

CHARLOTTE TASTE

Food, Wine, Art and Style for Charlotteans



— By Emily Halyburton Peterson

CIRQUE DU COEUR: THE 47TH ANNUAL GREATER CHARLOTTE HEART BALL

Wow...47 years! That makes this event Charlotte's oldest black tie affair, and one of the largest fundraising events for the American Heart Association. The "Cirque du Coeur" (Circus of the Heart) theme and décor this year is based on the beautiful and whimsical Cirque du Soleil, and includes a sit down dinner, live music, and both silent and live auctions. Help fight heart disease by showing your support...and be sure to wear your Oscar-worthy digs as the AHA kicks off the Red Carpet Best Dressed Award this year!. *The Greater Charlotte Heart Ball, February 12, The Westin Charlotte, 704.374.0632, heart.org.*

CHRISTMAS IN CHARLESTON

Let Carolina Food Pros guide you through the streets of Charleston this holiday season to discover some of the finest treats this culinary destination has to offer. Amanda Dew Manning, a 10th generation South Carolinian and local food expert, shares her own holiday memories of growing up on a farm where her family gathered together to celebrate the holidays with a traditional South Carolina pit-cooked barbecue, turkey with cornbread dressing and all the trimmings, sweet potato and pecan pies, and, for New Year's Day, Hoppin' John. Stops on the holiday walking tour include the Holiday Farmer's

news & events on charlotte's food & wine scene

production of *Samson & Delilah*. The dinners offer an intriguing combination of fine cuisine, wine and opera music in a unique and dynamic setting. Learn about opera music from top performers, while enjoying a specially created five-course meal by Blue Executive Chef Gene Briggs, with musical interludes to accompany each course. It is the ultimate cultural experience, and one that can be enjoyed by everyone from young newcomers to seasoned buffs...these are the talk of the town and seats are limited, so don't miss this opportunity! *Samson & Delilah Opera Dinner, January 9, Blue Restaurant & Bar, 704.927.2583, operacarolina.com.*

TASTEFUL GIFT IDEAS

In an attempt to answer the question "what to get the person that has everything?" we found a couple of brand new products for that special someone on your holiday list. The Gourmet Tote is perfect for transporting your covered dishes, desserts, and wines over the season so that you can arrive in style (no more plastic bags and cardboard boxes!) and spare the floorboards of your car. Totes are available in several sizes, with mylar lining for temperature control and easy cleanup, and a shelf for transporting several items. Keep it handy for tailgating! If you're shopping for a wine connoisseur, look no further than to the Wine Steward, a personal cruvinet system similar to those found in fine restaurants. The Wine Steward will not only help you serve your wines at the correct temperature, but also uses inert gases to preserve opened bottles. Don't forget to pick up a copy of the *Charlotte Taste* cookbook for that extra little stocking stuffer! Available at *Cooking Uptown, 1707 East 7th Street, 704.333.7300, cookinguptown.com.*

EPICUREAN EVENTS AT BLACKBERRY FARM

There are any number of reasons to visit Blackberry Farm, a Relais & Châteaux property located in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, but one just for *Charlotte Taste* readers. Blackberry hosts some of the finest chefs in the world for small intimate workshops packed with classes and tastings. Coming this fall, the schedule is *Spain: As Good As It Gets* with hottest new Chef Panco Roncero, Vintner Glorian and Eric Solomon, and *Walla Walla* with Chris Figgins from Leonetti Cellars. Make it away during the holiday season, check out the 2005 schedule, packed with Who list of top chefs and winemakers. *Blackberry Farm, Walland, TN, 865.984.8166, blackberryfarm.com.*

NORTH CAROLINA WINE OF THE MONTH CLUB

I'm a big fan of the "of-the-month" wine club giving...my personal favorites being cheese and wine (I'll leave the fruit baskets for someone else). A North Carolina company has just launched the North Carolina Wine of the Month Club to showcasing the premium wines emerging in our region. "The mission of the North Carolina Wine of the Month Club is to promote and support the North Carolina wine industry," says Whitescarver, one of the Club's founders. "We'll showcase the smaller wineries an additional distributor while providing the larger wineries an opportunity to showcase wines that are only available in small quantities or in their tasting rooms." A great gift keeps on giving, both to the recipient and