

Yountville Sun

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The Good Life . . . By Sue Elliott

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www.mustardsgrill.com

Each year, *StarChefs.com* recognizes up-and-coming chefs, pastry chefs, sommeliers and mixologists in four major cities with its **Rising Stars Awards**.

This year marks the first time the online magazine for culinary professionals has expanded its focus beyond big cities to reward up-and-comers in Napa and Sonoma counties.

In Napa County, the 2009 Rising Stars Awards went to chefs Nick Ritchie of **Bottega**, Philip Tessier of **Bouchon**, Matt Spector of **JoLe**, Christopher Kostow of **Meadowood Napa Valley** and Jeremy Fox of **Ubuntu**.

The other winners include Pastry Chef Deanie Hickox-Fox of **Ubuntu**, Sommelier Yoon Ha of **La Toque** and Co-Owner Duncan Gott of **Taylor's Automatic Refresher**, who won the Concept Award.

In Sonoma County, Rising Stars chef awards went to husband-and-wife team Eric Korsh and Ginevra Iverson of **Restaurant Eloise**. The other winners include Hotel Chef Jesse Mallgren of **Madrona Manor**, Mixologist Scott Beattie of **Cyrus** and Master Sommelier Geoff Kruth of **Farmhouse Inn and Restaurant**. Chef John Toulze of **The Girl & the Fig**, **The Fig Café** and **Estate** won the

Restaurateur Award, and Chefs **John Stewart** and **Duskie Estes** of both **Bovolo** and **Zazu** received the Sustainability Award.

Considerable effort goes into selecting Rising Stars. For each set of awards, the *StarChefs* editorial team travels to the area in question to conduct in-person tastings and interviews with between 60 and 100 culinary professionals. The team then chooses the 10 to 16 people who "best embody the vanguard of that city's dining scene."

According to *StarChefs*, "Rising Stars . . . have strong, compelling culinary philosophies, are able to see beyond the four walls of their restaurant and are committed to fostering a culinary community by sharing their knowledge with fellow professionals."

"Ultimately, creativity, ambition, exquisite presentation and, most important, delicious food wins a chef the designation of *StarChefs* Rising Star."

Since the awards are for up-and-comers, winners must have less than 10 years of experience in their current role and be under the age of 40 (unless they've changed careers midlife). Sommeliers also must be responsible for at least half the wine buying for their restaurant.

Napa and Sonoma counties' Rising Stars will celebrate their awards in the most delicious way possible: by presenting their signature dishes, cocktails and wine pairings at the **Rising Stars Revue**. This walk-around tasting gala will be held at **Charles Krug Winery** on June 17 at 7 p.m.

Tickets cost \$75 apiece, and they're available at www.starchefs.com/risingstars or by calling 212-966-7575.

If you'd like to attend a pre-event reception that starts at 6 p.m. — with vintage **Nicolas Feuillatte Palmes d'or** Champagne and **Petrossian** caviar, plus early entry to the gala — you can purchase VIP tickets for \$125. The VIP portion of the event is being presented by **Meadowood Napa Valley**, and some of the proceeds will benefit the **V Foundation** for cancer research.

Mustards Grill is continuing to celebrate its 25th anniversary — and its reopening after a kitchen fire in February — by adding a new section to its wine list, called "25 Years, 25 Wines, \$25."

That's right, the wine list now includes more than two dozen wines priced at precisely \$25 per bottle. These wines come from all over the world,

including the Napa Valley and other well-respected regions, such as California's Central Coast; Corbières, France; Sardinia, Italy; Rueda, Spain; and Salta, Argentina.

Not surprisingly, there are more whites than reds on the \$25 list, including one sparkler, the 2003 **Juvé y Camps** Cava from Catalonia, Spain. Plus, there's one rosé, the 2007 **Domaine de Fonsainte** Gris de Gris from Corbières.

Among the still whites are several local wineries' offerings, including the 2007 **Swanson Vineyards** Pinot Grigio, the 2007 **Pine Ridge** Chenin Blanc and the 2006 **Monticello Vineyards** Estate Chardonnay.

The red values include the 2006 **Domaine Chandon** Pinot Noir, the non-vintage **York Creek Vineyards** Cuvée One made with Spring Mountain fruit and the 2005 **Field Stone** Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.

Mustards also continues to offer its **Pour-Off Pair-Off Dinner Series** on Thursday evenings. Each week, **Cindy Pawlcyn** and her team select four different wines that are almost never available by the glass. Then they create a specific dish to pair beautifully with each of them. Upcoming pairings are detailed online at

Brix has dropped the price dramatically for its **Sunday buffet brunch**. You can expect the same sort of spread I described in my last column, including the al fresco seafood bar with **Beau Soleil** oysters and **Laughing Bird** shrimp cocktail.

But now **Brix** has cut the price from \$44 per person to \$32.95. Children ages 7 to 13 dine for \$16, and children 6 and younger eat free.

Brix also has cut the prices on wine in its retail store, where you'll find an ample assortment of chilled whites and sparklers.

Plus, **happy hour** at **Brix** continues to be a big success (weekdays from 4 to 6 p.m.); however, the restaurant has discontinued its **Sunday Supper** and its **Sunday Wine Social**.

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