

Fatherly advice for wine on Dad's Day

Father's Day is, of course, the perfect occasion for lavishing affection and gifts of wine on deserving dads. But it's more than that, much more. It's a day for thinking of fathers who have inspired generations of their children and children's children in the wine world. I was strongly reminded of the importance of such family ties this year when I attended a lunch at The Square in London organized by a group called the Primum Familiae Vini (www.pfv.org).

Comprising 11 of the greatest families in the world of wine today, the group was formed in 1993 by Spain's Miguel Torres and Burgundy's Robert Drouhin, both substantial father figures now in the process of passing the baton to their own children. At the gathering, the 11 younger wines we tasted before the lunch were introduced by the patrician heads of the families present while the younger generation introduced the mature classics with lunch.

Count Piero Antinori, the Big Daddy of the Antinori dynasty, explained the purpose behind the group thus: "The values we share are passion, respect for our vineyards, patience and the fact that we all consider profit not as a goal but a means to strengthen our companies and to maintain continuity."

As guardians of family values and traditions, the heads of the families present were all fathers except for the formidable Baroness Philippine de Rothschild. Yet she herself was the offspring of one of

Bordeaux's most influential fathers, Baron Philippe, who steered his property, Château Mouton Rothschild, from second to first growth status in 1973.

They were all keen to point out the importance of nurturing vineyards until the old vines produced great wines, like fathers themselves, of balance, depth and personality. Their initiative has inspired the establishment of similar family groups such as Australia's First Families of Wine and New Zealand's Family of Twelve.

Not that you have to be a member of such a group to show how a father can lead by example. In Italy's Piedmont, Angelo Gaja is the paterfamilias of a family that's worked its way up from humble beginnings to a position of unrivaled authority in the quality of its fabulous Barbaresco, in particular the three single vineyard wines, Sori Tildin, Sori San Lorenzo and Costa Russi.

In Argentina, Nicolás Catena took over from his father Domingo to establish Catena as one of the great Argentinian wine brands of the 20th century in a remarkable voyage towards high end, high altitude wines such as Nicolás Catena Zapata and Malbec Argentino. As the XY chromosome yields to the XX, both are now in the process of passing their wisdom, knowledge and experience on to their dynamic daughters, Gaia and Laura, respectively.

Given that fathers are by definition older, it would not be out of place to think

along traditional lines when it comes to Father's Day wine gifts. France is a safe bet and you'd have to be a very ungrateful father indeed not to enjoy the gift of a cru classé Bordeaux, a premier or grand cru Burgundy, or a vintage Champagne.

If he has a sweet tooth, you might think in terms of a vintage Port from one of the great years declared by the Port houses. If your father isn't too ancient you could even try and find a vintage of his birth. In Bordeaux, the great



The Gaja winery

vintages of the post-war era were 1945, 1947 and 1949, and then 1959 and 1961. In vintage Port we're talking about 1955, 1963, 1966, and 1970. Older Champagne and Burgundy vintages are harder to find so I wouldn't worry too much if you can't locate one from your father's birth year.

You can always give your father a bottle of wine with a personalized label but he might think it a little bit cheesy and the problem there is that you run the risk of the label being better than the wine. Only go down that route if the father in question is not particularly fussy about the wine he drinks.

For a father who loves his wines and wants to expand his knowledge, I suggest a wine tasting course as the perfect gift. The Wine & Spirit Education Trust does an excellent job in bringing its wine courses to many different parts of the globe. For a



Nicolas Catena and his daughter, Laura

local WSET approved program provider, of which there are now an increasing number in Shanghai, have a look at the following link: http://www.wsetglobal.com/where_to_study.

By the same token, a subscription to a wine magazine guarantees an enhanced enjoyment of wine through an appreciation of the subject. With news, features, tastings and opinions from experienced columnists such as Andrew Jefford, Michael Broadbent and Ch'ng Poh Tiong, an annual subscription to Decanter Magazine (www.decanter.com) is a must for any aspiring wine lover. I have arranged with Decanter an offer to Shanghai Daily readers of a 50 percent discount — £46.75 (US\$xxxx) instead of £94.20 — on the one year, 12 issue subscription. To take advantage of this offer, call +44 (0) 330 3330 233 at national rates and quote

code 18G.

I also have a lot of time for the World of Fine Wine for its erudite features, reports of tastings and auctions, opinion columns, book reviews, sumptuous photography and interviews (I write for both magazines, so I would say that!). It's normally four issues for US\$169 or eight issues for US\$300 (or a gift subscription at the same rates). However, The World of Fine Wine is offering my readers a trial subscription at an attractive discount. Simply go to this secure link to see more and browse some sample features: <http://www.subscribeonline.co.uk/wofw/WFW5>. Or call +44 1795 414 681 quoting code WFW5.

However you choose to celebrate the day, I wish you all a very happy Father's Day on June 17 and hope that a suitably fine bottle of wine is consumed to honor the occasion.



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