

*Hyde Park Wine Experiences
and
Culinary Adventures
Issue 26*

Finally, Spring is just around the corner, and wine consumers are looking for deals on light friendly wines. I have few recommendations for some Spring wines that are a good value, yet have the quality one always wants from their bottle.

Other topics this month:

- A big blow was handed down by the 10th District Court of Appeals on the private club smoking ban exemption. How have beverage sales in Ohio been affected?
- Who rates wines?
- Member question.
- Upcoming wine and beverage promotions
- Special deals on wines, good or bad.

Now let's get down to business:

PRIVATE CLUBS ARE NOT EXEMPT FROM SMOKING BAN:

The 10th District Court of Appeals panel ruled in late December 2007 that private clubs are not exempt from the smoking ban and the language could not be clearer. Many private clubs submitted a petition to the State of Ohio to exclude clubs from the smoking ban. Presiding Judge Susan Brown did not overturn the decision and stated that the people of Ohio voted for a smoking ban for all public facilities that hired employees as noted in the Ohio Revised Code.

Now that the smoking ban is in place, has there been any effect on alcohol sales in Ohio bars and clubs? According to recent numbers by the State of Ohio, sales have decreased in bars and restaurants in Ohio by 3.2 percent but have increased retail sector sales by 4.9 percent.

Beverage sales here at the club have not decreased due to the smoking ban. Even cigar sales continue to do rather well as members and guests purchase cigars to smoke out on the golf course.

The Ohio Restaurant Association, the Ohio Licensed Beverage Association, as well as several other beverage organizations are trying to gather enough smokers to overturn the smoking ban decision. According to the Ohio Attorney General Office, any changes to the law are highly unlikely in 2008, however a new bill may be on the ballot in the Spring of 2009. This may make exemptions for private clubs, family owned and operated businesses and retail tobacco shops.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER:

Les, smoking cigarettes and then drinking a good bottle of wine just does not make sense to me. Does tobacco effect the noise and taste of wine?

Yes it does. Smoking cigars or cigarettes really destroys one's taste sensations. Wine needs to be consumed with a clean pallet for the consumer to really enjoy the flavors and aromas.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER:

Les, we are newer members of the club and we read your wine newsletter for the first time last month. It was full of information and we really enjoy wine. Great job. We love Pinot Noir from California and Oregon. Can you give us a few suggestions of some good fairly expensive Pinot Noir with backbone?

Thanks for the nice words. As you know, Pinot Noir grapes are hard to grow and many wineries chose not to even produce a Pinot Noir. If one purchases an inexpensive Pinot Noir, they can be very light with no flavor or intensity. To select a good Pinot Noir, one needs to dig a little deeper in the pocket to find a bottle that meets the criteria of a good well-balance wine with backbone.

Here are a few recommendations with Ohio pricing:

Merryvale, 2005 Pinot Noir Napa Valley \$31.99

ZD, 2005 Pinot Noir \$32.99

Argyle, Pinot Noir Oregon \$19.99

Argyle, Pinot Noir Reserve Oregon \$36.99 ??

David Bruce, Pinot Noir 2004 Santa Lucia California Tondre Grapefield \$49.99

Cuvaison, Pinot Noir Napa Valley 2004 \$34.99

Erath, Oregon Pinot Noir 2005 \$18.99

A to Z, Oregon Pinot Noir 2005 \$26.99

Domain Alfred, Edna Valley Pinot Noir 2004 \$44.99

Foxen, Vineyard Santa Barbara 2005 Julia Vineyard \$44.99

Mount Eden, Vineyards Santa Cruz Pinot Noir 2004 \$52.99

Landmark, Vineyards Sonoma 2005 \$29.99

Domain Coteau, Pinot Noir Oregon 2005 \$29.99

WHAT A GREAT JOB:

What a great job to get paid a lot of money to sit around a table for five days a week and rate wines for Robert Parker's Wine Advocate Magazine. Gee, sign me up.

Well it sounds like a cake job, but really there is much more to it than sipping wine and getting sloshed everyday. Matter of fact, the wine raters for Robert Parker don't get sloshed, as they only rate three to six wines a day. The raters come from all occupations, but most are aviate food and wine educators or love to travel and drink wines from around the world. All the raters from The Wine Advocate specialize in wines from different parts of the world. Some of the raters have unique pallets and enjoy European wines, while others like wines from Argentina, Australia, Italy, Chile or Spain. Therefore, the seven wine raters from The Wine Advocate are more diverse and specialize on wines from the regions they enjoy.

This core group gives you, the consumer, a better feel on how wines taste and are enjoyed.

The Wine Advocate Magazine is only an information magazine, centered on wines. There isn't any advertisements in the magazine, just information. Publications like the Wine Spectator, the Wine Enthusiast are filled with wine advertisements. Robert Parker feels his magazine gives the reader a true picture of wine at its best without be swayed by wineries that advertise.

How wines are rated?

As stated above, the wine rater only samples three to six wines a day. Wines are rated in the morning when the pallet is still fresh and clean. First, every bottle is inspected for leakage around the cork, label condition, markings on the labels and alcohol content. Every bottle is logged into a ledger by the wineries name, type varietal, year, vineyard, and area.

Wines are then poured into the tasting glasses at proper tasting temperatures. Sometime the wine may sit for a matter of minutes so they can breath and open up. The color and clarity is carefully studied along with the aromas of the wine. Nice wines usually slide on the sides of the glass (known as legs) and this too is carefully noticed as the rater tilts the glass and swirls the wine.

Tasting is the important part:

The wine taster sometimes samples the wine two or three times. White wines tasters scrutinize the fruit and oak, while in red wines, tannin, finish, and structure are firmly studied. Sometimes it can take a week before any point rating is finalized.

The Robert Parker Point Wine Rating system is as follows:

- 96 -100 Extraordinary
- 90 - 95 Outstanding
- 80 - 89 Good or above average to very good
- 70 - 79 Marginal to Average
- 60 - 69 Below Average
- 50 - 59 Unacceptable

How important is the Wine Rater?

Many wine store owners, wine buyers, wine consumers, or anyone who enjoys wine rely on Wine Rater's. This is how most people purchase wines for their homes cellars and establishments.

Wine Rater's, how good do they rate wines?

Most of the time, Wine Rater's scores are within four points of a rater from all other wine publications.

WHEN A DEAL IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE:

Have you even been to a wine store and the salesperson informs you that, if you purchase a case of a certain brand of wine, you can get the second case at half

price. Well it happened to one of the members at the club who told me they got the wine deal of a lifetime. I will not mention the member or the name of the wine shop where he purchased the wine, but it was a great story. I gave the member a few names of nice inexpensive Chardonnay's that would be perfect for the group he was having over the house. Mr. X went into a local wine shop and checked out the wines I listed. A salesperson greeted the member and out of the blue said we do have a great deal going on a Chardonnay from a small producer in Italy. The case price was \$49.99 and normally this wine is over \$100 a case. They offered the second case at half the \$49.99 price. Of course, the member was ecstatic and he couldn't pass up a deal like this. Mr. X wanted to know how many cases he had in the wine store. The sales person said six so the member bought them all.

Three weeks later, I asked the member how his party went at his home. He said well the food was great, the mixed drinks went like hotcakes but the wines he bought were not well received by our guests. I was perplexed. I asked, "Did you purchase any of the wines I suggested?" No, he said, "The salesperson said he had a great deal on an Italian Chardonnay by the case and I bought all he had." "Italian Chardonnay" I said. "Yea," said the member, "it tasted like old wash water and my wife was upset to say the least."

"Every bottle I opened," he said, "had a funny smell and the taste was just awful. The worst part was I had to go to my basement and pull out some Cakebread and Kistler. It just broke my heart to use my good bottles of wine for this party." I about busted out in laughter but I held it in, as I could see Mr. X was very upset.

Lesson learned: Italy doesn't produce a good Chardonnay. You would be better off purchasing a Chardonnay from Australia, Argentina, South Africa or Spain. Stick with a nice Pinot Grigio, Passerina, Trebbiano and Pecorino, which are all good bets for Italian white wines. When a sales person offers you a deal too good to be true, chances are it is. When you see dust on the box stay away from it. If the vintage for a white wine is dated around 2003, stay away, especially if the wine is only \$4.19 a bottle.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER:

Les, how do you select wines for the clubs wine list?

I try to find very interesting wines, some items are unusual or intriguing other are stable produces that many consumers know and trust. I attend many wine tasting events during the course of the year and my sales representatives bring me wines almost every other week to try. Here, I look for value, yet the wines need to set marks in quality too. I select wines that get good press, decent ratings, and from there, decide if the wines will sell if we put them on the wine list. One of the hardest parts of selecting wines is finding one that everyone will enjoy. When I select wines for the list, I want to sell them quickly. The wine list needs to be fresh and changed monthly.

SPRING WINES OF QUALITY AND VALUE:

Here are some quality wines at some very affordable prices perfect for this time of the year.

Ecco Domaini, Pinot Grigio Delle Venezine 2006

Light bodied with fresh apple aromas cut hay citrus and lemony flavors. \$8.99

Ruffino Lamina, Pinot Grigio 2006

Clean and crisp with pear green apple and lemon zest on the finish. \$10.99

Formentini, Pinot Grigio 2005

Medium bodied with rich pear and ripe apple and tropical flavors. A lovely refreshing finish. \$16.99

Campanile, Pinot Grigio 2006

Light and clean with hints of melon peach and fresh cut apples. The finish is perky and silky. \$11.99

Caliterra, Reserva Sauvignon Blanc Chile 2006

Light bodied and crisp with well balanced aromas Great with crab cakes. \$7.99

Whitehaven Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc New Zealand 2006

A lovely balance of candied grapefruit peel and spice notes with a well-balanced palate to medium finish. \$16.99

Eleven Tongues, Sauvignon Blanc South Africa 2006

Aromatic with lots of grapefruit, lime and peach. Great with shrimp salad. \$7.99

René Barbier, Chardonnay Spain

Aromas of oak and green apple with spice showing a medium dry and clean finish. Awesome for seafood! \$6.99

Robert Pepi Pinot Grigio 2007

This wine is on sale at local retailers until May 5th. Nice crisp green apple, melon and peach flavors that mingle with nice acid and a soft silky finish. \$9.99

Dog House Merlot 2007

Another wine that is on sale until June 1st. Nice soft cherry, and strawberry flavors hints of nice spice and vanilla on the soft gentle finish. \$7.99

FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROMOTION RIGHT AROUND THE CONNOR:

Spring and wine always go well together and usually around June we have a great wine dinner in the planning stages. Last month, we sat down with the people from Gallo Winery and, after a few glasses of wine, we decided to have them do another wine dinner from their new and exciting international portfolio. Last year, Gallo Sonoma hosted our June Wine Makers Dinner and many of the wines that were featured are used today at the club. This time, we decided to switch things up by featuring wines from around the world. We will feature bottles from Italy, Spain, Argentina and of course, California.

We have selected a date of Tuesday night, June 10th, as the date for the sit down dinner. The menu and all the details concerning this event will be available in the April issue of the Club Newsletter.

Take care and drink wines of your liking.

**Les Hemingway
Bar Manager**

Some of the wine information in this publication came from the following magazines.

The Ohio Beverage Journal

Santé

Restaurant News

Market Watch

The Wine Advocate

The Wine Spectator

Top Shelf Magazine

Food and Arts Magazine

Bartender Magazine

Cheers Magazine

The Wall Street Journal

The California Wine Journal