

TIP OF MY TONGUE

Food, wine and Dia de los Muertos

Just returned from five weeks of traveling around the U.S., consuming copious amounts of BBQ, and various other non-veggie fare. I have confirmed my suspicion that just because a specialty cuisine was born in one region does not mean that it is still the best and only place to taste it.

From the Santa Monica Pier to Chicago, along Route 66, from New Orleans to NYC and from Kansas to Kentucky, I sampled so many roadside delicacies that my pants quickly required no belt. Before, during and after all these meals, I attended 12 minor league baseball games, five halls of fame (baseball, football, basketball, rock-n-roll and chess ... yes, chess) and oodles of "world's largest" roadside attractions, including the "The World's Largest Collection of the World's Smallest Versions of the World's Largest Things." Where was the best BBQ, fried catfish, hot dog, ice cream, Mexican, Asian, Italian? Stay tuned.

Beyond the Glory helps Tolay

Beyond the Glory will hold a "dine and donate" fundraiser on Sept. 29 from 5 to 9 p.m. BTG is donating a huge 20 percent of the proceeds to the Sonoma County Parks Foundation, which supports local education programs, as well as the Tolay Fall Festival, a Petaluma tradition for many years.

Usually only open to special permit holders, the Tolay Fall Festival gives a chance to visit one of our greatest local parks.

Petaluma Gap elections

The Petaluma Gap Winegrower's Association is looking for new board members. The PGWA is a nonprofit volunteer organization responsible for guiding and shaping our local wine industry. It's the PGWA who are working overtime to secure Petaluma our very own American Viticultural Area, which will bring further

attention and prestige to the grapes grown and wine produced in our unique little corner of the world.

Open only to PGWA members, applications are due Oct. 9, with elections in December.

While other wine growers' organizations are only open to industry insiders, the PGWA is Petaluman to its core and offers non-grower memberships. "Friend" memberships are only \$25 a

year and include all sorts of great benefits, like a members-only holiday party and summer BBQ, discounts at the Petaluma Gap wineries, and great seminars that will help you become a wine expert.

Dia de los Muertos

The month-long El Dia de los Muertos festival moves its home base downtown this year, holding most of its events in and around the Petaluma Historic Library and Museum.

The festival starts on Sept. 27 with an altar workshop, and ends Nov. 1 with a spectacular and surreal candlelight procession with giant puppets, through the streets of Petaluma ending with a taco truck roundup.

I can already smell the homemade carnitas, tacos, tamales, elotes, papusas, churros and more. The month of October is filled with great cultural and food events.

Taste of Mexico, Oct. 10, is a molé sauce contest and chicken dinner. For the unanointed, molé comes in many varieties and colors, depending on which state of Mexico it's from, and you'll see a wide variety at this event, with categories of competitors for restaurants and homemade.

The Mezcal Dinner, on Oct. 15, will feature a guided tour through several mezcals, a spirit made from roasted agave plants. With a smokier flavor than its cousin tequila, you might think of it as Mexican Scotch. I never miss one of Amber Balshaw's (Preferred



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Sonoma Caterers) expertly paired specialty dinners. Amber's dinners always sell out, so buy your tickets now at www.petalumamuseum.com.

Lagunitas Farms

On Oct. 6, Seared will offer a special Lagunitas dinner. With their recent partnership with Heineken, Lagunitas' worldwide appeal certainly isn't a secret, although I'd bet few knew that Lagunitas has its own farm. Along with Lagunitas beef and lamb, Seared's Chef O'Donnell will create Lagunitas meat sausages specifically for this occasion.

Restaurant news

Another BBQ spot fizzles out as Tyler's Roadside BBQ is replaced by the Happy Gyro, 1105 Bodega Ave. (inside Bodega

Market), which is run by the former chef of the Real Döner.

Activity is a brewin' behind the paper-covered windows at DeSchmire's old location, 304 Bodega Ave. According to the nice chap who answered the door, a new fermentation company (kombucha, sauerkraut, etc.,) will open a small storefront sometime this winter.

Gone before most even noticed they were there, Café de Croissant has closed up shop at 25 Petaluma Blvd. South, next to Peet's Coffee, after barely more than a year. Not the greatest location for food purveyors, let's hope that North Bay Café does better when they open in that same location next month.

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