

# INFAMOUS

FEBRUARY 2008  
LIFESTYLE  
ENTERTAINMENT  
NIGHTLIFE  
FASHION





## HOT EVENT

# THE VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE INTERNATIONAL WINE FESTIVAL

BY DAENNA VAN MULLIGEN PHOTOS BY LYALL STAFFORD

[www.winediva.ca](http://www.winediva.ca)

Each year, like the imminent arrival of our beloved cherry blossoms, the Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival sets up camp trumpeting the oncoming spring season. Where our visual sense is stimulated by those perfect puffs of pale pink, the VPIWF appeals to our senses of smell and taste. This year, the festival celebrates 30 years of wine in the form of public tastings, seminars, dinners and parties. It's doubtful that back in 1979 anyone could have anticipated this diminutive festival (Robert Mondavi was the only vintner at the inaugural event held at Shaughnessy's Hycroft Mansion) would become a spectacular event featuring 176 wineries from 16 different countries pouring 1,600 different wines.

Yes, our little wine festival has grown up. It has become one of North America's premier wine events and a favourite vehicle for international wineries to introduce their juicy wares to consumers and trade alike. An exceptional opportunity to taste wines, educate your palate and talk to winery principals from around the globe, it's like taking a loofah to your winter-dulled senses.

#### WHAT'S IN STORE THIS YEAR?

We've been dealt a winning hand – two aces – with Italy as the theme country and bubbles as the global focus. The first ace means Vancouver wine drinkers get the chance to taste their way through a vast and ancient wine culture, one that's home to countless grape varieties and, honestly, confuses the hell out of almost everybody. The second ace lends a bubbly sense of celebration to an otherwise grey west-coast February, throwing open the door to a world of sparkling wines — from Cava and Sekt to Prosecco and vintage Champagne.

#### WINING WHILE DINING ITALIAN STYLE

There are far too many wine-centric nosing events to mention all of them, but the following few promise to be bellissimo:



On Feb. 25 you can taste Tuscany. Castello Banfi will pour a selection of their wines including a newly released Principessa Gavi, the Super Tuscan Summus and a selection of classic Banfi wines paired with succulent Tuscan cuisine at Quattro on Fourth for \$125. Or, if you want to sample Six Centuries of History, Tradition and Passion, there is no better place than Cioppino's. A stunning lineup of wines from the Antinori Estates starts with Prosecco; continuing onward, the evening will weave its way through legendary Brunello de Montalcino, Tignanello and Solaia, paired with Pino Postero's unwaveringly sumptuous cuisine for a small-term loan of \$228. If you're in the mood to pan for precious metals, look

no further than CinCin on Feb. 26, where you'll want to stake your claim on an evening of Tuscan Gold. A lineup of Ruffino's flagship wines will take you on a sensory journey when paired with CinCin's classic, contemporary cuisine — worth its weight at \$153. If casual is more your style, for the same price, head to Italian Kitchen to explore the "art of sharing," where you can sample a fine assortment of Italian wines while delving into some of the best communal dining in Vancouver.

#### LUNCHING AND BRUNCHING!

If you want to explore the wines of South Africa without the hefty airfare, plan to be at Gastropod on March 1 to Celebrate the Cape. For \$75, chef Angus An will be creating an assortment of regional delicacies to pair with the wines of Saxenburg, Golden Kaan and Leopard Frog. Or, if you prefer Perfect Pairings by the sea, Watermark is the place to be. Chef Lynda Larouche pairs B.C. cuisine with the crisp, clean, kiwi wines from way-down-under in New Zealand for \$75.

Staying close to home may suddenly seem more promising when you can sample an exhaustive selection of British Columbia's own wines and graze on contemporary B.C. appetizers at the swanky Goldfish Pacific Kitchen, during B.C. Food & Wine – Our Land Revealed, for \$65. Brunching begins when the festival is wrapping up on Sunday, March 2 – think of it as a hangover cure. Two options will be yours to discover; the first, a perennial favourite food-and-wine extravaganza called the Vintner's Brunch. Featuring more than a dozen of Vancouver's finest restaurants, the Vintner's Brunch is a

Continued on page 11 ...