

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter July 30, 2008

Summer wines Distributor blowout and another great Barolo

Today's offer is one of the best deals we have offered on everyday drinkers. We want to make sure that the economy does not prevent you from drinking good wine so we pulled out all the stops.

Do not file this e-mail for reading later- by special arrangement with a supplier this is time sensitive so please take the time to go through this now.

Even for the most die hard red wine drinkers keeping a stash of nice crisp whites makes sense when the outside temperatures are in the 90's . You never know when friends will drop by for an impromptu visit, and a nice cold refreshing wine may be the perfect ticket.

The problem with many domestic and new world white wines is that they can be too” big”. If they are made in a super ripe viscous style (think of many Californian Chardonnays for instance) often high in alcohol they can just be too much. Hard to pair with food, unless your food is very rich and heavy -not exactly the type of fare you will typically consume in the summer.

The perfect summer sippers will be clean, crisp wines that have enough character and flavor to be served well chilled. As such they require a good acid component to ensure they are dry and tangy but not overdone to the point of being tart or bitter. We have featured some nice whites & rose here many times before, but today we have a truly monumental offer.

Summer is traditionally a quite period in the wine industry and with month end approaching we were offered some very attractive pricing by one of the largest distributors in the country.

My goal was to come up with a selection of wines that will be great to keep around the house for the rest of the summer. Each had to be exceptional quality and value, ready to drink, match well with food, and in these days of \$4 gas, priced no more than \$20 per bottle.

Our “pre selected” wine list to taste numbered over 120 wines. Some were new vintages of old favorites and some were new wines recently introduced. The following represents **the best of the best** according to my personal tasting notes. I did not check out the usual wine press and ratings as many of these are new vintages that have not yet been rated. I can assure you that all of today's selections would show very well along side wines that are rated in the 90+ point category. When considering the special pricing we got -these are superb value! Do yourself a favor and stock up on a few cases while we can strike.

The Rules of engagment: This is a time sensitive offer -we are suppose to hand in all orders by month end to take advantage of these prices -we managed to get an extension until Friday but please put in your orders ASAP. We expect delivery by middle of next week. We need a minimum total order of 6 bottles per customer -Mix and Match is OK! Here is where it gets even better -**get a case of 12 or more (again mix & match is ok) and get an extra 10% off**
Good hunting:

Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$ mixed case take another 10% off!

Sauvignon Blanc:

* **Bonterra 2007 \$13-** Well known domestic producer from Mendocino California. Bonus: all their grapes are organically grown, the 2007 was clean well balanced and easy going.

* **J Moreau & Fils Sauvignon St Bris 2006 \$16-** You don't often encounter SB from Burgundy. Rounder light & lively- easier going than most SB's from Bordeaux this has a nice chalky finish on the delicate melon and tropical fruit flavor -think SB with a distinct French twist

Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris & blends:

* **King Estate Oregon 2007 \$17-** If you are a fan of Oregon Pinot Gris this is a good bet. Big and relatively rich mouth feel almost ripe but well balanced . Serve this to American style Chardonnay fans, this could make an excellent alternative and open the door towards more food friendly wines.

* **Bottega Vinaia Trentino Alto Adige 2007 \$18-** Italian yes, but this is not a wimpy insipid & watery Grigio. A very fine example of what can be done when you make it right. Full bodied and layered with great floral aromatics, yellow fruit and honey -nice structured spicy finish. A serious wine.

***Luna Freakout 2006 Napa California \$16-** From the winery famous for their regular Pinot Gris, that has been rated several times as the top US PG by Wine Spectator magazine. This is a blends of PG and some Tocai -the result a round flavorful profile, yet easy drinking wine which is beautifully balanced. A crowd pleaser -take this to a party and it will be one of the first bottles drained.

Chardonnay:

* **Jadot St Veran Domaine de la Chapelle Aux Loops 2006 \$20-** A mouthful of a name but also a mouthful of great wine. Solid white burgundy at affordable prices is hard to find. Over the past few vintages Jadot, one of Burgundy's most famous negociants has elevated their game considerably. This one is proof in the bottle: Green apples, a hint of lemon and flint are all here. The quality vs. the price especially with a case discount is tremendous -well worth considering a case purchase for your "house white"

* **Bollini Terentino 2007 \$15-** Another nicely done wine from Italy; it has the verve and spiciness seldom found in new world wines. Clean and crisp with a mouth feel closer to a Sauvignon Blanc or Chenin Blanc yet the flavor is unmistakably Chardonnay. at a price that's down right silly.

* **Navarro Mendocino 2005 \$19-** Californian in origin but done in a style closer to Burgundy, this quality wine features apple -melon flavors in a nice crisp body which keeps it very food friendly. The 2005 from Navarro came out a winner. I suspect this is some older stock purchased at lower prices which has to be moved to make room for the newer vintages. With a little more bottle age this is at a prime drinking age. There are many wines in California at more than

twice the price that don't even come close in quality.

Falanghina:

*** Feudi Falanghina 2007 \$19-** Fala -what? Well falanghina its an indigenous grape varietal from Capmagna. Southern Italy. Feudi is one of the finest wine producers in the region -world famous for their Aglianico red wines. Like the red this too is grown in volcanic soils, straw color full of viscous tropical fruit flavors and nice minerality. Aged only in stainless steel to preserve the freshness and fruit characteristics- it is a wine that will pair beautifully with most sea food, Cheeses, light pasta dishes and even Sushi. With a nice spicy note on the finish this was my overall favorite of the entire tasting! A must try if you are mixing a case make sure to include a few.

Desert:

*** Quady Orange Muscat Essensia 2006 17- /half bottle (375cc)** Rarely does a domestically made desert wine walk that fine line between sweetens and proper acidity - which is what makes the finest desert wines in the world so unique and wonderful. Orange blossoms, apricot and spice make this a perfect little number to serve with fresh fruit or fruit based deserts.

Collector's Corner

Today's letter was so long that I almost did not include this. But this is such a great wine at an amazing price that I was afraid it will be all gone if I waited too long. Last week I lamented on how expensive the 2004 Barolos have become. Well the Gramolere has been consistently my favorite bottling from this small artisan producer who's wines have gotten better and better with every recent vintage. While most producers have seen dramatic price increases over the past 3 years Manzone has kept prices in check even with the decline in the \$. But with new glowing reviews in Parker's Wine Advocate I am afraid that this situation is not going to last long. You will have to look high and low to find a Barolo of this quality at this price from any vintage let alone a 2004! At the time when single vineyard Barolos start at \$75 + with many starting at closer to \$100 this is an exceptional deal – hurry, there is very little of this left. (note: This may be the lowest price in the country for this wine - this is not the Gramolere Bricat available at some discounters for less).

Manzone Gramolere Barolo 2004 \$ 49 -

Wine Advocate # 174 Dec 2007 Antonio Galloni: 94 points ; Drink 2012 – 2024: Manzone's 2004 Barolo Le Gramolere reveals gorgeous notes of candied cherries, spices and menthol in an elegant, sweet expression of this vineyard. It offers greater freshness than the Castelletto, with notable vibrancy to its generous fruit. The finish is delicate and long, as ethereal aromas linger in the empty glass. The Gramolere was aged predominantly in 500 liter barrels with 15-20% of the juice seeing larger 20-hectoliter barrels. It is one of the finest wines I have tasted from this small, artisanal producer. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2024.

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

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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