



## Pack It Up

**W**e get a lot of wine totes, luggage and shipping products here at the Grapevine. Many of them don't perform as advertised, or don't bring any innovation. Others are disposable, or require additional padding.

The Bottle Wise ([www.bottlewise.com](http://www.bottlewise.com), from \$59 for the two-bottle model; Duo LX, above, for \$149) combines two functions: it protects your clothes and your wine. Each padded insert holds one bottle, and

has an interior sleeve with a wine-tight zip closure; in case of breakage the wine should not stain your sweater. The whole thing unrolls and the inserts can be unsnapped if you're using only one or want to clean them. The appeal of this conveyance grew on me. At first I wondered if I needed it, and how often I'd use it, but now I'm counting it in my holiday packing list. Plus, it looks better than the competition.

—Owen Dugan

## NAPA OLIVE OIL

**I**n 2000, Napa Valley residents Lillian and Richard Dickson planted 1,200 olive trees on land in Jamieson Canyon that has been in Lillian's family since 1888. The Taggiasca variety trees came from Liguria, where the cultivar, known for its low acidity and fruity flavor, was developed in the 12th century by Benedictine monks.

The Dicksons first encountered the variety while vacationing in Italy, and became the first in California to plant it. The couple, who also grow Merlot and Cabernet, take great care to preserve the Taggiasca character. The olives are hand-harvested and taken to a nearby stone mill within a few hours.

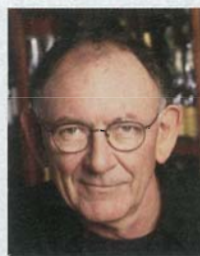
But you needn't take our word for its quality. Napa dining stalwart Tra Vigne serves it. And last May, the Dicksons' Regina Extra Virgin Olive Oil ([www.dicksonnparanch.com](http://www.dicksonnparanch.com); \$23 for 375ml at [www.cor tibros.biz](http://www.cor tibros.biz)) became the first U.S.-produced olive oil to win a prestigious ALMA trophy at the International Olive Oil Competition in Spoleto, Italy.

—Lynn Alley



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ERIC TADSEN; AENGUS MCGIERIN; ALEX DEVOIR

## KERMIT'S AUDIO CUVÉE



"It's just as fun as anything can be, I think," says wine importer Kermit Lynch on his experiences making an album. Emboldened by a not-negative reception to his vocal stylings on his 2005 album "Quicksand Blues" ("When my cuts would come on, I didn't notice anyone laughing"), Lynch headed back to the studio—this time to record an album of mostly covers, from the likes of Bob Dylan ("Girl from the North Country"), Curtis Mayfield ("Man's

Temptation") and the Carter Family ("Bear Creek").

"There were all these songs that I love," he explained. "I had had my own way of hearing them and that's what I tried to get." The result, "Man's Temptation" ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com); \$14), a collection of 13 tracks, carries a gentle and eclectic spirit akin to the recent Dylan trilogy or Mark Knopfler solo albums. Ricky Fataar, who produced Lynch's first album (and is perhaps better known from his work with the Beach Boys and the Rutles), assembled a cast of top Nashville session musicians. And if they weren't familiar with Lynch's work before the recording sessions ("Nobody knew me," Lynch says modestly), he certainly gained some fans. Dennis Crouch, who played upright bass on the album, told Lynch that on a subsequent gig, touring with Alison Krauss and Robert Plant, he put in his contract that a Kermit Lynch bottle had to be waiting for him in his hotel after each show.

—Jennifer Fiedler