

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter August 20, 2008
A 2001 Chateauneuf arrival, a killer deal on 2004 Barolo and an easy drinking Tuscan red for your Italian food pairings -long e-letter but worth it....

Summer time and the living is busy....yes I didn't get a newsletter out in a short while, but today's selections more than make up for it. Some great choices -so good hunting.

Don't miss today's collector's corner. Two instant sell outs this year have been a 2001 Chateauneuf (Vatican) direct from the producer and a great recent deal a 2004 Manzone Barolo. I looked hard to find similar wines and am happy to say we have outdone ourselves with today's features.

Quantities are a little bit better, so I hope no one gets shot out this time -note, these will sell out so please act in a timely fashion to avoid disappointment. (so don't file this for later if at all possible)

Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$

FATTORIA LA PESCHIERA Morellino di Scansano DOC 2005 \$20-

I found this wine at a recent tasting and it was excellent: Modern in style, full of beautiful fruit and very well balanced -a tribute to the great conditions in the area in 2005 combined with great wine making. This will be a perfect accompaniment to traditional Italian fare and would work great with pizza, tomato based pasta sauces, as well as bigger meat dishes. A Super Tuscan; The final blend is superb, playing on the strengths of the grape composition which is 85% Sangiovese, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot + 3% Alicante all from a small hillside estate of seven hectares overlooking the town of Saturina in West Tuscany.

The wine is made by Oenologist, Marco Stefanini and it is round and rich and **ready to drink now** -the price was also very refreshing and we got an even better special pricing for this offering. This could easily pass as a \$35 bottle. Don't let the modest price fool you -this is first rate wine. What makes it all possible, is that it is aged in Stainless Steel tanks so there are no expensive barrels to pay for. There are enough natural soft tannins from the fruit to keep this interesting and structured. So much so, that I did not know it was not aged on wood when I first tasted it. Production is small: 2500 cases and only a tiny amount is imported to the US, so you will seldom encounter this little jewel. I subsequently found out from the Importer that it received a "critic's choice" designation and a 92 point ratings from Wine & Spirit magazine and an even more impressive Due Bicchieri (2 glass) award from fame Italian publication Gambero Rosso (affectionately referred to as "the bible" by many Italian wine makers). Grab a case of this very food friendly red and enjoy over the next year or 2, though I doubt it will last that long once you taste it.

Collector's Corner

2 amazing wine deals today, I got so excited I just had to feature both. Our first feature comes from Charbonniere. I have been collecting their wines since the late 90's -"an up and coming producer" in those days according to Robert Parker. Boy was he right on target with this producer. If you are not familiar with them, these are wines that require a minimum of 3-4 years of cellar time. In a good year they will easily age beautifully for an additional 15. The local importer had a chance to obtain some "library selections" direct from the estate, which they ordered a while back and I was lucky to try different cuvees from several vintages. The following was the clear; best of the best.

It's been about 4 years since I have last had this wine and with the extra time in bottle it has evolved into a classic representation of the region. If you are a CDP fan looking to backfill your collection this is the perfect opportunity. If on the other hand you always wondered what the fuss is all about these wines; -here is your chance at a perfectly aged bottle which arrived from the estate this week. The price offered was great so I didn't question it. I have kept margins at a minimum so that more of you can step up and experience this elixir-I believe that this is the lowest price in the US. Just as important as the great price: the very recent arrival of this batch assures you perfect provenance as these are not old stock languishing on some retailers shelf (see my rant under the "did you know" section below).

2001 Domaine de la Charbonniere Chateauneuf du Pape Mourre des Perdrix \$49-

This wine got original scores of 93 points from Wine Spectator and 92 points from Parker. It has improved dramatically since these original reviews and today would easily merit a rating in the 94-95 point range (and I am being conservative). Fortunately it has not been "officially" re-evaluated or we would have never got offered this price. Since everyone is looking for a deal these days consider the following; this was a \$35-40 wine on release over 5 years ago, so the premium you are paying for perfect aging is silly. Further more this is priced way below current release of similar quality wines. Below is the original review and as I mentioned the wine is now much more complex and enjoyable,

From Robert Parker : Feb 2004; *A noble Chateauneuf du Pape with a grand cru Burgundy-like aromatic display, the 2001 Mourre des Perdrix possesses a deep ruby/purple color as well as a big, sweet nose that reminded me of a Flagey-Echezeaux. Aromas of raspberries, acacia flowers, and blackberries are followed by a southern Rhone-styled wine possessing large volume as well as a chewy texture. However, there is tremendous elegance and finesse in this full-bodied, precise, fresh, deep, rich, concentrated 2001. Drink this beauty over the next 12-14 years. For statisticians, it comes from a lieu-dit in the northeastern sector of Chateauneuf du Pape, just west of the village of Courthezon. Made from 30-50 year old vines, it is a blend of 70% Grenache, 15% Syrah, and 15% Mourvedre. Drink 2004 -2018.*

Calling all Barollo heads: If you missed on our recent offering of the Manzone Gramallore Barolo 2004 you need to get in on this one:

Palladino Barollo Serralunga 2004 \$44

Blair Taylor owner of the Barolo Grill also owns a small importation company which brings in small amounts of highly selected wines. I always go to his tastings hoping to find something special. Palladino is one of those small under the radar producers that makes several nice selections and has been mainly ignored by the main stream wine media. The wine is just not available, so why bother reviewing it? goes the thinking.

At A recent tasting including some of the expensive Riservas as well as some older vintages, I was particularly impressed with this 2004. Easily the finest wine I have ever tasted from this estate. Most good 2004's have received high ratings and prices have gone through the roof, but here we have a small stash of this quality wine (probably purchased several years ago with stronger dollars) quietly aging at the distributor.

Palladino is a small estate, one of the oldest - established back in 1870 in the classic commune of Serralunga. Owner/ Wine maker Maurillio Paladino has revamped the winery with the most modern equipment, yet he is a Traditionalist in his methodology -employing classic cellar techniques such as long Maceration of 20 + days and uses mostly traditional old Slovenian wood with a small amount of modern French Barriques. In 2004 he hit the bulls eye big time. The problem you often experience in traditional Barollo is that it takes years to shed the hard edge of the flavor profile. In 2004 Palladino archived that perfect equilibrium -the delicacy and aromatic complexity of a traditional wine with the soft mouth flavors of a more modern wine. In a word superb. This is again a “conservative “ 94 + point wine in my book. While most recognized wines of this caliber from 2004 are over \$100 the Palladino 2004 Under \$50 it is a **great value** and our price of just \$44 it is priced below the price of a very average 2004 Barbarescos. If you love the wines of Piedmont and Barolo in particular, do yourself a big favor and don't miss this.

Did you know

It is only in the past decade or so, that most importers have realized that it is absolutely a necessity to have wine shipped in refrigerated containers (known as Reefers in the business).

Most distributors now days store arriving wines in temperature controlled warehouses. On the retail side, more and more stores now have at least part of the store set up as a “cellar” or at least a small space dedicated to keeping the better wines at optimal storage temperature. Of course if you spot an older bottle on the shelf and it looks like a good deal -beware! unless it was properly stored you will be waisting you money on sub optimal juice at best. (ask them to look up the records to see when it came into the store ...if they won't tell you, I would recommend giving it a pass).

One of the dirty little secrets of the wine business is that most wine gets delivered from warehouse to retail store in **non temperature controlled trucks**. In fact, to the best of my knowledge only one distributor in Colorado delivers wine in temp. controlled vehicles. So that expensive bottle of wine that was shipped in expensive reefers may be actually getting cooked on it's way to your favorite store on one of those 100 degree days (and the temperature in the truck on such a day can be way higher ofteen exceeding 130).

You purchase that special bottle, put the wine away in your temperature controlled cellar and 10 years later discover that it is not optimal -it's flat, acidic and doesn't have that nice fresh fruit aromas. Now that really sucks. At Winepairings we really care about the wine we sell. During the summer months we will only accept deliveries if they can be scheduled “first thing” in the morning. Of course the big distributors think we are a pain. If they won't accommodate us, we will have our reps. pick up the wine personally for us- or ,we will go to their warehouse ourselves to pick it up. Sure it's expensive and time consuming but that's the way we choose to run our business. Yes we do it for the \$100 bottles as well as the \$10 bottles. So if it takes a few extra days before you can get your wine -now you know why.

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

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

WINEPAIRINGS

- Your wine concierge service. Contact us for all your Wine needs.

For more info: www.winepairings.biz
Reach us at: tel 303-331-8008

"Notes From The Cellar " or NFTC in the subject line is our free e-letter sent periodically when items of interest may be available. If you got this e-mail chances are that you or someone you know expressed an interest in being on our list. If you are not interested in receiving additional such e-mails please let us know & we will gladly remove you. Our e-mail list is strictly in house. we do not share it, or sell it what-so-ever. We thank you for your referrals.

All orders are sold and shipped by a licensed Colorado wine retailer. Title passes to you, the buyer, in Colorado. 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.