

# OVERSEAS NEWS

*Cat-suited wine waitresses and diet-friendly drops? Only, as they say, in America ...*

## OENOPHILES GO ELECTRIC

Sommelier Andrew Bradbury has solved the problem of asking diners to wade through the weighty tome listing his 50,000-bottle wine collection at Aureole, the swanky Las Vegas restaurant. Now he brings a wireless tablet computer to the table to enable imbibers to surf electronically for their desired drop. Once they've picked their preferred tippie, guests are transported by streaming video to the restaurant's wine tower to watch "wine angels" – black-cat-suited showgirls armed with bottle holsters – gliding up and down the steel and glass four-storey structure in hoists as they retrieve the vintage cargo.

Bottle shops, too, are going digital in America. At Wegmans superstores in New Jersey, wine wonks can touch computer screens to select drops according to their

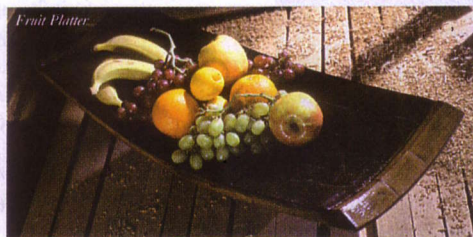
country of origin, grape variety and price. They can also scan wine label bar codes to access taste descriptions, reviews and suggested food pairings. Several retailers in Houston and San Francisco have already followed Wegmans' electronic initiative.

Manhattan-based Discovery Wines offers wine buffs a variation on this theme with 11 in-store kiosks. Each houses a large, wall-mounted tactile screen for browsing its complete wine inventory and printing out wine profiles on demand. The databank is also online at Discovery's website, [www.discoverywines.com](http://www.discoverywines.com). How authentic is the information provided? "This is a point-of-sale marketing tool for wine suppliers," says owner Ellisa Cooper. "My partners and I tasted 5000 wines before settling on the 650 that we sell. I stand behind them."

## WEIGH-LESS WINE

When Dr Robert Atkins trumpeted the benefits of low-carbohydrate intake, wine was not on the menu. Now, Californian mega-wine conglomerate Brown-Forman has developed low-carb wines – One.6 Chardonnay and One.9 Merlot – for the escalating number of US wine drinkers embracing the Atkins regime. The names of the wines reveal how many grams of carbohydrate are in a standard 142ml serve (most wines have up to four times as much). They are made with almost no residual sugar, which, says creator Cara Morrison, imparts enhanced flavour and mouthfeel comparable to conventionally vintage wines. They also take advantage of a new Tax Bureau ruling allowing wine producers to show calorie and carbohydrate content on labels.

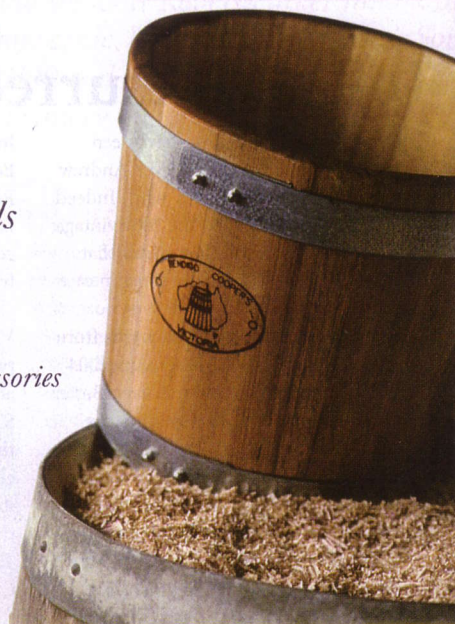
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products produced by  
Victoria's leading  
manufacturer of  
Oak Wine Barrels*

*Available direct  
from producer*

*Entertaining accessories  
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