

Hyde Park Wine Experiences and Culinary Adventures

In this issue, I will make some suggestions on Meritage and Red Blends for your wine cellar. Now is the time to stock up on Cabernet. I have put a very nice list together with various price points. Frank Family Cabernet Sauvignon was a hot item at our Cellar Wine Tasting in January. Now the most recent release is appearing at your local wine merchant. Don't blink, because this vintage will not be around long. I will catch up on mail questions from Members and suggest some fun wines with good value pricing. There is much confusion surrounding Pinotage. This old wine, produced in South Africa is starting to show up at local wine stores. I have a few inexpensive recommendations to share with you.

FRANK FAMILY VINEYARDS:

One of the hottest vineyards in California Napa Valley is the boutique wines of Frank Family Vineyards. Owners Richard Frank and Koerner Rombauer focus their energies on superb still wines. The winery produces Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Sangiovese and several distinctly different Cabernet Sauvignons. The highly regarded Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, barrel-aged for two and one-half years, is now emerging as one of the most sought-after wines in the valley.

Frank Family Vineyards is known for their red wines. However, their Chardonnay is very complex, buttery, and spends fourteen months in French oak barrels. Their Chardonnay is very similar to Rombauer or a Cakebread Chardonnay in style and grace...big, long and showing gleaming ripe apple, pear, and peach flavors.

Frank Family Vineyard, Rutherford Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 Retails for \$39.99

Frank Family Vineyard, Rutherford Napa Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 Retails for \$64.99

Frank Family Vineyard, Rutherford Napa Valley Chardonnay 2002 Retails for \$28.99

Frank Family Vineyard, Rutherford Napa Valley Sangiovese 2001 Retails for \$37.99

ANOTHER UNIQUE WINERY:

I was recently at a tasting at the Cincinnati Hotel and tasted some unique wines from the Beringer portfolio. Beringer just purchased Taz Vineyard located in Santa Barbara County. Their wines are exceptional, yet expensive. The quality is extraordinary and would be a good choice for your wine cellar.

Taz, Pinot Noir Fiddlestix Vineyard Chardonnay 2002

Lemon chiffon notes with a mineral tone of tropical fruit flavors. Hints of key lime and honeysuckle are balanced with long oak shadings. Retails for \$20.00

Taz, Fiddlestix Vineyard Pinot Noir 2002

Concentrated flavors of berry jam, strawberry, juicy blackberry and dark cherries. Good structure and texture. Long and complex finish. Retails for \$32.99

Taz, Fiddlestix Vineyard Merlot 2002

Aromas and flavors of ripe cherries, blackberries, red plum and cassis showing with nice spicy flavors of licorice, mocha and sweet vanilla. Retails for \$24.99

COSENTINO SIGNATURE WINERIES:

Are you ready for some big fat red wines with good structure and balance? If so, check out these interesting wines from Cosentino Winery out of Napa Valley:

Cosentino, Sangiovese IL Chiarretto Napa Valley 2003

This is another outstanding red wine from this small boutique winery in Napa Valley. This "Super Tuscan" blend wine is made from 94% Sangiovese, 3% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Merlot. This wine is rich, warm and showing black fruit with close and sweet herbs. Round wine that evolves into an intense mixed berry jam sensation with ripe tannins in the center. This wine is not as course as some Sangiovese and is very approachable now. This wine is a value as the retail price is **only \$19.99** at your local wine merchant. Highly recommended!

Cosentino, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2002

This recently released Cabernet is seen as a Bordeaux-Graves style wine with cassis, leather and earthy notes. The wine is dark in fruit, full-bodied and has firm, long and robust tannins. Great long term cellaring wine and **retails for \$42.99**

BIG RED WINES FOR THE CELLAR:

Are you looking for good solid red wines for your cellar? I highly recommend the wines from Hendry Vineyards. George Hendry produces red wines that are bold and have big juicy tannins. The structure and depth of his wines are what every wine collector is looking to have in their cellar.

Hendry, Block 28 Zinfandel 2002 and Retails for \$27.99

Hendry, Block 7 Zinfandel 2002 and Retails for \$16.99

Hendry, Block 4 and 5 Pinot Noir 2002 and Retails for \$27.99

Hendry, Block 8 Cabernet Sauvignon 2000 and Retails for \$39.99

WINES OF GOOD VALUE AND GOOD JUICE:

I always look for wines of value to use for the monthly special at the Club. Here are some good wine choices that have good quality and are reasonable:

Barnwood Vineyards, Sauvignon Blanc Santa Barbara County 2003

Lively and crisp with hints of mango, grapefruit and herbaceous undertones. This wine is great served with grilled fish or pasta. Retails for \$9.99

Salmon Harbor, Columbia Valley Merlot 2002

This wine is showing black cherry, cinnamon, anise and smoked chocolate. There is a touch of oak and vanilla on the long and soft finish. This wine is meant to be enjoyed now! Retails for \$8.99

Peter Lehman Barossa Shiraz 2002

Another great wine from the Australian producer. Deep black fruits of plum, blackberries and lashing of dark chocolate; beautifully highlighted by the integrated and muted background of oak characters. Retails for \$14.99

Alamos, Cabernet Sauvignon 2003

This Mendoza Cabernet is full-bodied with massive concentration of ripe blackberry and black cherry fruit. Great with a grilled steak or pan-fried pork chops. Retails for \$10.99

CABERNET SAUVIGNON FOR THE CELLAR:

Here is a short list of quality Cabernet that would fit well in any wine cellar:

Clos Du Val, Reserve Stags Leap District Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$54.99

Niebaum-Coppola, Estate Rutherford Napa Valley 2002 Retails for \$29.99

Trefethen, Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$19.99

Robert Mondavi, Private Selection Reserve Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$64.99

Burgess, Cellars Vintage Selection Napa Valley Retails for \$19.99

Conn Creek, Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$26.99

Cuvaison, Reserve Napa Valley Retails for \$44.99

Chimney Rock, Napa Valley 2002 Retails for \$49.99

Chalk Hill, Estate Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$69.99

Freemark Abbey, Sycamore Creek 2000/2001 Napa Valley Retails for \$69.99

Joseph Phelps, Backus 2001 Napa Valley Retails for \$150.99

Joseph Phelps, Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$49.99

M. Schlumberger, Reserve Napa Valley 2000 Retails for \$62.99

Mt. Veeder, Reserve Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$39.99

Stags Leap Cellars, Reserve SLV Napa Valley 2001 Retails for \$105.99

Simi, Reserve Napa Valley Retails for \$39.99

MEMBER QUESTION:

LES, WE RECENTLY HAD A PARTY AT HOME AND OPENED SEVERAL BOTTLES OF SMOKING LOON CHARDONNAY. SOME OF THE CORKS BROKE INSIDE THE BOTTLE AND WE COULD NOT GET THEM OUT. WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD TO GET A BROKEN CORK OUT OF THE BOTTLE?

Wow! I hate when that happens! With wineries using poor quality corks, these kinds of situations happen quite frequently. Really, there is not any sure-fire method of getting the cork out of the bottle easily. Here is what I do when I have this misfortune: Take your corkscrew and carefully insert it into the broken cork. Make gentle, slow turns of the corkscrew into the broken cork. After you get a slight hold of the cork with the corkscrew, very gently pull the cork straight out of the bottle. If the cork comes lose from the corkscrew, repeat the procedure. DO NOT PUSH THE CORK INTO THE BOTTLE. If the cork is pushed into the bottle, there is little chance of getting it out. As long as the cork is lodged in the neck of the bottle, you have better a chance of getting it out safely. The key is patience.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER:

I WAS AT THE WINE STORE LAST WEEK AND WAS OVERWHELMED BY THE MANY PRODUCERS OF SPANISH WINES. WHAT IS A GOOD, INEXPENSIVE SHIRAZ OR SHIRAZ BLEND THAT WOULD GO WELL WITH A STEAK OR ROASTED CHICKEN?

Spanish wines are flooding the marketplace, and there are some great Spanish wines with friendly pricing. As far a good Shiraz, I would recommend Mad Dogs and Englishmen 2003. This Shiraz is a blend of Cabernet, Monastrell and Shiraz. The wine is medium bodied, soft and well-balanced with mature plum, black cherry and hints of mocha and stewed tomato in the long finish. The best part is the price at only \$7.99 retail, but it's only available at fine wine shops.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER:

I LIKE A NICE SAUVIGNON BLANC, BUT LATELY MOST OF THEM ARE LOADED WITH GRAPEFRUIT. IS THIS A NEW TREND?

Sauvignon Blanc from Argentina and South Africa are typically loaded with grapefruit and heavy citrus flavors. Many consumers like the added touch, yet too much grapefruit and citrus overpowers the varietal. Many Sauvignon Blancs from California, Oregon, Washington State and Australia have hints of fresh grapefruit, yet add more green apple, pear, tropical fruit and lemon grass to their wines.

**QUESTION FROM A NON-MEMBER:
LES, WE JUST ADDED A WINE RACK IN OUR KITCHEN
AREA AND IT LOOKS GREAT IN THE EVENING WITH
THE SUN SHINING ON THE VARIOUS BOTTLES. ONE
OF OUR FRIENDS WHO APPRECIATES GOOD WINES,
TOLD US THIS IS A BAD SPOT FOR THE WINE RACK AS
IT GETS DIRECT RAYS FROM THE AFTERNOON SUN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Your friend is correct. When installing a wine rack in you home, you want to keep it away from direct sunlight or constant, bright, artificial lighting...especially red wines. They should not be stored in an area where there is any kind of direct lighting for any length of time. Red wines break down easier, and they could become bitter or even corked. Always try to store your red wines in darker areas of the home where the temperature stays below sixty-eight degrees.

GOOD WINES WITH CATCHY NAMES:

Have you noticed all the wines with odd names lately? All of these wines have good quality and the prices are very reasonable. Here are a few wines that I have tasted and recommend. Drink them young:

Fat Pumpkin, Merlot, Australia 2004 Retails for \$9.99 (Hard to find, small production, product from Yellow Tail).

The Little Penguin, Shiraz Australia 2004 Retails for \$7.99 (Again, this is a small production and somewhat hard to find at wine merchants.)

Fish Eye, Chardonnay, Australia 2004 Retails for \$7.99

Red Finn, Cabernet Sauvignon, Australia 2004 Retails for \$8.99

Lyons Head, Merlot, California 2004 Retails for \$8.99

Red Bicyclette, Merlot, France 2003 Retails for \$9.99

CHÂTEAUNEUF-du-PAPE:

If you have a wine cellar or just enjoy a fine red wine then look at the 2003 vintage. Now that the valuation of the dollar is fluctuating every week, the average retail pricing for this particular vintage will escalate to over forty dollars a bottle. This lovely Burgundy is packed with dark black fruit, cassis, licorice and tobacco flavors. The tannins are generally tight and the finish is long and polished. This red wine sees about fourteen to sixteen months of French oak giving it good balance and structure. Generally speaking, properly stored, a good vintage of Châteauneuf-du Pape can sit for up to 20 years.

Here are a few examples of three stellar 2003 Châteauneuf-du-Pape that I highly recommend:

Paul Coulon and Fils 2003 Retails for \$48.99

Domain Mont Redon 2003 Retails for \$52.99

Domain de Marocux 2003 Retails for \$64.99

PINOTAGE:

This very nice varietal is produced in South Africa. Pinotage, a cross between Pinot Noir, Cinsault is South Africa's signature grape. Pinotage is known for elegant cherry aromas from the Pinot Noir side and black currant and cassis from the Cinsault.

Sometimes it can be very hard to fork out some dough if one never tried a new varietal, so I have a couple of affordable Pinotages in the offering that are available at your local wine merchant.

Kumkani, Pinotage Stellenbosch 2002/2003 Retails for \$9.99

Umkhulu, Pinotage Stellenbosch 2002 Retails for \$13.99

Flagstone, Western Cape Dragon Tree Pinotage 2001 Retails for \$11.99

Below is a Pinotage that is highly recommend by Robert Parker, yet it is for the more sophisticated wine consumer:

Kanonkop, Simonsberg-Stellenbosch Pinotage 2002 Retails for \$25.99

NEW BILL PROPOSAL WILL REDUCE WINE PRICES IN OHIO:

A new bill proposal introduced by Republican Bill Seitz of Green Township to the Ohio General Assembly will end minimum markup of the 33.3 percent at the wholesale level on wine sales. This bill would change a seventy-year law dating back to Prohibition. What does this mean for wine consumers? Wines will be less expensive and Ohio will now be able to compete with Kentucky and Indiana. There is still a long way to go before this proposal can become law. Wine distributors are fighting this proposal tooth and nail. It should be very interesting to see how this all plays out down the road. I will keep you informed of new developments.

RED WINE OF THE MONTH:

I always look for good deals on exceptional wines during the month, and here is a great Cabernet Sauvignon:

Simi, Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2002

Simi, Cabernet Sauvignon is an absolute stunner. This review is from Robert Parker. The Simi 2002 Cabernet is dark red with purple tones and up front aromas of berry with a hint of sweet oak. A lingering finish of elegant tannins and black spice completes this silky wine. *Retails for just \$29.99*

WHITE WINE OF THE MONTH:

Farrari-Carano, Fumé Blanc Sonoma County 2004

Here is a review from the Wine Spectator in June” “This Sauvignon Blanc is vibrant and lively, with a delicious mix of orange rind, grapefruit, fig compote and subtle grass tones. Lemon blossom and tart quince flavors keep pumping out the intensity thought the long finish”. *Retails for \$14.99*

WINE VALUE OF THE MONTH:

Here is a wine that I had the pleasure of tasting last month:

Scarlatta, Montepulcano d’Abruzzo 2003

This impressive wine is rather limited. If you can find it, buy a case. Ruby red color with delicate cherry, strawberry, and currant flavors with soft round texture and mouth feel. Retails for \$6.99

SELECTING MERITAGE AND RED BLENDS FOR YOUR CELLAR:

Purchasing a nice Meritage or some impressive blends for you cellar is important. Mixing up the wine cellar with different varietals creates depth and balance when pairing wines with food. I have researched this sector and found some good suggestions:

Mount Veeder, Reserve Napa Valley 2001

Dark, rich, intense and concentrated with dense currant, mineral, earth and sage flavors. Excellent depth and structure Retails for \$9.99

Beaulieu Vineyard, Tapestry Reserve Meritage Napa Valley 2001

Wonderful structure and big tannins with solid blackberry, plum and sweet black cherry fruit. The finish is long and vibrant. Retails for \$7.99

Cain Five, Napa Valley 2001

Big and robust with chewy tannins and a big core of dark complex fruit and spices. Retails for \$74.99

Frogs Leap, Rutherford “Proprietary Red” 2001

Dark, rich and focused, with ripe and polished currant, blackberry, cherry and spicy, toasted oak. Retails for \$79.99

Newton, “Claret” Napa Valley 2001

Concentrated with layers of ripe, juicy, dark fruit with nice hints of spice and vanilla. Retails for \$14.99

Rudd, Oakville Estate Napa Valley 2001

Massive, yet needs to sit for a few years, but oh what a bottle of wine! Huge tannins, with a flexible backbone of meaty dark fruit. Hints of mocha and vanilla with cassis, licorice, tobacco and coffee elements work nicely with the sixteen months of new oak shadings. Retails for \$119.99

Cardinale, Napa/Sonoma Meritage 2000

Classic aromas of black currant, dark chocolate, espresso, leather and tobacco show nicely upfront. Solidly structured, elegant wine, finishing with serious but fine tannins, a peppery nuance and excellent persistence. Retails for \$122.99

Spencer Roloson, California Meritage “Palaterra” 2000

Flashy and intense with dark fruit and spices and tannins. Retails for \$13.99

Joseph Phelps, Insignia Napa Valley 2000

Big, fat, and juicy with deep concentration of fruit, and the finish is very complex. This wine needs to sit a few years to let soften. The wine displays dark black cherry, plum, blackberries, and mocha flavors along with old French oak and round tannins. Retails for \$129.99

Franciscan, Magnificate Napa Valley 2001

Plush and seductive with a solid core of deep back fruit and integrated spices. The finish is long and most complex with hints of chocolate, vanilla and tar. Retails for \$48.99

O’Brien Family, Napa Valley Seduction 2002

Nicely structure and bold with chewy long tannins on the finish. This wine is dark and gooey with a nice core of rich fruit and spice. Retails for \$24.99

Caymus, Special Selection Napa Valley 2001

Robust and big with a massive core of sinful dark rich fruit. The tannins are lively and the wine is hardy with just the right spice to light up the palate. Retails for \$134.99

Lyeth Winery, Sonoma Meritage Reserve 2001-2002

Tight and big with massive tannins and rounded mouth feel. This one needs time to sit but should be a winner in five years. Retails for \$57.99

Merryvale, Profile Napa Valley 1999-2000

Smooth and seductive with layers of dark complex fruit. The core is loaded with black cherry, rhubarb, blackberry jam, strawberry and mocha flavors. Excellent! Retails for \$96.99

Panther Creek, “Wine Makers Cuveé” Napa Valley 2000 -2001

Both of these vintages are excellent. The grapes are picked from a small vineyard on the Panther Creek Vineyard, and the vines are over fifty years old. The wine is dark and gooey with layers of seductive and enticing ripe fruit. Nicely oaked and layered with vanilla, espresso, and light chocolate flavors. Retails for \$39.99

Vinoce Vineyards, Napa Valley Mount Veeder Estate Grown Proprietary Red 2001

Wonderfully fragrant with intense black cherry and cedar aromas with a slight hint of roasted coffee and chocolate. The fruit lengthens and imparts a luscious, velvety texture and a full flavorful finish. Retails for \$52.99

I hope this list will help you select some blends for your cellar. Next month I will suggest some nice Merlots.

UPCOMING BEVERAGE EVENTS:

You have been asking “why don’t we have a Scotch Tasting?” Mark your calendars for **Friday, September 16th** as we will have a Scotch Ambassador from Johnnie Walker here to give a tasting and presentation on their entire Johnnie Walker portfolio. Here’s is what you’ll will be tasting:

Johnnie Walker Red

Johnnie Walker Green

Johnnie Walker Black

Johnnie Walker Blue (Retail for over \$200 a bottle)

The tasting and presentation will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. in the Terrace Room. Foods of a Scottish influence will be offered. Guests are welcome, dress is country club casual and the price is **\$32.95 per person**.

SINGLE BARREL BOURBON TASTING:

The good old boys from Woodford Reserve Distillery will be here on Friday, October 21st to present their fine Single Barrel Bourbon. We are still in the early stages of planning this event, but here is the information that I presently have written down:

- Woodford Reserve Cocktail Reception 6:30 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.
- Plenty “down home” appetizers-hot and cold-will be available.
- Presentation and tasting by the Master Distiller of Woodford Reserve begins promptly at 7:30 p.m.
- Door prizes will be available after the tasting.
- Price is around **\$26.95 per person**.

More details will be available in the September newsletter.

Well, I hope the information in this newsletter will help you in the selection process of fine wines for your home. Until October, take care and salute!

Les Hemingway
Bar Manager

ONE MORE THING:

If you enjoy reading a good book, run out and purchase
The Rise of Robert M. Parker Jr. The Reign of American Taste
by Elin McCoy.

The worlds most influential and controversial wine critic is the center of attraction in this well written and informative biography. Robert Park can either, make a winery a ton of money or he can cast a deadly spell on a winery by simply rating a bottle of wine poorly. This is a very well-written and informative book about the life of Robert M. Parker Jr. a very high profile person in the wine business today.