

# Garret Fleming: Pigging out

By Alexandra Greeley  
Special to *The Washington Examiner*

It must take a brave chef to dedicate his workday to cooking pig — well, many parts of the pig, from ears to even the tail. One can never be sure what goes into the cookpot at D.C.'s the Pig.

Evidently, patrons love Garret Fleming's pork-based dishes, and with good reason: He's a creative chef who can transform braised pork cheeks into a dish of fork-tender pork with grits. He can turn wild boar into a luscious, winey ragu. And he seems comfortable working with pork belly and even pig brains.

So what is it about this young man that makes him a kitchen hero? He grew up in a food-centric family, and remembers very clearly having a dinner with his father in France that featured this appetizer: "I started out with the cervelle, a dish of calves brains that were lightly poached and then pan-seared in browned butter and finished with lime juice and parsley," he explained.

But the prelude to this grown-up meal were his childhood years spent at a family dinner table enjoying his mother's well-polished recipes and listening to table talk about food, food, food.

"The Fleming family always cooked together," he said. "That was how I was raised. I was so excited to do this the rest of my life."

After high school his thoughts were not first about dedicating his life to cooking but to getting a law degree, a short-lived ambition. After traveling to Europe, Fleming returned to the United States and enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America. After graduation and an externship in Charleston, S.C., (his hometown), Fleming moved to the D.C. area.

Searching for a different position, Fleming considered applying to restaurants in Charleston, San Francisco and Chicago. One morn-



GRAEME JENNINGS/EXAMINER

### If you go The Pig

- » **Where:** 1320 14th St. NW
- » **Info:** 202-290-2821
- » **Hours:** Lunch, noon to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday; dinner, 5 p.m. to close nightly; brunch, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekends

ing on his way to work he saw a sign at the Pig announcing its spring 2012 opening. After confirming that this was not a barbecue restaurant, Fleming took the next step.

For his trial meal for the owners, he drew on all known pork-cooking influences from all around the world. "I did a little bit of everything — I served dishes from a 40-pound suckling pig. For example, I cooked ears down and chiffonaded and fried them and put them in a salad with toasted garlic, caramelized onions."

Now nearly a year later, it's safe to say that Fleming is very comfortable in his porcine role. The job, he said, has been amazing. "This is my menu, this what I do," he said. "I want it to be 100 percent my desires and according to the seasons."

## The Vine Guy » Scott Greenberg

# The organic wines of Sokol Blosser

By Scott Greenberg  
*The Vine Guy*

When Bill Blosser and Susan Sokol Blosser planted their first vines in 1971 in the Dundee Hills, there was virtually no wine industry in Oregon. With a lot of hard work and determination, the young couple turned an abandoned prune orchard into a thriving vineyard. They planted the persnickety pinot noir grape — a gutsy move for two people who possessed more passion than experience in a community where everyone was learning the ropes at the same time.

But they persevered and succeeded in a big way. Their first vintage, produced in 1977, was a success. Today, with more than 400 wineries throughout Oregon, Bill and Susan are considered legends in the Oregon wine industry, and their pinot noir wines are considered world class.

From the start, the Sokol Blossers were aware of the effect that grape-growing and wine production have on the environment. Today, siblings Alison and Alex Sokol Blosser, the co-presidents, continue to honor their parents' commitment to the environment through their certified organic farming practices and sustainable business practices. In 2002, Sokol Blosser became the first winery in the United States to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. Last year, the winery was certified by Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine.

According to the Organic Consumers Association, a wine can be labeled "organic" and bear the USDA organic seal when it is made from organically grown grapes and provides information about who the certifying agency is. In addition to using only organic fruit — grapes

that are grown using only natural fertilizers and strict farming methods — wine in this category cannot have any added sulfites. They may contain naturally occurring sulfites, but the total sulfite level must be less than 20 parts per million.

If you subscribe to the theory that it is always good to know exactly what is in your wine, then here are some delicious organic choices from one of Oregon's oldest and most respected wineries. Retail prices are approximate.

One of my favorite white wines coming out of Oregon is pinot gris, and the **2011 Sokol Blosser Willamette Valley Pinot Gris (\$18)** is an excellent example of how much pleasure this varietal can deliver. Willamette Valley has just the right combination of warm days and cool nights to bring out gorgeous aromas of ripe pear and honeysuckle on the nose, while showcasing flavors of white nectarine, lemon/lime citrus and green melon on the palate. The stylish finish is elegant, with a nice touch of acidity to keep the wine balanced. **QPR 9**

The **2011 Sokol Blosser Rose of Pinot Noir (\$18)** is a very versatile wine. (I sampled this wine with Indian food and it was a perfect match.) The wine is produced from 100 percent pinot noir grapes using the saignee method — where the grape juices are bled away from the skins soon after the grapes are crushed, leaving the remaining juice with a pinkish hue. The bouquet offers vibrant aromas of fresh strawberries and red cherries on the nose, while flavors of strawberry, watermelon and ripe cherry linger on a super-crisp frame in the mouth. The wine finishes with a delightful note of minerality and crisp acidity. **QPR 8.5**

A classic example of Oregon pinot noir is the **2010 Sokol Blosser Dundee**



COURTESY PHOTO

**Hills Pinot Noir (\$38)**. It sports a perfumed nose of wild strawberries and bright cherries on the fragrant bouquet. Lush flavors of dark strawberry, red plum and cherry cola hit the tongue up front, then hints of mocha and toasty oak remain delicate and stylish all the way through to the charming finish. **QPR 9**

If a bolder-styled pinot is your preference, then I think the **2009 Sokol Blosser Estate Cuvée Pinot Noir (\$60)** might be your proverbial cup of tea. Produced from estate-grown fruit, the wine features perfumed scents of black cherry, raspberry and dried herbs. In the mouth, flavors of black plum, blueberry and black tea expand onto a supple frame. Notes of dried fig and dark cherry filter in on the back of the tongue, leading to a firm-but-pleasant finish. **QPR 8.5**

**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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