



By Kari Ruel

GRAPESEED OIL & FLOUR

MAY BE A TICKET TO BETTER HEALTH

Food & Vine Inc, makers of Salute Santé! Grapeseed Oils, based in Napa, believes in the circle of life when it comes to wine and the bi-products of grapes. Austrian born, Valentin Humer and his wife Nanette began pioneering grapeseed oil in 1993. Valentin helped develop the equipment necessary to press the hard, little seeds most think of as a nuisance pebble from the grapes while living in Europe. He later moved to the United States, married Nanette and their passion for healthy, delicious food and sustainable alternatives for better health led their quest to California to start their own company, begin making cold pressed grapeseed oil and start the production for grapeseed flour.

“We have always talked about how healthy grapeseed oil is from its high essential fatty acid and high vitamin E content and the fact that it raises the good cholesterol and lowers the bad,” said Nanette. “It cleans the arteries of all the fatty deposits and takes it to the liver for elimination. What’s exciting is there is a new study that was published on March 7 and written about in numerous publications showing the benefits of linoleic acid. It’s one of the essential fatty acids that your body can’t produce.”

photos by Lowell Downey / Ary & Clarity



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Researchers at Ohio State University found that men and women with higher linoleic acid levels tend to have less heart-threatening fat nestled between their vital organs, more lean body mass and less inflammation. And higher linoleic acid levels also means lower likelihood of insulin resistance, a precursor to diabetes. These lipids are found in grapeseed oil.

This finding could have obvious implications in preventing heart disease and diabetes, but also could be important for older adults because higher lean body mass can contribute to a longer life with more independence, said Ohio State's Martha Belury, a professor of human nutrition who led the research.

"We are fat phobic in our society," said Nanette. "The old beliefs that you don't need fat in your diet has been dominating the media and published works for the past 50-years. In comes this incredible researcher that talks about linoleic acid from the scientific values, just as we have been preaching from the food perspective!"

But there's a catch. Low-cost cooking oils rich in linoleic acids have been disappearing from grocery shelves, fueled by industry's push for plants that have been modified to produce oils higher in oleic acid.

"Vegetable oils have changed. They're no longer high in linoleic acid," said Belury, an expert in dietary fats and part of Ohio State's Food Innovation Center. The research appears online in the journal *Molecular Nutrition & Food Research*.

Grapeseed oil, also known by many nutritionists as the new "Super Food," according to Valentin "The life force energy is in the seed. Most people spit out the seed and that's the best part of the grape from a health perspective. Grapes, figs and olives are some of the healthiest foods on the planet and we are fortunate to have them here in the Napa Valley. We are hoping more wineries will work with us to complete the cycle making Napa Valley the greenest place to be and help the planet to be more sustainable," he said.

Besides producing grapeseed oil, the Humers also make another incarnation of the seed by taking the cake-like pellets after pressing the oil from the seed and milling the bi-product into grapeseed flour.

"The grape seed is naturally gluten free and it's so healthy," said Nanette. "By adding a little grapeseed flour, you can choose to make your baked goods totally gluten free or you can add it to regular flours to make whatever dish you want. We do both. Sometimes we add it to almond and oat flour for our scones or mix it in with pancakes."



More recent studies suggest that chardonnay grapeseed flour helps reduce belly fat.

"More and more companies are using grapeseed flour in nutritional supplements and their products," said Nanette, who said their grapeseed flour is now popular Internationally as well as in the United States.

"Chardonnay grapeseed flour has been getting a lot of attention lately because new studies have found a great deal of health claims. From a wine point of view, red wine has the most health benefits but for some reason the chardonnay seed has different health benefits in the flour format. The seed itself is linked to high antioxidants which are present in both the oil and flour,

Valentin and Nanette pride themselves on all the research they are able to find on their products.

"We are a very aware society today because of the Internet s, so people can find out things so much quicker. We are a small company so it's vital that we relay new findings that are accurate and truthful, but yet people still believe the old facts. We are continually trying to educate people on healthy choices when it comes to the oils they use in cooking and baking. This new study confirms what we have been saying that linoleic acid found in grapeseed oil is good for heart health and diabetes. It also puts nutritional value back in foods."

Salute Santé! produces two types of grapeseed flour; Chardonnay and Merlot. Grapeseed flour is high in potassium, antioxidants and nonsalable fiber.

"To help reduce belly fat, you can even add a teaspoon to your smoothies and protein shakes. Or, mix some into your granola and yogurt. It's just great to have in your body. It has a wine crush flavor to it., and I can't eat my scones without it anymore!"

Salute Santé! also makes 5 infused grapeseed oils -basil, lemon, roasted garlic, rosemary and chili which are perfect as marinades for grilling because of grapeseed oil's high smoke point.

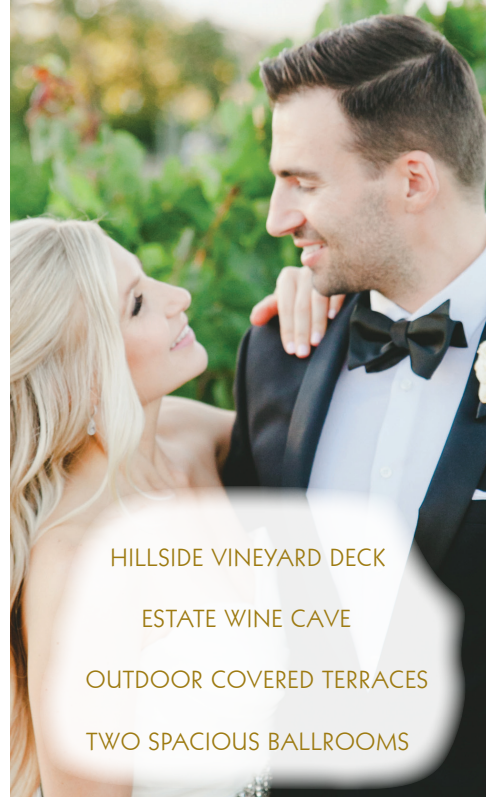
"We make the grapeseed oil here in the Napa Valley and we believe we are completing the ecological cycle," said Valentin. "The wineries grow the grapes to make wine. We take the discarded seeds and make healthy oils from them and the bi-product of the pressed oil is a cake like pellet, which we mill into flour. Then companies like Model Bakery take that flour and make grapeseed flour bread; ABC Bakery makes gluten free flap jacks and brownies, Napa Cakes makes panforte (that won an award in New York using our grapeseed oil and flour!) and Wild California makes a 4 varieties of a crisp with our grapeseed flour. This completes the cycle of the grape plant."

Valentin and Nanette live the sustainable life at their 1870 farm house nestled on a little acre along Napa Creek. Here they use their oils and flour combined with their seasonal produce, fruit trees and herb gardens they grow themselves. The couple are master chefs in their own right and love to teach healthy eating and cooking. Go to www.grapeseedoil.com/recipes for easy and simple recipes you can create at home. **NVL**

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