

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter October 16,2008

Great value CDR and a special Napa Cab.

Elections, hurricanes, economic upheaval, banking crisis, diminishing IRA accounts -what a mess. It seems that there is crisis everywhere you turn. Thankfully you can still kick back with a good glass of wine and savor some relaxing time. Fortunately it's not all bad news. Our dollar has been starting to get stronger which should make imported wine more affordable. Oil prices are about half of where they were last July so instead of spending all your cash on gasoline you can allocate some more resources to wine. Uncertain time bring opportunities and the wine world is not different. I am offered wines that are usually so highly allocated that in the past were not even worth trying to get.

When the accountants tell the distributors to move inventory we get offered deals -the bean counters don't care about quality or vintages. This creates ample opportunities for the savvy shopper.

Add the fact that this is the time of year where the calendar is full of tastings for the trade and you have a very busy time of year. Maybe if I wouldn't insist on trying all the wines I recommend to you, I would have time to write more newsletters, but this way you ultimately get the better selections.

Over the next few weeks I will be offering wines that really impressed me with their quality -in addition I was even more draconian in making the final selections with value as a main criteria. While this has been a goal since starting Winepairings over 6 years ago, It is at times like we are facing now, that make this emphasis on value even more important. I am committed to finding those great wines that represent great value regardless of the price points. Make sure you get yours.

Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$

Domain de Jardiniere Cote du Rhone red 2006 \$15-

A local distributor imports this directly from France, so right away the price is way lower than if this would be sold through the regular distribution channels. Don't let the low price fool you; this is a quality wine that you can stash a few cases of with confidence. A great choice to have as your house red wine for the winter. There is enough going on here in aromatics and flavors that you will not get bored.

Excellent balance of dark red fruit and extraction. What makes this very versatile with so many food choices is that the wine is elegant and not overdone. Easy going, yet flavorful with a nice touch of spice and a quality finish you will not always find in wines at twice the price. We got a great price & kept the margins tight.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Do you like Caymus Special selection, David Arthur 1147, Phelps Insignia or Dominus? Are you discouraged by the price of those wines? Well here is something new. The quality is here and the recognition will surely come (with price to follow).

Franciscan Stylus Napa Valley 2005 \$95-

Yes this is not inexpensive but what a great wine! I got to try it twice this week and was very very impressed. From my understanding this is something that was going to be offered in very limited quantity at the winery as well as offered to high end restaurants and steak houses. This has not been featured by any of the main stream wine critics, or wine publications. I guess you are going to have to take my word on this bad boy. If you are a fan of world class Napa Cab. on the elegant side with delicacy nuances and that dusty characteristics you get from the top Rutherford wines you will appreciate this bottle. Interestingly, I have never been a big fan of this winery so I tasted this with much skepticism but kept an open mind. I will refrain from a lot of hyperbole but when compared to the wines I listed above, this not only compares in quality, but is darn right a fantastic bargain. Yes it is the new kid on the block (although Franciscan has been making wine in Napa for over 30 years) this is clearly an attempt by the winery to run with the big dogs. With the 2005 they hit the bulls eye. When I got excited by the wine I was promised a small availability for my clients. And yes as far as I know this is also the lowest price of this wine in the US. I included more info from the winery below:

WINERY NOTES:

Stylus is the supreme expression of Franciscan's signature in Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. The engraving on the label presents an aerial perspective of a wine press that symbolizes Franciscan's commitment to creating exceptional wines in hundreds of small lots and blending them to perfection.

Cabernet Sauvignon has always played the leading role in Franciscan's vision, since our first vintage in 1975, which set a quality standard for Napa Valley. Franciscan's Magnificat and Cuvee Sauvage are synonymous with legendary quality found in the Napa Valley. Now, we are pleased to introduce Stylus, which continues to elevate the quality standard for Franciscan.

Stylus is created from grapes grown in our favorite vineyard blocks, including a selection from our Oakville Estate. As is tradition at Franciscan, we employ the paragon of small lot winemaking with Stylus.

In 2005, the growing season began early, with an unusually warm March, followed by a cool and wet spring delaying bloom until June. The summer temperatures were steady and moderate, without any of the normal heat spikes of late summer. October was beautiful and mild, and Cabernet came in unhurried, with long, even hang-time, picking up through November 5. - Janet Myers, Winemaker

Wine Profile:

Tasting Notes:

86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Petit Verdot; 5% Merlot, and 2% Malbec

Deep garnet in color with dense layers of ripe cassis, dark plum, cocoa and tobacco aromas. Vibrant and complex. Very full bodied, with deep flavors of black fruit, dark cherry, anise and plum. Hints of sweet toasty oak, chocolate

Vintage: 2005

Wine Type: Bold Red Wine

Varietal: Cabernet Sauvignon

Appellation: Napa Valley

Aging: 24 months in 97% French oak, 97% new

Alcohol %: 14.5

and coffee add complexity. Very fine rich tannins fill the palate, giving big body and supple texture, leading to a very long finish of cassis and cocoa.

EVENTS:

Dinner with **Desmond Tutu** at the **Brown Palace**: Wed Oct 22,2008 in combination with his lecture at the convention center. For info 303-297-3111.

The 2008 Grand Vintners Fundraiser Dinner Featuring Silver Oak Cellars

Wednesday Oct 29,2008 part of the Denver int'l wine festival

<http://www.denverwinefest.com/dusolarship.html>

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

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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