

Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune

DIVERSIONS

Chateaux York

With the help of a growing number of wine stores, oenophiles are bottling vintages to call their own

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

John Arthurs swirled a small glass of red wine, making note of its clarity, bouquet and taste before giving his expert opinion to Ed and Mary Lou Chuter.

This was not a wine-tasting party, however.

The scene was the Wine Kitz store in Markham, which the Chuters visit frequently on their trips down from Bracebridge.

Mr. Arthurs said the Chuters are not unique. The store has customers who come from as far away as Lindsay, Peterborough and Minden.

The wine is just as good quality as store-bought wine. Friends will come over with wine they bought at \$10 or \$12 a bottle and mine is every bit as good or better.

The Chuters brought a small sample of a wine they weren't happy with, made from a kit they purchased 18 months earlier. For Mr. Arthurs, senior vice-president of product development, there was no problem: he replaced the kit free of charge.

That's all part of the allure of home or in-store wine making that attracts a growing number of people to the hobby.

"The attraction is the process and the price," said Mr. Chuter, who has been making his own wine for about seven years.

"The wine is just as good quality as store-bought wine. Friends will come over with wine they bought at \$10 or \$12 a bottle and mine is every bit as good or better."

Mrs. Chuter said friends "rave" about their Sauvignon Blanc and some of their family and friends now make their own wine, either at home or in-store.

Cesar Valente, product specialist at Festa Juice in Vaughan, the home wine-making subsidiary of Magnotta Wines, is not surprised. "We have no way of measuring accurately, but home wine making has experienced an extraordinary growth in the last 10 years," he said. "It's typically associated with people from wine-making backgrounds in Italy, Portugal and Germany but we're seeing a dramatic change to people from the Orient, east Asia and the Caribbean getting into the hobby. That was practically unheard of 10 years ago."

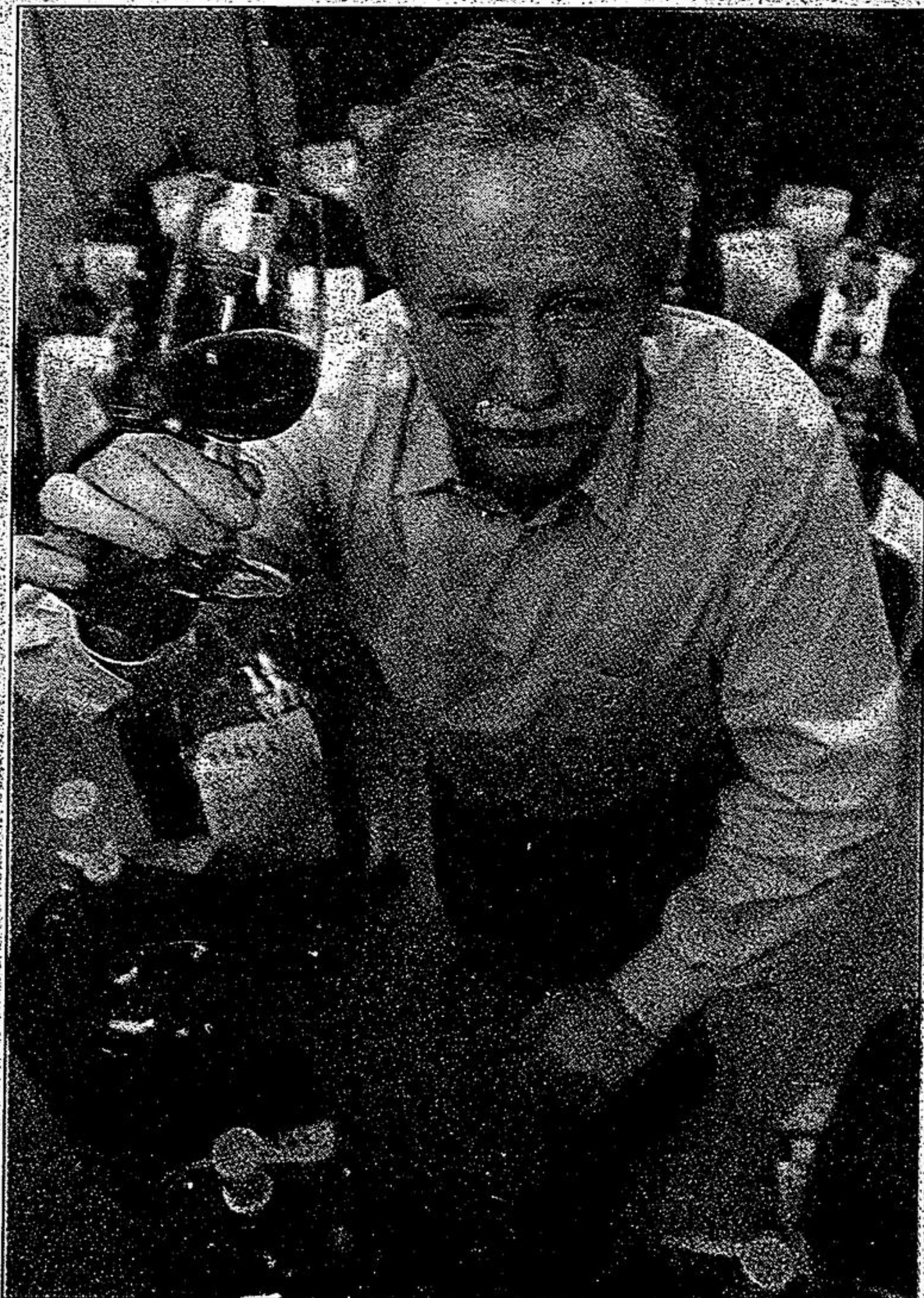
He said the hobby is so popular, Festa Juice ships wine-making juices across Canada and the United States.

Mr. Valente listed three major factors in the increase in home wine making: tradition, enjoyment and pride in producing wine and the cost — "you dodge the taxman."

"For the most part, it results from Canadians, in general, having a greater awareness of wine and food," he said. "That came on the heels of Ontario becoming a major producer of wine. We're not taking a back seat to anyone."

Numerous outlets in York Region provide kits for making wine at home, as well as providing the facilities for customers to make wine at the store. Provincial rules and regulations demand customers using store facilities participate in some of the various stages, including mixing wine kit contents for the initial fermentation process.

The stores monitor the process over the next few weeks and then the customer comes in to transfer the wine into bottles, put in the corks and add the labels. The average wine kit can produce



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

John Arthurs of Wine Kitz in Markham inspects a glass of wine. Making wine at home or in a store is catching on because it gives you quality wine at a low price and because it's fun.

about 30 bottles of wine at a cost of between \$2 and \$3.50 a bottle.

Pat and Fred Parker of Thornhill know the joys of home wine making, although they now have resorted to the in-store process.

Mrs. Parker said the couple used to make wine at their cottage, carrying special water from a nearby spring up 48 steps to the cottage.

"Did the final product taste better? Who knows?" she said.

"But what a fun thing to do."

Now that she and her husband have sold the cottage and moved into a small condominium, they have no space to store their equipment, making it necessary to use the in-store facilities.

Mr. Valente pointed out little space is required for the hobby.

All you need is two cubic metres of space or a corner smaller than the size of a closet as long



Kevin Greenspan

Entertainment for Youth

It's only rock'n'roll but it's funny

Jack Black rocks away as Dewey Finn in *The School of Rock*.

After getting kicked out of his own rock band, Dewey takes a job as a substitute teacher at Horace Green Prep School impersonating Ned Shneebley, his wimpy roommate.

While at Horace Green, Dewey tries to turn his snooty students into a rock 'n' roll band by switching them from playing acoustic guitar to electric guitar, from classical piano to keyboards, and from drums to... well, drums, but louder and more like a rock band.

Dewey tells the students it's just a school assignment, but it's really a plan to get revenge on his old band by beating them with his own student rock band in the local "battle of the bands." Along the way, Dewey runs into a whole bunch of problems, such as parents' night and even getting to the competition is a struggle.

But Dewey never gives up and that is a valuable lesson in the movie — always believe in yourself and never give up, no matter what.

If your kids are interested in music, comedy or musical comedy, then I guarantee they will love this movie.

School of Rock is appropriate for a wide range of ages, but would likely be most enjoyed by seven to 14-year-olds.

If your children are fans of anyone in the cast, such as Mr. Black or Joan Cusack, who plays the principal at Horace Green Prep School, then it's a good bet they'll like the movie.

The School of Rock is definitely one of the best movies I have seen in a long time.

See FOLLOW, page 24.

See MULTI-TALENTED, page 24.

See it, hear it... **LIVE!** There's Nothing Better!

Call to get your tickets!

905-305-SHOW (7469)

or Toll-free 1-866-768-8801 (not available in 416 or 647 area codes)

BOX OFFICE HOURS: Mon to Sat 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

171 Town Centre Blvd., Markham ON L3R 8G5

More Munsch Madness

Join world-famous Theatre as they bring you the family entertainment Sun Nov 23 11:00 a.m. Adult St.

With his renowned duo has...
 ...1998 and has been...
 ...radio and television...
 ...make you laugh!
 Nov. 22, 2003

Bowser & Blue