

Annual wine auction features a rare 51 year old bordeaux

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When Dr. Carl Deane descended into the narrow, sandstone labyrinth of caverns that honeycombs the dark earth beneath Chateau de la Riviere Fronsac in Bourdeau, France, he knew he'd found something special.

Hunting is a common enough pastime in Fort McMurray, but Deane is a hunter of a different sort. Instead of stalking moose or deer, Deane hunts down rare wines, valuable and exclusive vintages that are as hard to bag as a 12-point buck. As the local area representative of the Opimian Society, a non-profit wine-buying cooperative, Deane has access to rare vintages not often seen in Canada, and he puts these connections to good use as the primary buyer for the annual SMS Equipment Wine Auction in support

of Big Brothers Big Sisters Wood Buffalo, now in its fourth successful year.

When Deane visited the Bourdeaux region of France in the fall of 2012, he was treated to a tour of the vast network of caverns that runs beneath the Chateau de la Riviere Fronsac winery, one of the best natural wine cellars in the world.

“These caverns run for 22 kilometres underneath the property. We went for a small 1200-metre walk in the caverns and we didn’t even scratch the surface,” Deane says of his trip into the twisting maze of underground caverns, where barrels and bottles of wine have waited in the darkness for decades.

Deep in the caverns, Deane found his prize, a rare find indeed: a magnum of 1962 Chateau de la Riviere Fronsac Bordeaux.

Deane explains why the caverns, which date back more than 300 years, are the ideal environment for storing wine. “It’s temperature-neutral. It holds a temperature of 13 degrees year-round and about 90 per cent humidity. Wine stores best if it doesn’t move around in temperature, and so it just sits there,” Deane explains. “In that kind of environment, wine that is well-crafted and good quality will keep forever. It just gets better and better. That’s something we don’t have here – temperature swings, humidity changes and survivability of the cork are just some of the things we don’t do well here.”

Deane describes the rare Bourdeaux as “rich, lush, fruity and superbly balanced.”

“It’s now 51 years old, and it’s a dense, hearty wine – it’s not a light zinfandel-ish kind of wine,” Deane says. “A friend of mine picked up a bottle as well, and he described it as ‘stupendously rich.’ It’s showing in a way that younger wines just can’t

– there’s so much balance, so much mellowness. These are things that younger wines just don’t have.”

While the Chateau de la Riviere Fronsac name might not be common knowledge outside oenophiliac, or wine-lover, circles, the name Cristal certainly is. The Cristal name is synonymous with the best champagne on the market, Deane says.

“Every celebrity, every rap star, anyone who wants to flash their money serves Cristal. We up here in northern Alberta certainly don’t see it very often,” he says.

The Cristal name dates back more than 150 years to the Imperial house of Russia, when the Russian Czar wanted his own champagne made specifically for the imperial household. He turned to celebrated champagne maker Louis Roederer, who created Cristal specifically for the Czar’s consumption. When the Bolsheviks overran the Russian monarchy in 1917, Roederer began selling Cristal to the public. Today, it’s known as the best of the best, Deane says.

“It still exists in both the regular and the rose form, and it’s highly sought after, because it is and always has been the very, very pinnacle of quality champagne,” Deane says.

He has managed to acquire a rose 2005 Lous Roederer Cristal for the wine auction, which will be paired with a 2003 Dom Perignon, a pairing which represents the history of champagne itself as well as the exclusivity. “Dom Perignon was the monk who started champagne, and the label of course still bears his name,” Deane says. “He’s the history. We’re pairing the very beginnings of champagne with the upper crust.”

Rounding out the standouts at this year’s auction are two bottles of Italian wine which Deane describes as “amazingly rare.” Both bottles come from the famous winemaker Gianfranco Soldera, known as a wine pioneer whose bottles are very hard to come by.

“Soldera is one of the very, very exclusive winemakers of Italy; we seldom see it over here,” Deane says. “When we do, it’s usually somebody saying, ‘You’ll never guess what I got!’ – and it’s sold out. It doesn’t last on the shelf very long at all.”

Up for auction are a 2005 Soldera Pegasos and a 1996 Soldera Reserva Brunello di Montalcino. “These are very heart wines, very robust and very tannic, and they need time to sit,” Deane says. “The 2005 is getting awfully good, but it will probably be even better in three or four years. The 1996 is just about perfect now.”

Like the Bordeaux, Deane says that these wines are so exceptional, they should be enjoyed on their own, rather than being paired with food. “These are wines you want to just have and enjoy on their own – keep the other influences out of there,” he says. “It has to be consumed to be appreciated for its own merits. Top-notch wines are like this – no wine maker makes wine to be good with food. There’s so much stuff in there to appreciate for what it is.”

These are just a few of the tantalizing items which will be on the block at the SMS Equipment Wine Auction, which will be held October 5 at the Syncrude Sports and Wellness Centre to benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters Wood Buffalo. For more information, visit www.fortmcmurraywineauction.ca or to purchase tickets call 780-791-2447.



Proposed Aspen SAGD Project Public Open House

Imperial Oil Resources (Imperial) invites you to attend a Public Open House to provide information on their proposed in situ oil sands development project located approximately 45 kilometres northeast of Fort McMurray. As ultimate project owner and operator, Imperial plans to develop the resource on the Muskeg lease in up to three phases that would each initially produce about 45,000 barrels per day of bitumen using a steam-assisted gravity drainage (SAGD) process.

Tuesday, July 23, 2013, 4:00-8:00 pm
Macdonald Island Park
Miskanaw South Ballroom
1 CA Knight Way
Fort McMurray, Alberta

Coffee and tea will be provided.

For additional information regarding the open house, please contact:

Cheryl McArthur
(403) 387-1707
consultation.calgary@amec.com

Community Calendar

SUBMIT TO OUR ONLINE EVENT CALENDAR AT WWW.FORTMACCONNECT.CA FREE

To submit to the community calendar please email your event or information to community@macmedia.ca -

FREE for non-profits only, must be 50 words or less.



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National UNITY Day 2013, Fort McMurray
Saturday, July 20, Headliner: Northern Elements Crew, 6-8pm • FREE @ the Justin Slade Youth Foundation (The Dugout), 10500 Morrison St.
For all other inquiries, visit UNITYCharity.com

Book, gift, and toy fair taking place at the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre from July 17 - 19. This is a fundraising campaign for Patient Care at the Health Centre.

A Taste of Fort McMurray is back with tickets on sale now! We will be taking you on a Culinary Journey through Wood Buffalo with even more great local food to tempt your taste buds. Come out to the Suncor Community Leisure Centre at MacDonald Island Park on August 21 from 6 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. and enjoy the journey through the best bites our city has to offer. Tickets are \$40 with proceeds going to Volunteer Wood Buffalo, Leadership Wood Buffalo and Nonprofit Sector Link, a newly merged community benefit organization. Last year’s event sold out so buy your tickets TODAY at: <http://tofm2013.eventbrite.com/> or at Chocolate and Candlelight at 122 Millennium Drive (cash only).

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo wants to celebrate its citizens by throwing a huge underwater birthday party just for you! Come celebrate with us at Everybody’s Birthday Party on July 20th from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. The event is being held this year at Wood Buffalo park located just off of Wilson Drive. There

will be tons of games and crafts for kids of all ages, and lots of prizes to be won.

Coldwell Banker Fort McMurray presents the third annual Community Bash. Saturday July 20th, 2013, from noon to 5pm at the Syncrude/Timberlea Athletic Park, in support of KidSport, so no kid is left on the sidelines. Bring your family to Syncrude/Timberlea Athletic Park, on the corner of Cartier Road and Carteret Drive, in Timberlea, for a free BBQ! Enjoy bouncy castles, an obstacle course, face painting, crafts and sports with the Keyano Huskies. You will even have a chance to win some fun prizes!

Birth Choices Free Prenatal Classes hosted by the Fort McMurray Doula Association: Second Tuesday of every month at The Hub, 10020 Franklin Avenue, class starts at 7:30pm. No registration is required, just drop-in and join us. There are five topics covered on a rotational basis in the prenatal classes.

Join RMWB Programs in partnership with Events Wood Buffalo for the 4th annual Classic Car Show! Come by Howard Pew Park in Waterways from 1:00pm to 4:00pm, August 3rd, 2013, to check out the amazing classic and custom vehicles our community has to offer. There will be live entertainment to enjoy and you decide who wins the best Classic Car in the People’s choice award. To register your classic or custom vehicle, or for more information, please call us!



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