



GRAEME JENNINGS/EXAMINER

Rebecca Albright, executive pastry chef at Ted's Bulletin, takes classic American desserts and applies her own interpretive twists.

Rebecca Albright: A pastry pro

By Alexandra Greeley
Special to The Washington Examiner

For Rebecca Albright, working at Ted's Bulletin is a dream fulfilled. "When people enjoy dessert," she said, "that makes me happy."

A California native who received formal pastry training at L'Academie de Cuisine in Gaithersburg, Albright says she has been a lifelong foodie, baking with both of her grandmothers growing up and then minoring in food science while in college. "That was like a cooking class," she said. "For example, we cooked a whole duck, but first we broke it down." She said she finds the scientific aspect of baking particularly appealing.

To earn spending money while in college, Albright worked for a local catering company. "I got to make wedding cakes," she said. Shortly after graduation, Albright moved to the D.C. area and enrolled in culinary school. After graduating, she secured an externship at the Willard InterContinental, where she oversaw and produced pastries for the high tea service, including petit fours and seasonal scones. She then moved on to work in the pastry kitchen of Clyde's Restaurant Group's top-tier restaurant, 1789.

Now at the popular Ted's Bulletin, Albright has found a unique niche, a place where she can take classic

What is your comfort food?

Soup, chicken noodle soup like from my childhood. I associate that with comfort time.

What's in your fridge now?

Butter, fresh produce. I like to snack on fruit and salads at home.

Which is your favorite cuisine?

Home-style American, or when eating out, Japanese.

Which are your favorite cookbooks?

My favorite cookbooks right now are "The All-American Dessert Book" by Nancy Baggett and "The Last Course" by Claudia Fleming.

Where is your favorite restaurant?

Kushi Izakaya and Burapa Thai in Arlington. I also am a huge fan of Estadio. I don't eat out too often, but when I do, that is where I can be found.

If you go Ted's Bulletin

- » Where: 505 Eighth St. SE
- » Info: 202-544-8337; tedsbulletin.com
- » Hours: 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily

American desserts and apply her own interpretive twists. Take the restaurant's beloved pop tart, a dessert that is a menu staple. Albright has created a Nutella pop tart, and during the summer months, she came up with a fresh peach pop tart. She has also created a massive weekends-only cinnamon roll for Ted's breakfastgoers, but note: These sell out fast. Another of her

awesome creations is perhaps the best brownie in the world, so dense, thick and chocolaty that each bite is a bit of cocoa heaven.

Where do her inspirations arise? Albright says she has been fortunate to have moved into an apartment in which the former tenants had abandoned recipe clips and cookbooks with some of the recipes cited nearly 100 years old. "So these inspire me," she said. "I even found a recipe for Montgomery pie that tastes like gingerbread. This is a Pennsylvania Dutch recipe, like a shoofly pie. I like these old-fashioned concepts."

After all, she says, baking is what she grew up with, a romantic idea of what pies and cakes should taste like. "These are tastes I like to eat," she said. "These get to me. ... I often eat dessert instead of dinner."

The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg

American winemakers honored by Smithsonian

How do you know when you have made it in the wine world? Well, one indication would certainly be monetary success. But the ultimate compliment may include being honored by the Smithsonian Institution with an exhibit featuring your wines.

This is the recognition that five winemakers from California had bestowed upon them when they traveled to D.C. for the opening of the National Museum of American History exhibit titled Food: Transforming the American Table, 1950-2000. Joel Peterson, Warren Winiarski, Margrit Mondavi, representing her late husband, Robert Mondavi, Robert Biale and Violet Grgich, representing her father, Miljenko "Mike" Grgich, were honored for their contributions to the evolution of the American wine industry.

The exhibit's main attraction is renowned chef Julia Child's kitchen, painstakingly re-created inside a glass-enclosed space at the entrance to the exhibit. Also included in the display are vignettes that illustrate various examples of America's love affair with food, including a brief history of processed foods. But it was the area focusing on the history of wine in America, including a display titled Red, White and American that got my attention.

During a dinner held at the museum to honor their accomplishments, Winiarski summed it all up with the following comment. "Great wine requires an unwavering commitment to aesthetic proportion, and that is something I continue to stress today ... to the new generation of winemakers." Amen and pass the cabernet. Retail prices are approximate.

Grgich first gained recognition at the celebrated Paris Tasting of 1976, a seminal blind tasting that changed the course of American wine when his 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay was selected as the best white wine in the tasting. Today, his commitment to quality is captured in the **2009 Grgich Hills Estate Chardonnay (\$29)**. This certified biodynamic chardonnay offers generous aromas of pear cobbler with hints of orange blossom and toasty oak. The palate delivers flavors of wines twice the price with pretty notes of honeycrisp apple, lemon meringue and vanilla on the remarkably long and elegant finish. **QPR 9**

Winiarski is the founder of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars and

winemaker of the famous 1973 S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon that took first place in the red wine category in the aforementioned tasting. You can taste the nuances of the pedigree in the **2008 Stag's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon (\$50)**, where aromas of black fruit dominate the bouquet. The incredibly well-balanced wine displays flavors of blackberry, black cherry and roasted coffee over the entire palate. Notes of leather and cocoa fill out the expansive finish. **QPR 9**

Mondavi forever changed the way that American consumers think about wine, transforming the beverage from special occasions to daily appearances on the dinner table. His legend lives on through the **2009 Mondavi Napa Cabernet Sauvignon (\$25)**. Wonderfully dense and focused, with an aromatic nose of blueberry and saddle leather scents, the flavors of blackberry, cassis and dark chocolate on the front of the palate nicely integrate with notes of dried herbs and tobacco on the lengthy finish. **QPR 9**

Biale's legacy began in 1937 when the Biale family grew zinfandel grapes and raised chickens on the outskirts of Napa. In 1991, Robert, along with his father, Aldo, and his childhood friend, Dave Pramuk, founded Robert Biale Vineyards. Today, they are known for their zinfandels, like the **2010 Biale Vineyards Monte Rosso Vineyard Zinfandel (\$50)**. The vibrant flavors of blackberry, blueberry liqueur and raspberry fruit glide over the tongue where they are met by cinnamon, clove and black pepper on the lively finish. **QPR 8.5**

Peterson was well on his way toward getting a doctorate in microbiology when he got bit by the wine bug. He is now known for his beautifully balanced zinfandels. The **2009 Ravenswood Winery Belloni Vineyard Zinfandel (\$35)** is a wonderful example of a "field blend" zinfandel, with delicious flavors of ripe plum, boysenberry and clove that wash across the palate in waves. Superb balance leads to a lengthy, smooth finish. **QPR 9.5**

Note: QPR is a rating system that compares the quality a wine delivers relative to the price. A QPR of 10 is considered an excellent value.

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