South Africa’s winemakers winning new markets

By Eleni Giokos, CNNMoney

It’s a rare bright spot in a very gloomy economy: South Africa’s winemakers are winning new markets around the world. Battered by the slump in demand for commodities, Africa’s most developed country is teetering on the brink of recession and unemployment is rising.

But the country’s winemakers have a very different story to tell. Exports were up 5 percent in 2015, and the industry is predicting more growth in 2016.

South Africa is the world’s seventh largest wine producer. Its vineyards account for 4 percent of global wine output, and volumes have increased 20 percent over four years to about 420 million liters annually.

Read the whole story

4-day wine festival in El Dorado County

Each spring the El Dorado region comes alive to offer wine enthusiasts an assortment of wine and food pairings, barrel tastings, art, music, and other activities.

El Dorado Winery Association’s 25th annual Passport Wine event is April 9-10 and April 16-17 from 11am-5pm. Twenty-four wineries will be participating.

Passport holders will receive a commemorative 25-year wine glass.

For tickets and more information, go **online**.

Soup nights returning to Truckee

Slow Food Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Food Hub's fifth series of Community Soup Nights in Truckee are March 9 at Full Belly Deli, March 23 at Red Truck, and April 6 at Fifty Fifty Brewing Company.

Originally known as Project MANA's Stone Soup, these soup nights bring family and friends together to enjoy a warm, affordable and delicious meal made from fresh, local and sustainably sourced ingredients.

Each community soup night is 6-7:30pm. All are welcome to attend, and the cost is $5 at the door for a cup of soup and bread.

Each evening there will be live music and a raffle. Proceeds will go toward Slow Food Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Food Hub's initiatives to educate and reconnect the local community to our sustainable and regional food system.

For additional information, or if you are interested in volunteering, contact Trish Geary at pfgeary@gmail.com.

Former Truckee resident rocking the beer world

By Blair Anthony Robertson, Sacramento Bee

Let’s say you’ve got beer-connoisseur friends visiting from San Francisco or London or Berlin or Brussels, and they ask if there’s a good place in Sacramento to go for a pint.

If you send them to Capitol Beer and Tap Room, you won’t have to worry that Sacramento is going to come up short when it comes to great beer bars. Hidden in the back of a busy strip mall at Fair Oaks Boulevard and Howe Avenue, CapTap, as it is known to regulars, promises a world-class tasting experience seven days a week.

More than likely, your pals will encounter multiple beers they never have tasted or even heard of, and they will engage with like-minded beer lovers working their way through an ever-changing tap list that is closely followed and much-discussed.

Owned by former Truckee resident Ken Hotchkiss and his life partner, Patti Aguirre, Capitol Beer has become a major force in the local craft beer industry, attracting serious connoisseurs and newcomers alike. The bar is so influential these days that it can help launch a new brewery’s reputation; if you can’t find a fledgling beer there during multiple visits, it probably means it’s not ready for prime time.

Read the whole story

K’s Kitchen: Enchiladas packed with vegetables

By Kathryn Reed

Mexican food gets a bad wrap for being unhealthy. A lot of it has to do with all the cheese and when lard is involved.

It would be easy to skip the cheese and still have a flavorful dish.

During summer when corn is in season I buy several ears, blanch them, cut the kernels off the cob and freeze them. This allows me to have fresh corn through winter. That is what I used for this recipe.

I thought that each day that went by the flavors melded together even more.

This is definitely going to become a regular fixture in my lineup of winter comfort foods.



Veggie Enchiladas

Olive oil

1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut in cubes

1 medium onion, chopped

6 garlic cloves, minced

5 C spinach, packed

1 C corn

4 ounces mushrooms, chopped

1 15 ounce can black beans, drained

1 T cilantro

1 T cumin

¼ tsp pepper

Hot sauce

10 tortillas

16 ounce jar salsa verde

2 C Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

Cook squash for 45 minutes in 350-degree oven, or until tender.

Coat large saucepan with olive oil. Over medium heat cook garlic and onion until slightly opaque.

Add spinach gradually, stir until it wilts, add more until it is all wilted.

Add mushrooms and corn. Cook for 3-5 minutes.

Add squash.

Add cilantro, cumin and pepper. Add dashes of hot sauce until it reaches the heat level you want.

Divide mixture evenly into tortillas. Place seam side down in

9 x 13 baking dish. Spread cheese evenly over enchiladas. Cook for 15 minutes. Pour salsa over enchiladas. Cook for 7 minutes.

Park City cuisine – from ordinary to exquisite

Publisher's note: ***This is one in a series of stories about Park City, Utah.***

By Kathryn Reed

PARK CITY – With a ski-in distillery, food as satisfying as high-end big city restaurants, along with casual hangouts, it would be hard to be hungry or thirsty in Park City. It's also easy to leave with a larger waistline and much thinner wallet.

The Farm at the Canyons Village is all about locally sourced food (within 200 miles) that has been raised sustainably and is prepared from scratch.

The open kitchen allows diners to see the organized chaos in motion – with sous chefs keeping an eye on multiple pans, taking pinches of herbs to season the dishes and churning out savory meals to eager diners. Manual Rozehmal took over executive chef duties last fall.



Sous chef Jackie Assaad at The Farm plates an entree. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The menu is divided into small and large plates, with two of the large plates being vegetarian.

Sharing a variety of small plates did not leave enough room to finish the entrees.

The cheese is made in house with cows milk and the honey is local. It’s so soft and light it almost seems whipped. The apple and Brussels sprouts come with toasted pine nuts, Gold Creek Parmesan, kale and a lemon mustard dressing. Fortunately the dressing was not overbearing, but instead added a delectable tanginess. The roasted beets and honey is refreshing. It includes whipped honey ricotta, toasted walnuts, frisée, and pickled mustard seeds. The ricotta is spread on the bottom, is light and not overpowering.

JT, the waiter, is delightful and patient with answering

questions about the menu and the area – as well as keeping the wine glasses full.

The herbed Spätzle pays homage to the chef's German roots. In many ways it is like a fancy mac and cheese. This ensemble had Emmenthaler, truffle, caramelized onions, crispy shallots and black chanterelles. It was so incredibly rich and satisfying; fabulous comfort food on a winter night.

The Sugar House herb brined tomahawk pork chop comes from a farm outside of Salt Lake City. It is served with savoy cabbage, cannellini beans, tomato concasse and basil. Seasoned perfectly, pieces sliced easily off the bone.

Choices for wine are plentiful, with selections from throughout the world. The Honig Cabernet was a nice pairing with all the food on the table.



Part of The Farm restaurant is in an umbrella bar.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

While eating in the umbrella section is unique and it allows diners to see the snowcats on the hill after dark, it is chilly, at least sitting right next to the window. Being uncomfortable with cold toes throughout a meal should be reserved for true outdoor dining.

Vail Resorts operates this eatery, so those who've skied where there are umbrella bars will understand what this was like. There is interior seating, which walking through had an ideal temperature.

Finding the Farm was also a bit difficult even for the Uber driver. No signs point to it in the dark. It's behind the Grand Summit in Canyons Village, less than a 15-minute drive from the heart of Park City. When skiing this side of Park City it's easy to find it as it sits almost directly across from the Red Pine Gondola.



Doughnuts for dessert at Troll Hallen at Stein Eriksen Lodge are delightful. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Stein Eriksen Lodge has two choices for dining – Glitretind is more high-end and described as being like a three-hour experience, whereas Troll Hallen is more casual, with what the establishment calls lighter choices. Troll Hallen's "lighter choice" for a vegetarian was mac and cheese. Fortunately it was possible to order the mushroom risotto (also not light) off the Glitretind menu. It was rich and cooked exquisitely, but a salad or soup should have been ordered first because it wasn't enough to be an entrée.

The scallops, perfectly tender in the middle, were some of the best ever, according to an aficionado of this shellfish delicacy.

The extensive wine list on the one hand is a connoisseur's dream; on the other hand it's a bit overwhelming. And it's pricey – with a half bottle of Cab running about $100.

Dessert was a delightful twist on breakfast – doughnuts. Only these are Korean sweet potato doughnuts with sesame chocolate sauce, pickled Asian pear, and miso-shiso ice cream. They are worth saving room for.

Breakfast at Stein comes in two forms. For those staying the night, the buffet is included. It is much more robust than most "free" breakfasts, as well as a higher quality – like the maple encrusted bacon. It's also possible to order off the menu.

Sitting at a window looking out onto the slopes of Deer Valley one doesn't want to linger too long because the corduroy is getting skied off.



Ryan Burnham, chef at Goldener Hirsch, has no trouble catering to diner's food preferences. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The mountains call to Ryan Burnham, chef at Goldener Hirsch. He worked at Sunnyside in Tahoe City from 1999-2000, left for the flatlands, and is now in his fourth winter at this restaurant in Park City.

"You have to cook in the vein of the restaurant and listen to the clientele. The owners here are awesome. It's a beautiful location, family run, and I have a ton of leeway," Burnham told *Lake Tahoe News.*

While the restaurant has overtones of its Austrian roots,

Burnham has flexibility with some of the dishes, while the classics like wiener schnitzel are not to be altered. Even though offerings for a vegetarian are limited, Burnham welcomes the challenge to please diners with different diets. He didn't disappoint. He assembled a plate full of the accompaniments for the meat-fish entrees that became an entrée for a vegetarian.



The mushroom salad is the perfect start to dinner at Goldener Hirsch. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Starting the dinner was incredible – warm mushroom salad with Humboldt fog chevre, hazelnuts and Solara sherry. It was out of this world. The pungent cheese, sliced nearly paper thin and placed at the bottom blended well with the wild mushrooms and frisée greens. It was hard to share it. This with a soup would be an ideal meal for those not wanting meat.

The steelhead trout with potato-leek rosti, Swiss chard and

preserved tomato nage was perfectly stacked so a bit of the fish and potato could be put on the fork together. While the trout isn't local, it was fresh.

The Prisoner's red blend was a fantastic complement to all the dishes, but the $160 for the bottle is about four times what it retails for.

Sticking with tradition, apple strudel is available. It's not too sweet, which was great. But even better was the chef's recommendation of the sticky toffee pudding. Don't leave without having it.



A soft pretzel with mustard is a satisfying after ski snack. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Goldener offers an après ski menu – ranging from a Bavarian soft pretzel (yummy) to cheese fondue. Several European beers are available on tap and in bottles.

Breakfast is complementary for guests. An array of cold items – homemade pastries and fruit are on the bar. Hot items are made to order, including eggs, pancakes and oatmeal.

Most of the hotels in Park City have a restaurant associated with it, which makes it nice so travelers don't have to leave. But they are also destinations for others. At the Goldener

Hirsch, with only 20 rooms, the restaurant survives because of people dining there who are not guests.

Even the Park City Marriott has a restaurant and bar. What was nice about coming back to the hotel after a day on the slopes, though, were the hot cocoa and fresh baked cookies available on the first floor by the cushy couches and fireplace. The day started with breakfast upstairs – the choice of hot (eggs and meat) or cold (cereal, fruit, yogurt).



Miners Camp is Park City ski resort's newest dining option. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Skiers are presented with several food options at Park City and Deer Valley. Miner's Camp is Park City's newest edition. A vegetarian even has choices from the soups to grilled skewers to pizzas. Utah lamb Miner's pie, part of the Mediterranean station, isn't something any California resort is going to offer. The three cheese Miner's potatoes are worth the threat

of clogged arteries. The vegetable Moroccan stew is seasoned so well it's hard to believe this is ski resort food.

Park City (including the former Canyons resort) has eateries scattered about the mountain.



Empire Canyon Lodge offers upscale dining choices. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Deer Valley's choices are at several base lodges. The prices are comparable to the Vail Resorts' owned Park City or slightly less. A main difference is the lodges all seem like a lodge and not a fancy cafeteria. Wood is everywhere. It feels authentic.

The smell of a wood fire fills the Empire Canyon Lodge at Deer Valley. A pint of beer is only $6.50, and most on tap are from the Wasatch mountains. From the specialty grill people may order items like grilled venison, catfish tacos, and fresh

made fettuccine. Burgers and fries are at the traditional grill.



Chips, salsa and margarita are the perfect apres ski mix at Baja Cantina. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A 42-year local recommended Baja Cantina for margaritas after the ski day. Situated at the base of Park City ski resort, it was a good choice. The restaurant has been around for 31 years. The margaritas – especially with Grand Marnier – are tasty, and the perfect libation with a basket of chips and salsa.



Lights beckon people to Main Street Pizza and Noodle. Photo/Kathryn Reed

A plethora of dining choices are available along Main Street in Park City. Music spills forth from some, others offer windows for passersby to get a peak inside, and most have menus out front. Casual and simple were on order this particular night. Main Street Pizza and Noodle fit that description.

It has a super casual ambiance – with diners placing their orders at a counter and then having servers bring it to the table. The openness allows for conversations to carry and loudness to create a bit of a party atmosphere.

Being able to get half orders of pasta – all of those dishes sounded wonderful – and various size pizzas make sharing easy. "Noodle" in the name of the restaurant is a bit of a misnomer if one is thinking an Asian influence.

What left a sour taste was the automatic 12 percent tip, especially for two people, in an era when restaurants are starting to do away with tipping and the fact a server didn't even take our order. The food was good, but the price was a

little more than casual dining.

Another night of low key dining was take-out from Park City Chinese and Thai. Fortunately Dave, the concierge from Goldener Hirsch Inn, did the driving so it was more like delivery.

Menu offerings were pretty standard fare – but the flavor and spiciness – especially on the kung pao tofu – was fabulous. It was great to have leftovers – especially when the vegetable entrees are only $10.

The Salt Lake City 2002 Olympics, Park City officials told *Lake Tahoe News*, might have been the only time in Utah's history that state officials didn't enforce the state's liquor laws. The need for a membership or to pay a cover charge to get an alcoholic drink in Utah disappeared in 2009.

However, some quirky regulations still exist. Bars-restaurants cannot have a happy hour price for drinks. All prices must be the same throughout the day and be posted.



Royal Street Cafe won awards for these drinks. Photo/Kathryn Reed

At the Royal Street Café adjacent to the Silver Lake Lodge at Deer Valley the waiter warns that a second round of drinks will require ordering food – even if it's the cheapest thing on the menu. He smiled as he said this was the state law, acknowledging it was a bit quirky in 2016.

And while the RSC St. Germain Cocktail – winner of the 2009 Park City Cocktail Contest, and RSC Blueberry Mojito – winner in 2007, were both delightful concoctions, one was plenty to wind down with after a day of skiing. They were equally as pretty as they were delicious.

This eating while drinking law might also have had something to do with the St. Regis serving rosemary oil infused popcorn and a crunchy trail mix like bowl of goodies along with cocktails. It meant a second round could be ordered without the need to look at the food menu.



The 7452 Bloody Mary at St. Regis is worth the ride to the top. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The **St. Regis in New York** is the birthplace of the bloody Mary, so it was essential to have one overlooking the slopes of Deer Valley. The 7452 Mary (named for the elevation) is only available at Deer Valley, whereas the others are available at every St. Regis. The base for the bloodies is the same throughout the world. This one is topped off with a wasabi and celery espuma, cayenne pepper and black lava salt. It also comes with a stick filled with Worcestershire sauce and Tabasco for the imbiber to regulate the heat. The vodka comes from the High West Distillery in town.

It is definitely the way to start the ski day or a good reason to take a break. Sitting in a chair with a modern gas fireplace directly behind and the slopes of Deer Valley in the front, it was hard not to be relaxed. Outdoor seating is available, but flurries and 20-degree temps didn’t make that

appealing.

A funicular whisks people to the on-mountain hotel. Skiers and riders can have staff at the bottom take their equipment to the top, which is then waiting outside ready for them to hit the slopes which are just steps from the restaurant.

While staying at the high-priced resorts might be out of reach for many people, their bars and restaurants are open to those who are sleeping elsewhere. And the eateries don't all come with prices that correspond to what a room night costs.



Marshmallows for s'mores at the Montage come in an assortment of flavors. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Montage is like a classic mountain lodge, the interior grandeur reminiscent of the Ahwahnee at Yosemite. Comfy seating surrounds a fireplace. Farther down is a bar, but the best views of the mountains are reserved for those in the

dining room or sitting outside.

Those outside are bundled up, surrounding the fire pit as they roast marshmallows for s’mores. No signs said this was for guests only. The flavored marshmallows – in particular the peppermint – are quite tasty.

Down the hall is the much more casual Burgers and Bourbon restaurant. A wall of windows at least 12-feet high look out on the area near the base of the Empire lift at Deer Valley. A structure left over from when this was a bustling mining town in the 1800s sits on its side, not far up the slope. It toppled over in spring 2015 and officials have yet to be able to do anything with it.

As with most places, plenty of outside seating is available. But when the wind chill makes it feel like single digits, the inside warmth is the logical choice.

It would be surprising if a bourbon-Scotch-whiskey drinker couldn’t be satisfied here. Several varietals of whiskey from the local distillery are available.



High West Distillery makes a variety of whiskeys and vodkas. Photo/Kathryn Reed

High West Distillery is on Park Avenue in the heart of Park City. At the end of the day it’s possible to come down Park City’s Quittin Time run and be right at the watering hole.

Opened in 2007, is has garnered quite a following based on the lines – one for the bar, the other for the restaurant. Built in 1914, the building is listed on the National Historic Register. Upstairs is the bar and off to the side is the aptly named parlor, ideal for sampling a flight of the high-octane liquid.

The quick-talking Chris Dorsey explains how bourbon has nothing to do with Kentucky, a bit of history, the aging process and other subtleties.

The flight consists of American Prairie, Double Rye, Rendezvous Rye and Campfire. A sip of water is recommended in between the alcohol. It’s an experience to enjoy even if this isn’t your usual drink of choice. And it’s a wonderful way to warm the insides before wandering off to further explore Park City.

Parmesan cheese may really be wood pulp

By Lydia Mulvany, BloombergBusiness

The cheese police are on the case.

Acting on a tip, agents of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration paid a surprise visit to a cheese factory in rural Pennsylvania on a cold November day in 2012.

They found what they were looking for: evidence that Castle Cheese Inc. was doctoring its 100 percent real parmesan with cut-rate substitutes and such fillers as wood pulp and distributing it to some of the country’s biggest grocery chains.

One might be tempted to think of this as a ripped-from-the-headlines episode of “NYPD Bleu,” except that the FDA wasn’t playing. Some grated Parmesan suppliers have been mislabeling products by filling them with too much cellulose, a common

anti-clumping agent made from wood pulp, or using cheaper cheddar, instead of real Romano.

Read the whole story

Noodles: The ultimate global comfort food

By April Fulton, National Geographic

Who really invented noodles? Italians, Arabs, and the Chinese all claim to be the first to divide dough into bits and boil the pieces in water. Noodles of many shapes and lengths have been a part of global cuisines for at least 2,000 years, when but scientists found a 4,000-year-old noodle in China a few years back, it pretty much gave China the win.

Still noodles take many forms and are made from a wide variety of grains like millet, wheat, and rice. They are thrown into soups, fried in woks, or coated with olive oil, tomato sauce, or cheese. They are tossed with beans or vegetables or leftover meats to make a quick meal. Noodles are a blank canvas for infinite flavor combinations.

Making and stretching them by hand is a thing of beauty to watch.

Read the whole story

Class to focus on benefits of homemade broth

Victoria LaFont, certified nutritional therapy practitioner, will teach Skillshare – Bone Broth for Optimal Health on Feb. 27 at the Tahoe Food Hub Farm Shop.

Slow Food Lake Tahoe is hosting the class. Attendees will discover how easy it is to make a variety of broths and stocks, how to use them and the nutritional benefits of incorporating them into one's diet.

The $20 tickets may be purchased **online**. Ticket costs cover all materials for this Skillshare.

The class will be from 4:30-6pm at 150 Alpine Meadows Road, Alpine Meadows, Truckee.

Calif. vintners want Cubans to be wine drinkers

By Andrea Rodriguez, AP

The 3.5 million tourists who flooded Cuba last year downed oceans of mojitos, lakes of daiquiris and rivers of thin, sour beer. Only an odd few accompanied their ropa vieja and croquetas with wine – mostly overpriced, low- to mid-grade vintages from Chile, Argentina and Spain.

That may be about to change, at least around the margins of Cuba's once-dismal dining scene. Some of the United States' largest vintners want to turn this island of sweet rum and

flat state-brewed beer into a haven for robust California zinfandel, oaky chardonnay and powerful cabernet sauvignon.

Thousands of private restaurants have cropped up around Cuba in recent years under economic reforms designed to soften the shock of cutbacks in the troubled state-controlled economy. Particularly on the high end, those restaurants' clients are increasingly American, part of a 76 percent surge in U.S. tourism – to 161,174 last year – that followed Presidents Raul Castro and Barack Obama's declaration of detente at the end of 2014.

Hoping to ride both trends, about 100 California wine producers, distributors and exporters descended on Havana this week for a two-day symposium to reintroduce Cuban restaurant owners and managers to their products.

The California Wine Symposium was organized by the California Wine Institute, associations of Napa and Sonoma valley wine producers and Sonoma-based U.S. Cava Exports, a 2-year-old company founded to export California agricultural products to Cuba. The event featured tastings, talks on California's vineyards and one-on-one meetings between U.S. business people and Cuban restaurateurs and state officials.

"This is a spectacular meeting," said Orlando Rodriguez, owner of Waoo!!, a 3-year-old, 20-employee restaurant in Havana's trendy Vedado neighborhood. "It arouses interest, which prompts business, which creates profits."

Some 50 private restaurants, or paladares, and hundreds of sommeliers and buyers for state-run restaurants attended the conference, whose participants included representatives of the E&J Gallo and Francis Ford Coppola wineries.

It's been legal for Cuba to buy wine and other agricultural products from the U.S. for years but Cuban officials say they stopped importing California wine in 2005 because the U.S. trade embargo prohibits American producers from selling

agricultural goods to Cuba on credit. Obama allowed sales of most goods to Cuba on credit through executive action last week but lifting the ban on credit for farm products would require an act of Congress.

Cuba has never been a big wine-drinking country, but it imports some 360,000 cases of wine a year from countries that allow sales on credit.

Darius Anderson, head of U.S. Cava Exports, said he hopes to be shipping California wine to Cuba by the end of the year.

“We’re working on the shipping, we’re working on the financing, and we hope to have them all solved by mid-year, have two or three containers on the water and get them here by the holidays,” he said.

Only a small number of Cuban government agencies are allowed to import goods, creating a chokepoint of inefficiency and bureaucracy that makes it virtually impossible for private businesses to bring in large quantities of goods from other countries. Paladar owners depend on black-market goods, items bought at retail stores or supplies brought in the suitcases of people paid to “mule” products from the U.S. and other countries. The lack of a legal wholesale market is widely seen as one of the main hindrances to the efficient development of private enterprise in Cuba.

“It doesn’t matter to me if a private person or the state does the importing. What matters is that there’s somewhere to buy this wine,” said Julio Valdes, a representative of the Five Corners Trattoria in Old Havana. “It’s important for us to have a variety for our clients. Right now we have Chilean, Italian and Spanish wine that we buy in stores bit by bit.”