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## Spywear, intrigue at hospitality event in Monterey

**LAURA NESS**

*Her VineNess*

It was a night of flashy and fleshy espionage at the Monterey County Hospitality Association's annual dinner, which this year honored Michael Bekker of Cannery Row Co. as 2008 Hospitality Professional of the Year.

Themed "Mission Impossible," the spywear-laced intrigue featured "Austin Powers" as the MC and "James Bond" as auctioneer. Both were sufficiently convincing, even without the mind-melting martinis that flowed, both shaken and stirred.

Mission Director for the evening's hospitable high jinks, Quail Lodge General Manager Sarah Cruse, effected a 007-daring entrance, rappelling from the ceiling. She was rewarded with a martini and appreciative applause from the 250-strong spy network that welcomed the new 2009 MCHA President.

Quail Lodge Chef Jeff Rogers and his most attentive staff stealthily executed the four-course "Mission Menu," (printed backwards on waterproof parchment), which included "Secret Identity Soup" with 2007 Scheid sauvignon blanc, "Double Agent Duck" with 2007 Paraiso pinot noir, and the "Detonator" -prime filet of beef expertly paired with 2003 Bernardus Marinus, the unequivocal hit of the "007" table. Oh dear, I guess my cover is now officially blown!

### Happenings

Carmel's new Spanish tapas restaurant, Mundaka, on San Carlos between Ocean and Seventh avenues, debuts tonight. Executive Chef Brandon Miller and restaurateur Gabe Georis are only offering dinner for now, but will open for

lunch by April 15. Featuring authentic Spanish cuisine, the 46-seat eatery is made of sustainable materials from floor to ceiling. Information: 831-624-7400 or [www.mundakacarmel.com](http://www.mundakacarmel.com).

"Library Sunday" this weekend at Taste Morgan features 1999 Pisoni Vineyard pinot noir - truly a "taste only" opportunity. Sorry, no bottles available for sale.

### Wine of the Week

-2003 Bernardus "Marinus," \$36.

Set the right scene, prepare the right dish and a wine explodes with the precision of a well-targeted hand grenade. Such is the case with the 2003 Marinus: Unleash it with a rich cut of beef, a gratin of potatoes with bleu cheese and porcini truffle jus.

### Scintillating!

This de-lushious blend is 73 percent cabernet sauvignon, 20 percent merlot, plus dollops of cabernet franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. Plenty of black pepper, Cuban cigar and dark cherries stuff this baby like a fat leather armchair in a posh men's club.

It'll make you feel like the old James Bond: smug, satisfied and ever so slightly self-indulgent. So good, it's practically a steal.

•Laura Ness writes for many wine publications, including AppellationAmerica.com, Vine Times and Vineyard & Winery Management. A long-time resident of the Santa Cruz Mountains, she enjoys writing about wines of character and the characters who make them. Email: [highperf@got.net](mailto:highperf@got.net)

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