

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

February 4-6

PHOTON USA CORPORATION
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
CLINICAL ONCOLOGY

Attendance: 3,400

February 20-24

BIOPHYSICAL SOCIETY

Attendance: 4,700

February 24-27

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Attendance: 5,000

(visit www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com
for a list of all conventions in Feb.)

NAPA VALLEY SPOTLIGHT

Last month a group of concierges from the Northern California Concierge Association participated in a "Research Day" in Napa Valley organized by the Napa Valley Concierge Alliance (www.conciergealliance.com) in order to learn more about the area. Jamie Fusco from the Ritz-Carlton San Francisco details their day of learning!

The day began with Carol Ainsworth's Great Olive Tours which introduced us to Villa Mille Rose (with adorable property manager Loy). This was a great start to an early morning tour. A guided tour of the gardens, vegetables, olive trees and a peek at a private estate was a pleasant surprise. Imagine me, sitting around Marie Manetti Farrow's kitchen table sampling olive oil and vinegar. Who knew such a tasting could be fun and educational. Carol's passion and knowledge was contagious.

Hill Family Estate Tasting Room and Farm next was an interesting concept for a tasting room to be combined with a lovely antique shop, although it could prove dangerous to the credit card after a few tastes! Ryan Hill's marketing ideas - wine stained surf boards, guitars, and ... - showcased his unique and creative side. Ryan's bright, charismatic personality showcased his passion for the family business. A tour of the Hill family farm by Ryan, even in winter, was an interesting and exciting experience as he had us eating rosemary flowers off the plants.

Lunch at Brix and delighting in the savory dishes of Anne Gingrass-Paik paired with the wines of Hill Family Estate was a winner. I hadn't been to Brix before, so learning about the restaurant, surrounding extensive gardens, and sampling the food was both a tasty treat and a positive research experience to share with my guests. My two favorite wines were the sauvignon blanc and the dessert wine. My

only disappointment was the lost opportunity to purchase Hill wines right then.

Keever Vineyards, our stop after lunch, is run by husband, wife, son and daughter. It is an immaculate private winery situated on a hill top with magnificent views. They produce 3 great wines (although I'll have to take the word about their sold-out cabernet sauvignon). I was lucky to take home a bottle of the syrah.

Visiting next Gabrielle Collection, we were greeted with canapes and wine by proprietor Wayne O'Connell as he walked us through the grounds of this estate with extensive gardens designed by his wife Gabrielle. We were invited into his lovely country home, sat around a beautifully set table and treated to a pairing of cheeses, salumi, flavored salts, chocolates along with delicious full-bodied red wines. I'm a big fan of wine decanters and Wayne had a nice collection that he poured from. My favorite wine was the 2004 Equilateral Cask. - but it was the salt collection that I took home as Christmas gifts.

Our final stop of the day was at Sodaro Estate Winery. Here lie breath-taking views of the rolling hills, even after sunset, not far off the beaten path of Hwy 29 as we were greeted by Kari DiFabio, Director of Sales & Marketing the esteemed wine maker Dawnine Dyer and Michael the Vineyard Manager. Kari then hosted a candle-lit cave tasting of two wonderful reds, Felicity and Sodaro, both poured from beautiful decanters. I was also thrilled to learn this winery has a heliport for those guests wishing to fly in.

To learn more about the Concierge Alliance of Napa Valley visit www.conciergealliance.com. All photos provided by Greg Wright at Wright's Photography. Visit their website at <http://www.wrightsphotography.com>



PERFORMANCE Spotlight

SHN brings Harvey Fierstein and the award-winning musical FIDDLER ON THE ROOF to San Francisco as part of SHN's 2009/2010 Best of Broadway Season. Mr. Fierstein starred as the iconic milkman, Tevye in the recent critically acclaimed Broadway production. Audiences now have the rare opportunity to see this Tony Award-winning actor embrace one of his favorite roles in this Jerome Robbins inspired production. A perennial hit since it first opened in 1964, FIDDLER ON THE ROOF has enjoyed critical acclaim for bringing to the stage a poignant story about the enduring bonds of the family. Now, the national touring production of this timeless musical brings the wit and wisdom of Tevye and his family to audiences throughout the United States with the reproduction of Jerome Robbins' famous masterpiece. Showing from Jan. 27 - Feb. 21st at the Golden Gate Theater located at 1 Taylor St. Visit www.shnsf.com for further information and to buy tickets.