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July 28, 2010

Caraccioli Cellars: Our Little Secret

By Amber Sandoval-Griffin

When most people think of California wine country, they think Napa Valley and Sonoma County, and considering that these are the largest wine producers in the Golden State, they are correct in thinking that. However, I'm about to let you in on a little secret: There are other great winemakers outside of Napa and Sonoma. I recently came across [Caraccioli Cellars](#) of the Central Coast and they stole this wino's heart with their brilliant Brut Cuveé.



Based out of the Santa Lucia Highlands of Monterey County, this new winery had their first release last spring and is already off to a great start. Light, crisp and refreshing, their Cuveé left nice notes of citrus and apple on my tongue after every sip. It also left me feeling a little giddy.... One of my colleagues described it as an "explosion of flavors" on his tongue that was tart, yet fruity and clean. It was lovely with strawberries and dark chocolate and goat cheese on crackers but if you had to choose one, I would recommend paring this wine with fruit.

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Whether it's a sampling of dark chocolate, the signature dish at a favorite dive, or last night's dinner recipe, we're compelled to share our delicious discoveries with fellow food lovers. Try our favorites, then tell us a few of your best food finds. Enjoy!

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July 28, 2010

Caraccioli Cellars: Our Little Secret (cont.)

By Amber Sandoval-Griffin

Based out of the Santa Lucia Highlands of Monterey County, this new winery had their first release last spring and is already off to a great start. Light, crisp and refreshing, their Cuveé left nice notes of citrus and apple on my tongue after every sip. It also left me feeling a little giddy.... One of my colleagues described it as an "explosion of flavors" on his tongue that was tart, yet fruity and clean. It was lovely with strawberries and dark chocolate and goat cheese on crackers but if you had to choose one, I would recommend pairing this wine with fruit.



Aside from producing a killer sparkling wine, one of the things that makes this family-run establishment unique is that they are the only winery producing high-end sparkling wine out of the Santa Lucia Highlands right now. This is surprising considering that the area's warm days and cool evenings create an ideal climate for growing sparkling wine grapes.

Even though the Cuveé is a little on the pricey side at \$52 per bottle, it's worth the splurge because you can taste the quality. You are getting something that isn't mass-produced and that has been properly aged through a meticulous wine making process.

I also was delighted by the Pinot Noir, which was earthy with notes of pepper and tobacco. Caraccioli Cellars also makes Sparkling Rosé and Chardonnay wines which I have yet to indulge in but hope to knock off my bucket list in the near future.

The bad news: Since this wine is so exclusive, you can only purchase online for select states at www.caracciolicellars.com.

The good news: Caraccioli Cellars is opening a tasting room in Carmel, Ca., and they are also adding additional states for direct shipping.

For more wine recommendations and pairings check out these articles:

[An Easy Way to Pair Wine and Food](#)

[5 Wine Rules Made to Be Broken](#)

[Tour the Wine Country at Home](#)

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