



Spring 2010

| NOTABLE EDIBLES

FRESH, GREEN WINE ON TAP

A few years ago, on a trip between Lake Garda and Verona, Italy, Michael Bohlsen stopped at a small restaurant on the side of the road. "We drank some wonderful red wine from a pitcher," recalls Bohlsen, owner of Verace restaurant in Islip. "I asked where the wine was from. The owner pointed out the window to the vines in plain sight."

It was the freshness-and ease-of that old-world wine experience that inspired the custom-designed tap system that stores and serves wine from kegs at Bohlsen's rustic Italian restaurant. Verace currently offers four wines on tap, including a barbera made and kegged in Italy and three New York wines: a riesling from Hermann J. Wiemer in the Finger Lakes and two wines made at Raphael in Peconic, a sauvignon blanc and a custom-made Bordeaux-style blend. Not unlike beer stored in kegs, the wine is protected from both oxygen and sunlight, so the last glass poured will taste as fresh as the first. (Think of it as boxed wine on a larger scale, with much better wine inside.)

But there are other advantages, both local and global. The restaurant saves money-and tames its carbon footprint-because it doesn't have to pay for the costs of bottling wine or shipping those bottles around the globe, or to dispose of empty bottles and the cardboard boxes they came in. There's no theater of pulling corks, but also no worries about corked bottles or pouring wine from bottles that have been open too long.

"The price of the wine reflects those savings," Bohlsen says. The reds wines are \$9 a glass, while the whites are \$8, with half-carafes and carafes-or mezzo-litres and litres on the menu-between \$18 and \$32.

While it's only a small part of his production and business, Raphael winemaker Rich Olsen-Harbich likes "not having to order extra glass and cardboard. It makes our entire winery just a little more environmentally friendly, which I'm proud of." According to Bohlsen, the program has been widely embraced by customers and will continue for the foreseeable future. "People are enamored with the quality of the wine and quickly forget that there was no bottle to open or label to inspect. We plan on always having at least two local wines and two from Italy."

Verace, 599 Main Street, Islip, 631.277.3800, veracerestaurant.com

