

Food & Drink

Food & Drink editor, Dave Michaels, 602.444.NEWS
or dave.michaels@arizonarepublic.com

Wednesday, November 12, 2003

SECTION FD



The Arizona Republic

Handmade Bottega del Vino stemware is specially made for drinking wine. From left: Two large glasses for reds, a tall, thin flute for champagne, and a glass for white wine.

For fine wine, fine glasses

Stemware brings out subtle notes

By John Carlos Villani
john.villani@arizonarepublic.com

"Targeted taste zone" may sound like a great job category at an M&M's factory, but to wine lovers, it's the key to gustatory pleasure.

These zones, located along the tongue, are sensitive to sweetness, acidity and other sensations. We register sweetness on the middle part of the tongue, acidic flavors along the sides, and fruit tastes at the tip.

Interest has surged in specialized stemware that isolates and intensifies the best flavors in middle- and upper-priced wines.

If you've always sipped wine from typical 12- and 16-ounce tulip-shaped stemware, the difference in taste can be dramatic. Specialized glasses make Chardonnays more buttery and reveal subtle aromas of flowers and fruit. Merlots take on seductive complexities of cherry and fig, while Cabernet Sauvignons reveal their tannic boldness and fruit expressiveness.

These glasses use particular shapes and sophisticated fab-

FI

Stemware sources

Among the Valley shops that sell specialty stemware are AZ Wine Co., 2515 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale; Bacchus Wine Made Simple, 7122 E. Greenway Road (Kierland Commons), Phoenix; Epicurean Wine Services, 7101 E. Thunderbird Road, Phoenix; Le Creuset Company Store, Prime Outlets at New River, 4250 W. Anthem Way, Phoenix; Sportsman's Fine Wines & Spirits, 3205 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix; Sur La Table, 7131 W. Ray Road (In Casa Paloma), Chandler; Sweet Basil, 10749 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale; Village Wine Cellar, 8877 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale. Online retailers such as Amazon.com and Wineenthusiast.com also sell the stemware.

rication techniques (such as cut rims rather than rolled ones) to deliver flavors to specific parts of the tongue. Many of the Valley's wine shops sell this stemware.

"They bring out all the positive fruit flavors while diminishing the acids and tannins that interfere with wine flavors," says Michael Fine,

owner of Sportsman's Fine Wines and Spirits, who uses Austrian-made Riedel stemware at the store's wine bar. Riedel lead-crystal stemware ranges from \$7 for a small glass to \$89 for a large one at Sportsman's.

Another manufacturer is Italy's Bottega del Vino, whose glasses are sold at as AZ Wine Co. These glasses are handmade from barium crystal for durability, says Richard Betts of AZ Wine.

"People who have experienced the comparison between wines served in a traditional wine glass and in specialized stemware understand that more complex, more expensive wines deserve to be served in the best possible stemware," Betts says.

At AZ Wine, Bottega del Vino glasses cost \$30 to \$35.

John Scremin of Epicurean Wine Service sells Riedel and Bottega del Vino as well as Spiegelau stemware from Germany.

"The Riedel glasses are the most expensive, and that's created a lot of opportunity for the two other manufacturers," Scremin says. "But all of them deliver a very comparable experience."

Reach the reporter at
(602) 444-8384.