you might want to add, but the original soup is this one. The detailed recipe is also on the bag.

History recounts that this was a dish made by the wives of stevedores who would carefully collect the spillage from sacks of beans and grain, unloaded from ships' holds. These "gleanings" would be the basis of this very simple yet tasty dish typical of La Spezia. Although one can doctor the recipe, it is really worthwhile tasting first as directed and then additions made. Sometimes, simplicity really does work. Especially if what you are looking for is simplicity!

**CORTI BROTHERS MESS-CIÛA** \$6.99 500g bag (#3264) \$37.00 case/6 bags (#3264C)

## PANETTONE FROM BARDI AND LOISON: It's Holiday Time Again

For Italians, when **PANETTONE** arrives, Christmas is just around the corner. From **LOISON**, our producer in the Veneto, we have several new flavors this holiday season. These panettone are: **ZAFFERANO e LIQUIRIZIA** (saffron and liquorice); **REGAL CIOCCOLATO** (Ecuadorian chocolate bits); and **MARRON GLACÉ** (puree of candied chestnuts.) All panettone are 1 kilo in size unless noted:

### LOISON PANETTONE

**MANDARINO** with the Late Mandarin of Ciaculli of Palermo in Sicily, boxed \$37.99 each (#3265)

**AMARENE** with large candied Amarene cherries, boxed \$35.79 each (#3266)

**CHINOTTO** with candied green Chinotto citrus, boxed \$38.99 each (#3267)

**REGAL CIOCCOLATO** with Ecuador chocolate bits and chocolate cream, boxed \$36.59 each (#3268)

**NOËL** with candied pear, cinnamon and cloves, boxed \$35.89 each (#3269)

**FICO** with the white Dotatto fig from Cosenza, boxed \$38.99 each (#3270)

**ALBICOCCA e ZENZERO** with candied apricot and ginger, boxed \$37.99 each (#3271)

**TORCOLATO** with raisins plumped in Maculan Torcolato wine, wrapped, \$37.59 each (#3272)

**LATA**, in this year's commemorative tin. Eighth year of presentation 750g size \$29.99 each (#3273)

**MARRON GLACÉ**, with a cream of candied chestnuts, boxed \$37.79 (each) (#3274)

**ZAFFERANO e LIQUIRIZIA** with saffron and liquorice, boxed, \$43.89 each (#3275)

**CREMA** with a vanilla pastry cream, wrapped, \$35.99 each (#3276)

**LIMONE** with a limoncello cream, wrapped, \$35.99 each (#3277)

**PANETTONCINI**, mini panettone 100 g size, smallest made, boxed \$9.99 each (#3278)

**MAGNUM 5 kilo** size, wrapped \$134.00 each (#3279) **MAGNUM 10 kilo** size, wrapped \$241.59 each (#3280)

Not panettone, but **PASTICCERIA**, cookies to us, 6 flavors, individually wrapped, boxed,  
Flavors: Coffee, Cacao, Rice Flour Shortbread, Cornmeal with butter, Cornmeal Shortbread, Butter cookie.  
**PASTICCERIA** gift box 16.9 oz \$29.99 each (#3281)

### BARDI PANETTONE (all are 1 kilo size)

**ALTO**, tall shape, traditionally boxed, \$26.99 each (#3282)

**BASSO**, low shape, traditionally boxed, \$29.99 each (#3283)

**BASSO FONDENTE** covered with chocolate, wrapped in silver paper, blue ribbon \$31.99 each (#3284)

**SENZA CANDITI**, just raisins, no candied fruit, red paper wrapped, gold ribbon \$26.99 each (#3285)

**NOCCIOLA**, glazed with hazelnut paste, wrapped in gold paper with red/gold ribbon \$29.99 each (#3286)

**PANDORO**, tall, star shaped, the New Year's cake, no fruit, vanilla sugar, tall box \$27.99 each (#3287)

## **TWO CHEESES FOR YOUR TABLE: COUGAR GOLD AND BARINAGA BASSERI**

**BARINAGA BASSERI** is a sheep's milk cheese produced in Point Reyes, California, and **COUGAR GOLD** is a cow's milk cheese produced at Washington State University, Pullman, Wa. Both are wonderful cheeses and will honor your holiday table. Both are firm paste cheeses, produced through aging.

**BARINAGA BASERRI** is made from raw sheep's milk from a flock of East Frisian/Katahdin milking sheep from a ranch on the Sonoma Coast owned by a third generation Basque sheep breeder, **Marcia Barinaga**. The name "baserri" means the shepherd's hut in Basque. The **BASERRI** cheese is a tomme style cheese of about four pounds and then there is another size called "Txixi," (pronounced chichi) weighing about a pound and a half. **BASERRI** is a 60 to 90 day aged, creamy textured, rich, almost fruity flavored cheese that would be wonderful with any kind of wine and would fit as both a cheese course cheese or as an appetizer cheese. If you just put it out with a knife, once tasted, it will probably disappear in no time. A lot of other sheep's milk cheese pale beside it. It is very difficult to stop eating .

**COUGAR GOLD** is another very special cheese. It is the creation of the Dairy Department of Washington State, dating from World War II. It is unique in the cheese world since **it is aged in a tin**. There are two versions: the normal which is over a year old (and will take further aging) and the 3 year old, available in very limited quantity. In my opinion, this is the best cow's milk cheese for wine. It is sharp without being acid and creamy without being sweet. If you have cheese loving friends, here are two different cheeses that will bring great smiles of joy. Vintage Port and either or both of these cheeses would be a wonderful entertainment during the winter months. Bring cheese to room temperature before cutting and serving.

**BARINAGA BASERRI** cut pieces, random weight, approx. 1 lb. each \$38.99 pound (#3288)

**BARINAGA TXIXI** whole wheels, approx 1.5 pounds each \$38.99 per pound (#3289)

**COUGAR GOLD (2012 production)** 30 ounce tin \$34.99 each (#3290)

**COUGAR GOLD 3 YEAR OLD (2010 production)** 30 ounce tin \$48.99 each (#3291)

## **TWO CRACKER SUGGESTIONS:**

### **EFFIE'S OATCAKES AND POTTER'S CLASSIC WHITE CRACKERS**

Here are two cracker suggestions to serve with the above cheeses. **EFFIE'S HOMEMADE OATCAKES** are made with wheat flour, malted barley flour, rolled oats and unsalted butter. Reminiscent of English digestive biscuits, they would offer a softish, "biscuit-ty" background for these cheeses.

**POTTER'S CLASSIC WHITE CRACKERS**, are friable, very thin, baked in Sacramento, "flat-bread" like crackers that are crisp, "wheaty," and fragrant.

**EFFIE'S OATCAKES** 7.2oz bag \$5.99 (#3292)

**POTTER'S CLASSIC WHITE CRACKERS** 5 oz bag \$4.99 (#3293)

## **A UNIQUE DRIED FRUIT FOR YOUR HOLIDAY TABLE: DRIED MIRZA MELON FROM CALIFORNIA**

Corti Brothers is extremely pleased to be able to offer our customers something novel and unique. This is “**DRIED MELON.**” Produced by Ruben Mkrtychyan, a grower of **MIRZA** Uzbek melons in Kern County, California, it is being offered to us for the first time. We tasted the prototype last year, and this year the production has formally begun.

**MIRZA MELON** is a large elongated, scented melon with light greenish colored flesh. When ripe, the melons are peeled, seeded, sliced, and laid out to dry on racks in a covered hot house so that the strips are naturally sun dried without direct sunlight. Then the strips are braided, bagged and boxed, two braids in 6 inch boxes. The dried melon is delicious, unique, and stores very well. We do not have an large quantity, so do not delay ordering.

In countries where melons are highly prized, Uzbekistan, being one of the most famous, melons are not just the fresh fruit we commonly see, but used in different ways due to their structure and sweetness. Drying the melon flesh is merely one way of preserving the sweetness for when there are no melons. For us, it is a very different type of dried fruit, which at holiday time, is a welcome addition to the nuts and fruits already typical on our tables. These braided strips need just to be cut into small slices and put as accompaniments to port, sherry, or Madeira for a lovely end to a holiday or winter meal. It takes about 11 lbs of fresh melon to make one pound of dry. I was impressed with **DRIED MIRZA MELON** at first taste. I think you will be also.

From the same grower, we have a tiny quantity of another unique product: **MIRZA MELON JAM**. It takes one melon, about 8 pounds, peeled, seeded, and cooked slowly with a bit of fresh lemon juice until it reduces to produce about 16 oz of jam. This jam looks much like apricot jam, has a very delicate scent and a delicate flavor very much like pumpkin, a relative. There is no other product like it. Its use is limited only by your imagination.

**ISABELL GREEN DRIED MIRZA MELON BRAID** 3.8 oz pair of braids, bagged \$13.99 bag (#3294)

**ISABELL GREEN MIRZA MELON JAM** 8 oz jar \$13.99 each (#3295)

## **TRAINA SUN DRIED TOMATO KETCHUP**

The Traina family from both Friuli and Sicily, has produced sun dried fruit in California since 1929. Recently, they produced a **SUN DRIED TOMATO KETCHUP** which is a wonderful product both as ketchup and for using in other ways: for example, as tomato paste. Traina sun dried tomato ketchup comes in a plastic squeeze bottle, with a self sealing top. It is used as ketchup by merely squirting it where needed, or it can be used to replace those small tins of tomato paste which generally are opened and then thrown away since the quantity used is small. The highly concentrated tomato flavor of **Traina Ketchup** will make you wonder where it has been all your life. Not thin like normal ketchup, it is thick enough to use on a sandwich, but flavory enough to stand on its own as the addition of tomato flavor to sauces or anything where tomato is required. It is very good as a very quick topping for a cracker snack. The tomato intensity is pleasingly unique.

Another Traina product that is special is their **DRIED STRAWBERRIES**. Retaining the shape of the whole strawberry, even strawberry colored, these are a delicious snack on their own or a wonderful addition to the fall and winter dried fruit platter. They are really good. Recently, I took some to China to have with tea and the fit is perfect.

**TRAINA SUN DRIED TOMATO KETCHUP** \$4.99 16oz bottle (#3296) \$26.00 case/6 (#3296C)

**TRAINA WHOLE SUNDRIED STRAWBERRIES** \$4.29 3oz bag (#3297) \$46.00 case/12 (#3297C)

## **A NOVEL DESSERT WINE: VISCIOLA, a traditional grape and wild cherry wine from Italy's Marche**

Italy's **MARCHE** region is on its Adriatic coast across from it is what is now Dalmatia and part of Croatia. This western area of the former Yugoslavia was the origin of the famous cherry liqueur called Maraschino. The cherry variety cultivated for Maraschino is called "marasca." The common word on both sides of the Adriatic for cherry is "**VISHNÁ**," a Turkish word for sour cherry. Hence, the word "Wishniak" in Polish for cherry vodka and wine and the same meaning in other Slavic languages with the "vish" in them.

**VISCIOLE** is the word for wild, sour cherries in Italian. In the Marche, where unique, aromatic red grape varieties are grown, these cherries are added to the red grape juice or wine and fermented or blended together to produce a strongly cherry flavored "wine." This is not a liqueur. It is a wine, albeit one made of grapes (65% wine) and cherries, (35%) not just grapes.

The resulting product is delicious! This is the sort of drink that one could imagine Renaissance princes and cardinals enjoying out of Venetian "tazza" goblets at banquets. Now you can try it also.

The estate of Luigi Giusti in the Marche grows the very local red variety called **LACRIMA DI MORRO D'ALBA**. Corti Brothers has also offered this aromatic red wine previously as both a dry table wine and as a frizzante, lightly sparkling sweet wine, like a red Moscato. Lacrima wine and visciola cherries are worked together to produce this wine called **VISCIOLA** (vee-SHE-oh-lah) Its scent and flavor of cherries, in the Lacrima wine matrix, is remarkable. This is probably **THE** wine made for ice cream or chocolate. It is a revelation in both scent and flavor. Not a lot is produced, but if you want something very enjoyable and not overly sweet for this holiday season, for desserts or just drinking when friends come over, **VISCIOLA** is it.

**VISCIOLA**, Luigi Giusti, 12.5% \$29.99 500ml (#3298) \$323.00 case/12 (#3298C)

## **FAVA FROM SANTORINI**

Although the name **FAVA** may look like the word we know, Vicia Fava, horse beans or fava beans, **FAVA** from **SANTORINI**, from the island of the same name, are a yellow colored, lentil-looking pulse which is actually a split pea. This pulse, occupies a special place on the island and in Greece since it is known to have been cultivated on Santorini for three millenia. The island's soft, sandy soils, rich in potassium, iron and magnesium, together with the short rainy season provides the perfect growing conditions.

Botanically, the Fava of Santorini is *Lathyrus clymenum* L. from the Fabaceae family. If you are familiar with the flower we call "Sweet pea," Fava is in the same family with about some 160 species. I would be remiss, if I did not mention the fact that much like its name sake the fava bean, (Vicia Fava) massive, prolonged consumption of excessive quantities of the Santorini Fava may have a toxic effect. However, normal, occasional consumption of this ancient, tasty pulse, just like consumption of fava beans, is harmless.

The **FAVA** from Santorini, a Protected Denomination of Origin product, comes in a cellophane package with an utterly simple and tasty recipe for using this pulse. Very tasty, with a slightly sweet flavor, Fava can be used in ways similar to hummus, to make very tasty dishes that are completely vegetarian.

**FAVA FROM SANTORINI P.D.O.** \$9.99 400g bag

**TERMS OF SALE: This list supersedes all others. All taxable items, such as wine, beer, or spirits will be taxed at the rate of 8.5%. This is for all sales since we sell in California. Foodstuffs are not taxable. Shipping will be charged at prevailing rates. PLEASE NOTE: In extreme weather, either hot or cold, please give us a shipping address where your order may be properly received and stored. Corti Brothers cannot be responsible for items left without protection.**