



# Hyde Park Wine Experiences And Culinary Adventures

Issues 29



You know, many members like wine, but really don't understand the terms associated with the drink. In this issue we will look at the three most important details that every wine consumer needs to know.

### *Also in this issue:*

Where do all the favors come from when drinking wine

Wine stores that are overflowing with wine from several different countries.

A Layercake Shiraz update

A new bar promotion in January along with a cellar wine tasting.

And more!

## **THE NOVICE WINE CONSUMER:**

I often hear that many members, and even some non-members, who read my newsletter don't know much about wine. They are familiar with a few favorite brands but rarely go outside-the-box to look at new and different varietals. I always say you need to try new wines - never drink the same wine for more than a month. Wine is about experimentation. Sure, you may like Chardonnay or Cabernet, but there are so many varietals out there from different countries that you never need to stay with only one. In fact, many wine shops offer wine tastings during the week., which is a grand opportunity for you to try different varietals.

The three most important areas to look for when tasting wine are clarity, noise, and the taste. (Note: Never taste wine after smoking tobacco, brushing your teeth or eating spice foods that have garlic or some other harsh flavor. This will ruin the flavor.)

### **Clarity:**

When you are poured a glass of wine, take it and hold it up to some light. If you have a glass of white wine, make sure the wine is clear and not cloudy. If the later, the wine should not be consumed as it may be tainted. Red wine is the same way. The color of the wine should look light to dark depending on the grape varietal. For example, if you're tasting a Pinot Noir, the wine should be light in color, while a Cabernet or Meritage should be darker.

### **Nose:**

The smell of the wine is very important. The best way to bring out the aromas of the wine is to swirl the glass several times. After doing this, put you nose in the glass. You will notice the flavors of the wine wafting up.

### **Taste:**

The most important part of wine is the taste. Of course, everyone has a different taste when it comes to wine. What one person likes in a bottle, others may not feel the same way. When tasting a glass of wine take a generous sip. Let the wine go to the back of your tongue. Hold it there a few seconds, and then swallow. After a few seconds, you will detect the flavors of the wine. For example if you drank a white wine like a Chardonnay, you would taste green apple, peaches, melon, or maybe some vanilla or oak. If you tasted a Cabernet Sauvignon, you may taste black cherry, plum, chocolate, cinnamon, or even other spices. If you tasted a Sauvignon Blanc, you may taste grapefruit or citrus flavors. All of the taste flavors come from your senses in the back of your tongue.

## **WHERE DO ALL THE FLAVORS COME FROM IN WINE?**

If you read the Wine Spectator, or other wine publications, you will notice wine descriptions like vanilla, tar, smoke, mocha, spice, barn yard, sage and other descriptive words related to taste. Where do these flavors come from?

The flavors come from the toasting of the barrel, which is done with fire. The winemaker torches the inside of the barrel to bring out the flavors you taste in a wine. Winemakers are like chefs in a way. They experiment to improve their wines and bring out the flavors they want to see.

Some winemakers toast their barrels for longer periods of time. When this process occurs, one will pick up more smoke, vanilla, tar, or spice in the wine.

## **HOT RED WINES:**

While Pinot Noir continues to be a big seller in the United States, blends are starting to explode in sales among consumers. The new wine consumer is looking for something unusual, with modest fruit flavors and is easy to drink yet holds up to food. As you may know, a good Pinot Noir is hard to find because it's grape is hard to grow. Many wine producers don't even attempt to produce Pinot Noir for this exact reason. Instead, they go for Cabernet Sauvignon, Bordeaux style grape, Merlot, Syrah, Malbec, Zinfandel and other red grape varieties. By using these grapes, the winemaker can produce an excellent blend for less cost and far less stress.

The blend needs to have a least two grape varieties. Many Italian producers sometime blend Sangiovese and Montepulciano together to showcase an outstanding red wine with nice fruit flavors. In Australia, Malbec is commonly used for blending of red wines along with Cabernet Sauvignon, and Shiraz. The wines show great balance and intensity. In California, a blend can be made with Zinfandel, Merlot, Cabernet Franc or Petit Verdot, which brings out a nice dark fruit component, interesting spicy flavors and more complexity.

For a wine to be labeled a Red Meritage it must contain over 75 percent of a specified two varietals. These grape varietals are: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc, or Malbec. Meritage is also a registered trademark. Therefore, wine producers must be registered to The Meritage Association. Wineries that join the association must pay an annual fee and must abide by very specific rules.

As you can see, producing a Meritage can be very complicated. This is why many consumers see more blends on the store shelves, which are becoming more and more popular.

Here a few nice Blends and even some Meritage Red wines that you can purchase at your local wine shop:

*Rodney Strong Meritage Symmetry Alexander Valley 2004*  
Full-bodied with aromas of spice and black plum. Rich and velvety with mouth-coating tannins. Retail for \$39.99

*The Hess Collection 19 Block Cuvee Napa Valley 2005*  
Prominent aromas of black fruit, and vanilla showing dusty tannins good oak and a long seductive finish. Retail for \$24.99

*Francis Coppola Diamond Series Black Label Sonoma County 2006*  
This wine is loaded with raspberry, black cherry, and plum fruit showing a nice integration of oak and spice. Very elegant and refined. Retail for \$11.99

*Columbia Crest Reserve Washington State 2004*  
This is a two varietals blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Columbia Crest is becoming a true elite winery in Washington State is this is a prime example how older vines are producing awesome grapes. Full-bodied, rich and toasty with black fruits and oak with a dark fruit palate backed by length on the long finish. Retail for \$34.99

*Kenwood California 2005*  
This little blend features red cherry and blackberry fruit showing subtle tannins and only a short finish. This is just a cocktail wine. Retail for \$6.99

*Opps, Cheeky Little Red Chile 2006*  
This blend from Chile is made of Carmenère and Merlot. Opps is a simple red wine nothing flashy with cherry fruit some spice and vanilla and a soft finish Retail for \$8.99

*Girard, Artistry Napa Valley 2005*  
This is one for the cellar. Soft on the palate with a balanced fruit core. Dark and rich with lively tannins on the long finish. May need some more time in the bottle as this is an explosive Red Blend. Retail for \$28.99

## **LAYERCAKE GOING GOING GONE:**

The most common question at the bar these days is what happen to Layercake Shiraz? Layercake is not available at any wine distributor in Ohio. If you see it at your local wine shop, purchase as much as you can.

Layercake is having problems like many Australian wine producers. Australia is in the middle of a three year drought. Many small wineries have closed down, others have cut production and several have been purchase by larger wine produces.

Layercake has also cut down on production as the grapes are smaller and, therefore, not a much juice is produced. Layercake has pruchased juice from other wineries in the region in the past but, with the drought, the juice is not available. The winery has also received great press from many wine publications over the past three years. Supply and demand have taken a toll on the winery. Therefore, what you see in the store is what is left of this year's vintage.

I have talked to my supplier last month and the word on the street is the new vintage may be ready by January 2009. Here at the club, we purchased nearly a pallet of Layercake last year and it lasted until early June. As you can tell, Layercake is a good seller here at the club, but we needed to find a good alternative.

I tasted a few bottles of Shiraz one Thursday afternoon (I just love Thursday afternoons). Penfolds Tomas Hyland Shiraz is the one we came up for Hyde Park. The juice is exclusively from Penfolds and displays the style and body that Layercake showcases. Until the new vintage of Layercake comes in, I would recommend Penfolds Thomas Hyland Shiraz.

Now the six million dollar question: How long will the new vintage be available? I would look for another low production year. Australia had some rain but not enough to take care of the drought conditions. Penfolds is a very large winery and has many acres of land planted with grapes vines. It also has juice contracts with other wineries in the region, so production is not as big as a problem. Smaller wineries like Layercake will continue to have problems keeping up with demand. Really, the next time we will see Layercake Shiraz in the stores could be March 2009.

## **SO MUCH WINE AND GREAT PRICES:**

I went over to the Party Source a few weeks back and was amazed at all the different brands of wine they had in the store. Prices were as low as \$4.99 and as high as \$400.00 a bottle. One of the wine salespeople came over to make a sales pitch on some of the less expensive items they had in a cart. Some of the brands were so gimmicky that I wouldn't even waste my time going to the cash register with the stuff.

The wine market is saturated with wine from every region of the world but you need to watch what you purchase. The wines that cost from \$3.99 to \$5.99 a bottle are not good. These wines were once known as box wines. Now, wineries put them in fancy bottles with enticing labels to catch the consumer's eye. If the bottle doesn't catch your eye, the price will, but, as the old saying goes, you get what you pay for. That certainly holds true for wine.

While at the store, I looked at a Pinot Grigio. It was in a bottle shaped like a vase, a spring bottled water. I think the brand name was Voga. It was an Italian wine produced in Northern Italy and priced about \$10.99 a bottle. The wine had a cute little package, but was a very sub-par wine. For ten bucks, you can purchase a nice bottle of Kris Pinot Grigio and get a good wine for the money. Ditch the cute bottle, go with the good wine.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Vodka has replaced Scotch as the Brits' favorite spirit for the first time ever? Vodka sales rose 11 percent as Scotch sales were only up 1 percent for 2007. (*The BBC*)

Beer lost 5 percent of the Canadian market from 1997 to 2007. Its share slipped to 47 percent. Wine sales rose 28 percent in the same time period. (*The Canadian Press*)

One may get tipsy faster by consuming a cocktail made with diet soda rather than a non-diet mixture. Absorption is believed to be the factor. (*CNN*)

### **Future Beverage Promotions:**

#### **KARAOKE NIGHT / STEAMER ADULT OPEN BOWLING NIGHT:**

I thought we would switch gears and make some changes this winter by shelving the guest bartender night to next year and do a Karaoke Night / Steamer Adult Open Bowling Night. It will be on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. Bowling begins at beginning at 7 p.m. Get out the old bowling ball and get down to the lanes for some practice and you can win some prizes.

Additionally, Karaoke has always been a hit here at the club. I thought now would be a great time to bring it back and see how many talented members we have at the club. Karaoke will go from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. in the Old Main Bar. Plenty of liquid libations will be flowing throughout the course of the evening. This should be a fun event, so bring some guest and make it a night at the club.

#### **Cellar Wine Tasting:**

We're going to get out some of the old bottles from the cellar, clean off the dust and sample them on Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. I will be pulling out some nice bottles of red and white so we can add new products to the wine list. The cost is only \$28.99 per

person, which will include an array of cheeses. If you plan to stay for dinner please make your reservations ahead of time.

Have a great holiday season and, as always, drink good wines

Les Hemingway  
Bar Manager

Some of the information in the wine newsletter was taken from the following publications:

The Wine Spectator  
The Wine Advocate  
Santé  
The Ohio Tavern News  
Cheers Magazine  
Market Watch  
Ohio Beverage Journal  
Wine Score  
Nightclub and Bar Magazine  
The Wine Enthusiast

