

Life Without Art is like Dinner Without Wine – Why Bother

By Linda Cordair

As premier California wineries continue to make a fine art of capturing the fruit of the vine's nuanced and delectable flavors, perhaps

it was inevitable that a singular artist would eventually emerge, one whose skills would be a perfect pairing with the subject at hand. Thomas Arvid, represented by Quent

Cordair Fine Art in Napa, has been credited with launching an art trend that revolves almost completely around the product that is the heart and soul of the wine country. Delighting wine and art connoisseurs alike, Arvid's mouthwatering, over-size still lifes feature wine and the rituals surrounding wine, the intricate details of which are brought to life with a mastery of light, depth and reflection - and have garnered worldwide attention and acclaim.

Doug Shafer, of Shafer Family Vineyards, likens Arvid's skill to that of the best Napa winemakers. "Arvid's style is big and bold, with enough selected detail and softness to create a sense of balance ... this blend of elements is precisely what winemakers hope to bring to their top vintages." Influential wineries such as Silver Oak Cellars, Far Niente and Diamond Creek Winery collect Arvid's work, with USA Today declaring in 2000: "What the Dutch masters did for clusters of fruit, Arvid is doing for the fruit of the vine."

The power of Arvid's work lies in his unique ability to visualize and evoke a pleasure-infused atmosphere beyond the frame, to suggest a story of sensuous enjoyment and the good



Winding Down by Thomas Arvid

life. Passionate about art and wine himself - he's an ardent collector of both - Arvid strives to capture, on each canvas, the pleasure of life well lived, while insisting that the wine itself, as a subject, should remain approachable. As such, his paintings are an embodiment of the more casual and natural way that Americans have come to enjoy wine today, as a natural and expected element of dining and entertaining.

Raised in a blue-collar family just outside of Detroit - his father was



Thomas Arvid
at the easel

ABOVE
Doctor's Orders by
Thomas Arvid

RIGHT
You're Two Kind by
Thomas Arvid



a foreman at a General Motors plant - Arvid certainly wasn't raised an oenophile; there were no coffee-table books on great art, only the constant blue-gray of steel and grit. Yet as far back as he can remember, he always knew he wanted to paint; wherever there was a blank surface, he would be compelled to fill it. Early in his career, he recognized that the more successful artists had not only talent and skill, but also a niche. He embarked on what he refers to as his "red period," dedicated to painting all things red: crushed Coke cans,

Radio Flyer wagons, Converse tennis shoes. The reception was positive, but not profitable. One evening, as he was painting a bottle of red wine, a fan enthusiastically insisted on purchasing the work even before the paint was dry. After several more such reactions to the subject of wine, the artist realized he had found his niche. Twenty years and countless bottles and compositions later, Arvid now owns his own impressive cellar, "built with room to grow into," filled with vintages from around the world, including some of

his personal favorites: Harlan Estates, Schrader, Screaming Eagle and Silver Oak.

The artist wants to make a lasting connection with those who enjoy his work, something precious and intimate that has drawn the viewer. In his view, the art of growing and harvesting grapes is reminiscent of a sunset, with each vintage's end providing a chance to reflect on the

day's labors and the prospect of starting anew on the next adventure waiting on the horizon. Having dedicated years to the craft he loves, he continues to be enthralled by the promise of a new experience each time he approaches his easel. "I



Just in Case
by Thomas Arvid

BELOW-CENTRE
Perfect Balance
by Thomas Arvid

BELOW
O What a Night by
Thomas Arvid

BELOW-RIGHT
Uplifting by
Thomas Arvid



think my pieces are successful when I can evoke an emotion, memory or thought in a viewer. Wine and art are vehicles to communicate the pleasure of the human experience."

As journalist Gabriel Diego Delgado of La Prensa de San Antonio wrote: "Arvid wants the audience to have a sense they can metaphysically reach into his painting and pick up the glass and drink the wine, without feeling self-conscious about an underlying 'Do Not Touch' taboo."

Self-taught, the artist remains awed by the response to his work. "Wine is such a special subject for those who appreciate it, for those who connect with the intimacy of the wine experience and all the great feelings

and associations of enjoying wine with friends and family. I think that my paintings are like landscapes for wine lovers, and it couldn't be more wonderful for me that my collectors find such personal enjoyment in my work, especially when I'm just doing what I love, about a subject I love."

Unrestrained by conventional formatting limitations, the dimensions of Arvid's classically composed works are determined solely by that which he feels best reveals and accentuates the attributes of the image's constituent elements. For larger-scale work, selling currently for upwards of \$100,000, there is a four-year waiting list, but aficionados consider Arvid



masterpieces well worth the required patience, as for the first taste of an anticipated, rare vintage of a favorite label.

Fortunately for Arvid fans, limited-edition prints on paper and canvas are also available for many works, with prices starting at around \$700. Often after completing an original painting, Arvid will create a high-resolution scan of the image which is then used to create reproductions,



Well Travelled by
Thomas Arvid

BELOW-RIGHT
Golden Opportunity
by Thomas Arvid



limited in number to as few as 20 or as many as 460, each personally signed and numbered by the artist. On special hand-embellished artist proofs, the artist adds surface texture and highlights.

Over the years, the press and critics have been laudatory and appreciative:

“His name is Arvid and he has found his calling: capturing wine bottles on canvas.” – Los Angeles Times

“With an unparalleled zest for celebrating the good things in life, Arvid recreates for us the special connection shared when friends get together.” – Wine Country News

“Thomas Arvid has made a name for himself as the preeminent painter of wine.” – Art Business News

“I paint wine because I love wine,” the artist explains in summation, “and art is an excellent medium for sharing that love with others. I hope that by exploring my work you can get a little closer to the feeling you have when you’re enjoying a great glass of wine. For me, life without art is like dinner without wine. Why bother?”

Thomas Arvid’s available work and portfolio are on view at Quent Cordair Fine Art in Napa, California, as well as on the gallery’s website at www.cordair.com. To purchase any of Thomas Arvid’s paintings or to discuss commission possibilities, please contact the gallery at 707-255-2242.

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