



FALL 2010

## CORTI BROTHERS

To Our Customers:

Summer has come and gone. Fall is here--another change of seasons. This newsletter has unique wines and foodstuffs that I hope will make your mouth water. Rather than bore you with repetitious text, I have put in our website address to allow you to look up some products that will also be viewable. I hope you will find this format user friendly. **Go to [www.cortibros.biz](http://www.cortibros.biz)** Products in this newsletter are always available for purchase online. I hope that you will find them to your liking.

Darrell Corti

### **MELGAREJO COMPOSICIÓN DELICATESSEN EXTRA VIRGIN OIL**

**MELGAREJO COMPOSICIÓN DELICATESSEN** is one of the best oils in Spain. In May, 2010, the 2009 harvest was awarded the prize for the best green sweet fruity oil made in Spain by the Ministry of Agriculture. To be awarded such a national award, the quality must be excellent and the quantity of oil available must be at least 20,000 liters or 40,000 bottles. At the May, 2010, Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Oil competition it won a gold medal and Best of Class. The German wine and food magazine Der Feinschmecker, selected **MELGAREJO COMPOSICIÓN DELICATESSEN** as one of their 50 Best Oils of the World, and it was a finalist for the Mario Solinas prize for oil quality awarded by the International Olive Oil Council in Madrid.

The Melgarejo family produces a lot of oil in the province of Jaén, Andalucía, in southern Spain. Long bulk producers, they have begun to commercialize their best oils themselves, and the **COMPOSICIÓN DELICATESSEN** is a wonderful blend of Andalusian Picual and Hojiblanca, with Catalán Arbequina, and Tuscan Frantoio, all grown on their groves in Jaén.

The olives, from trees grown at elevations of 480 to 850 meters, were harvested in the first twenty days of November 2009, from both shaken trees and from trees harvested by “vareo” or beaten with poles. Extraction is by a two phase system which preserves the oil’s fruitiness. The oil is bottled only on demand, just before shipping. Our shipment was air freighted in to protect it from excessive heat.

This superb oil is really what its name suggests: it is composed from different cultivars, whose oil is extracted by adjusting production techniques to preserve the individual quality of each. Then the different oils are blended. It is an oil with great flavor; green apple, leafy-ness, green almonds; balanced pungency and bitterness; a sweet entry in the mouth, medium bitterness, a bit more pungency--then again an almond-like finish, but with that balance and character of composition that shows different shades of flavor coming from the individual cultivars.

You should experience **MELGAREJO COMPOSICIÓN DELICATESSEN** just to see what superb extra virgin olive oil is all about.

**MELGAREJO COMPOSICIÓN DELICATESSEN** \$24.99 500ml (#2600) \$134.00 cs/6 (#2600C)

**ERIN’S POPCORN: Original and White Cheddar**

“Now what is Corti trying to make us do? Eat popcorn?” Well, frankly, yes!

I happen to like popcorn very much. To me it is a satisfying snack and wonderful with drinks, but I am particular about the kind of popcorn. What I particularly like is white popcorn that pops in small, “crispy” pieces; not the large and more cottony textured popcorn. This is why I would like to tell you about the delicious popcorn produced in the Pacific Northwest called **ERIN’S**.

**ERIN’S All Natural ORIGINAL POPCORN** is owned by a noted potato chip producer, **TIM’S CASCADE**. This popcorn is produced at the Tim’s plant in Algona, Washington. Popped from a white variety of Zea mays everta (popcorn to us) called 211W, it is grown on the Morrison family farm in Nebraska. It is a white cultivar, one of the more than 25 varieties planted in this country. The white popcorn is small batch popped in a Cretors hot air popper, using pure corn oil. For the white cheddar flavor, the only flavor made, the popped corn is lightly enrobed with a white cheddar slurry, so as not to color the popcorn. Salt is added to the regular popcorn and that is all. It is popped five days of the week at the plant and has a shelf life of 18 weeks without any enhancers.

In and of itself, popcorn seems to be such a simple thing. But it has a wonderful history. Although it is corn—maize to the rest of the world—of the four most common types of corn, only popcorn, pops! The other corns don’t. It is the drop of water stored inside the soft starch covered by the kernel’s hard shell which swells when popped. At 212 degrees the water turns to steam and at about 347 degrees, the pressure inside the kernel reaches 135 pound per square inch and bursts open the hull. The inside is “everted,” turned inside out, steam is released, and the soft starch, cooling immediately, forms the odd shape we know as popped corn.

Known in the U.S. from early colonial days, popcorn has a very long history in MesoAmerica. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, one of the early missionary chroniclers in Mexico in the 1500s describes popcorn “called ‘momochitl’ a kind of corn which bursts when parched and discloses its contents and makes itself look like a very white flower...” In Spanish today, popcorn is called “palomita” little dove.

One of the virtues of **ERIN’S POPCORN** is that you can indulge yourself at any moment you crave popcorn. All you have to do is open a bag, pour it into a bowl and go to town. Or: you can also eat it just out of the bag as I do. It saves time and fuss, and you do not get any “old maids,” the unpopped kernels that can remain in homemade popcorn.

**ERIN’S POPCORN** is a delicious snack. It is satisfying and more-ish. It has one drawback: it can be addicting!

**ERIN’S POPCORN All Natural Original** 1.5oz bag 99 cents (#2601) \$21.00 case of 24 (#2601C)

4.5oz bag \$1.99 (#2602) \$21.00 case of 12 (#2602C)

**All Natural White Cheddar** 1.5oz bag 99cents (#2603) \$21.00 case of 24 (#2603C)

4oz bag \$1.99 (#2604) \$21.00 case of 12 (#2604C)

**TERMS OF SALE: This list supersedes all others. All taxable items, such as wine, beer, or spirits will be taxed at the rate of 8.75%. This is for all sales since we sell in California. Foodstuffs are not taxable. Shipping will be charged at prevailing rates. PLEASE NOTE: In extreme weather, either hot or cold, please give us a shipping address where your order may be properly received and stored. Corti Brothers cannot be responsible for items left without protection.**

**CORTI BROTHERS MONDEUSE 2009 The last harvest**

With the 2009 vintage, there ends a wine from the Napa Valley. Under our label, we have quietly sold, only twice noting it in our newsletter, a red wine produced from a small plot of vines grown on the Marchese Antinori's vineyard at Atlas Peak, in the Napa Valley. This wine was previously labeled **CORTI BROTHERS REFOSCO MONDEUSE**. With the 2009 vintage the wine comes to an end. The vineyard has been pulled out.

**MONDEUSE** is a French variety from Savoie which had some history in the Napa Valley. Under the name **REFOSCO**, its most famous wine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came from H.W. Crabb's famed To Kalon vineyard in Oakville. It was known as "Crabb's Black Burgundy." It was the "hot" varietal in Napa Valley and other parts of California, and then it fell from fashion.

The viticulturalists at UC Davis have always equated French Mondeuse with Italian Refosco, claiming that they were, in California, the same variety. Hence our previously dual named label. Now the people who control these things have objected, and so I have simply called this last harvest, **MONDEUSE**.

Many wine lovers will recall that at Beaulieu Vineyards in Napa Valley, **mondeuse** was part of Beaulieu's famous "Burgundy" blend which had many fans. When Beaulieu pulled out its mondeuse, cuttings went to Monterey County and from there returned to Atlas Peak in the late 1980s. Planted on very poor soil, the vines produced very little, but they produced. All the previous vintages were vinified at Atlas Peak and bottled for us at Harbor Winery in West Sacramento. The last being 1997. Now we offer the final vintage, 2009.

**CORTI BROTHERS MONDEUSE 2009** was produced for us at Napa Cellars in Yountville. The 2009 vintage produced 3.34 tons of grapes, harvested on October 24, 2009, at 20.4 Brix with a pH of 3.50, total acidity of .51. The wine at bottling had 11.4% alcohol, 3.73pH and .59 total acidity. This bottling produced 138 cases.

**CORTI BROTHERS MONDEUSE 2009** is not great wine, or a wine for the ages. It is merely a **joyful** wine, bottled young, under Stelvin caps, and meant for drinking, but not hurriedly so. I had it bottled under Stelvin so that there would be no TCA problems. I will be interested in seeing how it develops with time. So should you.

The wine has a good dark color, with a scented, slight rose-like perfume; a soft flavor typical of the variety, with some spiciness and pleasant tannin for palate interest. The wine has 11.4% alcohol, although the label says "table wine" a term that can be used if the wine is under 14% alcohol. I think you will enjoy it.

**CORTI BROTHERS MONDEUSE 2009** Atlas Peak 11.4% \$9.99 750ml (#2605) \$107.00 cs/12 (#2605C)

## **TIME FOR TEA: OUR SELECTION AND SOME TEA WARES**

Our complete list of teas from **LOCK CHA TEA HOUSE** in Hong Kong is available on our web site [www.cortibros.biz](http://www.cortibros.biz) together with the photos of our tea wares from Lock Cha. We have a number of lovely Yixing pots that I have selected from the stock selected by **Wing-chi Ip**, Lock Cha's proprietor and a great expert in Yixing ware. We also have some lovely egg-shell porcelain sets in elegant pressed bamboo boxes.

**Terese Tse Bartholomew**, lately retired from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and herself a Yixing expert, writes this about this famous tea ware: "I classify Yixing teapots by shape: geometric (based on spheres, cylinders, cubes, etc); naturalistic (modeled after tree trunks and plant and floral forms); ribbed (or segmented, based on stylized floral or plant shapes such as melon and chrysanthemum) and miniature (small round teapots for drinking the strong brew preferred by the tea connoisseurs of Guandong and Fujian provinces." p.57, **Steeped in History: The Art of Tea**, Fowler Museum UCLA, 2009, 235p. Available at \$39.95 plus tax in CA.

## **COCONUT SUGAR: A SWEET ALTERNATIVE**

Everyone like sweet things. Sugar, as we know it, is made from either the juice of a grass or a root bulb. Sugar made international commerce work and spurred several cultures. One of the unusual sweeteners is that made from tree sap. In the U.S., we know about maple syrup--maple tree sap boiled down. There are other trees that produce sap which is also used as a sweetener, the coconut palm one of them. I would like to bring **COCONUT SUGAR** to your attention.

**COCONUT SUGAR** is produced from the fresh sap of the inflorescence, or flower spathe, of the *Cocos nucifera* palm. This same palm produces the “coconut” that is used to make the white shredded coconut, young coconut flesh and water, coconut milk and oil, and myriad other products from its wood and leaves. In Asia, the coconut palm is considered the almost perfect plant: you can eat it, drink it, wear it, or be sheltered by it. Everything necessary for life is given by the coconut palm. It even became an art object in Renaissance Europe, where rarely seen coconut shells would be mounted in silver and gold and displayed in royal treasuries.

Our store director, Rick Mindermann, found **COCONUT REPUBLIC COCONUT SUGAR** at a trade show. He was intrigued by it, and we have bought it to present to our customers.

Carefully tapping the flower spadix or stalk of each new leaf of the coconut palm, one can produce both some sap and some coconuts. The sap, tapped and collected before it starts to ferment, is boiled down to produce sugar, much like making maple syrup. This work must be done quickly since fermentation sets in rapidly and spoils the sap for sugar production. The sap, once fermentation has begun, produces “toddy” from which another type of sweetener is made called “jaggery.” **COCONUT REPUBLIC COCONUT SUGAR** is produced in the Philippines, where on the 7,100 islands that make up the country, more than 350 million coconut palms are grown. (The coconut itself is not a nut, but a seed, the largest in the world.)

We have two color variants of **COCONUT REPUBLIC COCONUT SUGAR**: a light tan one and a slightly golden, darker one. Not highly processed, color varies from batch to batch, and is packaged by color. Rose Beranbaum, the noted baking expert and author of [The Cake Bible](#), wrote us that this coconut sugar “requires about 1-2/3 cups to be equal in weight and sweetness to cane sugar, but is fantastic for génoise and angelfood resulting in a beautiful color and flavor more subtle than light brown sugar.”

Natural and unrefined, the sucrose content in Coconut Republic Coconut Sugar is 70-79%, followed by glucose and fructose. It is rich in inositol and vitamin B complex vitamins. Its glycemic index is 35-54. Packaged in stand-up foil pouches, once opened, please keep Coconut Sugar away from heat and air. **Price is \$5.99 500g**

**COCONUT REPUBLIC COCONUT SUGAR** Light Variant (#2606) Dark Variant (#2607)

### **GOAN CUISINE: Condiments with an exotic kick**

Since this is our fall newsletter, I would like to remind you of our **GOAN CUISINE** condiments, made by a Goan family in Perth, Western Australia. Goan cooking is probably the world’s first “fusion cooking” since Goa, on India’s west coast, was the first Portuguese, hence European, settlement in India. Asia would soon follow.

Our **GOAN CUISINE** products are a selection of chutneys and other condiments that use fresh Western Australia produce and Indian spices and are meant for use with meat and fish dishes as savory accompaniments. Since fall weather and then colder winter means that we will be enjoying richer meats--pork, ham and the like--Goan Cuisine products will really spice up a meal. Interestingly, they also work extremely well with vegetarian dishes, even just simply steamed rice. Please consult our web site [www.cortibros.biz](http://www.cortibros.biz) for the complete list.

## **GINGER ELIZABETH CHOCOLATES from Sacramento**

It seems that in the last few years a gastronomic revolution has been taking place in Sacramento. Good restaurants have proliferated, we have become the center of farmed caviar in this country, wineries are popping up like mushrooms after a rain, and now I am pleased to present to our customers a new local chocolatier, **GINGER ELIZABETH**.

**GINGER ELIZABETH HAHN** is a formally trained pastry chef and chocolatier. Her boutique in Sacramento produces some wonderful things that are often found on the tables of local restaurants as additions to their dessert offerings. Now she has produced some lovely dessert pieces which should fit nicely on our customers' tables. These are Ginger Elizabeth Chocolates **DESSERT BARS**.

**GINGER ELIZABETH DESSERT BARS** are made in small batches; each component is handmade before being folded together with perfectly paired couverture chocolate. They are a marvel of that wonderful balance of sweet, salty, bitter, smooth, and crunchy that is only achieved by the consummate chocolatier. They take their origin from those magical offerings of famous Parisian chocolatiers. Now you can enjoy them made in Sacramento.

There are four **DESSERT BARS** and two **CHOCOLATE BARS**. Each 3.5 ounce "tablet" is marked into 16 parts, rectangles of delight. The **VANILLA BEAN TOFFEE ALMOND BAR** is made from housemade toffee with Tahitian vanilla and toasted almond pieces, swirled into a 72% bittersweet couverture. The **SALTY COCOA NIB BRITTLE BAR** is made by making a salty cocoa nib brittle with roasted cocoa nibs and fleur de sel mixed into deeply caramelized sugar, hand chopped and folded into a 72% bittersweet chocolate. **CRUNCHY GIANDUJA BAR** is a wonderful take on the Piemontese combination of hazelnut paste and milk chocolate (gianduja), baked crêpes, and a hint of lemon, folded into 42% cocoa milk chocolate. **CRISPY COCONUT KAFFIR LIME BAR** is made from toasted, house candied, unsweetened coconut, fresh kaffir lime leaves, air dried and powdered, and both are folded into 40% cocoa milk chocolate.

The two chocolate bars, **BITTERSWEET 72% Cocoa** and **MILK CHOCOLATE 40% Cocoa**, are made from cocoa from noted suppliers and melded in the Ginger Elizabeth shop and then formed. These are essentially the couverture chocolates used for the Dessert Bars. The quality and expertise of a chocolatier can be told by the taste of the unadorned chocolate produced. Please try these **GINGER ELIZABETH CHOCOLATES** now. You just might want to use them for holiday gifts.

Now that the weather is cooling off, chocolate can be shipped easily. If you live where warm temperature is a problem, please inform us so we may take precautions in shipping chocolate to you.

**GINGER ELIZABETH CHOCOLATES DESSERT BARS All are 3.5 ounces \$6.49 each**  
**VANILLA BEAN TOFFEE ALMOND BAR (#2608)**  
**SALTY COCOA NIB BRITTLE BAR (#2609)**  
**CRUNCHY GIANDUJA BAR (#2610)**  
**CRISPY COCONUT KAFFIR LIME BAR (#2611)**

**GINGER ELIZABETH CHOCOLATES CHOCOLATE BARS Both are 3.5 ounces \$4.99 each**  
**BITTERSWEET BAR 72% Cocoa (#2612)**  
**MILK CHOCOLATE BAR 40% Cocoa (#2613)**

**GINGER ELIZABETH CHOCOLATES ASSORTMENT OF SIX** One of each variety \$32.00 (#2614)

**MARUMATA OWARINO TAMARI  
and World of Flavor at CIA, Greystone, St. Helena, CA Nov. 4-6, 2010**

**O-SHOYU** to the Japanese, soy sauce to us, is a necessary staple with today's fusion cooking. **TAMARI** is a type of soy sauce which is richer and fuller in body. It is called "Tamari" from the verb tamaru meaning "to accumulate or puddle" since originally it was a by-product of miso production.

**OWARINO TAMARI** is a rare tamari, completely natural, made by the **Marumata Shoten** which was established in 1834 in Taketoya, just south of Nagoya, Japan. Owari is the old name of this prefecture. Thus Owarino Tamari is "Owari no tamari" tamari of Owari. It is made only from Japanese soybeans and natural sea salt, and slowly aged for three years in large cedar casks. With daily aeration and its long production cycle, **tamari** becomes thick and dense. It turns a rich, dark brown color and has an enticing aroma. In this sense it is like traditional balsamic vinegar. At the end of production the mash is pressed, and the resulting **tamari** filtered and a bit of sake is added to stabilize it.

Often kept for use with sashimi, it is tamari's long production aging which produces its sweetish, smokey, meaty full flavor and thick body. Unlike normal soy sauce, **OWARINO TAMARI** is wheat free.

Just a little tamari in western cooking adds a flavor component which is difficult to describe and deliciously enticing. It gives body to dark sauces and a deeper taste to braised dishes. Once you are accustomed to it, the lack of its flavor in dishes is clearly noticeable.

**MARUMATA OWARINO TAMARI** \$19.99 360ml bottle (#2615) \$215.00 case of 12 (#2615C)

For anyone interested in that fascinating world which is Japanese cuisine, you should not miss the three day series of seminars at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in St. Helena, in the Napa Valley. Called JAPAN: FLAVORS OF CULTURE from Sushi to Soba to Kaiseki, a global celebration of tradition, art, and exchange, this is the largest event ever held in the United States focused on Japanese cuisine and food culture. Seventy leading chefs and experts will share the culinary traditions of Japan. The dates are November 4-6, 2010. For information contact: [www.worldsofflavor.com](http://www.worldsofflavor.com)

**SCHUCHMANN SAPERAVI 2009 Georgia's main red wine cultivar**

What I'm talking about is wine from Georgia, the country, not the state.

I would like you to read what Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson say concerning this wine producing country about which we know practically nothing.

*"Far from being a recent colony of the vine, it [Georgia] may be the oldest wine region of all. Archeologists have found in this general area between the Black and Caspian Seas pips from what were obviously cultivated vines dating four thousands of years B.C. Its own grape varieties are said to number over 500."* World Atlas of Wine, p 261.

**SCHUCHMANN SAPERAVI 2008** from the Schuchmann vineyards in the Kakheti region, north and east of

the capital Tbilisi, is a wine produced using the autochthonous red variety saperavi grown in vineyards owned by Burkhard Schuchmann, a retired German industrialist who was fascinated by Georgian wine history. He bought vineyards in different regions of the country and then started making wine. Georgian wines are noted for being fermented and aged in large pottery amphora called kvevri.

**SCHUCHMANN SAPERAVI 2008** was fermented in the normal stainless steel fermenters of most of the wine world, producing an intriguing, charming wine that is dark colored, spicy scented, and less tannic than normal Saperavi. I was taken with it.

Previous to this, the best Saperavi I had tasted was produced by Robin Day, former president of Orlando in Australia's Barossa Valley, grown there by him on his home vineyard. Hugh Johnson calls the variety "[the] sterling, red fleshed saperavi....[the] splendid red Georgian grape producing dark, plummy, acidic wines for long aging."

**SCHUCHMANN SAPERAVI 2008** is a slightly tamed version of the variety. Nonetheless, the power and temper of the variety are still present, only dressed up a bit. It is dark in color, black cherry scented, flavory with that savoriness of slightly "rustic" wines. It has very good acidity and light, grippy tannin making for an interesting mouthfeel. Eminently drinkable now, it is a good example of Saperavi to acquaint yourself with this new-to-us variety.

**SCHUCHMANN SAPERAVI 2008** 12.5% \$12.69 750ml (#2616) \$137.00 cs/12 (#2616C)

### **LEN EVANS How To Taste Wine**

**LEN EVANS** left us in August, 2006. But before he left he wrote. **How To Taste Wine** is a concise book of 112 pages, published in 2007 by his family and before now, never sold in this country. I am very pleased to bring it to your attention since it is a delightful read, filled with those pithy ideas that made Len, Len. He did so much to bring Australian wine to public notice both in Australia and the rest of the world that he is rightly called "Mr. Australian Wine." He also knew a great deal about most other wines, being involved with them both in Europe and California.

This compact little work is a must for reading if you are at all involved in wine judging. The twenty two pages of the Show Judging chapter are a distillation of more than 30 years of being a judge or chairman of judges. It is an opinion of wine judging that is unique.

Len Evans food and wine bibliography is long. But as Hugh Johnson writes in his foreward to **How To Taste Wine**, "This is Len's short book; it took him time, fifty years or so, to perfect his technique, collect his thoughts and refine them into this message." You should read it, and have a copy in your library to occasionally re-read.

**LEN EVANS, How To Taste Wine**, paperback 122 pp, Sydney, 2007 \$19.99 plus tax in CA. (#2617)