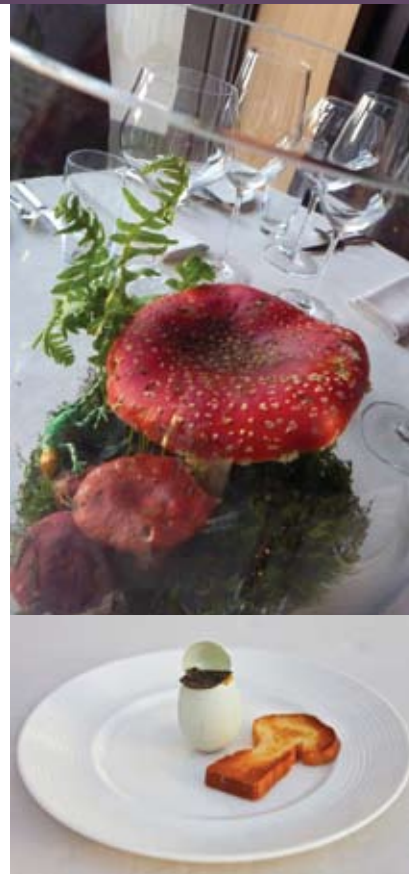


1ST NAPA TRUFFLE FESTIVAL



Photos: Centerpiece: FAITH ECHTERMEYER, 2010; Truffled Egg: ©KOPOL BONICK STUDIO

When the French writer Curnowsky was asked how he liked his truffles, he said “in great quantity.” Truffles: the very word, says Brillat-Savarin, is “grand ... and awakens the erotic ...” It’s a well known aphrodisiac. Even so at \$2,000 a pound that’s expensive love-making. No one needs a reason to eat exquisite truffles, but Alexander Dumas reminds us that they make a “woman more tender and a man more lovable.”

The **Napa Truffle Festival** makes no such claims but their love of truffles matches the spirit of the French and the Italians. Last winter they had their inaugural truffle festival, bringing together some of the ablest personalities for their “black truffle orchard excursion.” The diverse crowd was made up of scientists, truffle lovers, and foodies. The American Truffle Company under director Robert Chang was the initiator. For the last decade, ATC has applied major scientific research into cultivation of truffles. The festival showcased



Robert Chang and Robert Sinskey in the newly-planted truffle orchard at Robert Sinskey Vineyards

the Black Perigord Truffle (*Tuber Melanosporum* to aficionados). Director Chang and Chef Educator Doug Duda made the introductory speeches, followed by two truffle seminars: “Science-based Truffle Cultivation,” and the “Economics of Truffle Cultivation.” As to the economics of truffles, it is said that cultivation of the black truffle can be seven to ten times more profitable than growing grapes. Robert Sinskey of the

eponymous vineyard has a 1.75 acre truffle orchard, and a visit to the orchard’s Sonoma/Carneros location was part of the Napa Truffle show. Wine pairings were discussed — think Champagne, Barbaresco, or Pinot Noir — followed by a \$330 truffle dinner with Michelin starred chefs, who created a *degustation*, with each chef preparing a special course.