

The Grapevine



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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Preview of April Wine Club**
- **Upcoming events**
- **Easter is coming**

Preview of April Wine Club (Wines Ready Friday)

I am sure many of you are delighted to hear that we have the **2009** “**Tosca**” blend for our first red wine in April. Reininger Winery in Walla Walla has bottled this special wine for the Intermountain Opera Bozeman presentation of Puccini’s “**Tosca**” next month. We are also pleased to have it in the Wine Club as previous bottlings of this blend have sold out to rave reviews.

The label was painted by Bozeman artist Laurel Hatch. Her work, entitled “*Recondita armonia*”, is her interpretation of the famous aria in the first scene of “**Tosca**”. In the aria, artist Mario Cavaradossi proclaims the mysterious harmony and diversity of beauty. In the sacristy of a church, he paints a beautiful blue-eyed, blond Madonna. As he sings he muses how his own true love, Tosca, is beautiful in her own right with dark hair and dark eyes. Laurel’s painting shows the dark haired Tosca looking into a mirror whose reflection is the blond woman.

Inside the “**Tosca**” bottle is a mysterious, diverse and beautiful blend of Columbia Valley red grapes from Reininger Winery in Walla Walla. It features Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Merlot and a splash of Petit Verdot all from the 2009 vintage. **Tosca’s Blend** is a lush, plush, intensely garnet colored red wine with big fruit aromatics of dark plums, black currants and hints of sweet oak spice.

The palate is a cavalcade of cassis, blackberry, toffee and nutmeg finishing with smooth but complex tannins. Previous vintages of this blend have sold out in a matter of days and bottles of those vintages that remain are collectors' items. Fewer than nine hundred bottles of this commemorative "**Tosca**" special cuvee were made. Like the "*Recondita armonia*" label art, "**Tosca**" reflects a wine that bears all the hallmarks of careful expertise and esthetic concern given to artisanal small lot production. **(\$17.50)**

Our first white is the **2015 Domaine La Taste Gascone Blanc** from Southwestern France. A juicy blend of Colombard, Gros Mensang, Sauvignon Blanc and Ugni Blanc, this stainless steel fermented beauty clocks in at a mere 11.5% alcohol and is what the French would term a "Glugg, Glugg" wine. (I believe the American term is "deck wine"). It is the sort you drink and come back to because it is so approachable and friendly. As you can imagine, the wine is bright and fruity. Our tasting notes reveal melon tones with a hint of ginger and minerals. It has crisp acidity and a light touch of citrus to go with the lively acidity. The blend brings out the herbal flavor of Colombard with just a touch of honey from Gros Mensang. Enjoy this with light appetizers, fresh fish, roasted chicken with herbs or even a pork chop with a fruit component. It goes great with spring menus so keep that in mind if ham is on your Easter menu. **(\$11)**

The second red for April is the **2014 Reverend V Syrah** from Western Australia's Margaret River. Beautiful vibrant purple in color, this Syrah lends inviting spice and floral perfume aromatics with underlays of fleshy, juicy fruit. The mix of wild berry fruits extends across the palate with weight and texture and the gentle but firm oak integrates with this array of berry fruit, giving length and complexity. This Syrah can be cellared for up to eight years, or matched with duck, game and light meats, or even aromatic spice dishes. **(\$17.50)**

Wine Club members who receive two white wines will also receive the **2015 LaFage Côté d'Est**. As the name suggests, Côté d'Est, comes from vineyards planted on the gentle slopes facing the Mediterranean just a few kilometers inland from the sea. Benefiting from the thermal breezes that refresh these vineyards every afternoon in the summer – which preserves a high level of natural acidity in the grapes – this is a lively blend of Grenache Blanc with smaller percentages of Chardonnay and Marsanne. Floral and aromatic, it is an excellent example of the open and friendly whites you can find all along the Catalan coast. Wine Advocate awarded 90 points **(\$12)**

Millennium Club members will receive the **2014 Gilles Troullier Tandem Syrah**. A fabulous value, the inky colored 2014 Tandem comes from Maury and offers classic notes of chocolatey dark fruit, licorice, graphite and herbes du Provence. Full-bodied, rich and layered, with a big mid-palate and no shortage of texture, it makes the most of this cooler, difficult vintage and will

drink well for 5-7 years. Did I tell you it had a 94 point rating from Wine Advocate? (**\$32**)

Mark your Calendars!!

*You still have time to get tickets to the **Intermountain Opera Raffle**. First prize is a five day vacation in the beautiful Willamette Valley wine country in Oregon. The prize includes air transportation, limousine service from Portland, a rental car to allow you to explore and up to 10 VIP tours of some of Oregon's best wineries. Second prize is season tickets to the **40th Anniversary Season of the Intermountain Opera**. Third place is a case of the best-selling Wine Club wine in history—"Tosca". One of the bottles in the case will be signed by the artist who painted the art for the label--Laurel Hatch of Bozeman.

Speaking of "Tosca", the drawing for the raffle will take place at the **May 14th performance of Puccini's "Tosca" at the Willson Auditorium**. You can buy raffle tickets from the Wine Gallery (\$25 each or 5 tickets for \$100). Wine Club members can charge them to their credit card on file. Last year the winner was a Wine Club member; let's keep that string going!

* For those of you who really love "real" Montana, we are co-hosting a wine dinner at the **Madison Valley Ranch** in Jeffers on April 15th. The evening is highlighted by a 5 course French dinner with wines paired by the Wine Gallery. There are also 12 rooms available for \$125 for the night (double occupancy) with Easter brunch in the morning. Check it out to see why Orvis named Madison Valley Ranch the Lodge of the year in 2015. Tickets will run \$89 and you can make your dinner reservations with us by calling 586-8828 or sending an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com. Watch for more details next week.

*Keep your calendar open for the **2017 Extraordinary Wine Tasting**. We are planning for May 14th at the Baxter Hotel. More details will be forthcoming in future editions of the Grapevine.

Get ready for Easter

Easter is still two weeks away and we are already getting inquiries about wines for the feast.

For some great wines under \$20, may I suggest the **Mount Gravet Carignane** from France? It has bold flavors, a spicy finish, and would sit well with a slice of roast beef. The best part of a delicious wine like this is that it only costs **\$9.50**. Its sister, the **Mount Gravet Gascone** has roughly the same blend (in different proportions) of the grapes in our second Wine Club White this month. The fresh flavors of melon and citrus are the perfect foil for Easter Ham. Again, the price/value ratio is quite high when it only runs **\$9**.

To me the grassy, herbaceous nose of Sauvignon Blanc goes well with spring menus. We have the **2015 Mohua Sauvignon Blanc** that reached 91 points in Wine Spectator for its lime, mango and pineapple flavors and the vivid crisp finish. For **\$14**, you can't go wrong.

Rose' is always great with Easter. It has a light body, dry feel and gorgeous color. All of those characteristics match well with anything on the table. Try the **Pratsch Rose' (\$13.50)** from Austria. It was named the best import Rose' in the off-dry category in an international wine competition last year. We also have Roses' from Oregon, Italy, France and California. All are affordable and all are delicious.

Atlanta area wine critic and gourmand Everett Babcock recommends Gewurtztraminer for feasts that feature many different dishes. A wine that has a nose and some of the fruit characteristics of Gewurtztraminer is the Argentine white grape, Torrontes. The **2014 Zuccardi Torrontes** also shares the flavors of herbs and spices for which Gewurtztraminer got its name. The fresh palate will do well with ham and all sorts of side dishes. **\$14.95**

For folks who like reds, we have the **Big Fire Pinot Noir** that boasts an impressive 93 point rating that dwarfs its **\$19.95** price tag. If you want something a little heavier, the **2013 Baron Ricosoli Chianti Classico** is also **\$19.95** and got 91 points from Wine Advocate.

While I was gone on vacation last week, Tiffany did some spring cleaning and filled up our close-out table. These wines are the last of the vintage or wines we just can't get anymore. All wines on that table are 15% off the original price.

Also check out the table display Tiffany set up for Easter. There are lots of great suggestions for Easter Brunch including those roses' mentioned above and some affordable sparklers for Easter mimosas. If you can't find something there, we can make up an Easter basket for you with gourmet chocolates, a couple of great wines and your choice of delicious goodies. If you would like any of these wines or need to order a basket, just call us at 586-8828.