

Hyde Park Wine Experiences And Culinary Adventures

The dead of winter... cold north winds are howling, and a good bottle of wine is just what the doctor ordered. In this issue, I will recommend good, hearty wines to drink now and some that you may want to add to your cellar for a rainy day. Lately, I have been receiving many emails in regards to nice Spanish wines. I just happen to have a few recommendations that are readily available at your local wine merchant. Lodi wines are becoming very popular especially with the novice wine customer. We will look at a few nice selections that you should try to find.

I have received a few comments regarding the length of the wine newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to better inform the novice and educated wine consumer about wines that are readily available at your local wine merchant and to keep you up to date on trends, ideas, and legislation which effects all of us when it comes to purchasing wines. I have made a decision to cut back on the number of pages in the wine newsletter beginning this month. Normally, I write eleven or twelve pages every issue and now I will try to give you the reader, more information in about eight to nine pages. Cutting back on material will give you the reader more time to focus on the wines and articles you find interesting.

IN THE CELLAR:

Buying wines for your cellar can be a painstaking adventure. One always wants to have some very special wines in the wine cellar such as the wines that are rare gems and need to be stored for a few years. Beringer Private Reserve, Far Niente, Heitz Martha Vineyard, Stags Leap, and Silver Oak are some selected names of the most popular vineyard wines that individuals like to store in their cellars and open for a special occasion. The initial investment in these impressive labels can be expensive; however, the quality that these wines delivers, will be a pleasant memory to the one who enjoys the grape.

The trick is getting the proper vintages – the vintages that are rated in the high nineties by many popular wine magazines. Allocated vintages like the 1997 or 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon are very hard to find yet they still can be purchased directly from the wineries.

I do know for a fact that the 1997 and 1999 Beringer Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon can now be purchased directly from the winery at certain times of the year. Here are a few web sites you can log onto to receive more information these cellaring wines.

www.beringer.com Phone Number 1 707 967 4412
www.stagsleap.com Phone Number 1 800 640 5327
www.silveroak.com Phone Number 1 800 273 8809
www.farniente.com Phone Number 1 707 944 2861

www.heitzcellars.com Phone Number 1 707 963 7454

WINE CLUBS - LOVE THEM OR LEAVE THEM:

Have you ever thought about joining a wine club? I highly recommend trying one out to further your wine education. You receive many benefits when joining such a club. Often time's clubs offer free newsletters, a percentage off merchandise, wine tours, discounts, and even wine purchasing discounts.

Membership fees vary from club to club. Average memberships begin around \$15.99 per month and may go as high as \$140.00 a month. Every wine club gives you the option to have wines shipped to your home. If you accept this benefit, you will then receive a bottle or two of wines each month. Here are some wine club web sites that I recommend.

www.globalwineclub.com
www.amazingwineclub.com
www.wine.com
www.californiawineclub.com
www.bonnydoon.com

Wine merchants also are getting into the act. K&L Wine Merchants offers a wide variety of memberships which includes free shipping of wines to your door. You can visit them at www.k&lwinemerchants.com

If you really want to concentrate on one winery or maybe a corporation like Diageo, Constellation Group or Wolf Blass, then the best option is to go to their web sites and join one of their wine memberships. For example, Beringer produces a wide portfolio of excellent wines. Wolf Blass of Australia-the parent company of Beringer, offers excellent deals on wine memberships.

ALERT:

Before joining any wine group check out all the safeguards first:

- **Check each group carefully by calling the Better Business Bureau before joining.**
- **Does the group include free shipping of wine that is included in your membership dues?**
- **Can you drop your membership at any time?**
- **Find out what benefits are available to you as a member.**
- **Always try to find a wine clubs that has been around for a while and has a good reputation.**

SPANISH WINES:

Spanish wines have become very popular in recent years. Price, quality, availability, and consistency are big selling points for these wines. Here are a few good recommendations that are available at your local wine merchant:

Naveran Crianza, Cabernet Sauvignon 2003 Retails for \$9.99
Naveran Manuela, Chardonnay 2003 Retails for \$9.99
Torres Gran Vina Sol, Chardonnay Retails for \$15.99
Berberana, Dragon Tempranillo Retails for \$10.99
Ramon Bilbao, Tempranillo Rioja Retails for \$11.99
La Rioja, Alta Vina Alberdi Reserva 1999 Retails for \$17.99
Marques de Murieta, Gran Reserva 1999 Retails for \$54.99
Castillo de Monseran, Grenache 2002 Retails for \$8.99 (Best Buy WS)
Augustus, Chardonnay 2002 Retails for \$29.99
Ichanka Torrontes, 2004 Retails for \$7.99
Yesa, Garnacha 2003 Retails for \$6.99

LODI WINES:

Lodi is located about thirty miles south of Sacramento in California's Central Valley. Unlike the rest of the hot Central Valley Delta region, Lodi receives cool ocean breezes from the San Francisco bay. The nights are cool as well, and the mornings are often foggy until late morning. This provides perfect growing conditions for the grapes to ripen to maturity.

Lodi is known for fantastic Zinfandels, usually high in alcohol content, yet the juice are dominated by nice spice and inky grape texture. Chardonnay is also on the recommended list from Lodi. *I recommend the Borra 2003 Chardonnay. This is a nice elegant wine with nice ripe apple, peach, and Melba toast flavors. This Chardonnay is nicely oaked and very creamy. It retails for around \$16.99 a bottle.*

I also recommend the Earthquake Petite Sirah 2003 an excellent full-bodied red wine with deep rich fruit and gentle spices of pepper cinnamon and mocha. If you like a blend, try the Borra Fusion 2003. The wine is primary of Zinfandel blend with a little Syrah, Cabernet and Merlot. Good ripe dark fruit with layers of jam and spice. Very nice and the price is only \$15.99

Lodi wines are very food friendly, easy to drink and consumer valued.

THE MANY STYLES OF FORTIFIED WINES:

“Sailor or not, a stormy evening seems far friendlier with your hands wrapped around a glass of rich Port.

What is a fortified wine? This is simply a wine to which additional alcohol has been added, most commonly in the form of brandy (a spirit distilled from

wine.) The reason for fortification is to preserve the wines, as the higher alcohol level and additional sweetness helps preserve the wine. Fortified wines can be Port, Madeira, Sherry, Vermouth, and even Marsala. Fortified wines are legally called “dessert wines” in the United States, yet are called liqueur wine in Europe.

Ports spend longer time in a barrel, and there are several different styles. Ruby, Tawny, White Ruby, Vintage Port, Late Bottled Port, Single Quinta Port, and domestic port all have quite different personalities. I find the best Ports are the ones produced in Portugal. Here are a few examples and retail prices:

Taylor Flatgate, 40 Year Old \$148.99
Fonseca, Bin 27 \$19.99
Sandeman, Founders Reserve \$19.99
Fonseca, 20 Year Old \$52.99
Sandeman, Tawny \$14.99
Sandeman, 1997 Vau Vintage Port \$67.99
Dow's, Fine Ruby \$14.99
Dow's, White Tawny \$14.99

QUESTION FROM A NON-MEMBER ON THE WEST COAST:

Les, I enjoy your email wine newsletter. One of your members is a good customer of mine and he emails your newsletter to my office every other month. There is plenty of information to digest, but it is all very educational and I do purchase many of your recommendations. Now to the question at hand, my wife loves to entertain and we have many cocktail parties at home. Included in the past few newsletters you have been pairing wines with cheese. Is there a really good book that you recommend that can educate my wife on finding good cheese from around the world and pairing them with different wines?

Dobbs, thank you for your wonderful comments. Your wife is in luck. I recommend the following two books:

Max McCalman's *Cheese, Connoisseur's Guide to the Best*. This book retails for about \$35.95, and is available at many national bookstores and online. It is much like a reference book of sorts, listing hundreds of different cheeses from around the world, and wines that would pair nicely with them.

Another good book is by Laura Werlin *All American Cheese and Wine Pairings*. This book also sells for around \$35.95, and is available online or at any national bookstore chain. This is an in-depth book pairing international wines with international cheeses.

QUESTION FROM A NON-MEMBER:

Great Newsletter, we really enjoy reading every page. I wish our club would have would take more interest in their wine program as they do at your club. We live just north of Columbus Ohio and have a hard time finding good wines. Last month I begun calling wineries in California they are directly shipping wines to my home. Am I really getting a better deal or am I paying more?

Purchasing wines directly from wineries can be a good deal on hard to find vintages or wines that normally are never shipped out of state. These could be the wine maker's wines special barrel wines or even back vintages of reserve wines.

Looking deeper into the equation, the winery will always charge the required Ohio Sales Tax plus "the old gotcha shipping and handling charges." Then there is the insurance on the package. The bottom line: it may cost you more to ship the wine from an out of state winery than it would if you purchased the wine locally. Really, it all depends on what you want. If you want to purchase wines, you can fine here in town it may cost more to have them shipped to your home. If the wines are no longer available then it may be worth the money to have them shipped.

Some wineries offer "free shipping" with a case purchase. Free shipping always sounds great, but in reality, the shipping charge is quietly included in the case price of the wine.

To sum it up, you may be paying more by purchasing the wines out of state, and you are most likely able to purchase hard to find vintages, and special produced labels that are very allocated. Always research before you purchase.

WINERY OF THE MONTH:

Lava Cap from El Dorado is a hot selling wine in the tri-state. Here at the club, we order a case or two of Lava Cap Chardonnay every week. What makes this Chardonnay a crowd pleaser? **Lava Cap, Reserve Chardonnay 2002** is French in style and character. One can find golden pear, fresh green apple and melon fruit flavors, yet the wine sees fourteen months of French oak barrel aging creating creamy, buttery flavors. For the price, this is a quality wine for the consumer who prefers a good complex Chardonnay for cocktails or for dinner.

For the person who prefers a nice big Cabernet, **Lava Cap produces a Reserve 2002 Cabernet** that is big in style with complex tannins on the long and sensual finish. The wine shows dark black cherry fruit, with licorice, mint, and cassis flavors.

If you prefer Merlot, then try the **Lava Cap Reserve Merlot 2002**. This is a blockbuster Merlot, and always works well with most types of menus. Big ripe strawberry, blackberry, plum and sweet cherries with a glaze of mocha, vanilla,

and spice linger on the soft silky finish. This is just an incredible Merlot and highly recommended.

The Lava Cap Reserve 2002 Chardonnay retails for \$19.99. The Lava Cap Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 retails for \$23.95 and the Lava Cap Reserve Merlot 2002 retails for \$22.95

WINE BUY OF THE MONTH:

If you like a smooth Cabernet with some body, then I would recommend Root:1 Maipo Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. This superb Chilean Cabernet is supplied with black currant, ripe cherries, plum and mineral notes. This Cabernet finishes smooth with nice spicy flavors.

Root:1 comes in a stellar package with individually painted labels that hint of an expensive bottle of wine, yet in reality the cost to you *is only \$13.99.*

YELLOW FLAG – CORRECTION:

Our member, Mrs. Murray, was quick to point out that the Wine Garage has changed their name and so has the web site address web. The new name is The Cincinnati Wine Warehouse is located at 6611 Madison Road. The web site is www.cinciwine.com. Since my last newsletter, the proprietor Jens Rosenkrantz Jr. sent over a nice email thanking me for the plug. If you have a chance, stop by and check out this local wine connection.

WINES TO BUY NOW:

Get out your pen and paper and jot down these wines for future reference before they disappear off the shelves:

Shafer, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2002 \$55.99
Silverado, Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 \$34.99
Martin Ray, Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Cruz Mountains 2001 \$29.99
Kenwood, Artist Series Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 \$69.99
Freemark, Abby Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 \$31.99
Callaway, Chenin Blanc 2004 California \$9.99
Blackstone, California Sauvignon Blanc 2003 \$9.99
Duckhorn, Napa Valley Fumé Blanc 2004 \$23.99
Sterling, Central Coast Chardonnay 2003 12.99
Rombauer, El Dorado Chardonnay 2002 \$27.99
Sanford, Santa Barbara County 2002 \$17.99
Panther Creek, Reserve Pinot Noir 2002 \$34.99

CINCINNATI WINE FESTIVAL:

This is one of the largest wine events in the Midwest as the money raised goes to local charities. The 2006 Cincinnati Wine Festival kicks off with a Charity Auction and Dinner, Saturday February 25th at the Hyatt Regency. Tickets are \$200.00 per person.

The Grand Tasting will be held at the Cinergy Center on Friday March 24th and Saturday March 25th. You can find out more information about the Cincinnati Wine Festival by going to www.winefestival.com.

BAR PROMOTIONS AT THE CLUB:

Put this next bar promotion on your calendar. Monday, April 3rd the club will be open at 8:00 p.m. for the Men's NCAA Basketball Championship. Many surprises are in store for the members and guests who attend this special Monday night opening. The price is only \$18.95 per person and this is what you will receive.

- A gala food court with Hyde Park Chilidogs, Chef Paul's Subs, Pizza, Chips and Dip, Nachos, Potato Skins, and much more.
- You can view the game as we have several TVs set up in the Ross and Club Room.
- Shoot baskets in the Ballroom
- Prizes
- Fully stocked bar with discounted Draught Beer.

Bring your spouses, friends and clients for a night of sporting entertainment at your club. Please reserve your table by calling Jenny at 871 3111

GUEST BARTENDERS NIGHT CONTINUES:

Get ready for The Steamers bowling team who will be trying to break all kind of records behind the bar on Friday night February 24th. I was informed by bowler John Ruppert that the Steamer night will be the wildest event that we ever had for this event. I hope that they will not be leaning on the bottle too hard. Come on out and support your favorite Steamer. These member bartending events continue to draw big crowds and they are always entertaining.

If you really want to lodge a formal complaint then join us as the Board of Directors will be behind the bar on Friday night April 7th. Not only is the Board going to bartend they are going to be serving food. This should be very

interesting. If you plan to stay for dinner please make your reservation ahead of time as the dining rooms will be very busy for both events.

WINE LETTER EMAIL LIST:

This newsletter is really getting around as I had an email from Sidney Austrillia last month. If you have friends, relatives, clients that want to be added to our wine email or you plan to change your email address just drop me an email at les@hydeparkcc.com and consider it accomplished. Remember your email address will always be kept confidential.

ONE LAST ITEM:

Our new wine list will debut in February 15th. The last few months I have been overhauling our wine list adding new and exciting wines to the list. Many of the members want more Bordeaux and French Burgundies, and higher end red wines on the list. Two months ago, we purchased several high-end first growths Bordeaux, some from as far back as 1996. I have also purchased some small boutique wines that have exceptional quality. We now have plenty of soft supple leather wine books. The servers have been instructed to present the wine menu along with the dinner menu at the table for your enjoyment.

Thank you, stay warm, and drink wisely.

Les Hemingway
Bar Manager

Some of the researched information to put this newsletter together may have come from the following publications.

The Wine Enthusiast
The Wine Spectator
The Wine Advocate
Cheers
Santé
Market Watch
Bartender
Ohio Beverage Journal
Food and Arts
The California Wine Journal