

The North American Truffler

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Jackson Family Wines turns to growing truffles

By Stacy Finz, S.F. Chronicle

Perigord truffles: They're called black gold because they're one of the most expensive and luxurious ingredients in the world.

Historically foraged in the Perigord region of France and used in the finest restaurants in the world, the black truffle could soon be Sonoma County's next big crop.

Farmers and vintners, who believe that Sonoma's terroir and climate mirrors Perigord, are buying up land, ripping out vineyards and planting trees inoculated with the fungus, hoping to strike it rich - or at least grow some of the best-tasting truffles in the new world.

Jackson Family Wines, the company that owns Kendall-Jackson and a string of smaller wineries, is so convinced of the success of a domestic truffiere that it's planted 10 acres in Santa Rosa with plans to eventually expand to 60 acres, including property in Santa Barbara. "Our objective is to grow ones that taste as good as the wild ones or better," said Kevin McGee, president of the Jackson Artisan Purveyor Group, a subsidiary of the wine company. "We think it will be one of the most advanced orchards in the country because it's as close as you can build an analog to the Perigord region."

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A few weeks ago, Brian Malone, Jackson's vineyard manager, planted nearly 4,000 hazelnut and oak tree seedlings - each injected with the truffle fungus - in long, neat rows. Initially, it doesn't look like much, Malone said. But in three to five years the property, an old horse farm on Taylor Mountain, will resemble a forest.

The late Jess Jackson, founder of the family's wine enterprise, became interested in cultivating truffles three years ago, after reading a newspaper article about someone in Tennessee who was doing it, McGee said.

Business plan

"He sat down and put together a business plan," he said, adding that after extensive research Jackson believed that he could put California on the map as a top truffle producer. So far, there are only three commercially productive orchards in the United States - two in Tennessee, and one in Mendocino County near Laytonville whose founder died and no one is sure what is to become of the property, said Charles Lefevre, owner of New World Truffieres Inc., a truffle nursery and consulting firm in Oregon. (Continued on Page 2)

"Truffle cultivation in this country is in the very early stages," said Lefevre, who competes with four other nurseries nationwide. "Only in the last four years has there been a sudden interest. We're where the wine industry was 50 years ago or even longer."

Fungus is tolerant

The fact that it's been successful in Tennessee, where weather and soil conditions differ from France's, shows how tolerant the fungus is, he said. But experts have high expectations for Northern California because of its climate and volcanic soil characteristics, the same ones that have made this region famous for its wines and olives.

Lefevre said he has a number of clients here who are taking the leap into the truffle-growing business and just recently accompanied a group of investors to Mendocino County, where they're interested in planting an orchard.

"California could become very important," he said, adding that only a few miles from Jackson's orchard one vintner pulled out 10 acres of vineyard to plant truffles. "I think that's going to be the trend, especially because there's such a large market in the Bay Area's culinary scene."

Better bet than wine

Certainly, if they're as profitable as experts say, they could be a better bet than wine.

Black truffles wholesale from \$800 to \$1,000 a pound. Some Bay Area chefs said they've paid as much as \$1,500 a pound. The famous Piedmont white truffles from Italy are even more expensive, but so far no one has figured out how to successfully grow them here.

The black truffles, however, are significantly less expensive to grow than wine grapes. It costs about \$10,000 an acre to establish an orchard, including trees, soil prep and the irrigation system, Lefevre said. It takes \$2,000 a year to maintain an acre, including the truffle dog - in Europe they often use pigs, which are known to eat the truffles, he said.

It takes about five to seven years for the first harvest, and 10 to 12 years to reach full production. But once the trees are mature, they can generate from 35 to 100 pounds of truffles an acre.

Over the last 100 years the global truffle supply has decreased from 1,000 tons annually to around 100 tons, mostly because truffles thrive on farmland - and the number of farms is diminishing, Lefevre said. But with the gourmet food movement that's sweeping the country, demand for truffles has never been higher.

4-star chef weighs in

Roland Passot, chef-owner of San Francisco's four-star La Folie, said when truffles are at the peak of their season, from December to March, he uses them in a number of classic French dishes. But his black truffles come from France. "It's not that I'm being nationalistic," he said. "But so far I haven't found the same quality from the ones cultivated in the United States. In Europe they've been growing them for thousands and thousands of years." But when the California ones are ready to harvest, Passot said he'll give them a try. "I'm very supportive of local farms," he said. "If they're the right quality, there is no reason to buy something in France if I can get it here."

New Book : *Mycophilia* by Eugenia Bone

Eugenia Bone, co-president of the New York Mycological Society and a nationally recognized journalist and food writer, is publishing *Mycophilia*, the ultimate read for any fungus aficionado. Gary Lincoff, author of *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*, has called it "the most engrossing, readable book about mushrooms and the science of mycology I have ever read."

Mycophilia is available from Rodale books.



WINTER/SPRING 2012

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NATS MARCH MEETING

PLACE: CORVALLIS MULTICULTURAL CTR: 128 SW 9TH ST.

TIME: TUE., MAR 6, 7:30 PM

SPEAKER: TBA

NATS MARCH FORAY

PLACE: TBA

TIME: SAT., MAR 9, 2012

Full details will be available at www.natruffling.org.

TRUFFLE DOG TRAINING SEMINAR

PLACE: FORESTRY CLUBHOUSE, PEAVY ARBORETUM

DATE/TIME: SAT. MAR 17, 2012

NATS and Jeannine May will present a truffle dog training seminar at the Forestry Clubhouse at Peavy Arboretum. The seminar will be a combination of lecture, fundamentals of scent training, and practical field work. Beverages and a continental breakfast will be provided. Attendance is limited to six dogs and four audits (people without their dogs). A waiting list will be maintained; if there is sufficient interest another seminar may be scheduled. All dogs will be required to be under voice control and well-mannered in company of other dogs and people. Aggressive or disruptive dogs will be ejected from the class without refund. The course fee for NATS members is \$200 with dogs and \$100 for audits, and for non-members \$215 with dogs and \$115 for audits, payable in advance. The non-member fee includes a 2012 NATS membership. For questions or to register for the seminar, please contact [Marilyn Hinds](#).

Reminder: Please Remember to Renew Your Membership for 2012.

A membership renewal form is included in this newsletter and can also be found on the NATS website. Please renew now.



Editor's Comments

The truffle season looks like it's been off to a slow start. However, according to some commercial pickers I know, things are looking up. Keep your fingers crossed!

The weather has certainly been non-typical. Some would call it just plain weird.

As always, please keep those newsletter submissions coming. Foray pictures are always appreciated. A review of Truffle Cheeses is scheduled for the next "Truffler."

Jon Kenneke, *Truffler* Editor - jon@kenneke.com



Disclaimer

The information contained in *The Truffler* is to be used at your own risk. NATS Inc., its officers, editors, and members are not responsible for the use or misuse of information contained in the newsletter. If you are unsure of mushroom identification or safety, please consult an expert. It's better to be safe than sorry!

In addition, attending and participating in a NATS event is entirely at your own risk. No person associated with NATS is either directly or indirectly responsible for anything that occurs during, or in transit to/from, a NATS event. Be responsible.



Truffler Recipes

Bruschetta Al Tartufo Nero – Bruschetta with Fresh Black Truffles

There is bruschetta and there is Black Truffle Bruschetta. The latter of course is majestic and rarely found at the average mom-and-pop Italian restaurant, or even at chi-chi places. Moreover, if you do find a black truffle bruschetta at some spiffy place, how do you know that actual fresh black truffles were used and not some preserved stale specimen. That said, like for many other culinary experiences, “God Bless the Child who’s Got His Own,” since he will reap the benefits of the real thing. Hence, herewith, please find a detailed recipe for homemade Black Truffle Bruschetta – luxury within reach.

- **Prep. Time: 10 min.**
- **Serves 4**
- **Measurements are U.S. standard and metric units.**

INGREDIENTS

4 Slices Country Bread
3 ounces (100 g) Oregon Black Truffle
Extra Virgin Olive oil
1 Garlic clove
1 Anchovy fillet
Salt

DIRECTIONS

Clean the truffle. Grate the truffle through the smallest holes of a cheese grater

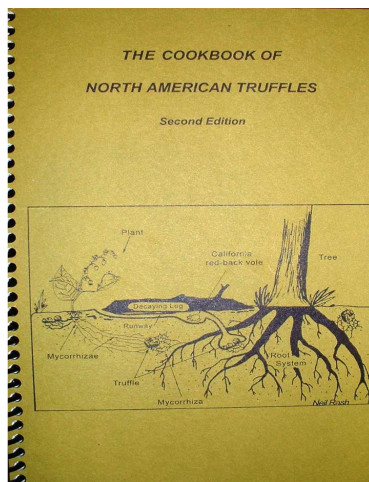
Place a peeled garlic clove and one anchovy fillet in a mortar and crush with a pestle (if no mortar is handy simply use a plate and crush with the back of a spoon) while gradually adding extra virgin olive oil.

Add the grated truffle and continue to crush and mash together. Add a little salt. Continue to pour in the remaining extra virgin olive oil. The compound should be dense but fluid, so that if a spoonful is placed on a plate it spreads but does not slides away.

Toast the bread. Quickly spread the black truffle sauce on each one of the still-hot toasted bread slices. Serve immediately. Enjoy!



The North American Truffling Society Announces the Second Edition of “The Cookbook of North American Truffles”



The North American Truffling Society (NATS) is proud to announce the release of the second edition of “The Cookbook of North American Truffles”. The second edition has been updated with some new and exciting recipes featuring Oregon truffles. NATS would like to thank the following for their help and contribution: Sylvia Donovan, Alex Nagy, Pat Rawlinson, Frank Evans, Michael Castellano, James Trappe, Alija Mujic, Mysti Weber, Nancy Weber, Sarah Uebel, and all the recipe contributors!

A couple of the editor’s favorite recipes from the cookbook are: Truffle Puffs, Truffled Brie, and, of course, Wild Mushroom Pate.

Proceeds from the cookbook go to the NATS general fund, which allows NATS to bring you great meeting speakers, Pavelek Scholarship, truffle forays, and other NATS efforts and activities.

If you’d like to purchase “The Cookbook of North American Truffles”, it’s available for purchase at NATS meetings for \$15.00. To purchase via mail, please send a check payable to NATS in the amount of \$18.50 (\$15.00 plus \$3.50 S&H) to:

North American Truffling Society
Attn: Cookbook 2012
PO Box 296
Corvallis, OR 97339

Thank you!



MINUTES FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN TRUFFLING SOCIETY – JANUARY 2012
NATS Meeting
January 10, 2012

The meeting was held in the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center, 128 SW 9th Street in Corvallis.

The January 10th 2012 meeting was called to order by club president Marilyn Hinds.

Introductions were made around the room.

The December minutes were presented and approved by call of voice.

Treasurer's report:

Treasurer Zelda Carter gave the treasurer's report. There is \$2336.07 dollars in the club account. This includes \$646.00 of the Welles Bushnell Memorial Fund.

Membership report:

Mysti Weber gave the memberships report. There are 69 renewed/new members for 2012. Membership income to date = \$846.00.

Foray report:

Foray master Matt Trappe gave the foray report for Saturday, January 7, 2012. Location near Blodgett (TumTum). About 20 people were at the foray. Truffles found were many *Hymenogaster spp.*, Oregon White Truffle (*Tubor oregonense*), Black Truffle (*Leucangium carthusianum*), Oregon Brown Truffle (*Kalapuya brunnea*) and a as yet unidentified Rhizopogon spp.

Welles Bushnell Memorial:

Joyce/ Eberhart gave a report on the Welles Bushnell Memorial Fund. Joyce and Jim Trappe are researching books to donate to both the Salem and Corvallis library Joyce presented the book plates for member review that will be adhered to the inside cover of each of the donated books.

Truffle Dog Training:

Marilyn Hinds -The first basic truffle dog training with new truffle dog trainer Jeannine May will be held on March 17th. Dan Luoma has made arrangements for use of the Forestry cabin in Peavy Arboretum. We will firm up the event after the Oregon Truffle Festival. Volunteers contact Marilyn.

The speaker was Dr. David Janos. Dave is a Professor of Biology at the university of Miami who did his doctoral dissertation research on arbuscular mycorrhizas in Costa Rica at the La Selva Biological Station of the Organization for Tropical Studies. The title of his presentation was "Oaks to ocelots: Hiking an Altitudinal Transect in Costa Rica". In his undergraduate field course he has attempted to hike from cloud forest to lowland tropical rain forest in Costa Rica 22 times; they've succeeded 20 times. This presentation illustrated some of the plants and animals encountered along the 51 km transect.

The meeting was adjourned and refreshments were served.

MINUTES OF THE NORTH AMERICAN TRUFFLING SOCIETY
DECEMBER 10, 2011

On December 10, 2011, the North American Truffling Society held their annual potluck at the Corvallis Senior Center.

The business meeting was brought to order by Marilyn Hinds, President. She welcomed all those who were in attendance. Minutes from the November meeting were on the table for review, it was motioned and seconded to accept them as is, and those in attendance voted to accept them. Zelda Carter, Treasurer, gave the financial report. The NATS checking account beginning balance on January 1, 2011 was \$4244.49 and ending balance as of December 9, 2011 was \$2336.07. Of the ending balance \$1690.07 was NATS and \$646.00 for Welles memorial fund. In 2011 NATS had a total income of \$6045.35 and expense total of \$ 7775.07.

Marilyn Hinds, president, presented the annual report:

In 2011 NATS held; 8 forays, 8 meetings with speakers and 4 informational tables at: the Oregon Truffle Festival, Oregon Mycological Society, Yachats and Mt. Pisgah Mushroom shows. She thanked the volunteers who staffed the booths: Adrian Beyerle, Sylvia Donovan, Mysti Weber, Jonathan Evenboer, Zelda and Everett Carter, Pat Rawlinson, Loren McMahill, Betty Orner and Marilyn Hinds.

NATS continued to distribute the guide to ethical and sustainable truffle harvesting. NATS ran two basic truffle dog training classes. Jean Rand, the truffle dog instructor, moved to the east coast and the group has a new truffle dog instructor Jeannie May for upcoming trainings. A basic training class will be held sometime in May.

NATS produced a new cookbook which we are offering for sale. Thanks to Sylvia Donovan, Pat Rawlinson, Michael Castellano, Nancy Weber and Sarah Uebel for their contributions to the project. Frank Evans spoke to give a special thank you to Sylvia for all her work on the cookbook. Frank presented the cookbook dedication to Dr. Jim Trappe for his 30 years in work and efforts in NATS. Everyone present was asked to sign a copy of the cookbook for Jim. Jim thanked every member for their energy dedicated to making NATS the group that it has become.

Marilyn thanked Marshall Adams for the evening's entertainment, he graciously played guitar during the meal.

Two long term members passed away this year, Welles Bushnell and Paul Bishop. NATS started a memorial fund for Welles. A plaque for Welles was passed around for those present to view. Joyce designed book plates for the dedication in the books to be donated to the Corvallis Public Library and other local libraries.

Herbarium Grant Report- Dan Luoma:

In 2010, NATS voted to fund a \$1,000 grant to the Oregon State University Herbarium Mycological Collections. That grant was designated to go towards funding work-study students to help with accessions and the database of the collections. The work-study program matched those funds 3 to 1, so the grant leveraged \$4,000 in funds for student employment and the educational enhancement of students interested in mycology. That equates to about 4 terms worth of part-time employment for a student. The students worked on organizing and cataloging fungal specimens including many that were new to the Herbarium catalogue.

Although much progress has been made with integrating the specimens into a single database, there is an immensity of work still to be done. There are tens of thousands of samples remaining to be worked on, and the database status of each one needs to be confirmed, updated, or entered. The work necessary to accession and curate new collections adds to the task. The previous support of NATS in the ongoing efforts is greatly appreciated. Fortunately, funds from a collaborative National Science Foundation grant through the Consortium of Pacific Northwest Herbaria will help fund this effort over the next 12 – 18 months.

Elections:

Sarah Uebel resigned from being NATS Secretary. Mysti Weber volunteered and was nominated to fill the position for 2012.

The officers nominated for election were:

President: Marilyn Hinds

Vice-President: Joyce Eberhart

Treasurer: Zelda Carter

Secretary: Mysti Weber

At this time Marilyn asked for the election of officers. Those members in attendance unanimously elected the 2012 board.

Chairs of committees and other positions-

Membership chair: volunteers are requested to fill this position, Mysti will continue in the position until someone else volunteers.

Librarian: Jonathan Evenboer

Exhibit Chair: Jonathan Evenboer

Refreshment Chair: Sylvia Donovan

Newsletter Editor: Jon Kenneke

Trufflemaster: Jonathan Evenboer

Marilyn presented a personal thank you to Matt Trappe for his 14 years serving as Trufflemaster for NATS.

2011 Pavelek Scholarship:

Pat Rawlinson announced that the scholarship this year goes to an undergraduate student in Biological Sciences at Southern Oregon University, Chelsea Reha. She plans to graduate in 2013, and work as a researcher and/or surveyor for listed plants, lichens, bryophytes, and fungi. Her research program focuses on truffle ecology and identification. Chelsea works with Dr. Southworth as a field/lab assistant. From all reports, she is very good at finding truffles! By her own words, Chelsea especially appreciates the opportunity to study the plants and fungi that she loves in an area of such rich diversity. It is a pleasure to award this year's scholarship for \$1500 to Chelsea Reha.

Marilyn excused those in attendance to take a brief break and make their final bids on the centerpieces donated by NATS members that benefit the Pavelek Scholarship Fund, purchase raffle tickets, renew their memberships for 2011 and purchase clothing items or books for sale.

Joyce Eberhart introduced the speaker Dr. Darlene Southworth. Dr. Southworth presented "Truffling Unlikely Places in Southern Oregon."



Quick guide to identification of common western Oregon / Douglas-fir truffles

M. Trappe

This quick “cheat sheet” covers only those truffles commonly found in low-elevation Douglas-fir forests. It is not comprehensive and does not address pine, oak, or alpine habitats. Despite these limitations, hopefully it will be helpful for quick field identification at least to genus.

Interior solid and firm (but not green), marbled, brittle, black powdery, hollow, or with convoluted folds:

Ascomycete

Interior spongy, rubbery, green, brown, orange, or gelatinous black: **Basidiomycete**

Ascomycetes

Exterior pale to reddish or brownish; interior solid, marbled pale to beige, firm: *Tuber*

Fruiting in the fall/winter, peridium with reddish stains: *Tuber oregonense*

Fruiting in the late spring, peridium translucent: *Tuber gibbosum*

Peridium brownish, irregularly shaped: *Tuber californicum/ sphaerosporum*

Exterior pale to pinkish, with navel; interior partially hollow, brittle & crumbly, often found with Tubers: *Barssia oregonensis*

Exterior black, rough, larger (to 10 cm); interior solid, mottled black & white: *Leucangium carthusianum*

Exterior black, folded, smaller (to 2 cm), white in cross-section; interior hollow: *Genea harknessii*

Exterior reddish brown, rough, larger (to 10 cm); interior solid, mottled black & white: *Kalapuya brunnea*

Exterior red, smaller (to 2 cm); interior hollow: *Gilkeya compacta*

Exterior pale beige, larger (to 5 cm); interior densely folded, brainlike: *Geopora cooperi*

Exterior pale beige, smaller (to 2 cm) and fragile; interior hollow or loosely folded: *Genabea cerebriformis*

Exterior tan, spherical, peridium thick and finely warty; interior black powdery when mature, cobwebby when younger: *Elaphomyces*

Peridium marbled in cross-section: *Elaphomyces muricatus*

Peridium not marbled in cross-section: *Elaphomyces granulates*

* If exterior smooth and columella evident could be *Schenella* (formerly *Radiigera*)

* If with basal tuft of rhizomorphs, *Scleroderma* (puffball)

Basidiomycetes

Exterior dingy white, sometimes bruising pink, peridium thin; interior spongy olive green to brown, not breaking easily into pieces, mild odor, without columella: *Rhizopogon*

Surface bruising pink: *R. hawkeriae* (spores 7-8x2-3 μ , interior white when young)

R. parksii (spores 5-6x2-3 μ , interior white when young)

R. vinicolor (spores 6-8x3-4 μ , interior yellow when young)
Surface not bruising pink, odor of rotting onions: *R. villosulus* (spores 6-8x2-3 μ)

Exterior dingy white, interior spongy yellowish to dark brown, breaking easily into pieces, unpleasant odor, without columella: *Hymenogaster subalpinus*

Exterior dingy white, bruising brown; interior spongy white, not breaking easily into pieces, mild odor, without columella, more common in the spring: *Gymnomyces brunnescens*

Exterior white, separating easily, bitter; interior firm rubbery green with cartilaginous veins: *Hysterangium sp*

Exterior white, not bruising brown; interior bright white, often exuding latex: *Leucophleps spinispora*

Exterior dingy white; interior spongy pale orange, sometimes exuding latex when cut, not breaking easily into pieces, mild odor, without columella: *Zelleromyces scissilis*

Exterior pale orange-tan; interior spongy pale orange, sometimes exuding latex when fresh-cut, mild odor, with columella often forming vestigial stem: *Arcangeliella camphorata*

Exterior yellow; interior spongy pale orange, mild odor, with prominent columella forming vestigial stem: *Macowanites luteolus*

Exterior yellow; interior firm spongy gray-green, not breaking easily into pieces, mild odor, with columella, often at soil surface: *Truncocolumella citrina*

Exterior yellow; interior white with chambers exuding white latex: *Leucogaster citrina*

Exterior yellow, larger (to 6 cm); interior spongy gray-green, not breaking easily into pieces, mild odor, without columella, always with coastal pines: *Rhizopogon occidentalis*

Exterior brown, interior tarlike black gelatinous, pungent odor: *Melanogaster tuberiformis*

Exterior beige to brown; interior brown, spongy-gelatinous with marbling, found only in presence of alder: *Alpova diplophleous*

Exterior tan, peridium thick, with basal tuft of rhizomorphs; interior yellowish-grey when young becoming dark powdery mass at maturity: *Scleroderma*



NATS Invites You to Join or Renew Your Membership for 2012!

The officers and board members of NATS greatly appreciate the enthusiasm that our members have shown for our society.

You can help ensure that 2012 is another banner truffle year!



We are seeking more volunteer help with officer and committee chairperson activities (secretary, foray leader, booth staffing, etc.) If you would like to be more involved, please contact us. Thanks! For those of you who have not yet renewed your membership, you can do so by mailing in your dues to the address below. If any of your contact information (address, phone, email) has changed, please let us know so we can stay in touch.

THE NORTH AMERICAN TRUFFLING SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. Box 296
Corvallis, Oregon 97339
www.natruffling.org

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
(Province) (Postal code)

Country: _____ (if other than USA)

Email address(es): _____

The NATS newsletter is now delivered electronically via www.natruffling.org.

Annual membership fees: \$15 first family member, \$10 each additional family member in the same household. Businesses: \$15. Individuals/Businesses from other countries: \$20. **Payable in US funds.**

Annual contribution categories: Donor: \$15-\$49; Contributor: \$50-\$499; Sustaining: \$500+.

North American Truffling Society (NATS)
P.O. Box 296
Corvallis, OR 97339
www.natruffling.org

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Field Data \Truffle ID Cards:

Collector _____ Date _____
Location _____

County _____ T/R/S or Lat/Long _____
Elev _____ Aspect: N NE E SE S SW W NW
Growing On/In: Moss Mineral Rotten Needle
(Circle one or more) Soil Wood Litter
Other/Notes _____
Overstory Trees _____
Understory Shrubs _____
Fresh Notes (color, odor, etc.): _____

Collector _____ Date _____
Location _____

County _____ T/R/S or Lat/Long _____
Elev _____ Aspect: N NE E SE S SW W NW
Growing On/In: Moss Mineral Rotten Needle
(Circle one or more) Soil Wood Litter
Other/Notes _____
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Fresh Notes (color, odor, etc.): _____
