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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Extraordinary wines**
- **Memorial Day Hours**
- **Ready for inspection, SIR!!**
- **Chilling for the summer**

Extraordinary Wines

Last Wednesday a select group of tasters reviewed the 66 wines we presented at the Extraordinary Tasting. For those of you who missed the event (due to the snow?), we have some of the best sellers to report.

Eberle Full Boar red

Many of you remember this as a Wine Club wine back in 2015. The current version is a medium bodied wine, with juicy fruit flavors of cherry and blackberry, supple tannins and a hint of cola. Like the earlier version, this one is approachable for everyday drinking and built well enough to lay down. I was pleasantly surprised at the quality and complexity for a wine at this price point. Full Boar Red pairs well with braised and barbecued meats as well as pizza and pasta. That makes it a good candidate for summer fare. **(\$18.50)**

Eberle Chardonnay

Also from Eberle is their Paso Robles Chardonnay. This wine is fresh in every way making it one of the most exciting vintages of Eberle Estate Chardonnay to date. This wine is vibrant in color like newly cut straw with aromas and flavors of ripe pineapple, creamy lemon with a hint of sweet toasty oak. We had lots of great comments on this wine not only for its taste but the versatile style. Eberle's Estate Chardonnay makes a perfect accompaniment for a wide range of dishes from Chicken Piccata to creamy pasta dishes. Or if you like fresh fish, try it with grilled salmon or sole sautéed in a lemon herb butter sauce. **(\$21)**

2014 Bodegas Palacios Remondo La Montesa

The 2013 vintage of the La Montesa got 91 points from Wine Spectator and landed at #51 on top 100. The 2014 was reviewed in February and got 92 points from Wine Advocate. I can see why; the palate shows great balance, and the overall effect of the higher percentage of Garnacha in the 2014 is a more elegant, streamlined wine that is very tasty with great freshness. It feels like an expensive wine but only runs **\$21.50**.

La Spinetta Barbera di Asti

One wine that our staff had pegged for a winner is the **La Spinetta Barbera di Asti**. We got that right as evidenced by the tasters who included it on their order forms. In the glass it is ruby red with purple reflections. It is extremely perfumed with violet, blackberry, blueberry and wet earth aromas. The palate is backed by full body, firm, silky tannins and an attractive acid-fruit balance on the finish. This is an ultra-fine Barbera that combines richness with finesse and is suitable for drinking now. **(\$27.50)**

Sean Minor Nicole Marie Red

We always rock the wines from Sean Minor and this year the standout was the **Sean Minor Nicole Marie Red**. The Napa Valley Nicole Marie Blend is deep ruby in color and displays aromas of ripe dark fruit, brown sugar, molasses and vanilla. On the palate, it is big, rich and spicy, offering flavors of dark cherry, plum, cassis and black pepper that integrate with hints of oak spices, coating the palate. The round soft tannins and sweet oak balance lead to a long and lingering finish. **(\$19.95)**

Yamhill Pinot Blanc

Yamhill Valley Vineyards is one of the Wine Gallery's best Oregon producers. We try not to play favorites, but if we had a favorite white wine from Oregon, Pinot Blanc would be it. Before it was commercially recognized, Yamhill Valley Vineyards were growing Pinot Blanc and learning how to make it the way I like. It has rich full flavor, minerality, hints of melon and stone fruit with a creamy, supple texture that is just delicious. Pair with smoked cheeses, a nice poached halibut, or summer grilled chicken. Atlanta area wine critic and gourmand Everett Babcock thinks Pinot Blanc is best with oysters. **(\$17.95)**

Memorial Day

The Wine Gallery will be closed Monday, May 29th in observance of Memorial Day. Take a moment to raise your glass to salute our honored Armed Forces members who died in the service of our country.

Sure, there's no "I" in team. But, there is in Wine and that starts with Win. Coincidence? Nope.

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Ready for Inspection, SIR!!

Last month, we were inspected by the Gallatin County Health Department as part of our yearly health and sanitation review. This surprise inspection covers all aspects of our public face including our coolers, food storage, restrooms, cleaning procedures, adequate hand sanitizing—the whole gamut. It is a great pride (and relief) to me that there were “no findings”. In layman’s terms “no findings” means we passed with a perfect score.

The week after that, a young lady came into the store, picked out a bottle of wine and brought it to the register. Tiffany asked for her ID, but the young woman answered that it was out in the car. Tiffany replied that she would be happy to wait until her proper identification was retrieved. At that moment, another customer stepped forward and produced her own identification as an inspector for underage liquor sale violations. We got a nice postcard saying “thank you” for asking for ID and for passing our surprise test.

Now we are waiting for the fire inspector.

Chilling this summer

It bears repeating that ice cold beer is one of the most refreshing and welcome beverages of summer. The cold, bracing feel of carbonation and the dry flavor of malty hops is a just reward for a well mowed lawn or the completion of a round of golf. It also bears repeating the proper method for chilling white wine does NOT come anywhere near the ice cold that makes beer so refreshing.

Most white wines will be best at 48-54 degrees F. If wines are much colder than that, the only thing that you will taste is alcohol and acid. In order for the esters and

aromas of white wine to reach your olfactory bulb, the wine has to be a good bit warmer than refrigerator temperature. To get your wine to the correct temperature, follow the 40 minute rule: If you have had your white wine in the fridge, pull it out 40 minutes before you intend to serve it. If you are starting with a white at room temperature, a 40 minute rest in the fridge will bring it to a more congenial serving temperature.

If you are serving a sparkling wine like Champagne or Cava, one hour then straight from the refrigerator is acceptable. The carbonation will bring aromas and flavors to the surface (and make your nose tickle!).

While we're talking about refrigerating wine, let's dismiss another myth: There's no harm in refrigerating wine, and no need to worry about alternately cooling wine and letting it come back to room temperature. Perhaps based on old stories about unpasteurized beer, many people fear that wine will be somehow damaged by this treatment, but it simply isn't so. You do want to protect your wine from high heat, but otherwise, it's durable and resistant to moderate temperature changes within the range of 35-85 degrees F.

One last summertime caveat concerning wine: Don't let a bottle overheat inside your car or trunk! If the cork has been pushed up and wine is leaking from around the capsule, it is a sure sign your wine is cooked. Overheated wine will be undrinkable within a day or two. If your wine reached just 130-140 degrees F. it will taste bland flat and lifeless. If you think you may have overheated a bottle of wine, immediately bring it back to serving temperature and give it a taste. A few of the times I have been the bonehead who left a bottle to heat up in a locked car, drinking the wine right away hasn't seemed to have been a huge catastrophe. Other times I've tasted wines even a day or two after the sedan sauna treatment, they have been replaced by a horrible beverage resembling stewed prunes.

A good rule of thumb for wine in the summer is one related to me by Mary Maier of Bozeman's own Health Balance. Her rule is: "If your car is too hot for your dog, it is too hot for wine."

Keep cool.