DEAR ABBY

Bald is beautiful, many women reply

Dear Abby: Your reply to "Bald in Baltimore," the man who's considering getting rid of his wig, left me feeling you were advising someone with an "affliction" that isn't normally publicized.

I have false teeth. Should I have a "coming-out party"?

My 40-something son lost most of his hair by the time he was 22. When he was in his 30s, he and a couple of friends shaved their heads on a dare, and he has kept it that way ever since. It's a popular and fashionable look. "Bald in Baltimore" should retire the wig and join the bandwagon with a shaved head.

— Nancy in Spring, Texas

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips.

Abby says: My comment about the "coming-out party" was not meant to offend. I was being literal. Many readers agreed that the hairpiece was unnecessary. Read on:

Denver lady: Your idea of a coming-out (or off) party is a great one. He must have a sense of humor about all this. I hope he knows that what makes a man appealing isn't a head of hair but his attitude, outlook and the way he treats others. When he loses the wig, he will gain his freedom.

T.L.C., Canvas, W.Va.: Hooray to "Bald in Baltimore" who's thinking of ditching his rug. Many women find bald men attractive, and I am one of them. So what if his head is shaped a "little" funny! That's what makes him an individual, like our fingernails, noses or toes. I'd rather see a bald man any day than a "rug" or a "comb-over."

M.S., Okeechobee, Fla.: I met my man when he was bald. It's time that writer ditches the wig and becomes the man he always wanted to be.

Patricia in Belle, W.Va.: I worked with a man in the same situation. His mother objected to him "coming out" from under the wig. Her real objection was that his baldness made her feel "old."

Albertville, Ala.: When I was still in college, I met a bald man in his 30s. He explained that when his hairline began to recede, he started shaving his head rather than dealing with the anxiety. I saw old pictures of him with hair, and I can honestly say I like him better without it.

Kathy in Chicago: Wouldn't it be wild to arrange to shave his head if people pledged money for cancer research or some other favorite charity?

Write Dear Abby at DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069

TODAY'S MOVIE TIMES

Times are subject to change. Call the theaters.

Showtimes provided by Cinema-Source, (203) 436-6389; on the Web at www.cinema-source.com

16 Blocks (PG-13, 1h45m) Billy Joe's Pitcher Show — 5, 7:15, 9:30. Nova — 4:15, 6:50, 9:30. Sierra — 4:40, 7:20, 9:30.

Aleksh and the Bee (PG, 1h52m) Century — 11:25 a.m., 2, 4:40, 7:20, 10. Cobblestone — 7:15, 10. Copper Creek — 4:30, 7:10, 9:30. Southridge — 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10. Wynnsong — 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10.

American Dreamz (PG-13, 1h55m) Century — 11:50 a.m., 2:25, 4:55, 7:25, 9:55. Fleur — 4:35, 7:05, 9:15. Wynnsong — 1:30, 4:20, 7:15, 9:45.

Aquamarine (PG, 1h46m) Nova — 4:10, 6:55, 9:25.

Basic Instinct 2 (R, 1h53m) Nova — 7, 9:20.

The Benchwarmers (PG-13, 1h25m) Century — 11:45 a.m., 1:55, 4, 6, 8:10, 10:20. Copper Creek — 4:40, 7:20, 9:35. Southridge — 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:30, 9:50. Wynnsong — 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:30, 9:50.

Curious George (G, 1h22m) Nova — 5.

Date Movie (PG-13, 1h25m) Nova — 5:40, 7:40, 9:50.

Eight Below (PG, 1h52m) Sierra — 4:30, 7:10, 9:55.

Failure to Launch (PG-13, 1h36m) Southridge — 1:15, 4:05, 7:30, 9:50. Wynnsong — 1:15, 4:05, 7:30, 9:50.

Firewall (PG-13, 1h40m) Nova — 4, 6:45, 9:15.

Final Girls (PG-13, 1h35m) Nova — 4:20, 7:20, 9:50.

RV (PG, 1h38m) Century — 11:30 a.m., 12:45, 1:55, 3:10, 4:20, 5:35, 6:45, 8, 9:10, 10:25. Cobblestone — 7:45, 10. Copper Creek — 4:30, 7:10, 9:25. Merle Hay Cinema — 5, 7. Southridge — 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10. Wynnsong — 1, 2, 3:15, 4:15, 5:30, 7, 7:45, 9:15, 10.

Scary Movie 4 (PG-13, 1h23m) Century — 11:40 a.m., 1:45, 3:50, 5:55, 8, 10:05. Cobblestone — 7:15, 9:15. Copper Creek — 4:45, 7:30, 9:40. Southridge — 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15. Wynnsong — 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15.

The Sentinel (PG-13, 1h48m) Century — 11:20 a.m., 12:20, 1:50, 2:55, 4:25, 5:25, 6:55, 7:55, 9:25, 10:30. Cobblestone — 7, 9:30. Copper Creek — 4:40, 7:20, 9:35. Southridge — 1:45, 4:15, 7, 9:30. Wynnsong — 1:45, 4:15, 7, 9:30.

She's the Man (PG-13, 1h45m) Nova — 3:20, 5, 9.

Silent Hill (R, 2h00m) Century — 11:40 a.m., 1:20, 2:40, 4:10, 5:30, 7, 8:25, 10:25. Cobblestone — 7:25, 10. Copper Creek — 4:20, 7, 9:25. Southridge — 1:50, 4:20, 7:20, 10. Wynnsong — 1, 1:50, 4, 4:30, 7, 7:20, 9:45, 10.

Slither (R, 1h36m) Nova — 10.

Sophie Scholl: The Final Days (NR, 1h57m) Varsity — 7:30, 9:35.

Stick It (PG-13, 1h45m) Century — 11:35 a.m., 1:50, 4:15, 7:50, 9:55. Copper Creek — 4:45, 7:30, 9:45. Southridge — 1:30, 4, 7, 9:30. Wynnsong — 1:30, 4, 7, 9:30.

The growing taste for wine

1854 was a very good year. That's when the Mirassou family brought grapes to America.

By BILL REITER
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Winemaker David Mirassou likes to tell a story about his family.

In the mid-1850s, the 35-year-old's great-great-great grandfather left France in search of gold. He headed to California.

"It didn't work," Mirassou said.

The Frenchman didn't find gold. But he did stumble onto an idea: He could use all that California sun and rich soil to grow grapes and make wine.

Pierre Mirassou sailed home, put French grape cuttings in his suitcases, kept them alive using potatoes during the voyage back to America and made his way to California. That was in 1854. His family has been making wine since.

"We're the oldest winemaking family in America," Mirassou said.

The Mirassou label has several varieties of wine. His family first brought Pinot Noir to California, he said.

Mirassou was in Des Moines last week, and he sat down to talk about building a palate, picking out wines and enjoying reds and whites.

Q: How do you go about building your palate?

A: Find a retailer that can help guide you in selection. Find a place that does tasting regularly. A lot of people have lost the enjoyment of wine as a cultural experience, [but] it's coming back. No matter what, your palate is going to get better as you drink more wine.

Q: Does a wine habit get more expensive as your palate gets better?

A: Not necessarily. A lot of the time, when people develop a palate, they don't have to spend a lot of money on wine. Some $9 bottles of wine have more subtle tastes than a $20 bottle. A lot of Chardonnays have a vanilla flavor that jumps out to you [if you have a better palate].

Q: What should people try if they want to get into drinking wine?

A: Most people like starting with white wines because they don't have as many tannins, which are a little bitter and which gives the wine character. In whites, start with Riesling, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, in that order.

Q: How about with reds?

A: I'd go with Pinot Noir, because it's soft and silky. Then to Merlot, then Cabernet.

Q: What's your favorite wine?

A: The wines are like my kids; it's hard to choose. [Long pause]. My favorite white is Chardonnay, and my favorite red is Pinot Noir.

Q: There's a lot of wine coming out of states like Oregon, and imports from Italy and France and other places. How do they compare to California wine?

A: The international wine business and other states are coming on strong. They're making use of all of the innovations my family and the other California [winemies] have developed and shared.

Q: Did the movie "Sideways" affect your business?

A: We call it "the Sideways effect." "Sideways" did a lot for the wine industry.

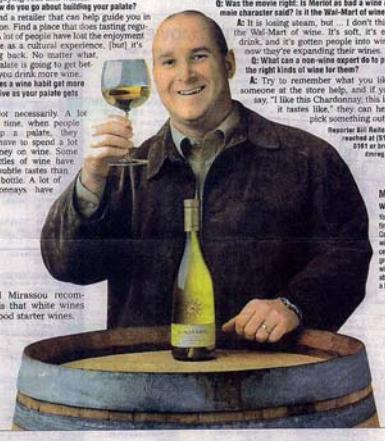
Q: Was the movie right: is Merlot as bad a wine as the main character said? Is it the Wal-Mart of wine?

A: It is losing steam, but ... I don't think it's the Wal-Mart of wine. It's soft, it's easy to drink, and it's gotten people into wine and now they're expanding their wines.

Q: What can a non-wine expert do to pick out the right kinds of wine for them?

A: Try to remember what you like. Let someone at the store help, and if you can say, "I like this Chardonnay, this is what it tastes like," they can help you pick something out.

Reporter Bill Reiter can be reached at (515) 284-8161 or breiter@dmreg.com



David Mirassou recommends that white wines are good starter wines.

Mirassou wines

You can find these Californian wines at most central Iowa grocery and wine stores for about $10.99 a bottle.