

TIP OF MY TONGUE

# F.A. Nino's sauce heats up October

This week, we have spicy sauces and mustards, a new tasting room and a happy hour capped with maple bacon donut holes to get you hungry.

**Hot-toberfest**

F.A. Nino's was a big winner at this year's Harvest Fair, taking home awards for just about all of their BBQ and hot sauces, several of which are infused with beer from Lagunitas Brewing Company. Staying connected to local food purveyors was one of the main reasons co-owners Chuck and Uncle Frank opened the F.A. Nino's tasting room back in June, and it is a promise they have stood by ever since. While attending F.A. Nino's "Hot-toberfest" event last weekend, we dined on sausages from Yanni's Sausages and Bud's Meats, kraut from Wild West Fermentation, and other local delicacies.

The highlight of the evening was learning that F.A. Nino's will introduce their own mustard. Infused with Petaluma Hills Brewing Company's Line & Twine IPA, three experimental mustards were available for guests to try, and to vote on. I have tasted hundreds of mustards, and I could not choose between their regular spicy, brown sugar spicy and jalapeño spicy mustards.

The restraint these boys show when creating spicy condiments is impressive, and much appreciated as someone who prefers flavor over fire. The jalapeño mustard was actually the least hot, while retaining an incredibly rich jalapeño flavor. If available, I will buy them all, so I hope the vote was a three-way tie.

**Food at Petaluma Hills**

F.A. Nino's has started serving food at Petaluma Hills Brewing Company on Sunday afternoons, and I bet you too can get a sneak preview of their new mustard if you ask nicely. Last weekend's beer-kissed menu included Porterluma braised beef tacos (2 for

\$5), Line & Twine sausage sandwiches (Yanni's Limoncello sausages steamed in Line & Twine beer, topped with kraut for \$7), Candied Rivertown Nuts, and for the hot heads, Rivertown Demon Nuts.

The F.A.'s like to experiment with flavor, so the menu will change from week to week, but with those prices, and PHBC's great beer on tap, it makes for a no-brainer Sunday afternoon football and lunch/dinner destination.

**Spaghetti feed**

One of our favorite feeds is the yearly spaghetti feed, benefiting the Petaluma Woman's Club scholarships and building maintenance funds. We love that this event is simple, fun, held in a historic building by a historically significant club, and best of all, you'll get to dine alongside some of Petaluma's most interesting people. The event is Nov. 6 at 6:30 p.m. and is \$20 for adults, \$12 for kids 12 and under. Advanced tickets are available at [www.petalumawomansclub.com](http://www.petalumawomansclub.com).

**Local restaurant chain closes**

Terra Vino has closed its doors at both Petaluma locations. Originally Round Table Pizza, this family owned, local franchise switched names last year because they wanted to "go local" by offering a better menu than what they were confined to as a franchisee. For some reason they purposely avoided free local media coverage, instead opting for expensive radio commercials.

One of the not-so-secret secrets to success in Petaluma is that restaurants not only have to offer a great menu, but also must be in tune with our community. With so many great options, most locals assume that a new restaurant is nothing more than an outsider trying to capitalize on Petaluma's



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culinary fame, unless they show us otherwise. Haven't heard of or tried Terra Vino? That's kind of my point.

**Downtown wine tasting**

As of Oct. 17, Petaluma has its first downtown wine tasting room, located at 112 Washington St., in the Petaluma Hotel. October is Barber Cellars "soft opening." A grand opening is planned for later this fall.

We visited within hours of their kickoff and Barber seems to have picked their location well. The tasting room was already filling up with out-of-town hotel guests. The décor is simple but friendly, with a definite French farm feel. The tasting fee is \$5, which I ac-

tually appreciate because I would hate to deplete their limited production for free. Bottles are \$18 to \$35.

There is no better way to introduce out of town friends to yet another aspect of Petaluma's agrarian culture than by visiting Barber Cellars for a quick wine and local cheese pairing before moving on to dinner at any one of our excellent downtown restaurants. The tasting room is open Thursday to Monday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**Happy hour highlight**

Speakeasy introduces Petaluma's newest happy hour, with a cheese board and bubbly special, weeknights from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Go for the Spanish Cava, although

all bubbly pairs excellently with Speakeasy's cheese board. Currently offering Marin French's Camembert and triple crème brie and Achadinha's Brancha (all favorites of mine), the cheese plate is rounded out with sweet and spicy pecans, bacon jam, local honey and house crackers, making this a steal at just \$20.

Personally, I'd add Speakeasy's famous edamame hummus, empanadas and salmon croquettes to the table, finished off with maple bacon donut holes or their chocolate peanut butter pie, but that's just me.

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