

**Pinot Spoken
Here**

PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Devoted to Pinotaficionados

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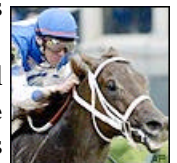
Ex-Duke Seeks Title Back

It was a saddening experience in late 2003 when I was forced to revoke the title of "Duke of Pinot" from one of my wine-loving colleagues. The "Duke," also known as "Dookie," had acquired the title through nefarious and mysterious ways, but because he had demonstrated signs of passion for the heartbreak grape, I decided to honor his title. With time, however, he veered off course and began touting the virtues of cheap flings with older Zinfandels, Merlots and Cabernets. He had a number of trysts with the great wines of Piedmont, Pauillac and Pomerol, and had become enamored with Amarones. He was heard to remark that "men are from Bordeaux and women are from Burgundy." The Duke talked enthusiastically about "red leather-pants wines," and scoffed at elegant, sensual wines. He said that complaining about "Big Babe" Pinots was like criticizing a lover because she was too beautiful. At the same time, his humble wine cellar had become deficient in the noble wines of the Russian River Valley, the Willamette, Vosne-Romanee, and Corton. I had no choice but to revoke his title.

At the time, "Dookie" was quite taken by this turn of events. He cried and moaned. He tossed and turned at night, feeling low and unworthy, like a dog without a bone, a politician without principles. Over the last year, he has made some strides to recover his title. He has begun to stock his cellar with Pinot Noirs from Dehlinger, Rochioli and the great crus of Burgundy. He seems to have a renewed reverence for the only regal wine. A small vertical of La Tache has been assembled and a magnum of '47 Comte de Vogue Musigny is proudly displayed in a prominent spot in his cellar. But is he really worthy of the title "Duke of Pinot" again? Can any Piasano be deserving of an entitlement that espouses devotion to and expertise with Pinot Noir? Can a person who reveres Digiorno possibly be deserving?

He has been persistent and I have found difficulty thwarting his advances. The most recent turn of events has me over a barrel (sic) and my resistance has weakened. My friend has taken a financial interest in thoroughbred race horses over the years. Most of these horses have finished last or next to last in races. However, he has recently invested in a foal with great promise and the horse is officially named, you guessed it, "Prince of Pinot!" With a name like this, the horse has to be a hands down winner. If Prince of Pinot wins or places in a race, I have to think that Dookie would no longer be under the whip, and his title would have to be fully and deservedly restored.

I have taken a week's hiatus from Pinot tasting. The weather here has been stifling. I quote Peter Bell: "High temperatures tend to make alcohol in wine more apparent. This can be a problem with red wines during summer - the alcohol, being very volatile, will spoil both the nose and palate of wine."



An Update on the Health Benefits of Wine

Moderate drinking is an important part of a healthy diet. Even though the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans eliminated the prior language for recommendations of drinking with meals, there is overwhelming scientific evidence that moderate drinking with meals, along with a Mediterranean diet, physical activity and non-smoking, is heart-healthy.

Research studies suggest that the most benefit from drinking comes from wine than other forms of alcoholic drinks. Briefly, here are some relevant figures:

Gin & Tonic 179 calories

Rum & Coke 178 calories (128 if Diet Coke)

Mojito 172 calories (antioxidants in mint)

Cosmo 143 calories (antioxidants in cranberry juice)

Margarita 157 calories (vitamin C in lime juice)

Pina Colada 245 calories

Beer - 12 oz 146 calories (50% of antioxidants of red wine)

Light Beer - 12 oz 99 calories

Red Wine - 5 oz 102 calories (High antioxidants - polyphenols; 3-8x more fiber than white wine)

White Wine - 5 oz 86 calories (Less polyphenols than red wine)

“Moderate drinking” means one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men (according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism). A drink is a 5-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce beer, or a 1 1/2-ounce shot of liquor. The father of wine research, Dr. Arthur Klatsky, a cardiologist at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Oakland, California, believes the definition of moderation is too conservative. Many studies are based on people who often underreport the amount they drink, so women can probably do fine with 1 1/2 drinks a day and men 2-3 drinks a day. Klatsky recommends drinking like you were taking a medicine - that is, a moderate dose every day. It is not advisable to save up the daily drink allocation for a blowout on Saturday night, since you will lose all of the health benefits as well as have to deal with a hangover.

Being a physician with a passion for wine, I have had a special interest in the relationship between moderate wine consumption and health. I have reviewed older studies in previous editions of the *PinotFile*. In this issue I will bring you up to date on recent new information and significant research studies.

Stroke: A Columbia University study (*Stroke*, Jan 06) showed that there is a protective effect of moderate alcohol consumption on the risk of cerebral vascular accidents (CVA, stroke) in a large multiethnic population over the age of 40. The risk of ischemic stroke due to a blood clot is reduced by 50% in moderate drinkers. Those drinking more than 2 drinks a day showed the same risk level as non-drinkers. The basis for this is unclear, but it is suspected that the antioxidants in wine favorably affect the coagulation of blood within arteries by decreasing the stickiness of blood platelets and enhancing factors that help break up blood clots when they form.

Life Expectancy A *British Medical Journal* study in 2006 found that a modest intake of alcohol, mostly as wine, increased life expectancy by up to 14% in elderly Europeans. Another study found that a Mediterranean diet, physical activity, non-smoking and moderate alcohol intake reduced the mortality from all-causes including cancer and cardiovascular disease. The risk of cancer in post-menopausal women was also reduced. In recent years there have been dozens of cohort studies from all over the world linking moderate alcohol consumption to decreased overall mortality rates. Resveratrol, the

most studied antioxidant in red wine, has been considered the cause of increased life expectancy. In a study reported in *Current Biology* (Feb, 05), resveratrol lengthened the life span of normally short-lived fish and it is thought that it may have the same effect on humans.

Cardiovascular Disease A recent study of an Italian population revealed a significant decreased risk of myocardial infarction (heart attack) when alcohol was consumed during meals. Alcohol seems to raise HDL (good cholesterol), which helps unclog arteries and prevents blood clotting triggered by fat. Alcohol also slows the proliferation of arterial smooth muscle cells, a critical factor in the development of atherosclerosis.

Periodontal Disease Scientists in Quebec, Canada, reporting in this August's issue of the *Journal of Periodontology* found that resveratrol slows the growth of bacteria that cause periodontal disease. It also reduces the tissue inflammation and symptoms of gingivitis. There is a negative side to this beneficial effect, however. Red wine acids and alcohol can cause discoloration and erosion of teeth.

Woman's Health Some studies in the past have suggested a link between alcohol and an increased risk of breast cancer. This has never been proven scientifically. Recent research found that a diet rich in folic acid (a B vitamin that produces red blood cells and maintains the DNA of new cells) eliminates the risk of breast cancer in women due to moderate alcohol consumption. Folic acid is found in high concentration in leafy greens, citrus fruits and beans. Wine appears to preserve women's memory. When researchers gave memory quizzes to women in their 70s, those who drank one drink or more every day scored much better than those who drank less or not at all. An Australian study found that roughly one glass of wine a day seemed to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer by as much as 50%. Earlier research at the University of Hawaii had similar findings. A recent University of Michigan study found that a red wine compound helped kill ovarian cancer cells in a test tube. It is the antioxidants or phytoestrogens in wine that have anticancer properties. Women who drink moderately seem to have higher bone mass than abstainers. Alcohol boosts estrogen levels. Estrogen slows the body's destruction of old bone more than slowing the production of new bone. A 10 year Harvard Medical School study showed that premenopausal women who drink one or two glasses of wine a day are 40% less likely than women who abstain to develop type 2 diabetes (the reasons are not clear).

Wine with Meals Research at the State University of New York at Buffalo reported that women have more damage to their liver from alcohol when they drink alone. No damage is evident when they drink while dining with a friend. Safe levels of drinking with meals for women was 7-14 drinks per week. In men, the amount and frequency of drinking was more important than the pattern of drinking with or without food. Safe levels of drinking with meals for men was 14-27 drinks per week. A separate study found that drinking outside meals increased the risk of high blood pressure, independent of how much alcohol was consumed.

Weight Management Several studies have shown that drinking wine daily leads to a lower body mass. Moderate wine drinkers have narrower waists and less abdominal fat than people who drink liquor. Alcohol may encourage your body to burn extra calories for as long as 90 minutes after a drink (beer has a similar effect).

Body Defenses In one British study, those who drank roughly one glass of wine a day had a 11% reduction in their risk of infection by *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria, a major cause of gastritis, ulcers, and stomach cancers. Even a half a glass of wine may prevent infection from *Salmonella* and other bacteria in contaminated food, according to one Spanish study.

Those who love wine want to embrace the health benefits of wine. But these benefits are open to debate. In the *Journal Addiction Research & Theory* (Mar, 06) Kaye Fillmore and an international team of colleagues found that "light drinking is a sign of good health, and not necessarily its cause." They looked at 54 published reports on the health benefits of drinking but found many studies included people who had quit drinking because of age and serious illness, yet were listed as abstainers. Only 7 out of 54 studies had only long-term abstainers and none showed a benefit from moderate drinking.


PrinceofPinot.com

I will be at the International Pinot Noir
Celebration in McMinnville, Oregon
next week so no *PinotFile*

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I love this time of the year because of the availability of beautiful fresh tomatoes. For me, it means BLT time. The BLT sandwich is one of man's most perfect eating pleasures. The first recorded recipe was in the 1929 book *Seven Hundred Sandwiches* by Florence A. Cowles. Michele A. Jordan has written a whole book on the subject, titled *The BLT Cookbook: Our Favorite Sandwich*.



Take some fresh white or sourdough bread, generously spread on Best Foods mayonnaise, cover with fresh lettuce, add several slices of thick-cut Applewood-smoked bacon, cover with sliced heirloom tomato, a touch of salt and plenty of fresh ground pepper, and

voile! If you want to get fancier, add slices of Haas avocado, toast the bread, or add extra bacon (the BBBLT). The wine of choice - Pinot Noir of course. Pinot loves bacon, black pepper, and can handle low-acid tomatoes.

Pinot Noir is also an irreverent match for deli classics such as a Reuben sandwich and corned beef sandwich.

Hangover Cures

Fortunately I haven't had a hangover since my 50th Birthday party several years ago and I find drinking wine in moderation much more appealing. Medically speaking, a hangover is termed *voisalgia*. Whatever you call it, it is miserable. The physiological basis of a hangover is complex. When alcohol reaches the liver, alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH) converts it to acetaldehyde which is attacked by acetaldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH) and glutathione and converted to nontoxic acetate. Women have lower levels of ADH than men and Asians have a lower tolerance to alcohol because of lower levels of ALDH (50% of all Asians have non-functional copies of the ALDH-2 gene). Glutathione is quickly used up when large amounts of alcohol enter the body so acetaldehyde builds up in the bloodstream and causes many of the effects of a hangover. Also, alcohol inhibits glutamine which is a natural stimulant. After drinking stops, the body continues to produce glutamine (glutamine rebound) in amounts that exceed the need. This leads to stimulation of the brain during sleep and resulting fatigue, tremors and anxiety. Alcohol also irritates the stomach lining leading to nausea. Dehydration from alcohol causes dry mouth and headache.

The Chinese customary hangover cure is drinking the liquid remaining after two banana peels have been boiled in water. The Mexicans believe in *menudo*, a spicy soup made with tripe. The French swear by onion soup. Those nutty Puerto Ricans rub the juice of a lemon into their armpit. Still other remedies include mulligatawny soup (seasoned with curry) and a banana milkshake sweetened with honey (the banana calms the stomach, the honey builds up depleted blood sugar, and milk soothes and re-hydrates the system). Burnt toast, coffee, and fatty foods are of no value as treatment. Aspirin can worsen the stomach irritation. Extra intake of water while drinking and before bedtime can effectively reduce the symptoms.

There are more than 50 over-the-counter hangover remedies divided into before (prevention) and after (redemption) types. Most of them are of dubious value and no better than the water that is ingested with them. Two supplements based on the filtering qualities of carbon, when taken along with drinking, can have a beneficial effect. **Sob'r-K Hangover Stopper** (inexpensive, patented) and **chaser** (medically proven) are best.