

Hyde Park Wine Experiences And Culinary Adventures

October is a time of change. The cool winds come more from the northwest and start to drive temperatures back to normal. The leaves change to their beautiful fall colors, and the daylight hours become shorter and shorter. Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon begin to take a back seat as heavier fall wines ease into the moment. I will focus on traditional seasonal wines and preview some nice bubbly for the holiday season.

There are also some very interesting and rather good varietals out there these days that are readily available at your local wine merchant. Merlot is starting to come on strong again. I will suggest a few nice Merlots to keep in your cellar.

I have highlighted both Merryvale and Rombauer Vineyard in the newsletter. Listed are some recommendations that you need to seek out at you local wine merchant. All of these wines have aging potential, and they have all received high rating's by several wine publications. Also included in this wine newsletter, I will answer some member and non-member questions about wines and keep you informed on some earth-shattering promotions in the month of October.

MEMBER QUESTION:

LES, WE WERE HAVING DINNER AT WESTERN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB LAST MONTH AND OUR HOST ORDERED A BOTTLE OF CAKEBREAD. OUR SERVER PRESENTED THE BOTTLE AND OPENED IT PROPERLY, THEN HE PUT THE BOTTLE IN A WINE BUCKET FILLED WITH ICE. WOULD YOU PUT THIS PARTICULAR WINE IN AN ICE BUCKET?

I always recommend to never use an ice bucket and here is why. First, the wine is removed from the cooler that is usually set between forty-five to forty-eight degrees. By the time the server takes the bottle of wine to the table, the wine is around fifty degrees. When a bottle of wine is too cold, all one tastes is the alcohol and not the character of the wine. As the wine warms, the real flavors of the varietal come out. In your example: Cakebread Chardonnay is a very complex wine with creamy butter, green apple, pear, and peach flavors showing toasty oak in the long and defined finish. When this wine begins to warm up, one can detect these qualities in this Chardonnay.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER'S DAUGHTER:

LES, MY GIRLFRIEND AND I GO TO THE SAME UNIVERSITY UP EAST AND WE LOVE TO TRY DIFFERENT WINES. WE PURCHASE THE MOST EXPENSIVE TO THE BARGAIN BASEMENT VARIETALS. WE ALWAYS COMPARE NOTES WHEN WE TASTE A PARTICULAR WINE. SOMETIMES WE NEVER AGREE ON THE AROMAS OR EVEN THE FLAVORS WE TASTE IN A BOTTLE OF WINE. IS THIS COMMON?

Everyone has a different sense of smell and taste. For instance, I recently sampled a bottle of Raymond Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999. My sales representative told me the wine is loaded with black cherry and wild berry with hints of mint leaf, tar, black licorice, milk chocolate and long robust tannins. I then tasted the wine and let it sit for a few minutes so the wine could open up. I never did taste the mint leaf or the milk chocolate. Then the member who was sitting in the Donald Ross Room at the time tasted the wine. He said; "I cannot detect the mint leaf or the milk chocolate, but this Cabernet is excellent."

Bottom line: not everyone tastes the same flavors that another person may taste, and this is what makes wine tasting so unique.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER:

I RECENTLY PURCHASED FOUR CASES OF ORGANIC SYRAH FOR A PARTY AT MY HOME. WHEN I SERVED THE WINE FOR DINNER, I NOTICED THERE WERE PARTICLES OF SEDIMENT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLES. THE WINE TASTED FINE AND IT WAS A 2002 VINTAGE. WHY DID THIS WINE HAVE SEDIMENT IN THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE?

Some winemakers who produce organic wines purposely do not stain or filter the vats in the first winemaking process. This way some of the stems and skins of the grape find their way into the bottles during the final step in the wine making process. The winemakers feel this gives the wine a better balance and natural taste.

If one feels uncomfortable to have such sediment in the glass or bottle of organic wines, I recommend you decant and filter the wine first. This way you will not offend anyone who doesn't understand the organic wine process.

QUESTION FROM A NON-MEMBER:

LES, WE REALLY ENJOY YOUR WINE NEWSLETTER. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WINE PRODUCED IN THE FINGER LAKE DISTRICT OF NEW YORK?

I like the wines produced in the Finger Lake District. Widmer Winery is the first wine producer that comes to my mind when one talks about the Finger Lakes. Widmer produces some outstanding Rieslings. Check out the Semi or Dry 2001 Riesling or the 2001 Cabernet Franc and their 2001 ice wines. Even the 2001 Widmer Chardonnay is excellent. The Finger Lakes have several different vineyards of interest. Nagy's, Caywood and Fox Run are just a few vineyards that produce some nice varietals. The red wines are not the best, but white wine varietals are always in demand-especially the ice wines and Rieslings.

CHÂTEAUNEUF du PAPE – THE OTHER WHITE WINE:

The vineyards of Châteauneuf du Pape, which cover about 13 square miles east of the Rhône between Avignon and Orange, are known for spicy, full-bodied red wines that seem made for grilled lamb and other meaty dishes. One out of thirteen vineyards in this region produce white châteauneufs, which derive muscle from the region's long, warm summers, balanced from the use of multiple grape varieties and pronounced mineral character from the famously stony soil.

For many years, the White Châteauneuf du Pape wines were snubbed by wine consumers, as the wines were light and not of good quality. Modern-day white Châteauneuf owes much of its quality to low temperature fermentation and to cellar practices that block secondary malolactic fermentation. This new process gives the wine a pale-to-medium straw color and vibrant aromas of yellow flowers overlaid with hints of resin, white pepper, apple and honey. On the palate, these wines are creamy, mineral-rich, and long. A useful alternative to Chardonnay. Here are some recommendations and tasting notes:

Clos Saint Michel, 2003

Aromas of pear and banana leading to resin with the bit of arugula, a hint of spearmint on the long creamy finish. *Retails for \$24.99*

La Crau De Ma Mère, 2001

A smoky, cheesy nose, like Roquefort; organic and spicy on the palate, with an old-white-wine character. *Retails for \$27.99*

Chateau Grand Veneur, 2002

Aromas of coconut overlaying honey and seaweed; rich and intense on the palate, combining creaminess and minerality; finishes dry, with intense white pepper. *Retails for \$37.99*

HOT WINES JUST RELEASED AVAILABLE NOW:

Check out these wines available now at your local wine merchant:

J. Lohr Riverstone/Arroyo Seco Chardonnay 2002

Big, full-bodied, lush and mellow with pineapple, baked apple, cinnamon and a creamy finish. Nice with roasted chicken. *Retails for \$8.99*

Liberty School, Central Coast Chardonnay 2003

Medium bodied and bright with ripe, crisp fruit flavors with green apple, peach melon, and figs. Hints of butterscotch and vanilla on the clean finish. Serve with scallops and sea bass. *Retails for \$8.99*

Benardus Monterey County Chardonnay 2002

Displays a seductive interplay of sleek oak tannins, silk, and tingly acidity plus flavors of apple pie, spearmint, crème brûlée and peach brioche. Nice with lighter dishes and lemon-cream sauces. *Retails for \$11.99*

Blackstone Napa Valley Chardonnay 2003

Viscous mouth-feel and moderate alcohol, with pineapple, peach, vanilla, and violet; light acidity on the finish. Serve with Teriyaki chicken. *Retails for \$12.99*

MERRYVALE VINEYARDS:

Merryvale Vineyards was founded in 1983 with a strong, clear vision: to capture the essence of the regions noble vineyards in rich, complex, supple wines that rival the best in the world. Nested in the heart of Napa Valley, Jack Schlatter and his family, along with winemaker Stephen Test, have been producing lovely varietals for several years. Their Starmont line is known for:

- Outstanding value for choice Napa Valley quality
- Aged exclusively in fine French oak barrels
- Highly rated wines with broad availability

Here are a few of my recommendations:

Merryvale, Starmont Sauvignon Blanc 2003

Bright, fresh and remarkably versatile, with aromas and flavors of peach, fresh hay, and melons. Oak-aging contributes to the wine's rich texture and long finish. *Retails for \$17.99*

Merryvale, Starmont Chardonnay 2002

Lively, focused aromas and flavors of apple, pear and vanilla are balanced by rich mouth feel and a long finish. *Retails for \$19.99*

Merryvale, Starmont Cabernet Sauvignon 2002

Complex and supple; aromas of concentrated blackberry and cassis echo on the palate showing the fruit's fine Napa Valley breeding and structure. *Retails for \$27.99*

Merryvale produces some fine wines from their Beckstoffer Vineyards and their reserves are spectacular. These wines are noted for:

- Meticulous vineyard selection, monitoring and aging in French oak barrels.
- Native yeast fermentation of Chardonnay and red wines.
- Wines of exceptional grace and dimension.

Here are a few of my recommendations:

Merryvale, Reserve Chardonnay Carneros 2002

Rich, round and seamless with distinct, opulent aromas and flavors. The finish is long and complex. *Retails for \$35.99*

Merryvale, Carneros Reserve Pinot Noir 2002

Deep strawberry and ripe plum flavors with light spice and a rich, silky texture. *Retails for \$45.99*

Merryvale, Beckstoffer Vineyard Las Amigas Vineyard Carneros 2001

Luxuriously deep and superbly balanced with pronounced dark berry fruit and dancing spices of vanilla, pepper, and chocolate. *Retails for \$69.99*

Merryvale, Beckstoffer Clone Six Rutherford 2001

A stunning wine of intense expression and opulent layers of dark, bright fruit and velvety tannins. Hard to find, worth the search. *Retails for \$79.99*

Merryvale, Profile 2001

Opulent, rich and elegant, this proprietary Bordeaux varietal blend is loaded with dark berry, vanilla and spice flavors, silky tannins and a luxuriously long finish. *Retails for \$52.99*

Merryvale Silhouette Chardonnay 2002

Luscious and honeyed, Burgundian in complexity, the apple and hazelnut aromas continue on the palate through a long and vibrant finish. *Retails for \$49.99*

ROMBAUER:

Rombauer Vineyard's mission is to produce the ultra-premium varietal wines of exceptional quality from California's premier grape growing areas, utilizing the finest fruit with the best equipment available.

Here are four highly recommended wines from Rombauer that can be stored in your cellar for years or can be consumed now.

Rombauer, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2001

Aromas of violets, black currant, cherry, chocolate and cloves. The wine is intense on the palate with supple tannins and toasty oak notes. While the wine drinks well now, aging will allow it to reach its full potential. *Retails for 38.99*

Rombauer, Napa Valley Merlot 2001

Deliciously rich and concentrated. Showing layers of black cherry, plum, clove, cinnamon in both the aroma and the flavor. The wine has a long finish with supple tannins. This Merlot will age to the year 2009. *Retails for \$31.99*

Rombauer, El Dorado Zinfandel 2001

Concentrated ripe blackberries, boysenberries, and ripe plums with light notes of cedar and cloves. This Zinfandel is well focused with good balance showing hints of sweet spice, pepper, and currants. This wine can be easily cellared for ten to twelve years or can be consumed today. *Retails for \$28.99*

Rombauer, Carneros Chardonnay 2003

Rich and luxurious wine filled with aromas of ripe apple, peach, nectarine, and mango. On the palate, round, crisp flavors of tropical fruit are perfectly balanced with rich vanilla from oak barrel aging. Opulent flavors follow through with an elegant finish of fruity, light oak nuances and buttery notes. *Retails for \$ 31.99*

HOT WINE DEAL OF THE MONTH:

Macon Lugny, Les Charmes Chardonnay 2002

This French Chardonnay shows lovely green apple, melon, grapefruit, and nectar flavors with a nice touch of French oak. *Retails for \$7.99*

HOT RED WINE DEALS OF THE MONTH:

Château Montelena, Napa Valley 2002

This is a plush fruit bomb with sweet jammy fruit showing good concentration, firm tannins, and a spicy character. Retails for \$29.99 (hurry, supply is limited)

Château Greysac, Medoc

The Bordeaux-lover delight displaying a deep ruby color and concentrated flavors of cassis and cherry fruit with oak nuances. Retails for \$14.99

CHAMPAGNE OF THE MONTH:

Taittinger, Cuvee Prestige Rose

A classic, aromatic Pinot fragrance of red raspberries and strawberries is offset by elegant, subtle floral, earth nuances. Retails for \$49.99

SPECIAL WINE OF THE MONTH:

If you want something unusual, then check out these wines from Chile:

Vina Haras, Cabernet Sauvignon 2001

Elegant, with rich fragrances of dried dark fruit, vanilla, smoked oak and mocha. *Retails for \$19.99*

Vina Haras, "Character" Chardonnay 2003

Burgundian in style, this graceful wine has ample fig, honeydew, peach and lemon flavors followed by graceful oak and a glaze of creamy butter. *Retails for \$15.99*

MERLOT FOR THE CELLAR:

Pinot Noir gained popularity over Merlot this past year, but in the past few months Merlot sales have been coming on strong the past few months. As I stated a few months ago, Pinot Noir is a very hard grape to grow and to find a good Pinot, one must pay the price. Merlot on the other hand, are always consistent, pricing is attractive to relatively expensive, and just about every winery produces a good quality Merlot.

Now without being too technical, here is some information about grape varietal.

Merlot is the most widely planted red grape in France's Bordeaux region, although it is eclipsed in stature by Cabernet Sauvignon, the grape with which it is routinely blended. In recent years, Merlot has enjoyed an explosion in popularity, especially in the United States, South America, Italy, and of course Australia. Since the early eighties, plantings of the Merlot grape has risen from 4000 acres to over 55,000 acres to date.

A thin-skinned variety, Merlot ripens earlier in the season, unlike Cabernet Sauvignon which is prone to a variety of ailments from rot and mildew. Merlot is more adaptable to cool climates than Cabernet Sauvignon, but similarly prefers a relatively warm growing environment.

Merlot popularity is softer, fruitier, and earlier-maturing than Cabernet Sauvignon, yet it displays many of the same aromas and flavors- black cherry, blackberries, currant, cedar, and green olive-along with mint, tobacco and tea-leaf tones. Although enjoyable as a varietal wine, it is probably most successful blended with Cabernet Sauvignon, which contributes the structure, depth and flavor, and ageing time Merlot lacks.

Here are a few recommendations to add to your cellar. These wines can be consumed today or they can age quite nicely for several years.

Beringer, Howell Mountain Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$79.99*
Geyser Peak, Napa Valley Reserve Merlot 2000 *Retails for \$40.99*
Merrryvale, Starmont Napa Valley Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$26.99*
Raymond, Estate Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$19.99*
St. Cemet, Napa Valley Merlot 2000 *Retails for \$27.99*
Stags Leap, Winery Napa Valley 2002 *Retails for \$33.99*
Etude, Napa Valley Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$54.99*
Stonestreet, Napa Valley 2002 Merlot *Retails for \$19.99*
Foxen, Santa Barbara 2001 Merlot *Retails for \$27.99*
Lava Cap, El Dorado Reserve Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$22.99*
L'Ecole 41 Winery, Merlot Walla Walla Washington State *Retails for \$33.99*
Lions Peak, Paso Robles 2000 Merlot *Retails for \$19.99*
Pride Mountain, Napa Valley 2001 *Retails for \$66.00 (Very Limited) Rated 94 by Robert Parker*
Pahlmeyer, Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$98.00 (Very Limited) Rated 96 by Robert Parker*
Plaisir Der Merle, Merlot South Africa 2000 *Retails for \$23.99*
Petrus, Pomerol 1999 *Retails for \$1124.99 Rated 98 by the Wine Spectator*
Neyers, Napa Valley 2000 Merlot *Retails for \$39.99*
Saddleback, Napa Valley 2001 Merlot *Retails for \$49.99*
Chalk Hill, Napa, Valley Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$54.99*
Ceago, Mendocino County Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$69.99*
Clos Du Bois, Alexander Valley 2001 Merlot *Retails for \$22.99*
Conn Creek, Napa Valley 2000 Merlot *Retails for \$29.99*
Cuvaision, Napa Valley Merlot 2000 *Retails for \$32.99*
Freemark, Abby Napa Valley 2000 Merlot *Retails for \$28.99*
Franciscan, Oakmont Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$23.99*
Joseph Phelps, Napa Valley Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$43.99*
O'Brien, Family Napa Valley Merlot 2001 *Retails for \$29.99*
Robert Mondavi, Reserve Carneros Merlot 2000 *Retails for \$40.99*

Chateau Ste. Michelle, Washington State Canoe Ridge Merlot 2001 or 2002 *Retails for \$27.99*

In the next issue, I will look at a few White Burgundies for your wine cellar.

OCTOBER FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROMOTIONS:

Woodford Single Barrel Bourbon Tasting with Korbel Champagne and Amarula Marula Cream Liqueur

We have TWO earth-shattering promotions in October. First, if you enjoy Bourbon, Champagne and good food then you don't want to miss our Woodford Reserve Single Barrel Bourbon/Champagne and Amarula Marula Cream Liqueur Tasting on Friday night, October 21st.

This is one of the "best valued events" we have ever had at this club. Here is what you can expect:

The event begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Old Main Bar with an Open Bar until 7:15 p.m. featuring any drink made with Woodford Reserve Single Barrel Bourbon. For the members and guests who prefer another liquid libation, there is a FREE Korbel Champagne Tasting. Chef Paul is going to have plenty of "down home" hot and cold appetizers for your enjoyment though out the evening.

At 7:30, there will be an enjoyable presentation by Chris Morris, Master Distiller from Woodford Distillery.

After the presentation, there will be a question and answer period. Then stroll out to the Center Lounge, and Chef Paul will be flambéing a special desert made with Amarula Marula. There will be plenty of Amarula Cream Liqueur for everyone to try, straight up or on the rocks.

Make it a night at the club! Guests are always welcome and dress is casual. Oh yes, the price is only \$25.95 per person! You do not want to miss this outstanding promotion. Make your reservations today!

****WENTE WINE MAKERS DINNER****

Many of the members have been asking for a wine makers dinner, and we have one that is going to shake the club. Christine Wente, daughter of Eric and Carolyn Wente, will be in Cincinnati for three days promoting her parents' business. The members of the club have supported the wines from Wente for several years, and Christine wants to visit the club and present her wines at a Wine Makers Dinner **Tuesday night, October 25th**. We will have an unforgettable sit-down wine dinner that you will don't to miss.

Last month, Bill Rohde stopped by the day we tasted the wines and Paul came designed a menu to fit the wines we sampled. I must say every one of the wines from the Wente portfolio were excellent.

Here is the menu for this affair:

Christine Wente Welcome Reception

Hors D'oeuvres Ala Chef Paul
Wente Sauvignon Blanc 2003

The Menu

First Course

Peccorino Romano Crisp Filled with a Wild Mushroom Duxelle, drizzled with a Chive Infused Organic Olive Oil

Wente Reserve Riva Ranch Reserve Chardonnay

Second Course

Baby Field Greens topped with crispy Duck Lardons, Dried Cherries, Candied Pecans and a light Porcini Oil Vinaigrette

Wente Reserve Pinot Noir 2002

Third Course

Slow-Roasted Veal Shank served with a duo of sauces including a Reserve Cabernet Veal Glace, Butternut Squash Puree, accompanied by Roasted Baby Beets and Fingerling Potatoes

Wente Reserve Cabernet Reserve 2002

Murrieta's Well Meritage 2001

Fourth Course

Spiced Pumpkin Mousse with a Twelve Apple Cider Reduction and a Dark Chocolate Tuille

Wente Vineyard Selection Riesling 2003

Reservations limited to thirty people

Price is \$64.95 per person

RSVP with Angi or Les

SPECIAL BONUS:

Every person attending the dinner will walk out with a nice gift from Wente Vineyards. Everyone in attendance will have a chance to win a golf package for two at the Greg Norman complex "The Course of Wente" located next to the Wente Vineyard in Livermore, California.

If you would like more information on Wente Vineyards or "The Course of Wente" just go to www.wentevineyards.com. As of 10/9/2005 we have sixteen members signed up for this dinner. We hope you will be able to attend this exciting event.

We hope you take advantage of these fine events. Until next time, hold your glass up high. "In water, one sees one's own face; yet in wine, one beholds the heart of another". James Royan.

Les Hemingway
Bar Manager