



## “White Party” tasting at Fluid 7:32 p.m.

### THE CROWD

The dressed-up, friendly boozehounds in attendance are more about swilling than swirling.

### THE JUICE

Tonight, all white, including Joel Gott California Sauvignon Blanc '06 and El Portillo Mendoza Sauvignon Blanc '06 from Argentina.

### THE SOUNDTRACK

Mostly wine-fueled chatter over a background of upbeat and housey lounge tracks.

### EAVESDROPPING

“I want to get a bottle of this to take to Burning Man.”

CHECK HIPTASTES.COM FOR UPCOMING EVENTS.

## Elsewhere

**Maverick's** wine director, Mike Pierce, hosts “One of a Kind Wine Wednesdays,” an informal seminar at the restaurant’s communal table, where three wines are paired with bites from the kitchen. EVERY SECOND WED., 3316 17TH ST., S.F., 415-863-3061, SFMAVERICK.COM.

Monthly regional tastings from **Uncorked Events** lure an attractive, Carignan-loving crowd to the Club Sportiva exotic auto showroom and food-friendly venues like Circa and Bambuddha Lounge. UNCORKEDEVENTS.COM.

Italophiles pack the front patio at **Ottimista Enoteca Café** for monthly Italian lessons, cooking classes, and tastings featuring various Italian wine producers or regions. 1838 UNION ST., S.F., 415-674-8400, OTTIMISTAENOTECA.COM.

## NIGHT WATCH

## Wine minus the snob factor

A new wave of unpretentious wine tastings is giving everyone, not just the vino, room to breathe.

Perhaps the funkiest events for the new generation of winos who are saying *au revoir* to “wine-and-cheese” affairs are run by Courtney Cochran of Hip Tastes. At her soirées, attendees figure out what pairs best with Thai food and pigs in a blanket. Thanks to an onsite DJ, unstuffy wine fans can even shake their tails while knocking back a glass of red. Each event Cochran sponsors at nightlife venues around the city has its own theme, such as “The Young Guns” (featuring winemakers 35 and under), “The White Party” (above), and “Get Your Grill On,” where bartenders poured local Trumer Pils beer alongside the zin and shiraz.

While some of the wines at Hip Tastes may occasionally feel Trader Joe’s familiar, Cochran’s Saturday School tastings dive deeper into the cellar. It doesn’t hurt that the 28-year-old is a charming educator and seriously certified (she passed level two of the Master Sommelier diploma). This month, she’s also celebrating the release of her first book, *Hip Tastes: The Fresh Guide to Wine*, with clues as to which wines to drink with pizza and Mexican food. Now that’s our kind of wine pairing.

BY MARCIA GAGLIARDI

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN CURLEY