

CINDY GREENBERG
VineGal



Let me drink Frank

Walt Disney meets wine pretty much sums up Frank Family Vineyards. Take a grape or two, mix in a little magic fairy dust and voila! — a Franktastic wine! But make no mistake: There is nothing “Mickey Mouse” about any of the wines from Frank Family Vineyards even though Rich Frank is well-versed in fairy dust and hard work given his long history with the Disney companies and Hollywood.

It all started once upon a time (1980s) in a land far, far away (California) when a handsome prince and his wife (Rich and Connie Frank) began taking weekend trips to the kingdom of Napa. They liked the kingdom of Napa and bought a house there.

While touring the kingdom, the Franks drank wine, met the townsfolk (future friend and partner in wine Koerner Rombauer), and slowly answered the siren song to join the wine business.

In 1992, Kornell Champagne Cellars (at Larkmead Winery in Calistoga) was bought by Rich and Koerner and eventually renamed the Frank Family Vineyards. In 1996, the dynamic duo bought Napa Cellars in Oakville, Calif.

Todd Graff, a 1984 graduate of UC Davis with a degree in plant science and viticulture, joined Frank Family Vineyards in 2003 as their winemaker. Todd came with more than 20 years of experience in the wine industry, working in Europe, Australia and California.

I had the opportunity to sample several offerings from the Frank Family Vineyards when they generously donated several cases of wines for a local Hurricane Katrina fundraiser in the Washington area.

In addition to the wines listed below, Frank Family Vineyards also make a sangiovese, a Winston Hill cabernet and five sparkling wines. Prices are approximate.

■ **2001 Rutherford Reserve cabernet sauvignon** (\$65) — Aged 27 months in half new and half-once-filled French oak barrels, it exhibits an amazing

bouquet of creamy cassis and aromas of violets and lilacs. Ripe blackberries dominate the front end of the palate and melt into a long, focused finish that concentrate flavors of anise, chocolate and toffee. While the tannins appear to be on the softer side (i.e. it's drinking well now), this wine has plenty of structure and will cellar well for several years. But if you must try it now, try it with a veal chop.

■ **2001 Frank Family Vineyards Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon** (\$40) — This wine has a slightly softer side than its big brother mentioned above but still offers loads of ripe black cherry and black plum fruit on the nose and the front of the palate. The medium/soft finish brings in additional notes of smokey wood and cherries that linger just long enough to compliment any New York strip (medium rare, of course).

■ **2003 Frank Family Napa Valley zinfandel** (\$32) — Made from 90 percent zinfandel, 8 percent syrah and 2 percent petite sirah, this wine grabs your nose with scents of black cherries, dark plums and black raspberries and won't let go. In the mouth, the wine fills out nicely with additional black fruits and spices, then finishes smoothly with notes of pepper and plum. A comforting wine perfect with comfort food, like lasagna.

■ **2004 Frank Family Napa Valley chardonnay** (\$32) — I thought the winemaker was kidding when I read “aromas of a freshly baked apple pie, old fashioned vanilla cream soda, and roasted almonds” but it is, indeed, all in there. It has a beautiful mouth feel and delivers more apples and roasted nuts on the palate and ends with a long elegant finish with notes of tasty oak. A stellar choice with grilled swordfish.

Consider also trying some of Todd Graff's other wines, offered through Napa Cellars (approximately \$20-\$25). If you do, e-mail me at cindy@vineguy.com and let me know what you think.

Between the slices

Sandwiches are a good start to the day

BY JOYCE ROSECRANS
Scripps Howard

Let's imagine fixing up some morning nourishment that's simpler in concept than a full brunch and a lot more fun.

This would be the breakfast sandwich.

A century or so ago, a fried egg found its way between two pieces of toast. Maybe a slice of cheese was put in there. A slice of tomato. A streaky piece of bacon hot off the cast-iron griddle.

Last century, McDonald's and other fast-food restaurants immortalized biscuits and English muffins as road food. Weekday breakfasts were suddenly on their way to work. Food technologists worked hard to eliminate the dreaded lap crumbs from biscuits made especially for sandwiches.

We propose pulling up a tray or table by the hearth and putting a knife and fork to a fancy breakfast sandwich. Even the fanciest is still fast food, so to speak, but not road food.

All the recipes gleaned from the National Peanut Board, banana shippers or a snazzy cookbook called “A Real American Breakfast” by Cheryl Alters Jamison and Bill Jamison (William Morrow, 2002) are definitely lap-droppers. They would be a sticky mess if you tried to pick them up. Utensils are required, and a hearty appetite.

For instance, Elvis would be so fond of the peanut streusel-topped French toastwiches stuffed with

sliced bananas and a cream-cheese filling. Good with hot cocoa for kids, less-sweet mocha cocoa for grown-ups. Decorate each plate with a bunchlet of seedless grapes. They're portable, if not the Elvis entree. Finish the sandwich, grab the grapes and go shopping, if you have to.

“A Real American Breakfast” includes one entire chapter of breakfast sandwiches. There's a Grown-ups Jelly Sandwich made with challah or another egg bread, mascarpone cheese, orange marmalade and fig preserves.

BANANA BREAKFAST CLUB SANDWICH

Peanut Streusel:

1/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
1/4 cup old-fashioned oats
2 tbsp. flour
2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 cup creamy peanut butter

Sandwiches:

8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup sugar
1 tsp. grated lemon peel
2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. vanilla extract
6 eggs, beaten to blend
1/3 cup milk
12 slices firm white or egg bread
3 to 4 bananas, sliced 1/4 inch thick
Ground cinnamon
Maple syrup, optional

1. For streusel, combine brown sugar, oats, flour and cinnamon. Add peanut butter. Work into mixture using two forks or your fingers, until blended and crumbly. Set aside.

2. Blend cream cheese, sugar, lemon peel, lemon juice and vanilla in a medium bowl. Beat together the eggs and milk in a large, flat dish.

3. Spread 1 1/2 tablespoons cream-cheese mixture on each bread slice. Top one slice of bread with sliced ba-

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Place
second
slice of
bread with
cream cheese side down on bananas. Repeat for remaining bread slices.

4. Spray two 13x9-inch glass baking dishes with nonstick cooking spray. Dip a sandwich in the egg mixture, turning to coat each side. Repeat. Place 3 sandwiches in each dish; sprinkle with cinnamon.

5. Have oven heating to 375 degrees.

6. Sprinkle about 2 1/2 tablespoons streusel topping over each sandwich, pressing lightly to make it adhere to the bread slice.

7. Bake at 375 degrees for 25 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes. Slice in half, corner to corner, for each serving and serve with maple syrup, if desired.



The Examiner salutes ...

... our wine columnists, Scott and Cindy Greenberg and the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington for hosting a wine benefit Hurricane Katrina victims in the D.C. area.

The wine tasting at Smith and Wollensky in D.C. will help the D.C. Central Kitchen feed the evacuees staying at the armory.

The following wines will be served for tasting:

- Bogle vineyards 2003 Clarksburg Petite Sirah Port
- Bogle vineyards 2003 Petite Sirah
- Victor Hugo Petite Sirah
- Vina Robles ps Petite Sirah
- Lolonis ps Petite Sirah
- Earthquake Petite Sirah
- Silkwood Petite Sirah
- Frank Petite Sirah
- Foppiano Petite Sirah
- Ernhardt Petite Sirah
- Rosenbloom Petite Sirah
- Biale Petite Sirah
- Mettler Family Vineyards Petite Sirah
- Concannon Petite Sirah

These wines are available at wine stores throughout the area. We invite you to try them yourself!

