

TASTE TRY THESE 5 GREAT WINE BARS OF THE I.E.

INLAND EMPIRE

MARCH 2017

THE REGION'S PREMIER MONTHLY

7 Local Talents to Watch

Get Your Irish Up With 6 Great Cocktails

JIMMIE JOHNSON LEADS NASCAR RETURN

WHO'S WHO IN THE REGION

BEST DENTISTS

FUNNY GIRLS

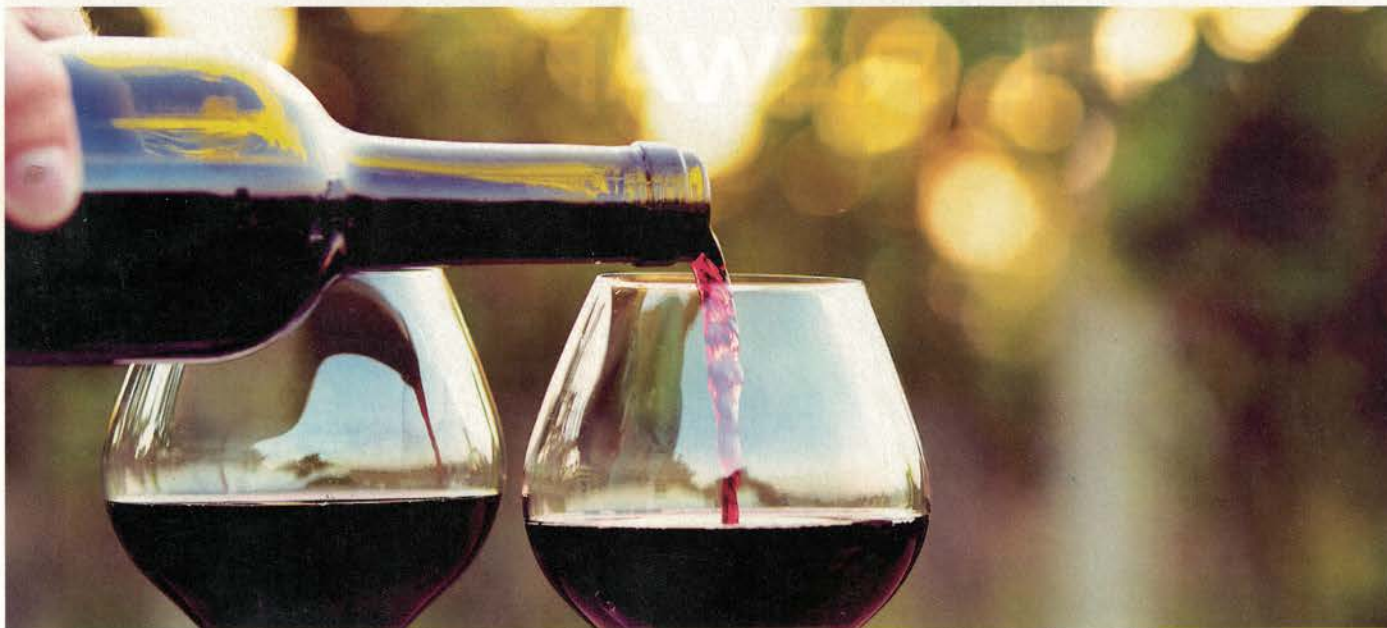
Five Talented Actresses Know How To Make You Laugh

Plus

8 GREAT PASTA DISHES

When you've gotta get comfortable

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WINE COUNTRY

Cab Is King

Cabernet Sauvignon—the bold varietal with a long history—has found a nurturing home in the Inland Empire. *Written by Patrick Bartlett.*

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rown in almost every wine producing country in the world, Cabernet Sauvignon is a global favorite. First introduced in France in the 17th century, Cabernet is much younger than Syrah and was developed by a chance crossing of two Bordeaux grapes: the red grape Cabernet Franc and the white grape Sauvignon Blanc.

This parentage is the key to understanding the unique and distinguishable green notes found in most Cabs, which come from the Sauvignon Blanc with its grassy, green flavor profiles. These green notes vary depending on growing practices, climate, and soil composition. After harvest, the winemaker can work to retain more of the green characteristics, or minimize them depending on the preferred style. That's why green notes like eucalyptus, mint, green olives, and the most assertive green note—green bell peppers—can be a part of your Cabernet tasting experience.

Today the most respected version of a Cabernet wine is the left-bank version of the French Bordeaux red blend. In Bordeaux, the wines are broadly classified left-bank and right-bank because of the Garonne and Gironde rivers. Merlot is dominant on the right-bank north of the rivers; Cabernet is dominant on the left-bank south of the rivers. Not as respected but just as coveted are Cabernets from Napa Valley with their big, bold, velvety, chocolaty style. Unlike Bordeaux blends, the most coveted Napa wines are 100 percent Cabernet.

After California you should look to Australia and Chile as notable Cabernet-producing countries whose upper-end wines compare

favorably, but at much lower prices.

Here in Southern and Central California, winemakers, growers and wine writers assume our hot summer climates are too severe to enable the classic complex profile of the Cabernet fruit to emerge; that they'll end up overripe and jammy and lacking the subtlety of the grape's best expression. But some winemakers have proven successfully that great Cabernet wines can be produced in this warmer climate.

The first 90-plus point Cabernet Sauvignon from Temecula was Lorenzi Estate's 2011, which received 92 points from *Wine Enthusiast* magazine. Lorenzi's 2012 earned 90 points.

"I don't think heat is the problem," says Phil Baily, another noted Cabernet winemaker in Temecula. "We have the same heat degree days as central to northern Napa Valley. Cab's reputation here probably has more to do with the clones. We have one of the original Cab vineyards here [planted in 1968]. Based on unique flavor, deep color, silky texture and minty aromas, we've determined that our vineyards are Wente Clone 7, and that it was the only Clone 7 that Wente sent down here [from Monterey] because the other cab vineyards planted here at that time didn't have the color or character of ours."

In addition to Lorenzi and Baily, other Temecula wineries that offer exceptional Cabernet Sauvignon include Wiens Family Cellars (2013 Reserve Cabernet), Hart Winery (Reserve Cabernet), and Palumbo Family Vineyards & Winery (2012 Cabernet).

Patrick Bartlett is a freelance writer, wine and food educator, and winery brand consultant. He co-owns Mood Wine, an online wine store with a focus on wine tastings, dinners, and wine country tours. moodwine.com