

short orders

Luscious Pomegranates

Ancient Armenia, which spread across eastern Asia Minor and into the Caucasus Mountains, may have been the site of some of the world's earliest vineyards. Long unknown outside the Soviet Union, Armenian wine is now becoming available even as far afield as Milwaukee. Hagop Kharatian, an Armenian dancer who came here four years ago to join the Milwaukee Ballet, is now the exclusive local importer of his homeland's wines. They are now available at Twisted Fork, Beans and Barley, Outpost Foods, Grafton Liquor and other locations.

The flavors of Armenian grape wines will be familiar yet distinct to connoisseurs. The red Veda Areni is sunny and dry as a rocky Mediterranean hillside, perfect with roasted meat and spicy food. Vernashen is a delicate balance of dry and sweet, a flavorful vintage located somewhere in the wine world between Shiraz and Merlot. Kharatian's most exotic import, however, is pomegranate wine, a richly textured, organic beverage loaded with antioxidants and unlike any other libation in flavor.

An Armenian wine-tasting will be held 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, July 24 at Outpost Foods, 100 E. Capitol Dr. and 7000 W. State St. Armenian wine will also be served noon-5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, July 24-25 at Armenian Fest, 7825 W. Layton Ave. (David Lührssen)