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## One wild and crazy winemaker

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So what's the deal with so many celebrities going into the wine biz?

Dan Aykroyd, the former "Saturday Night Live" comedian and actor, is just about to release his 2007 Russian River Valley Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon - his first California wine project. He teamed up with DeLoach Vineyards' winemaking team and has added the Sonoma County wines to his Discovery Series. He plans to put the bottles on California shelves by Christmas.



Craig Lee / The Chronicle

"I want it to jump around a little like a Mexican jumping bean in the center of your tongue," says Aykroyd, who worked hand in hand with the winery in producing the varietals.

But this is not the funnyman's first foray into the liquor cabinet. In 2007 he launched the Discovery Series in Canada, which includes Chardonnay, Cabernet Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Shiraz and ice wine made with grapes from Niagara. He's also an investor in Diamond Estates Wines & Spirits, a Canadian distribution company.

Aykroyd, a native of Canada, was one of the original members of the "Saturday Night Live" cast. The writer-comedian launched to fame with such recurring roles as Fred Garvin, male prostitute; one of the two "wild and crazy guys"; and a newscaster on the "Weekend Update" with Jane Curtain - it's where he said his famous line, "Jane, you ignorant slut."

Later he went on to star in such blockbusters as "The Blues Brothers," "Trading Places" and "Ghostbusters."

Aykroyd lives in Los Angeles, where he continues to work on his syndicated House of Blues radio show, which has been going for 16 years. He says between the show and

his other business ventures, he doesn't have time to do movies anymore. But wine is a whole different story.

Q: What got you interested in wine?

A: My wine story starts at a purple Jesus party. It's where we mixed Manischewitz and Mogan David together and the next morning woke up praying to Jesus.

Actually, it was while we were filming the movie "The Blues Brothers." Band member Steve Cropper brought me up to his house on Mulholland Drive, where he had a huge cellar and turned me on to the big fat red wines.

Q: What was the first great wine you remember having?

A: It was up at Steve's, a French Chateau Brane-Cantenac red.

Q: What wine do you think people don't drink enough?

A: I think the Cabs have been left behind by the Pinots. I like Fumé Blancs and unoaked Chardonnays.

Q: If you were on death row and the warden let you have one glass of wine, what would it be?

A: First I would have a glass of nice Chardonnay with an iceberg wedge salad with blue cheese dressing. Then I would move on to a T-bone steak, green peas, mashed potatoes and my own Cabernet.

Q: You only get one glass. There's a limit on death row.

A: They would do pairings for me in prison. The warden and I are close. I killed all the child molesters.

Q: OK then, what else?

A: For dessert, black forest cake with my ice wine and then I'd finish it off with Patron XO with milk and a nice cigar.

Q: How many wines are in your cellar?

A: Not too many. In Canada my cellar is depleted. Here (in Los Angeles), 150 bottles because I entertain so much.

Q: If you could share one bottle of great wine with a current cast member of "Saturday Night Live," what and who would it be?

A: A nice bottle of pink Champagne with Will Forte. He's a cultured man. We'd have it with roasted potatoes and buffalo burgers.

Q: If you could share one bottle of great wine with a blues singer what and who would it be?

A: Well, Ella (Fitzgerald) of course. I would bring her a nice, soft, red Burgundy for her pipes.

Q: What is Elwood Blues' favorite wine?

A: Definitely Boone's Farm Green Ginger wine. It's 110 percent alcohol.

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