

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter May 14, 2008

Highly rated Portuguese red wine

Those who have been reading this newsletter for a while know that one of our “specialties” is tracking some older vintages of good wine. With the continuing escalation of wine prices it is always exciting to get our hands on a few bottles of wine that had the benefit of a little age on it. Since they were purchased originally at lower cost we look for wine that has not reflected the cost of storage in its current price. With the recent steep price increases we can sometimes find excellent wines at a lower cost than the new release.

Of course provenance and storage are a must. Sometimes we get really lucky and manage to find older releases from vintages which are superior to the current releases as well. Such is today's featured wine.

A little recent history: Portugal is most famous for its fortified wines but today's wine is a dry red. It is no surprise that the finest dry reds come from port country; the steep, rugged rocky and terraced vineyards of the Douro river valley.

Eric Asimov, chief wine critic for The NY Times summed it up nicely in one of his blogs: *Despite its centuries of traditions, the focus on dry wine is a fairly recent phenomenon in Portugal, beginning roughly with its entry into the European Union in 1986. The country's wine industry had been insular and antiquated until then, with the notable exception of Mateus and Lancer's, cheap rosé wines that remain the source of rueful first hangovers the world over. But Portuguese wine producers benefited from an injection of capital that unleashed entrepreneurial energy throughout the country's wine regions.*

Nowhere gained as much as the Douro, where skilled and ambitious winemakers were able to reject the restrictive old cooperative system to make and market their own wines. Many port producers also began to look beyond fortified wines, and today some of those famous port names grace the labels of dry wines as well.

Today's featured wine Vertante is made by Niepoort which has been in the port business since 1842 and has made dry wines since the early 1990's. Vertante has big fruit concentration on front end: black & red, not so much in the port vein as in the modern international style. Still, it is balanced and distinctive. Cherries, plums and a hint of smoke & dusty earthiness make an appearance. The wine is elegant and surprisingly light on the palate and has an enormous finish accentuated with excellent minerality and good acidity. Similar to a good Aglianico from Southern Italy. It will age beautifully, so it will show best given some time after its initial release.

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

Niepoort Vertente Douro 2003 \$32 (compare to new releases at \$35+)

The deal: The highest ever rated vintage of this wine -the excellent 2003 received a whopping 94 points from Wine Spectator's magazine. The wine has had an extra 2.5 years in bottle and it is only now starting to enter its prime drinking years. Priced below current releases -unfortunately supply is rather limited.

Wine Spectator's review: *Rich and muscular, with an intense aroma of dark chocolate and kirsch, with flavors to match. Just a baby now, but still ripe and seductive, with layers of blackberry, spice and mincemeat flavors as well. Exotic finish of cream and smoke. Best from 2006 through 2012. 1,665 cases made. -KM Score : 94 points*

Did you Know: There are a lot of wine close out deals out there. We get to see many of them, but we bite on very few. If we don't know the wine we won't commit to a purchase. So by the time you see a deal on our NFTC pages you can rest assured that it's been thoroughly tested..Yeah It's a tough job, but we have to do what we do -enjoy and let us know what you like: the better we know our customers the better we can match wine to their particular needs.

events:

L'esprit de France-2nd Annual Benefit Gala At the Westin Tabor Center May 16th , 2008
Presented by the French -American Chamber of commerce details :

<http://www.rmfac.org/>

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=

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

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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The buyer is solely responsible for the shipment of wine. We make no representations concerning your legal right to ship or receive wine into any state outside Colorado or any country outside the United States. By placing any wine order with us, you authorize Winepairings to act on your behalf to engage a common carrier to deliver your order to your selected destination.

Please note that **you must be at least 21 years old** to order or receive alcohol from this newsletter. All orders require the signature of a person at least 21 years of age.