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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

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December Wine Club Preview

Our primary red wine for December is the **2015 Pragal Veronese Rosso**. It is a fruity, spicy blend of Corvina, Merlot, and Syrah giving full expression to the Italian wine region of Verona. We were intrigued by its easy elegance and full-bodied structure. Derived from low-yield vines, the wine is vinified with both fresh and partially dried grapes ('a la Amarone and Ripasso) and, after a lengthy maceration and fermentation period, it is refined in large oak barrels. Deep ruby color lightly blended with garnet red reflections of violet greet the eye. The Pragal has an engaging bouquet with alternating hints of red fruit preserves, dried roses and black cherry with subtler tones of dark spice, tobacco and black pepper. Enticing, warm and round, it has a bright acidity with soft, beguiling tannins balanced with great structure and persistence. Pair it with dishes made with truffles or grilled, roasted or braised red meat, poultry, roast lamb, stews, or sautéed vegetables or maybe a plate of hard and semi-hard cheese. **(\$18)**

The December white wine is the **2014 Les Jamelles Viognier**. It shows a pale golden color, with a nose of lime and fresh cut grass. This is not some over-ripe Viognier but one dry and rich with notes of apricot, pineapple and lavender honey on the palate. Moderate fresh acidity, firm structure and body of great finesse show on the finish. The Les Jamelles Viognier works in wine and food pairings with a wide variety of seafood and shellfish, roasted or grilled chicken, veal, pork, spicy flavors and Asian cuisine. Viognier is also delicious with select vegetable and salad courses and of course hard or soft cheese. **(\$11)**

Our second red is the **2015 LaFage La Narassa Red** from the black schist and blue skies of Roussillon, France. Notes of cassis, toasted spice, chocolate and licorice all emerge from the **2015 La Narassa**, which is 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah brought up in 600 liter oak barrels. This hedonistic, downright sexy, ripe and layered beauty will drink nicely right out of the gate. Last vintage, it rated 93 points from Wine Advocate and the 2015 barrel tasting has it at 91-93 points. Because of its rich, medium bodied, fresh, spicy and dark fruit characteristics, it makes a great wine and food pairing with beef, pork, game, duck, lamb, sausage, veal and Asian dishes. **(\$17)**

The part of the Wine Club that receives two white wines will get the **2015 Barone Fini Pinot Grigio**. Opening citrus notes evolve into juicy flavors of warm ripe apples and lychee, concluding in tones of mountain herbs and flowers. Bright acidity balanced with minerality creates a rich, clean finish that allows it to be paired with heavier sauces and strong flavors. **(\$15)**

Millennium Club members will receive the **2014 Buehler Cabernet**. This wine blended from multiple vineyard sources represents tremendous value and quality. The Buehler is brimming with fruit aromas and flavors tilted to the black fruit end of the Cabernet spectrum: plums, blackberry, and black currant. Rich and full-bodied on the palate, this Cabernet drinks well now but will soften and develop with additional age. Clean and direct, this is an easy-drinking charmer, with lively dark berry, spice, light cedar and loamy tannins that cast a nutmeg aroma. It really works for those who seek youthful fresh Cabernet fruit aromas and a more structured wine

New arrival

If you are looking for a great sparkling wine for the Holidays, we have one for you. **Viva La Vida Brut Rosé** has a beautiful cherry/coral color that delivers a cheerful stream of fine bubbles. Highlighting flavors of wild red fruit, rich cranberry and strawberries and cream, this wine is light and spicy on the front. It yields a racy acidity with a lovely toasty and generous finish. The Viva la Vida color gives a real Christmas look to accompany aperitifs or canapes. Of course it is delicious with salmon, seafood and sushi and recommended with all types of pastries, especially those with fruit. For those of you who like statistics the Viva la Vida is only 11.5% alcohol, 100% Pinot Noir and 100% Spanish. This is a fabulous find for a 100% Methode Champenoise Rose' of Pinot Noir. **\$13.50**

Best of Bozeman Three-peat

For the third year in a row, **the Wine Gallery was voted Bozeman's Best Wine Retailer** by readers of Bozeman Magazine. If you count all the casinos, liquor stores, grocery stores, big box outlets, drug stores and other outlets for wine, the competition is getting tougher every year. We are proud of our excellent service, selection, and pricing so we are gratified to receive this honor once again.

In a related but quirky vote, the Wine Gallery also showed up in a category meant for restaurants and bars. In spite of closing at 6 PM and not pouring one drop of wine, the Wine Gallery still finished second to Plonk in the Nightlife Category under **Best Wine Selection**. I admit we are not a nightlife hotspot but we were recognized for our 1600 label selection covering over 100 grape varieties from 21 different countries as a confirmation that we have one of the best line-ups in five states when it comes to wine selection. We appreciate the votes even if we didn't qualify for the category.

We would like to thank all of you that voted for us. Next year we will strive to make it a Four-peat.

The Story on Story Mill Park

Last summer, Jeanie and I happened on the "open house" for the new Story Mill Community Park. I must say we were impressed and amazed at how this gem will enhance our community.

As you may know, since 2012 the Trust for Public Land has been working to create a flagship community park at the 60-acre Story Mill site northeast of downtown Bozeman. Working with the City of Bozeman, the park will feature opportunities for active recreation (trails, climbing boulder, an adventure playground, dog park, etc.), community gathering spaces (outdoor amphitheater, community center, pavilions, grand lawn, etc.), a nature sanctuary along the restored East Gallatin River and wetlands, new trails and trail connections, and natural and cultural interpretive programs. Story Mill Community Park represents extensive partnerships across the community including the university, many nonprofit organizations, city government, neighborhood organizations, local schools, and others. They recently received final site plan approvals from the City of Bozeman, and are now preparing the project for the construction phase to begin as soon as spring weather allows. The City of Bozeman dedicated \$4.5 million from the 2012 Parks & Trails Bond Measure, and the Campaign for Story Mill Community Park has secured almost \$10.4 million in private gifts, leaving \$1.2 million to be raised by The Trust for Public Land for construction to continue through next summer and fall. If successful, the Park is scheduled to be completed by Fall of 2018!

At the Wine Gallery, we are building on these partnerships by placing a beautifully decorated birdhouse donation box and informational brochures on our front counter. Please donate what you can to this worthy cause.

December schedule and events

****December 8th is the final Art Walk of 2017** in Downtown Bozeman. We will be at **Miller's Jewelry** at Main and Tracy pouring delicious samples of Holiday Wines. Enjoy these special selections while perusing Miller's huge selection of Yogo Sapphire jewelry pieces, classic watches, estate jewelry, gemstone bracelets, rings and

necklaces. Who knows? You may find the perfect gift for someone who has been extra good this year.

If you need another incentive, Miller's is sponsoring their **Annual Ugly Christmas Sweater** contest. There will be a photo booth to document your taste in sweaters or just to commemorate the evening.

** Moving forward into **December**, the Wine Gallery will be open seven days a week for all of December except Christmas Day. We will have our normal hours Monday to Saturday and **we will be open Sundays from 12 PM to 4 PM**. Those Sundays include Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Remember, the liquor stores will be closed both of those Sundays but the Wine Gallery will be open to accommodate last minute shoppers.

Large Format Wines

'Tis the season for parties and dinners, family get togethers and company galas. For any setting with a lot of people, large format wine bottles are particularly fun.

With a Magnum (1.5 Liter) or larger bottle, more guests will be sharing the same wine out of the same bottle. We have many different Magnum sized bottles and a few bottles in even larger formats. The celebratory nature of opening a big bottle always adds to any gathering.

One other advantage of large format bottles is that if you are a collector, large formats tend to age much longer than standard sized bottles. As my brother Geoff is fond of saying, "Wine loves itself". Because there is a larger proportion of wine to oxygen in a larger bottle it takes longer for the wine to mature and when it does the wine sometimes comes out with more subtlety and complexity than what would be expected from standard bottles.

If you would like a list of large format bottles that are currently available, you can get them by e-mail by contacting us at bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com.

Holiday Gift Baskets

For a knock-out Holiday gift that is as beautiful as it is easy to get, try one of the **Wine Gallery gift baskets**. This versatile gift can have as many goodies as you want. Choose from over 1600 wines, and our wide selection of cheese, meats, sauces, mixes, chocolates, crackers, wine gadgets and gourmet items. By selecting the items you want, you make the exact statement for the people on your list.

If you would prefer for us to make the selections, just give us a call with a preferred price point and we will assemble a stunning basket for you. Most baskets are ready within 24 hours of your order.