

## ***Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter Jan 16, 2008***

### **Today: Wine Politics & Some Finds from Gigondas**

The battle to allow consumers unencumbered wine shipping is heating up. Recent efforts on behalf of one retailer trying to “create a level playing field” with complete disregard to how their action will hurt their wine loving customers, were chronicled yesterday in an article in Decanter.com (the on line edition of Decanter magazine)

<http://www.decanter.com/news/174024.html>

It is nice to see various mainstream media picking up on this story which originally was featured in the Vinography wine blog – for the original blog see:

[http://www.vinography.com/archives/2008/01/winecom\\_gives\\_retailers\\_and\\_co.html](http://www.vinography.com/archives/2008/01/winecom_gives_retailers_and_co.html)

While on the subject, I encourage all of you, as wine loving consumers to check out some of the articles and comments on various wine bulletin boards. It is amazing how the forces of Neo-Prohibition are still ramming the ridiculous and monopolistic 3 tier system of alcohol distribution down our throats. Supported by politicians in the pockets of a powerful lobby in complete disregard of principals of free trade. Check out the following link titled; “ **\$50 Million Spent to Stop You From Getting Wine** “ on Squier’s bulletin board (on Robert Parker’s web site) :

<http://dat.erobertparker.com/bboard/showthread.php?t=156151&page=1&pp=30>

Protect your rights as a consumer and take an active stance with your legislators. I urge you to support the SWRA: more at <http://www.specialtywineretailers.org>

Off my soap box, and back to just great wine for your enjoyment:

We are fortunate to experience better wine making knowledge combined with great vintages. We also suffer from increases in prices, especially in light of unfavorable exchange rates. As certain areas gain notoriety and prices go up disproportionately, some great wines often are produced in less mainstream areas by conscientious producers. Lovers of the hearty and food friendly wines of the Southern Rhone valley in France have always realized that beyond the top wines of Chateauneuf du Pape (CDP), long considered the top sub-region in the area, there were also some great finds from the lesser appellations such as Vacqueyras and Gigondas. Discover a top producer from those areas, especially in a strong vintage, and you will often be rewarded with wines that are of better quality than some of those from the underachievers in the more famous regions. Prices are often favorable as well. Today’s featured wines are from one of the superstars of Gigondas. Louis Barruol of St-Cosme fit the above description to a T.

The vineyards have been in the family since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but it was Louis who started the revival of St Cosme with the 1995 vintage. Over the short past 10 years he has established himself as one of the best, using artisan techniques and minimum interventions in his wines.

In 2004 Robert Parker wrote: *“How many times have I written about a once uninspiring estate or producer shifting gears, largely because a member of the younger generation took charge and propelled the estate into the top echelon of high quality producers? St.-Cosme is another example of*

*a young, passionate vigneron, in this case Louis Barruol, not only resurrecting the fortunes of the estate's vineyards in Gigondas, but starting a high quality, limited production negociant business that is doing stunning work throughout the Rhone Valley. Like many of his generation, he is a forward-looking owner who knows he has magical terroirs, but also realizes that the glories of the Rhone are extensive, and many vineyards where the fruit was sold to cooperatives possess ancient vines, fine terroirs, and the potential to create something special in the hands of a dedicated winemaker. Barruol is certainly fulfilling his desire to be one of the best of his generation. One of the glorious things about this firm is their negociant line, called simply St.-Cosme, that includes so many extraordinary values, not to mention some profound wines at the top end."*

Today's wines are from the Monumental 2005 vintage from the family's own vineyards in Gigondas -they are arguably Louise's finest wines to date, and the quality to price ratio is hard to beat:

### **\$\$\$ Special wine deals \$\$\$**

#### **Château de Saint-Cosme Gigondas 2005 \$27-**

An excellent effort, this wine is big & rich, full of dark fruit aromas – think raspberry & blueberry with hints of roasted meat, black peppers & Herbs de Provence. Still very young, this can be drunk now with a few hours of decanting recommended. It will continue to evolve for at least several more years and last for a dozen more. This wine got 90-92 points from Parker based on barrel samples and 90-93 from Tanzer. The final product from bottle is worthy of the upper scores in these ranges, better than the excellent 2001. This is a can't miss wine for any Rhone lover.

#### **Collector's corner**

#### **Château de Saint-Cosme Gigondas "Valbelle" 2005 \$45-**

This wine is only made in the finest years, from a single vineyard where most vines are over 100 years old. The results are stunning concentration and a wine that will develop beautiful secondary characteristics with some cellar time. The finest Valbelle ever? Early indications seem to point to this conclusion. Definitely one for stashing in the cellar while you enjoy the "regular" Gigondas..

...a Tanzer 92-95 points

**Robert Parker 92-94 points:** *"The dark purple-colored 2005 Gigondas Valbelle has fabulous intensity, beautiful floral and blackberry notes intermixed with licorice, smoke, and a hint of pain grille. The wine has sensational texture and a full-bodied mouthfeel. A stunningly long finish lasts just over 40 seconds."*

#### **Events & stuff:**

Now you can hit a trendy spot & save money on wine....over the Winter months "North" Restaurant in Chery Creek is reducing their entire wine list to ½ price and they have quite a nice wine list (we have no affiliation or commercial interest here..)

Tues Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> Aix Restaurant & Paul Dolan from Parducci Vineyards will host an evening of organic food and wine. Parducci Winery, the oldest family-owned winery in Mendocino County, is the first in the United States to achieve carbon neutrality. \$65 details:

<http://www.restaurantaix.com/>

Only a few more days: The special lights display (over 1 million) is still on at the Denver Botanic Gardens until January 20<sup>th</sup> and now that the holidays are over you don't have to deal with the crowds. Check them out at:

<http://www.botanicgardens.org/pageinpage/blossomsoflight.cfm>

Thanks again for all your support and referrals, tell your friends, Cheers ! Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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