

## ***Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter November 12,2008***

### **Thanksgiving around the corner.**

A solid week of no political ads -now that is nice. I know most of you are busy with life's major challenges. My job remains to offer you great wines to relax with at the end of the day, or enjoy with a good meal -and boy do we have some excellent juice at some crazy prices today!

First, Thanks to all who contacted me about Wine Spectator's Wine Of The Year discussion in the last newsletter. [http://winepairings.biz/newsletters/NFTC\\_10-29-2008.pdf](http://winepairings.biz/newsletters/NFTC_10-29-2008.pdf)

The countdown began this Monday and so far one of the wines I mentioned as a top candidate: Pontet -Canet came in at the # 7 spot. I have done some digging and if you are interested I have a line on some half bottles (375's ) of this wine at quite a good price. I am still rooting for the Don Melchor, and was glad so many of you took advantage of our last offer and got this great wine. As of this morning there is still small availability of this wine if you didn't get any but things may change quickly so you may want to strike while the going is good...

I have written about wines for Thanksgiving many times. Lately I have been bombarded with retailer's suggestions for the "perfect" wine to match to Turkey Yada Yada .....Let's face it: a Turkey is a pretty bland bird: Yes a nice Riesling is a good safe bet for a white, and a delicate Pinot Noir for a red. But let's think about it in a different way -akin to Tofu the bird will absorb the flavors around it - so really the way it is prepared and the choice of side dishes, which most times have a much more distinct flavor are the better items to concentrate on when choosing your wines. Same goes for the sauce or type of gravy if it's highly flavorful.

Another noticeable trend is more diversified food, meals that where more than just the gobbler is featured. More prevalent in large gatherings or dinners that may be based on ethnic origins. (I remember some fine holiday meals cooked by a friend who's family was from Calabria in Southern Italy where the Turkey was neglected by many a guest in favor of the much more savory baked Sardines). So we are back to our golden rule: Drink what you like- if you are invited to someone's place don't stress, just bring along a bottle of something you would enjoy drinking and sharing and everything will work out.

If you are heaving the festivities in your place the choice of wine will depend on the type and size of crowd you are dealing with as well as the depth of your cellar and how flush you may feel. A variety may be the way to go especially for a diverse crowd. Why not take a look at the cellar -there may be some wines in there that are best consumed when young and fresh- a perfect opportunity to consume them before they get forgotten during the winter. Since on Thanksgiving many a meal start earlier in the afternoon, I find it a good opportunity to polish off the remaining bottles of Rose and those crisp whites that may be left over from summer - they go great with most appetizers, before bringing out the bigger wines we tend to consume with a bigger dish. Of course a nice Sparkling wine -Champagne if you can put everyone in a special festive mood.

Still not sure -give me a ring and I will be happy to put together a nice mix case for you and your friends at any price range. Or perhaps find you a couple of special bottles which are ready to be consumed or maybe a combination of the above.

### **Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$**

With the economy limping along, I am seeing better and better deals on wines: Inventory that the accountants dictate -got to move. There is a major shift underway. The benefit to you is that the worrisome trend of the past few years, that of prices spiraling out of control, has come to a halt. What we are seeing now is some very nice wines that have sat in the system being offered at give away prices just to make room for new inventory. If you are collecting wines for long term consumption, the

next few quarters will be the time to put away some great bottles. Do so while the deals are here and you will be happy you did down the road. My strategy is simple: quality first, followed by careful selection of choices I personally feel represent tremendous value. Remember that a mediocre wine won't become better just because the price is right. In addition to the 2 wines featured below, please make sure you let me know if you are an interested buyer for any particular type of wine or price range. Many times quantities of the top wines or best deals are just too small to feature in this newsletter but they do disappear fast.

### **Columbia Crest Walter Clore Private Reserve Columbia Valley WA \$24-**

Long term readers of NFTC will remember that we sold the 2002 vintage of this wine several years ago. I am happy to have a few more bottles of that fine wine in my own cellar. It is one of those wines that shows why Washington state wines have been receiving a lot of buzz lately on the wine scene for their quality and value.

Columbia Crest has made it's reputation on large production of inexpensive, value oriented wines. One of the first big operations in Washington state, they have the advantage of great selection of Grapes produced at much lower costs than similar operations in California. Much less known are a few top wines they make in very small quantities for their Private Reserve line. The Clore was named to honor one of the pioneers of WA state wines, has been a consistent best buy since 1999. A blend based on the famous wines of Bordeaux consisting of Cab and Merlot and in some vintages a small amount of Cab Franc it showcases it's US origins by offering a nice mouthful mature juicy fruit. Yet it is not over the top; a wine of elegance and style. The blend gives this wine a softness and approachability which makes it a tasty wine to drink young (decanting is recommended), yet it has the quality and stuffing to continue additional evolution. It can be easily cellared another 12+ years - should you decide to hang on to it -yes it is that good! Originally priced at the 40's this wine was frankly too cheap -if this quality came from California and would be priced at \$60+ it would be snapped up. So the new vintage 2004 was bumped into the upper 40's to low 50's. Timing is everything -while the new vintage is trying to establish new levels at exactly the price range of wines hit hardest by the current economy, some of the higher rated 2003 which has also benefited from extra bottle age - had to be cleared out. I am not questioning a good deal offered to me -just taking advantage of it. While a few discounters have aggressively priced this below 30. Due to the crazy close out - you are offered this wine at the lowest price in the US -A very smart purchase to enjoy now or cellar.

By the way, it happens to be the highest rated vintage ever of this wine in Parker's Wine Advocate: **August 2007: 93 Points:** *The 2003 Walter Clore Private Reserve is even better. It is composed of 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, and 7% Cabernet Franc aged for 28 months in new French oak. A classy nose of smoky oak, vanilla, lead pencil, plum, black currant, and blackberry leads to a rich, still youthful wine with loads of extract, thick fruit, superb integration of oak, tannin, and acidity, and a very long finish. This wine demands 6-8 years of cellaring and should drink well through 2025.*

### **Vina Montes Folly Santa Crus (Chile) Syrah 2004 \$36- (released at \$93)**

A Syrah from Chile -you bet. Wait till you taste it. A project of Montes one of Chile's finest wineries from the Rapel valley. The name of this wine came from the fact that the winery decided to plant Syrah grapes at an altitude that the "experts" predicted was too high. Stress the vines to produce maximum flavor .... The result a very impressive, full flavor high end wine with amazing concentration. Showing that Chile has what it takes to compete in the world arena for fine Syrah, with a small production artisan style wine. The wine has received 93 points in every vintage rated by Wine Spectator since it's introduction in 2001.

I tasted this wine 2 years ago in a trade event and was highly impressed. unquestionably one of the finest wines in the room -the only problem -The Price . Set to compete with the top Syrahs in the market, the famous wines of Cote Rotie or Hermitage. Yes the wine was great, but was the market ready for an \$90 Chilean Syrah? -probably not. I decided to pass.

I have been tempted to pick up a few bottles at deep discounts but never pulled the trigger. Fast forward to today: Economic melt down special: Slash the price to a fraction of the original tariff and now we are talking! Do you like the wines of Pax, Saxum or Sean Thackary? Well now this is to be had at less than ½ the price of the competition: give this bad boy a whirl and you will not be disappointed.

Wine Spectator May 15,2007; **93 points** release price \$93: *Shows lovely crushed blueberry and currant fruit aromas and flavors, with well-integrated toast and plenty of mineral, briar, mocha and bacon notes on the round, full-bodied finish. Could use some modest cellaring, but this is approachable now. Syrah. Drink now through 2009. -JM*

### **EVENTS:**

**The French American Chamber of Commerce** presents their annual **Beaujolais & Beyond** party on Thursday November 20,2008 6-10pm at a new location The mile High Station -details and advanced discount tickets at 303-695-7818 or [www.rmfac.org](http://www.rmfac.org).

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

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

### **WINEPAIRINGS**

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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.