

Wine Spectator

WineSpectator.com

STAR CHEF

THE BRILLIANT COOKING OF GRANT ACHATZ



An edible
balloon, one
of Achatz's
desserts

**CALIFORNIA
RHÔNES:
TOP REDS
AND WHITES**

**BORDEAUX:
OUR GUIDE TO
THE DIFFICULT
2013 VINTAGE**

**WHAT'S NEW
IN WINE
DELIVERY APPS**



Desinare in Florence, Italy

Desinare Florence

Website www.desinare.it/en

Wine and food are integral to any trip to Italy, and you often end up trying to bring it home by stuffing bottles of oil and Chianti into your suitcase. Why not dig a little deeper and bring home a way of life? Desinare is an elegant salon near the Boboli Gardens, in Florence, that offers cooking and wine classes taught by local luminaries. The name means “dinner” or “to dine,” but for partners Alessandro Grassi, Francesco Barthel and Claudio Mariottini, it’s more than that; it is a chance to share a lifestyle built around the kitchen. Classes include shopping, table setting, even food photography, and the design of the space is singular—homey but very stylish. Likewise the classes cover everything from classic pasta making to Asian cuisines to cutting-edge techniques.

Desinare is proof that Italian domestic and culinary culture do not exist in amber but continue to evolve and thrive. And if knowledge isn’t enough for you, Desinare also has an extensive shop of housewares and kitchen tools.

—Owen Dugan

GRAND AWARD **LUNCH AT THE ROYAL MAIL HOTEL**
Website www.royalmail.com.au

The Royal Mail Hotel in Victoria, Australia, sits on a 24,000-acre estate with orchards, olive groves and a view of Grampians National Park, but the real jewel is the 1.2-acre organic kitchen garden. On March 4, this *Wine Spectator* Grand Award winner will welcome 100 guests to a seasonal lunch in collaboration with Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. The single-table outdoor meal will be sourced from the garden’s selection of more than 100 species of fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs and edible flowers. Farm-bred beef and lamb will be paired with local wines pulled from sommelier Deniz Hardman’s 26,000-bottle cellar, while mustard cress and purple basil microgreens will add kick to the menu.

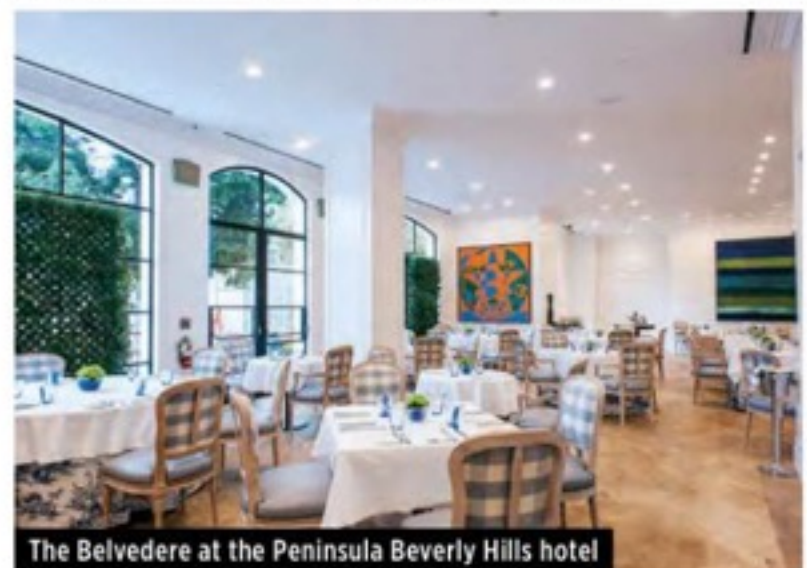
For city dwellers who can’t get away, chef Robin Wickens will be traveling to downtown Melbourne in April to produce another lavish dinner, once again championing the region’s bountiful natural produce.

—Samantha Falewée

THE BELVEDERE AT THE PENINSULA

Website beverlyhills.peninsula.com/en/fine-dining/the-belvedere

The Belvedere, located in the Peninsula Beverly Hills hotel and rumored to have been a hangout of Mikhail Gorbachev and Paul Newman, reopened in January after undergoing four months of multi-million-dollar renovations. The ground-floor dining room now expands



The Belvedere at the Peninsula Beverly Hills hotel

farther onto the terrace, with fire pits and waterfalls, and a new art collection inside features paintings by Alex Katz. The dress code is casual, but the wine list lives up to its *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence: A rotating selection of rare bottles available by carafe and by glass includes a 1999 Château Haut-Brion, a 2000 Bodegas Vega Sicilia and a 1997 Château d’Yquem. The new menu, Mediterranean-inspired and seafood-based, has an updated 250-selection wine list; the hotel itself boasts 750 selections from almost 6,000 bottles.

—S.F.



Charleston, S.C.

FINE DINING IN CHARLESTON

Website www.charlestonwineandfood.com

MARCH 2-6

The Charleston Wine and Food Festival is preparing to fill the Holy City for its ninth annual celebration. Master of Pinot Noir Ken Wright will lead a Willamette Valley tasting, and dinners will be hosted across the city at spots such as *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence winners Cypress Lowcountry Grille and Charleston Grill.

With more than 100 events, it’s no surprise that *Wine Spectator* Restaurant Award winners are flying in from across the country, including chef Joseph Lenn of Blackberry Farm in Tennessee and Shelley Lindgren, owner and wine director of San Francisco hot spots A16 and SPQR.

For the less wine-inclined, Preston Van Winkle will offer a chance to taste his collectible Pappy Van Winkle whiskey, and chef Sean Brock of Husk and McCrady’s (which holds an Award of Excellence) will be representing Southern fine dining in style.

—S.F.