



Passport NEWS



happenings from the blue mountain passport club

Partners in wine

Okoboji Wines helps make our pours ... yours!

One of the key goals in the conception and establishment of the Passport Club was to offer our Northwest Iowa patrons and visitors to the area a wide selection of great wines in a variety of styles and price points. To do that, we needed an experienced, reliable wine broker/supplier. We were fortunate to find a partner who could provide us with expert advice, an impressive and extensive offering of domestic

and import wines, and the kind of relationship that would allow us to offer events like the recent South African Wine Tasting Party.

Okoboji Wines, located in Okoboji, Iowa, supplies the Passport Club with all of our wines.

Tim Knudsen, our account rep, pays close attention to meeting the needs and tastes of our members, as well as exposing us all to new and exciting pours.

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Tim Knudsen makes sure the pours at the Passport Club suit everyone's tastes.

Usher in Spring with a bright and zingy white wine. Featured through April is Adelaide Hills Chardonnay from Australia's Mak Vineyards. This Chardonnay features flavors of citrus, apple, and guava, with hints of spices and oak. The color of the wine is pale straw with brilliant green hues. It is ideal to drink now with any seafood and white meat dishes, and will improve with short term cellaring. For information about Mak Vineyards, see page three.



WINE of the month

MAR/APR SPECIAL ~ \$23.00/BOTTLE • \$6.50/GLASS

Room with a view ... to the world

It's hard to miss ...the tall structure jutting up at the back of the Passport Club. Its peak towers above the existing facility, providing intrigue as to what's in store in this expanded space. Here's the scoop:the upstairs "pub" expansion is a generous 1,700 square feet, with additional seating for up to 60 people in a variety of cozy, comfortable, and visually stimulating areas. There is also a larger food prep area, a manager's office, a climate-controlled wine "cellar," and a roomy cigar room



with a built-in humidior. Keeping with the club's eclectic, cosmopolitan style, the entrance to the addition features a beautifully-carved teak arch with East Indian columns and Chinese doors. The lower level, scheduled to open this summer, is the Blue Mountain Pub & Grill, featuring an exhibition kitchen serving wood-fired pizzas, seafood, ribs, panini-grilled sandwiches, and other epicurean delights not easily found here in Northwest Iowa.

relax the body. enjoy the spirits.

814 Lincoln Place SE • Orange City, Iowa • 712.737.3153 • passportclub@frontiernet.net





Cigars: evil and stinky or refined and elegant? (Clayton's perspective)

Having enjoyed good stogies for a number of years, I've heard many people (mostly men) comment on their lack of basic knowledge and understanding about cigars. I'm no expert, but I've been around cigars long enough to pass on some basic information that might help you enjoy a good smoke now and then.

The most important aspect of a good cigar is the *consistency in its rolling*, which is considered an art form. Rolled too tight and you can't "draw" from the cigar easily. Too loose and the cigar will burn too fast and hot, diluting the flavor. And, if the cigar roller doesn't use the right leaves for the filler or the body of the cigar, it will burn unevenly and not stay lit.



I first became aware of cigars as a kid. My maternal grandfather always had a box of El Productos in the back seat of his Lincoln, and he often enjoyed a smoke after a meal. I guess that made cigars "all right" in my mind, even in the anti-smoking environment I was raised in.

The new addition to the Passport Club provides a roomy, comfortable, well-ventilated cigar room, stocked with fine cigars from several locales, including some of my favorites from Jamaica. Let me know what you think! korver@frontiernet.net

Living with the Maasai: a journey to Africa (part two)

This month's story is the second in a series by proprietor Clayton Korver about his experience living with the Maasai in Tanzania, which followed a climb to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

World DÉ KÖR

As we lay in our sleeping bags, listening to the high freezing winds rattle the nylon sidewalls of our tent, I thought about the day's climb through the western breach on Mount Kilimanjaro. Now bivouacked at 18,500 feet and preparing to reach the summit the next morning, Francis Kishingo – the Chagga mountain guide I had hired to take me up what is now known as the Machame Route – began to describe the various tribes in Tanzania. It was his description of the Maasai as "troublesome people that do not want to learn modern ways" that first got me interested in this ancient, fascinating culture.

On the summit the next morning, watching an incredible African sunrise, I decided to extend this trip a few days so I could visit a Maasai village. It was this short trip out of Arusa that started my plans for another trip to Tanzania. Back at home in the States, I studied as much as could about the Maasai. Then, after months of planning and preparation, I packed gear for an extended stay in Africa, which included a four-week hike in the "bush" to live among the Maasai.

As I had learned, there are 13 geographical regions of Maasailand extending from Kenya, where they are becoming more "Westernized," down through Tanzania, where they are still holding fast to traditional ways.

After landing in Nairobi for the start of my second visit to East Africa, I made my way to an area of the city where trucks and drivers congregate to negotiate rates for freight and passengers on an overland trip to Tanzania. For an extra dollar I negotiated a seat in the cab of the truck for the long drive to the small city of Arusa.

Once in Arusa, I made my way to the central market, where I was told I could find Isaac. After spending the night at a \$3-a-night "guest house," I was able to track down Isaac the next afternoon. After settling on a fee for guiding me on this "Maasai trip," Isaac and I began to lay out our trip, which would begin the next morning with a four-hour drive over dusty roads to a small village.

To be continued ...



Clayton traded for these warriors' weapons during his stay with the Maasai. Now they are displayed in the Passport Club, along with other African art and artifacts. The shield is made of Cape Buffalo hide. The spear is one that killed a lion that had killed a fellow warrior. Maasai warriors' spears get larger – and the handles shorter – as the warrior matures.



Okoboji Wines helped bring in Nico Stein for an adventurous taste of South Africa on January 25.

Our featured wine from Mak Vineyards

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The idea behind Mak Vineyards is grounded in the soils and in regional identity, in wine that speaks of the place from which it came. Like classic Australian folklore it tells a tale, although using the fruits of the vineyard rather than words as a



About the Label
"On the Road to Gundagai" is a fascinating piece of Australian bush lore that personifies the Aussie battler, and the pioneering spirit.

Transporting badly needed supplies, drovers were required to cross several treacherous rivers, including Five Mile Creek near Gundagai. As legend goes, Bullocky Bill the stoic but somewhat unlucky drover became bogged at Five Mile Creek. The yoke of his bullock team broke and on top of that, the dog shat on his tuckerbox (food and supplies case). Later interpretations of the legend had the drover's faithful mutt guarding the tuckerbox, while his master went for help.

medium for the story. The Australian wine industry has prospered largely due to the unwavering determination and passion of its pioneering wine-makers, coupled with a freedom from constraints. If you want to plant vines on your patch of dirt out in the never-never, then good luck to you. And if your wine is liked and bought by the bloke on the street, then all the better. It epitomizes the Aussie "can do" spirit – people may shake their heads in disbelief, but there's no law saying you can't have a go.



Crab Cake Special!

Try our delicious "down under" crab cakes, the perfect pair with our featured Aussie wine. Offered for a limited time only. \$5.95

DESSERT of the month

Lamington Bars

Complete your taste of Down Under with this famous Australian treat.

The original version features squares of sponge cake dipped in chocolate glaze and then graced with coconut. Our cookie-style version is denser and loaded with toasted almonds. Enjoy a Lamington Bar at the Passport Club for a limited time, or ask Karri for a copy of the recipe to make them yourself at home.

The 2005 vernal equinox will occur at 6:33am, March 20, when spring begins in the Northern Hemisphere.

Vernal equinox: The coming of spring, marked by the passage of the Sun from the Southern to the Northern Hemisphere of the sky. The time when the Sun reappears at the north pole, after being away for six months. The middle-time when everyone feels vitalized by the most rapid climatic changes of the year.

Wine "cellar" adds a touch of Europe to club

Housed in the Passport Club's new expansion will be a climate-controlled wine room with the look and feel of a European wine cellar. With storage for 2,000+ bottles of wine, and a bistro table and chairs for tasting or examining offered wines, this new space will certainly be a unique and favorite spot for patrons, guests, and visitors.

If whiskey is more your taste, you can enjoy a cigar and a glass of your favorite label (choose from 24 whiskeys, scotches, and bourbons) in the new cigar room, complete with a large humidor with locking drawers for private storage. The new cigar room – designed in the style of an old English club, with a barrel vaulted ceiling and mahogany paneling – accommodates six people in comfortable leather chairs.

Okoboji Wines

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Okoboji Wines started in 1989 when they brought one wine back from California and private labeled it – selling it as a novelty item. Today, the firm represents over 400 wineries from all over the world.

Their mission statement says:

"We stand behind and represent wines of premium quality and distinction while placing these products in fine restaurants and off-sale accounts throughout the states of Iowa and South Dakota ... We believe strongly in Terroir and are constantly researching and traveling to chase the cutting edge and find those new boutique wines."*

Explore the wines at the Passport Club – with over 150 pours to choose from. Or give a special someone a custom-created gift basket of their favorite wines and other surprises.



***terroir:** *n.* The soil or earth in which a particular wine grape is grown.

Used in a special sense in French in connection with specific wines. Certain wines produced in heavy soil have characteristic, unmistakable, earthy flavors.

Gifts for Spring giving

If you're looking for something special to welcome spring – from an Easter surprise to a very appreciated Mother's Day present – consider a gift certificate or a custom-created basket of goodies from the Passport Club. Karri can put together a collection of your favorite someone's favorite wines, beers, or speciality liqueurs, plus other tasteful treats to warm up a vernal equinox in style. Call or email her, 737.3153; passportclub@frontiernet.net.



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814 Lincoln Place SE Orange City, Iowa 51041



CALENDAR of events



03.17 • 5pm to closing St. Patrick's Day Celebration

We'll bring a bit o' the auld country to ye with specials on Irish beer, Irish whiskey, and Irish coffee, plus some traditional foods sure to bring on some Irish smiles. It ain't no blamey ...it's all fun and games on March 17!

04.01 • 5pm to closing April Fools Festivities

Come into the Passport Club and share your wildest and most elaborate prank with us for half off a drink of your choice, plus prizes and gag gifts. The winning prankster will be treated to a gift certificate for something especially tantalizing. Happy hour specials and complimentary snacks from 5 to 7pm.



04.15 • 6:15 to 9pm Australian Wine Tasting

Sample some Down Under pours at this special event. Robert Camacho from Napa-based Old Bridge Cellars, an Australian wine importer, will serve as our sommelier, along with Tim from Okoboji Wines. A variety of wines will be served, plus a sampling of Aussie foods with some cookin' on the barbie. Reservations required. Limited seating. \$25, members. \$35, non-members.



04.29 • 5 to 9pm Mom's Night Out

Give the mothers in your life a break during our Ladies Night Pajama Party. (PJs optional, but there will be prizes for the oldest, most comfy, and most "alluring" jammies!) Plenty of favorite beverage specials, complimentary appetizers and desserts, fun prizes, and some silly games. Men can sneak in after 9pm.

Members receive first priority for all events. Call 737-3153 for reservations.

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