

Hyde Park Wine Experiences And Culinary Adventures

Many wine consumers say wines taste better in the winter months. Hearty wines do taste better in the cooler months, and in this issue, I will examine several different varietals that fit this mold. What is the hottest wine of late? I have the answer. Have you been stocking up wines for your home wine cellar? This is the month to look at some wines as the new releases from the wineries are now in the stores. Washington State offers some outstanding wines. Inside this issue, I will look at one of the most popular wineries in the State of Washington and suggest some wines that I know you will enjoy. I will also answer some member questions and hit on some affordable and quality wines for your home. The holidays are only a few weeks away. I have a few good websites that have some very interesting gift ideas.

First, before we begin I wanted to say a few words. I very much appreciate all of the nice comments that I have received this past year about the wine newsletter. Granted, it does take several weeks to gather all the information to print in this publication, yet I do like to research and come discover the details about wines that I feel you will enjoy.

Everyone has different experiences with wine. For example, some consumers like Merlot other snub the wine. This is what makes wine tasting an interesting subject. Most consumers are afraid to venture into another varietal. It could be cost, habit or just indecision. Trying new wines is an adventure, and I encourage you to begin to try new wines every month. Never stick with one varietal move on and explore the world of wine.

BREAKING NEWS:

Our Wente Wine Makers Dinner was a complete success! How do we top such a dinner? Well, we are planning another dinner that will be held sometime in May. Merryvale Vineyards will be the featured winery. We will begin the event with a nice Champagne reception and end it will a lovely French Champagne. The date has not been determined at this time as the event is still in the early stages of planning. I will keep you posted when more details are available.

A NEW HOT VARIETAL:

Malbec pronounce (Malbeck) is a traditional "Bordeaux varietal" used primarily as a blending wine for Cabernet Sauvignon, Claret Blends, Bordeaux, Red Table Wine and Meritage. It is now strongly becoming the latest hot wine for America consumers. Although Malbec is produced in California, France, Australia and Chile, the quality is flawed as the wines are considered to be immature and do not

have the plum and anise characteristics notes that make up this wine. Argentina on the other hand produces a better quality Malbec. Argentine Malbec seems to age very well and are more consumer friendly in price and in quality.

One can describe Malbec as a soft Merlot, yet Malbec is dark in ripe berry fruit, some light spice and mocha flavors with ripe plum, and anise. The wine appears dark and almost inky in color with soft tannins. Personally, I enjoy a nice glass of Malbec with some light style cheese strawberries, nuts and grapes.

Here are my suggestions for some good quality Malbec from Mendoza region from Argentina that you can try:

Altos, Mendoza 2003 Retails for \$9.99

Norton, Mendoza 2002 Retails for \$9.99

Bodegas, Mendoza 2003 Retails for \$17.99

Finca El Portilla, Mendoza 2002 Retails for \$9.99

Salentine, Mendoza 2002 Retails for \$17.99

Alta Vista, Mendoza 2002 Retails for \$9.99

Altos, Mendoza Riserva 2002 Retails for \$22.99 (cellaring wine)

QUESTIONS FROM SEVERAL MEMBERS REGARDING WINE PRICING:

- **LES, WE FEEL THE “WINE BY THE GLASS” PROGRAM IS GREAT AT THE CLUB. WINE PRICES BY THE GLASS ARE FAIR COMPARED TO OTHER DINING ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE LOCAL AREA. WE FEEL SOME RESTAURANTS AND EVEN SOME COUNTRY CLUBS, CHARGE WAY TOO MUCH FOR A GLASS OF WINE. WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT MAKE UP THE PRICING OF WINES BY THE GLASS?**
- **WHY DO RESTAURANTS CHARGE SO MUCH FOR A BOTTLE OF WINE?**

Wow. This is a loaded two-part question with several logical answers. Without getting too technical there are many factors which determine the price of a glass of wine. They are:

- **How many ounces are poured**
- **Glassware used**
- **Type of establishment**
- **Beverage cost**
- **Volume per day**
- **Rent or lease on the building**

- **Breakage, over-pouring and theft**

Every establishment must establish a beverage cost and profit margin they want on the bottom line. Here at the club, the board determines the beverage costs the bar needs to hit at the end of the year. Through diligent purchasing and controlling beverage cost, we are able to maintain valued pricing for our members. Most establishments pour five ounces of wine per glass. Therefore, for a bottle of wine the norm is 4.5 glasses out of a bottle. Here at the club we pour nearly six ounces of wine and only get four glasses to one bottle of wine. My feeling is the members should receive a nice fill of wine for their money spent.

Restaurants rely on only food and beverage sales to pay for labor, purchases, leases, insurance and other expenses. Therefore, they operate on a tight profit margin. Country Clubs have other sources of income; dues, initiations, fees and of course food and beverage. Although the food and beverage departments run separately from the operation of the club, we (the department managers) need to focus on maintaining good costs, yet provide the membership with quality product at controlled prices.

Waste and breakage is always a factor in the pricing of wine. For example, here at HPCC we have two bars operating most of the week plus two satellite bars. When there are events like wedding receptions or banquets, we may have as many as fifty or more bottles of wine opened on a per night basis. These wines need to be consumed by the events that evening, or they need to be consumed by the members on the ala cart side. One of my responsibilities is to make sure any wines left after the banquets are consumed in a timely matter. The longer the wines sit around the faster they will go bad. Before this happens, I usually send the wine back to the kitchen so the chefs can incorporate the wines in their sauces. These cost saving measures keeps our wine prices in line with the budget, and therefore keep the prices low compared to other clubs and area restaurants.

In all establishments, the volume of business determines the price of a glass of wine. Some establishments offer over twenty different wines by the glass. As you know, when one opens a bottle of wine it needs to be consumed in a matter of hours, not days. For example if Trio opens a bottle of Cakebread Chardonnay to be served by the glass and they only sell two glasses out of the bottle that night and they don't sell another glass, for two days, the next glass of wine that comes from that particular bottle of Cakebread is probably going to taste bad. If this scenario continues night after night, the prices that this establishment charges for wines by the glass will increase in time.

Of course, upper scale establishments such as Jean- Robert restaurant group, Boca, The Havana Martini Club, The Precinct, Carlo & Johnny's, Morton's, Tellers and most hotel and resorts, charge an arm and a leg for a glass of house wine. Some mark it up three or even four times. In this case, it would be in your best interest to purchase a bottle of wine and save some money. Yet, if one frequents these types of establishments, one can either pay the price, or decided to stick with ice water.

I feel there should be a variety of wines by the glass offered at the club, yet prices should always be fair, and the product should always be fresh. Sometimes we have a bad bottle of wine because it was opened too long or the bottle was just “corked.” We pour a good six-ounce portion here at the club in Riedel wine glasses one of the finest handcrafted wine glasses on the market today. We wash the Riedel glasses behind the bar, to make sure breakage is always kept to a minimum. The type and make of glassware also affects the price of a glass of wine.

Now, for the second part of the question, bottles of wine are usually marked up two and a half times the wholesale price. Most hotels, resorts and high end dining establishments may mark up a bottle of wine three to four times the wholesale price. This sounds like a rip-off and, oddly enough, it is. If the consumer wants a bottle of wine bad enough, chance are they will pay the price. Sadly, establishments like Carlo & Johnny’s and Boca sell tremendous amounts of wine by the bottle, as consumers are willing to spend money on wines that are marked up three or even four times the wholesale price. I just do not get it!

We currently offer over 45 different wines by the bottle, at two and one half times or less over the wholesale price. This is a deal, compared to other restaurants and clubs in the surrounding area. Every wine on our list is rated 86 points and above by many national wine publications.

If you want to entertain clients, guests or just friends, your club is the best place around for service, food and beverage price and atmosphere.

**QUESTION FROM A NON-MEMBER:
WE WERE OUT THE OTHER NIGHT AT A LOCAL
RESTAURANT AND HAD A BOTTLE OF MURPHY-GOODE
CHARDONNAY. I HAD THE WORST RASH THE NEXT
DAY ON MY ARMS AND LEGS. MY DOCTOR FRIEND
TOLD ME I MIGHT BE ALLERGIC TO CHARDONNAY AS
IT CONTAINS SULFITES. DOES THIS SOUND RIGHT?**

Most definitely! Chardonnays are loaded with sulfites. Many wine consumers are allergic to sulfites, and everyone can have a different reaction. You may want to stray away from Chardonnay and move to a White Burgundy, Pinot Grigio, or maybe a Pinot Blanc. These wines contain fewer sulfites and are great food wines.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER:

I LIKE TO PURCHASE WINES FROM LOCAL WINE MERCHANTS. WHEN YOU PURCHASE WINE RETAIL, WHERE DO YOU GO?

I like the Wine Merchant, as they have just about any wine that is produced, and if they do not have it in their store, they will always order it for you. Eric O'Bryan, our General Manager, told me about a new place at the corner of Plainville and Madison Road called the Wine Garage. I checked it out last month, and I must say it is a very interesting place with plenty of exciting wines in inventory. Check them out at www.winegarage.com.

QUESTION FROM A MEMBERS DAUGHTER'S:

LES, I LOVE YOUR NEWSLETTER. MY MOM SENDS IT TO ME AT SCHOOL AND I DO BUY SOME OF YOUR WINE SUGGESTIONS. I FOUND SOME OF THE WINES AT BETTER PRICES THAN YOU PUBLISH. DO THEY DIFFER FROM STATE TO STATE?

Yes, the prices that are quoted in my newsletter are Ohio retail prices. You may be able to purchase these wines from the winery or from other states at a discount compared to the controlled Ohio retail pricing.

TWO WINES FROM ARGENTINA:

I want to recommend two affordable wines from Argentina that will rock your world. That's is right, I found this one by accident, as Ted Marinakis our Food and Beverage Coordinator told me about **Salentine Cabernet Sauvignon 2002** produced in Mendoza. Wow. This is a Cabernet with plenty of structure, black cherry, cassis, ripe plum, and nice oak shadings. The tannins are firm and bounce on the long and soft finish. This is a fantastic dinner wine blends nicely with chops, steaks, blacked seafood, and veal. Check this wine out at your local wine merchant, as the retail price is only \$19.99 a bottle,

Salentine produces several tiers of product from their enhance portfolio. Finca, El Portillo is their lower tier. The product from this line is exceptional in quality and in price. **Finca El Portillo** has been our house Merlot for well over a year now and the quality of this Merlot is exceptional. Well-balanced with a solid structure, showing nice plum, dark cherry, strawberry and mocha flavors. The finish is silky smooth with nice bounce. **This wine retails for \$11.99 at your local wine merchant. The current vintage is 2002**

Looking for an inexpensive Sauvignon Blanc? Check out [Finca, El Portillo Sauvignon Blanc 2003](#). This Sauvignon Blanc is fresh with crisp lemon grass, light citrus flavors and hints of ripe melon. Retail for \$8.99.

CHATEAU STE MICHELLE:

The wines of Washington State are superior in consistency, quality and value. The climate and the soil are similar to that of California. There are several fine wineries in Washington State, yet Chateau Ste. Michelle is one of the oldest, most acclaimed family-owned wineries in the state.

Chateau Ste. Michelle became popular back in the early eighties when their stable label, Columbia Crest gained popularity in the restaurants. The Wine Spectator and the Wine Advocate praised the wines of Columbia Crest with several high scores, especially their production of serious Chardonnay and Merlot.

Bob Bertheau winemaker now oversees four designated vineyards of Chateau Ste. Michelle. Canoe Ridge, Cold Creek, Horse Heaven, and Indian Wells. In recent years, Chateau Ste. Michelle has purchase Villa Mt. Eden taking the wine out of the grocery stores and turning them into a winery that produces single vineyard wines. Bob Bertheau was recently in Napa making a speech recently and said that this business is very competitive, and every winery needs to find the perfect niche to produce and sell their wines to the consumer. The perfect niche is what Chateau Ste Michelle found when they converted the Villa Mt. Eden line from a grocery store production to Single Vineyard wines. Chateau Ste. Michelle purchased this winery back in 1982. The fruit is collected from their properties in Napa Valley, Monterey, and Paso Robles. Their Cabernet, Chardonnay, Merlot and Zinfandel are exceptional products and are priced from \$19.99 to \$41.99 retail.

Here are a few wine suggestions from the Chateau Ste. Michelle portfolio for your cellar:

[Chateau Ste. Michelle, Meritage Artists Series sold in three pack verticals 1997, 1998, 1999 \(Retail for \\$149.99\)](#)

[Chateau Ste. Michelle, Cold Creek, Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 if you can find it, or 2001 \(Retail for \\$29.99\)](#)

[Chateau Ste Michelle, Canoe Ridge, Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 \(Retail for \\$20.00\)](#)

[Chateau Ste Michelle, Reserve Syrah 2001 \(Retail for \\$31.99\)](#)

[Villa Mt. Eden, Grand Reserve Pinot Noir 2001 \(Retail for \\$24.99\)](#)

[Villa Mt. Eden, Tall Trees Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 \(Retail for \\$14.99\)](#)

CELEBRATION:

This is the season for Sparkling Wines and Champagne. Here are a few suggestions to celebrate the Holiday Season:

[Gruet Blanc de Noirs N.V. \(Retail for \\$14.99\)](#)

[Jean Vesselle Brut Millesime 1994 \(Retail for \\$39.99\)](#)

Laurent Perrie N.V. (Retails for \$39.99)
Schramsberg Blanc de Noirs (Retails for \$35.99)
Sjoeblom Chauvignon Crystal Napa Valley (Retails for \$27.99)
Mumm France Brut Rose (Retails for \$54.99)
Perrier Jouet Fleur (Retails for \$149.99)
Taittinger Brut La Francaise (Retails for \$48.99)
Domaine Ste. Michelle Washington State Blanc de Blanc (Retails for \$13.99)
Mumm Napa Valley Cuvee M (Retails for \$20.99)
Gloria Ferrer Brut Sonoma (Retails for \$19.99)
Louis Roederer Estate Brut (Retails for \$23.99)
Charles Heidsieck BR Flutes Retails for (\$49.99)
Piper Sonoma Brut (Retails for \$17.99)
Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label (\$65.99)
Moet & Chandon White Star (\$64.99)

PENFOLDS:

When wine consumers talk about Australian wines, one of the names, that pops up frequently is Penfolds Winery. This is one of the finest vineyards in Australia, and the wines that come from this winery get better every year. Last month, I had the opportunity to try some of their low-end to their elite end wines and all the wines were exceptional.

Penfolds is known for their Shiraz, yet over the last few years, they have started to blend some of their wines. When you visit your local wine shop, you may notice some of these wines from Penfolds:

Barossa Shiraz 2002. This is a Shiraz with some Italian flare retailing for \$80.99. Shiraz Mourvèdre Bin2, 2003 Mourvèdre is used primarily for blending purposes, yet this particular wine full of flavor, bold in structure and zinging tannins. It retails for \$14.99.

Penfolds produces an amazing Cabernet/Merlot 2001 blend that has a dark purple color with nice oak nuances, warm black cherry and plum flavors, which retails for \$19.99.

If you really want something spectacular, try the Penfolds Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, rated 93 by Robert Parker. This is a cellaring wine, yet it could be consumed on a moments notice with a good half-hour of decanting. This particular vintage retails for \$84.99. The 2001 Penfolds Cabernet Sauvignon 2002 vintage young yet very complex, retails for \$19.99.

I highly recommend all of the Penfold portfolio. If you would like more information on any of these wines, go to their website at www.penfolds.com.

NEWS - WINE TO GO:

Ohio state legislators are working on a bill called “Merlot to Go.” This legislation would allow a person operating a motor vehicle to transport an opened bottle of wine purchased from a restaurant.

Supporters of the bill point out that most wine consumers who purchase expensive bottles of wine with their meals feel they must finish the bottle before they leave the restaurant.

“Merlot to go” legislation is intended to curtail driving while intoxicated by not encouraging consumption of the total bottle of wine. This bill is pending in the Senate Agriculture Committee.

The State of Ohio Liquor Commission continues to support legislation in which a patron cannot bring a bottle of wine to a restaurant and have it served by that establishment. For example, one cannot bring a bottle of Chateau Margaux 1990 to any restaurant in Ohio and for a corkage fee have that bottle of wine served. This is a violation of Ohio beverage laws. If an establishment is reported to the Ohio Liquor Commission, that establishment will face a stiff fine for the violation, and they would most likely lose their liquor license if they repeat the violation.

WINES FOR YOUR CELLAR:

Cuvaision Estate Winery has always produced quality-handcrafted wines from Carneros and Napa Valley. Winemaker Steve Rogstad has been with the winery for over 15 years, and his wines are exceptional year after year. Here are a few of my recommendations to try now or to purchase for your cellar.

Cuvaision, Carneros Chardonnay 2002

A pretty wine with nice peach and pineapple favors. The wine is accented with vanilla, hints of butter and toast oak. Rated 91 by the Wine Enthusiast August 2004 issue. *Retails for \$24.99*

Cuvaision, Estate Selection Napa Valley-Carneros Chardonnay 2004

This is a rich creamy style Chardonnay with lots of buttery oak, fig, pear, vanilla cream and nice French oak. Rated 92 by the Wine Spectator September 2004 issue. *Retails for \$49.99*

Cuvaision, Carneros Pinot Noir 2002

Bright cherry aroma with hints of strawberry and plum. Sharply focused, offering depth and richness. The wine needs another year to settle down but should be a classic. Rated Exceptional by Dan Berger’s Vintage Experiences March 2004. *Retails for \$25.99*

Cuvaision, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 1999

This was an exceptional vintage for this winery. This Cabernet is powerful and dramatic, packed with polished flavors of black currants, cassis, sweet roasted pepper and dried herbs. The tannins are big and well-structured and the finish is long and deep. This wine needs to lie down for one more year. Rated 90 by the Wine Enthusiast August 2003. *Retails for 35.99*

CHEESE AND WINE:

Recently I received numerous comments from members regarding cheese and wines. It is important to serve the proper cheese at a cocktail party or before dinner. Harsh or spicy cheese can overpower a wine thus changing the taste of white wines.

Here are a few cheeses that you can serve during a cocktail reception. I paired them with some wines to help you get a better feel when planning a party at home. I have also listed telephone numbers just in case you wish to find a source where you can purchase these cheeses locally:

Jasper Hill Farm/Vermont Bayley Hazen and Barlett Blue Cheese
Slightly smoky with a moist fruity taste. Great with Porto.

Cabrales from Spain 1 207 828 2000
This is a combination for sheep, goat and cow milk with an intense blue flavor overlaid with cashews and pepper. This cheese works well with Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot.

Willow Hill Farm/ Vermont Mt. Tomme 1 773 779 5055
This cow and goats milk cheese has a sweet acidity reminiscent of Golden Delicious apples. Serve with Beaujolais, or a fruity red Zinfandel.

Carr Valley Cheese Company Wisconsin Benedictine Phone number 1 608 986 2781
Off-white and creamy paste with walnut-like richness and an eggy, custard-like flavor. Serve with Champagne.

Carr Valley Cheese Company/Wisconsin Mobay Phone number 1 207 828 2000
This cheese brings a nutty quality with good balance and richness. You can also detect a hint of black pepper with earthy flavors. This cheese works well with a good Sauvignon Blanc, buttery Chardonnay or a crisp Graves.

HOLIDAY GIFT WEBSITES:

Trying to find the right present for someone is a major undertaking. Going to the malls this time of the year is a pain in the you know what. Then when you do find something, there is the line. Calling a store and asking a question about an item could take minutes as they usually put you on hold. Tired all this hassle? Check out these websites and make a purchase by the click of a button.

Here is a site that has everything from candy to dresses. Wines are not available on this site, but if you want to send candy or cakes, this is the site you need to check out; www.vermontcountrystore.com Highly recommended for nice gifts.

Buying wine is very easy to do now as the State of Ohio has made it easy to direct by from the winery. You can purchase almost any wine on line from west coast wineries. Here are a few recommendations:

www.clospegase.com

www.cakebread.com

www.beringer.com

www.orgonpinotnoir.com Pinot Noir Wine Club. What a great gift!

www.concannonvineyard.com

www.sherry-lehmann.com recommended by Joe Murray. You can purchase just about any wine from around the world, gift packaged and delivered right to your door.

www.pjwine.com This is just another wine merchant in New York that carries about any wine and low-proof liquor imaginable.

www.wineenthusist.com You can find Holiday gifts galore on this site. They have some of the finest wine racks, wine openers, wine glasses, plates, table settings, linens, and much more.

www.winecountrygiftbaskets.com has everything from gourmet food, wine, chocolates, and candles packed in nice wicker baskets to fit anyone's budget.

UPCOMING BEVERAGE EVENTS:

Back by popular demand for the month of January are the Guest Bartender Nights featuring the Diz and Carole Brown and Family on Friday, January 6th. All the action begins at 7:00 p.m. in the Old Main Bar.

Then, on Friday, January 27th join Bill and Joan Rohde plus most of the Rohde family as they take center stage behind the Old Main Bar. Last year the Rohde family won top sales honors and this year the Browns want revenge. These two evenings should be a riot behind and in front of the bar. If you want to dine on either of these nights, please make sure you make reservations ahead of time. Last year, the dining rooms were booked solid.

CELLAR WINE TASTING:

Friday, January 20th we will be having our annual Cellar Wine Tasting as we select some of the finer wines in the club wine cellar for your enjoyment. The price is only *\$19.95 per person*, which includes light appetizers. We will be tasting some nice red and white wines along with some sparkling wines. The tasting begins at 7:00 p.m. in the Terrace Room. Guests are welcome and the dress is county club casual.

MERRYVALE WINE MAKERS DINNER:

We are now in the early planning stages of setting up another grand Wine Makers Dinner. Our Wente Wine Makers Dinner was a very successful event with great wines and excellent food.

Here is what I do know about our next dinner. The wines will be from Merryvale Winery and the date will be on a Tuesday or Wednesday during the month of May. Some of the wines have already been selected for this event. We will feature a gala Champagne reception and one of the family members of the Merryvale Winery will be the guest of honor. Many of the details are still a little vague, but when I sort this thing out, I will inform everyone.

If you have a question, comments or would like to add someone's name to the wine email list newsletter, just send me an email and I will get back to you in a timely manner.

May the holidays delight you, embrace you in warmth, and fill your wine glass with good health for the New Year.

Les Hemingway

Some information in this publication came from the publications listed below:

**The Wine Spectator
The Wine Enthusiast
The Ohio Tavern News
Wine and Spirits
Market Watch
Wine Status
The Wine Advocate
Santé
Cheers
The Beverage Newsletter**