

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter May 08, 2008

Value Red Wines: Stock up for summer

Don't forget to treat Mom to a good bottle this Sunday! (A long e-letter this time)

3 wines are featured today– all standouts at recent trade tasting events. Interestingly, these were not the most expensive or famous wines. While everyone rushes to sample the big boys, I find it very rewarding to “discover “ some of the less famous ones. What makes these events special is the ability to compare wines I like directly with the “reference wines”. The truth is in the glass - when the wine you sample is on par or even better than the established wines in the same room, you know that you found some great value. So if you are looking for great wine to enjoy this summer here is an opportunity to get a small stash of wines currently available. Since all three are imported, I will also add that they were purchased with “old Dollars” which makes them a timely purchase as well, as any new arriving vintages are seeing large price increases.

\$\$\$ wine deals \$\$\$

Fleur Du Cap Shiraz 2005 \$14-

Sounds French but it's from South Africa, from the coastal region of Stellenbosch. The winery was planted in the 1700's by Governor Willem Van Der Stel -so I guess the Gov. had access to some pretty good potential vineyard sites. With every passing year, more and better wines are coming in from SA, a country that has the potential to produce great wines. This particular selection offers an easy drinking yet rich wine -think somewhere between a California Syrah and Australian Shiraz. Since this is harvested in the Southern hemisphere, it has a little more time in the bottle than your average 2005, adding to the overall smoothness. Don't be fooled, while this is an easy quaffer to enjoy with your BBQ, it also offers some classic Syrah spice & black pepper notes usually found in much more expensive classic examples from France. A serious wine for a very modest price : Consider a case purchase.

Marques de Murrieta Rioja Reserva 2004 \$24-

This comes from a rather big estate established in the mid 1800's. The top wines from this company, bottled under the labels of Castillo Ygay & Dalmau, bring in the big \$ from wine collectors. Since an ownership change in the 1980's, there have been some major capital investments in this winery. Combine this with the exceptional 2004 vintage, and the quality improvements are beautifully evident in this wine.

These kinds of wines are getting harder to find, as many wineries in Spain are producing increasingly heavier and over extracted wines which appear more homogeneous. Tasting the new breed of wines I often find myself losing the sense of their origin. Not this one- If you are a lover of Rioja this is a must. A great food wine that walks the middle of the road between Modern and Traditional. It offers classic notes of the predominant Tempranillo grape. Several years ago we featured a beautiful Rioja from Solabal and it was our best selling Spanish wine ever. Eventually we couldn't get any more. If you liked the Solabal, don't miss this little gem. When a wine shows well at a table where its big brothers are selling at 6-8 times the price I can't help but take notice. Keep in mind that the good 2004's are disappearing and the 2005's are much higher in price, Get a few extras -as good as this is today, you will have no problem aging this Reserva for another 3-5

years or probably more. Enough said

Chateau Bernadotte Haut-Medoc Bordeaux 2003 \$28-

Earlier this week Parker released his bottle scores for the 2005 vintage in Bordeaux. Prices are at an all time high, and driving up the cost of remaining stock of older vintages. I originally purchased some of this wine for myself several years ago. It was one I intended on drinking, while I kept my hands off the big 2000's and a vintage like 2005 which will require some serious cellar time to show its best. So getting a chance to try the wine again and witness its development was a bonus, and I was happy to see how well this was showing.

This estate is owned and run by Madame de Lencquesaing owner of the famous Pichon Lalande, and this wine receives similar care in the grape selection and wine making. Yes, I got to sample the Bernadotte side by side with a few vintages of the Pichon. While the 2003 Pichon is a great bottle, it will set you back about \$180 in today's market. For 1/5 the price and now with an additional couple of years in the bottle this little number was killer. I was thrilled to find that there was a small quantity of this wine left and to sweeten the deal even further, at original release pricing!

Here is Parker's review from April 2006 where it got a 90 point score and a "Sleeper of the Vintage" designation (I am willing to bet that if it were reviewed today it would easily merit a few more points). Either way this is an outstanding bargain ;"A sleeper of the vintage, the 2003 possesses a dense plum/purple color, a rich, sumptuous perfume of roasted nuts, cedar, figs, plums, and black currants, medium to full body, silky tannin, low acidity, and a lush, hedonistic, sensual personality. It should drink well for a decade. "

Collector's Corner

Just in case you missed it:

Last week I presented the following offer which I repeated below. This week I got offers from 2 of the nation's leading wine discounters (who spill more wines than we sell) for this wine at \$130! To take advantage of this price, please get your orders in by Friday AM....

Dominus Estate Napa Valley 2005 pre-arrival \$118-

Is 2005 a year you would like to celebrate in the future? Anniversary, wedding, birthday? Here is a wine that you can enjoy now or in 2-30 years from now. A cellar cornerstone, year in and year out since the early 90's, Dominus has been one of California's finest.

I admit it's a favorite of mine and I have been fortunate to have had most vintages since the late 80's

Often mentioned in the same League as Harlan, David Arthur, Mondavi and Screagle and other heavy weights from Napa, it has proven to be one of the finest Cabernet based US wines.

While I hope that you purchase this wine to drink (rather than speculate) there is no question that it is considered a blue chip of American wines. The 1997 vintage is selling at \$150 & up with the 1994 fetching \$275 & up and the 1991 recently selling at \$350-\$500....The 2005 is at least as good

in my opinion.

Last week Cristian Moueix owner & wine maker of Dominus as well as several Bordeaux estates, was in town and I had the pleasure of sampling several older vintages with him. I also got to preview the upcoming release of the 2005 which is expected to arrive in June. This was as good a young Dominus as I ever had -unquestionably at the level of the 2001 and 2002 -both vintages that I am happy to own a few bottles of in my personal cellar.

Please let me know your interest asap so that you can secure your personal stash on release.

Here is the latest review from Mr. Bob Parker;

Wine Advocate # 174 Dec 2007 **96 points** Drink 2009 - 2037 **release price : \$155-\$157**
The 2005 Dominus (a 7,000-case cuvee of 92% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest equal parts Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot) has come of age, and is one of the strongest efforts they've made. It is possibly the best Dominus since the 2001, and perhaps even the 1997 or 1991. A beautiful, sweet nose of roasted coffee interwoven with kirsch, black currant, cedar, and spice box emerges from this deep ruby/purple-colored wine. The wine has fabulous intensity, a layered, opulent, full-bodied mouthfeel, well-integrated acidity, and a stunningly long finish. The layering of this wine as it builds incrementally on the palate is something to behold. An outstanding, sexy, ageworthy Dominus, it will benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring, and last for at least 25 or 30 years. When I am tasting at Dominus, they always present a wine opened the day before and decanted, and one just opened, and the extended aeration version always seems to be the better example of the wine, so plenty of decanting seems to be in order.

events:

Taste of the Nation: a perennial favorite foodie fest -mark your calender for Sunday June 1st
details at:

http://taste.strength.org/site/Clubs?club_id=1032&pg=main

The 2008 Colorado State Fair advanced ticket before they go on sale to the general public at:

http://www.ticketmaster.com/promo/efwf1d?dma_id=

Thomas Arvid is considered by many to be one of the top photo - realistic painters of wine bottles and wine items in the US today -you undoubtedly seen his work in magazines and wineries. A native of Georgia, he is friends with Aaron and Sandy LaPedis, owners of **Fascination Street Gallery** in Cherry Creek. Arvid will be in appearance at the Gallery on May 9& 10th - give them a ring to get on the invite list. Always a great show - Check it out at
http://www.fascinationstart.com/thomas_arvid

Thanks again for all your support and referrals, tell your friends, Cheers

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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