

## *Hyde Park Wine Experiences And Culinary Adventures*

I have been on a few adventures since my last newsletter. In early March, I attended the annual Beverage Trade Show and Convention in Las Vegas, where I had the pleasure to taste some of the latest vintages from all over the world. The Las Vegas Beverage Show is the largest in the country, with over 10,000 owners, managers, and employees attending every year. The Southern Group, the largest wine distributor in the United States, hosted a kick-off wine tasting at the Las Vegas Hilton for the restaurant trade show. Outstanding wines were featured and I was able to network with many of the wineries' owners.

While at the show in Las Vegas, I attended several seminars pertaining to wines. One seminar focused on wine and food pairings. Another concentrated on the sale and marketing of wines while another discussed the creation of wine lists and tasting promotions. Over seven hours of educational wine courses were offered and I have many new ideas to implement here at Hyde Park Country Club. Of course, wines were only a small portion of the entire program. Anything and everything that involves food and beverage sales in the club business were featured at this show, including spirits, beer, non-alcoholic beverages, point of sale software, and commercial food items.

In late March I went to the Cincinnati Wine Festival Trade Tasting. The movie *Sideways* really influenced the marketing of pinot noir. However, the latest wine trend is red Blends or meritage varietals, which I have already purchased for Hyde Park's wine list.

Now that summer is finally here, lighter wines are in demand. We will focus on some nice, easy to drink varietals and some nice sparklers. Gin is making a comeback in the beverage world. Finally, I will point you in the direction of some inexpensive wines to use for home entertaining as well as two remarkable cellaring wines.

### FIRST ON THE LIST:

If you like to drink wines that are fun, soft, not over the top, fruit driven, easy to drink, and affordably priced, then I have a good suggestion.

Jewel Collection Winery, located in Lodi, has been known to produce pleasant wines that meet consumers' demands. Most of the wines they produce are "line priced," meaning the wines are priced the same at retail. Here are some personal recommendations for you to try at home:

Jewel, Un-Oaked Chardonnay 2005 \$9.99

Jewel, Viognier 2005 \$9.99

Jewel, Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 \$9.99  
Jewel, Firma (Red Table Wine) 2004 \$9.99  
Jewel, Petite Sirah 2004 \$9.99

Having friends over and need a nice red and white wine? No problem! I have a few recommendations that are very nice.

**Villa Mt. Eden Napa Cabernet Sauvignon 2004**

*Big and full-bodied with dark ripe fruit and lively tannins. Retails for \$14.99*

**Veramonte Maipo Valley Chile 2005**

*Layers of strawberry, black cherry and plum fruit with nice spicy flavors and a dash of oak on the long finish. Retails for \$11.99*

**Tomaresca Puglia Italy Chardonnay 2005**

*Gleaming butterscotch, green apple and pear flavors show nicely with toasted oak and a creamy finish. Retails for \$11.99*

**Caposaldo Veneto Italy Pinot Grigio 2005**

*Ripe apples and peach flavors that finish nice and clean. Retails for \$7.99*

## **RED WINE OF THE MONTH:**

When I was at the Wine Festival in March, I tasted a truly tremendous TITUS Cabernet Sauvignon that had some influence, firm tannins, and dark lush fruit. The Cabernet Sauvignon was recently rated 90 points by *Robert Parkers Wine Advocate*. I had never tried the TITUS wines before, and I was very impressed.

**TITUS, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 Retails for \$39.99**

The blend is 80% Cabernet, 10% Petit Verdot, 8% Merlot and 2% Malbec that sees twenty months in American Oak barrels. The production on the 2004 vintage is only 2868 cases. Here are the tasting notes on this wine:

“On the nose, complex aromas are showing-stopping, concentrated cherry and dark berry fruits are accompanied by subtle nuances of toasted oak and candied spice notes. This is a generous Cabernet, with a core dark cherry and blackberry fruit. Hints of coffee, chocolate, and subdued molasses through the long finish...”

*Robert Parkers Wine Advocate*

## **WHITE WINE OF THE MONTH:**

The Chalk Hill 2004 Chardonnay is over the top. This too is a splendid wine, aged fourteen months in French Oak. This chardonnay exhibits intense aromas of Asian pear, green apple and toasted hazelnut. Rich in elegance with creamy crisp flavors of lemon pie and exotic spices on the long sensual finish. *Retails for \$49.99*

## **THE WINE GLASS MAKES THE DIFFERENCE:**

Short story. A friend of mine invited me to a house party a few weeks ago. He and his wife just purchased a new home in Blue Ash and invited some friends over to celebrate. I rarely ever go to parties, but this event was on a Monday and he is a good friend so I could not pass it up.

Marty greeted me at the door and I must say he had a very lovely home. The table was set with some very nice base plates and silverware. The first thing I noticed was the wine glasses. Marty said, "I wanted to purchase some nice wine glasses. What do you think?" Using my candid wit, I said "Did you buy them at Big Lots?" "Man you're good, how did you guess? Only paid \$2.50 a stem." I carefully said, "Yes, it sounds like you got a good deal pal."

Dinner was great and the wines were very nice. **Merryvale Chardonnay 2004 and Beringer Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2002**, one of my favorite red wines. I did not have the heart to inform Marty that the wines would have tasted much better if they were served in Riedel or a hand blown wine glass. The glasses Marty had were the same wine glass we used here at the club many years ago. Matter of fact, the Boathouse on Eastern Avenue here in town uses the same exact glass. As I always point out, the thinner the glass the better the wine taste. That is a fact that any wine expert will stress repeatedly.

Here at the club we do sell Riedel wine glasses to the membership at full retail. If you are ever in the market to purchase wine glasses for your home, please give me a call and we can look over the Riedel glass catalog and select the glassware you prefer. Avoid Big Lots if possible.

## EASY TO DRINK WINES FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS:

Many wine consumers around the summer months are looking for something that is not too buttery, dry, heavy in tannin, or over the top...something that one can drink on the patio or at the pool. Here are a few nicely priced, quality recommendations.

### **Mezza Corona, Pinot Grigio Italy 2005**

Dry and elegant with nice soft green apple and citrus flavors. Excellent with white meats and fish. *Retails for \$9.99*

### **Banfi, Le Rime Chardonnay/Pinto Grigio Italy 2005**

Fresh and aromatic with nice fruity flavors. A crisp white wine that is perfect as an aperitif or with seafood, poultry or veal. *Retails for \$10.99*

### **Voga, Pinot Grigio Italy 2005**

Medium-bodied and rich with fresh ripe apple, peach, and pear aromas. *Retails for \$10.99*

### **Clos du Bos, Riesling California 2005**

Medium-bodied and slightly sweet with aromas of fresh peaches, and ripe apples. Try this wine with some spicy Asian fare. *Retails for \$12.99*

### **Da Vinci, Chianti Italy 2004**

Fruity with juicy berry and mineral aromas. Pairs perfectly with Romano Pecorino cheese and Italian meats. *Retails for \$13.99*

### **Monte Antico, Red Wine Italy 2004**

Fresh and fruity with nice sweet plum, dried cherries, and hints of mocha. The finish is clean and firm. Bring on the pasta! *Retails for \$11.99*

## SPARKLING WINES WITH BUBBLES:

One thing that really ruffles my feathers is when one purchases a bottle of sparkling wine and the bubbles die just after the bottle is opened. It happens more frequently now than before.

Here are a few nice sparklers that I recommend for the summer that will hold the bubbles long after you open the bottle. N/V = Non Vintage

**Vetoraz, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Brut Italy N/V Retails for \$11.99**

**Rionado Veneto, Frizzante Prosecco Italy N/V Retails for \$8.99**

**Cristalio, Brut Spain N/V Retails for \$7.99**

**Gramona, Brut Gran Reserva "Imperial" Spain Retails for \$24.99**

**Domain Chandon, "Riche" California N/V Retails for \$15.99**

**Gruet, Brut New Mexico N/V Retails for \$13.99**

**Iron Horse, Brut Sonoma California "Classic Vintage" Retails for \$19.99**

**Laetitia, Brut Cuveé Arroyo Grande Valley N/V California Retails for \$18.00**

**Gloria Ferrer, Blanc de Noir N/V Sonoma Retails for \$19.99**

**Mumm Cuveé, Napa Prestige California N/V Retails for \$18.99**

**Charles de Frere, Rosé Dry France N/V Retails for \$9.99**

## GIN, THE GAME IS ON:

Gin, a one time hot spirit in the beverage business, has fallen out of favor in recent years. Single barrel bourbons, single malt scotch, rum and vodka have become the trend setters in recent years. Vodka, the hottest spirit, is growing at a record setting pace across the United States. The flavor sensation is on as vodka and rum are gearing up the season with new flavors being introduced.

Gin has taken the back seat over the last ten years... but is a comeback on the horizon? Gin distillers have stepped up to the plate infusing flavors in their products. In recent months gin distilleries have produced blueberry, plum, apple, lime twist, lemon, and even grapefruit flavored gins that are now arriving in your favorite stores and bars. Gin has gone another step further to compete with vodka by producing several gins that are triple and six times distilled to capture the clean smoothness of the product. Point of sale is becoming another popular marketing tool used by gin distilleries. Last week I saw a bottle of gin at the liquor store that included two glasses and a small bottle of flavored cherries.

A prime example of a gin with added flavor is Aviation Gin a Dutch style product, which shows a flavor profile of citrus and herbal notes bound by juniper and hints of cardamom, anise, coriander, lavender and sweet orange peel. This dry gin is being introduced in Oregon, Washington State, and California this month and is expected to be widely available in all states by the end of the year.

Another example is G'Vine, a gin-based spirit distilled from grapes and flavored with green grape vine flowers. This gin has a delicate floral bouquet, the result of the maceration of grape flowers with a hint of ginger root and green cardamom.

Can gin make a comeback and entice new consumers to try new products? No one can be certain, but major distilleries are banking on new innovations and marketing ideas to leverage on this ever changing industry.

## **CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRIES ARE IN:**

There is nothing better than a ripe, sweet, strawberry with a glass of wine or a little bubbly. Strawberries can garnish the bottom of a champagne glass or be dipped in melted milk or dark chocolate and served with a fruit forward red wine. Strawberries are an enjoyable complement with wine, so take advantage of California strawberries before the season is over.

## **THE HYDE PARK WINE CLUB:**

We continue to receive great feedback and have a few members signed up for this exclusive club. I would like to have our first meeting in late June to schedule wine tastings and dinners for the first six months. The sticking point that has many members perplexed has to do with conflicting dates and schedules. I know everyone wants to take full advantage of every planned event, and I think if we can set up master calendar in advance it will eliminate an attendance/scheduling problem.

All the members of the club that are interested and haven't joined the Wine Club and want additional information please call me here at the club 871-3111, extension #16, or call me on my cell phone at 678- 2170. We can talk by phone or I can send you all the information about this new and exciting idea.

Thank you and have a great summer!

Les Hemingway

Some of the information in this newsletter came from the following publications.

**Cheers**  
**The Ohio Beverage Journal**  
**Market Watch**  
**Top Shelf**  
**The Wine Enthusiast**  
**The Wine Spectator**  
**The Wine Advocate**  
**Market Trends**  
**Bartender Magazine**  
**Santé**  
**Wine World**

