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# Olive season underway in Sonoma



Adolfo Veronese, owner of Aventine in Glen Ellen, made a Braised Boneless Short Rib over a Red Cerignola Olive Risotto Cake with a Parmesan Crisps and a Ruby Red Port Sauce with Extra Virgin Olive Oil Caviar, Friday, January 16, 2015. (Crista Jeremiason/The Press Democrat)

BY DIANE PETERSON THE PRESS DEMOCRAT January 27, 2015, 2:21PM



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Wherever you find grapes in the Mediterranean — from Spain and Italy to Greece and Tunisia — you'll also find oil made from the fleshy fruit of the olive tree, Olio europaea.

It's no different in the Sonoma Valley, where the olive season is celebrated each year during the winter months following the late-fall olive harvest. The symbiosis between wine and olives in the Sonoma Valley is manifested by the number of wineries that press their own olive oil.

"We have quite a few olive growers," said Carlo Cavallo, chef/owner of BV Whiskey Bar & Grille, formerly Burger & Vine, in Sonoma. "The Benzigers and Gloria Ferrer make olive oil, as well as The Olive Press, which is owned by the Clines of Cline Cellars."

### Olive Bash In Sonoma



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Cavallo will be one of 19 chefs highlighting the Sonoma Valley's second-largest crop during the annual Feast of the Olive Dinner this Saturday at Ramekins Culinary School in Sonoma.

The decadent, five-course dinner, held at three long candlelit tables, includes three separate dinner menus comprising soups, salads and starters, plus meat and fish entrées, cheese courses and desserts. Each course will be paired with a local wine.

"Olive oil and olives complement wine," Cavallo said, "Depending on the olive oil, it's good with red, white or sparkling wine."

Olives also pair well with other foods, from seafood dishes scented with saffron and fennel to hearty beef dishes braised in wine. In the kitchen, olive oil is not only used to sear foods, but can be used as a finishing touch as well, either on its own or as part of a simple but flavorful sauce.

Italian chefs, in particular, tend to finish their dishes with a drizzle of a fruity or grassy olive oil. Like salt, it brightens and deepens a dish.

"It ties together all the flavors," Cavallo said. "I like playing around with it, and I'll flavor the olive oil with parsley or chili, porcini or truffles."

At Aventine in Glen Ellen, chef/owner Adolfe Veronese often features dishes with olives, such as the venerable Rabbit with Black Olive Sauce from Sicily. He also uses olive oil to finish all kinds fish and pasta.

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