



Volume 18, No.41 (published by the Wine Gallery, Bozeman, MT) October 24, 2018

What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Fall Cider and Wine Tasting Review**
- **Deals and debuts**
- **Bozeman's Choice**
- **Events**

Fall Cider and Wine Tasting Review

Last Thursday we hosted a **Fall Cider and Wine Tasting** at the Food Studio. We featured seven ciders and six wines for our tasters. As an added component, Brooks Nuanez of George's Distributing led us through the history of cider and how it is made.

My favorite was the **Montana Ciderworks North Fork**. This English style cider is golden, gently bubbly, and boasts true cider flavor. It has an expressive bittersweet apple character with wood, grass and slightly smoky notes. There is enough fruit in this semi-dry cider to balance the faintest sweetness against sharpness, astringency, and tart fruit. I believe I heard Brooks say that this cider won the International Cider Competition in England recently. Ciders are lower in alcohol than wine and this refreshing fall beverage came in at 7% by volume. **(\$8; 16.7 oz. bottle)**

The surprise of the night was the **Julian "Black and Blue"** cider. This delicious concoction is made from 100% fresh-pressed hard apple cider blended with the juice from American-grown and sustainably farmed blackberries and blueberries. In appearance, it looked like wine. With the balance of fruit and acid, it reminded me of Gamay or ripe Grenache. Almost everyone who tried it thought it would be good on the Thanksgiving table. Every order (except one) placed for ciders had Julian's Black and Blue on it **(\$8; 22 oz. bottle)**

Speaking of Thanksgiving, Brooks brought along some of **Rev. Nat's Abbey Spiced Cider**. The cider is mixed with raisins and cinnamon so when you taste it, the impression you get is Granny's green apple pie. It is tart, spicy and utterly delicious. The packaging is a 12 oz. can and this cider is one Brooks recommended to be served room temperature or higher. I connected the dots and this will be the base for Halloween mulled cider this year. **(\$3 per 12 oz. can)**

Over at the wine table the runaway winner was the **Bleasdale Red Brut Sparkling Shiraz** from Australia. Now, for some, Sparkling Shiraz is an acquired taste, but like the Julian “Black and Blue” every order save one had a least one bottle of the Bleasdale. Made from Langhorne Creek Shiraz grapes, it boasts sweet berry fruit aromas with floral scents. On the palate, cherry and raspberry flavors are highlighted by a slight effervescent character. There are some sweet candy spices with pepper on the ending. This is a unique wine that may benefit from some chilling. It was stylistically akin to the Julian according to our tasters. **(\$19)**

Deals and debuts

This week we sampled the **2015 Domaine Solitude Chateauneuf du Pape**. We found a wine with a ripe and seductive silky feel. It shows hints of toasted almond or marzipan on the nose. The palate was a confluence of waves of raspberry, kirsch and blood orange flavors. Domaine de la Solitude turned in a top performance with its 2015 and it should drink well for 15+ years. It is less than half the price of Vieux Telegraphe and Beaucastel but still maintains a 93 point scores from Wine Spectator *and* Wine Advocate. This beautiful wine is \$50 elsewhere but at the Wine Gallery, it is just **\$40.95**

Domaine Solitude also makes a **Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc**. In my mind CdP blancs are the best white wines in the world. The **2017** version of the **Domaine Solitude** has a ripe and lush style, with creamed melon and peach notes framed by a light-handed dose of warm piecrust and toasted macadamia nut hints. The fresh edge sails through due to the honeysuckle gliding on the finish. The Solitude CdP Blanc garnered 92 points from Wine Spectator and again is \$50 everywhere else. The Wine Gallery has it for just **\$39.95**.

We also ran into a deal on Tikal wines from Argentina. The **2014 Tikal Natural** is a blend of 60% Malbec and 40% Syrah sourced from 12-year-old organically and biodynamically-farmed vineyards in Vista Flores, in the Valle de Uco. The wine matured in a mixture of new and old French and American oak barrels for some eight months. There is less ripeness and extraction than in previous vintages, but it's still nicely balanced and keeps a core of acidity and fruit-driven flavors. As always, it is easy to drink and pleasant. Wine Advocate has it at 90 points. It was released at \$23 but we bought a bunch and it is now **\$16.50**.

The **2015 Tikal Patriota** was a similar blend of Malbec from the Valle de Uco (Vista Flores) and Bonarda from Ribadavia. The blend matured in oak barrels for some ten months. There is no astringency or herbal notes in this blend, and the Malbec is nicely complemented by the slightly rustic character of the Bonarda. Concentrated dark cherry and blackberry flavors give this an inviting fruitiness, backed by firm acidity. Black licorice and spice notes show on the finish. Like the Natural, it has a 90 point Wine Advocate score, was released at \$23 and is Wine Gallery priced at \$16.50.

The 2014 Tikal Amorío Malbec is different, as it's mostly Malbec with some 15% Petit Verdot, but also from the Tikal estate vineyards in Vista Flores. matured in oak barrels for 14 months. It is ripe and also creamy, and round. The Malbec clearly dominates the character of the blend with a round, fleshy, tasty core, with a soft texture. Released at \$33, we have it at **\$27.95**.

Best of Bozeman poll this month

This month Bozeman Magazine will be offering their “**Best of Bozeman**” poll. This on-line poll lets you vote for your favorite stores, restaurants, bars, venues, performers, events and all things Bozeman.

Every year the poll gets bigger and I am daunted by categories like “best hip-hop group”, “best children’s store”, and “best bar for late night eats”.

I do have some opinions on restaurants, book stores, and performing arts that I vote on every year and it is fun to see the new entries and the old standards come up.

Once again, the Wine Gallery is listed in the Best of Bozeman poll. Under the broad category of “Chomping and Chugging” you can vote for the Wine Gallery as the “Best Wine Retailer” and “Best Place to Buy Alcohol”. Further down in the category of Night Life and Libations, you can vote for the Wine Gallery under “Best Wine Selection”.

You don’t have to vote in every category and every selection but we would really be happy if you could vote for us in the categories we just mentioned. Just follow this link to cast your votes.

https://bozemanmagazine.com/bestof/82_bozemans_choice_2019. Voting ends October 31 so vote early and vote often.

Grand Wine Tasting

Every November the Wine Gallery presents the **Grand Tasting**. This year it will be Saturday November 3. The Grand Tasting is a great way to find wonderful, affordable wines that you try before you buy. We plan to have over 60 wines priced from \$12 to \$20 and all rated 90 points or above. These are all wonderful and affordable wines for you to sample.

Get your spouse, your friends, your neighbors or your business associates together for this fantastic evening. **Tickets are just \$69** and include wine, food, parking and gratuity. I don’t know where you could go in Bozeman to find a deal like this! Call us at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com to get your tickets.

We plan a **7 PM start at the Hilton Garden Inn** and our chef has put together a stunning array of heavy hors d’oeuvres to pair with the night’s wine selections. Try pairing your wine samples with the seafood cioppino, Rosemary and peppercorn Bistro tenders, Cumin coated pork loin or any of the assorted cheeses, meats and pates. Save room for Chocolate covered strawberries!

The Holiday season is looming and what with parties, dinners, customer gifts and just re-stocking the cellar, this is the best wine event for savvy shoppers. You can even have a chance to try out that new cocktail dress—we welcome the folks who class up our evening by dressing up.

Madison Valley Ranch plans wine dinners

After having experienced the beauty and hospitality of the Madison Valley Ranch over Easter weekend, I was delighted to be presented a chance to offer two more wine dinners at this gorgeous venue on November 9th and November 10th. The Madison Valley Ranch sold out every seat for our last dinner and they would love to have another congenial group come by for a great evening in November.

The Madison Valley Ranch is located across the Madison River from Ennis in Jeffers, Montana. This beautiful setting won the **Lodge of the Year** from Orvis in 2015 and I can see why. There is a pond and a creek where you can practice your fly casting and it is a short walk through the Channels to the Madison if you prefer to river fish. At dusk we watched ring neck pheasants, sand hill cranes and osprey fly by serenaded by meadowlarks. In the adjacent field a moose family made daily appearances last summer and we were lucky enough to see a herd of deer foraging as we ate.

Our dinner will be prepared by Chef Matt Pease who stoked his creative energies to bring out dishes made with a variety of locally sourced victuals including smoked trout, Wagyu beef, local duck as well as beets, parsnips and cheeses. I came up with some delicious wines to pair and I would say, in all false modesty, it will be one of the best dining experiences in Madison County.

Jeanie and I as well as some other folks from Bozeman employed a strategy of staying at the lodge overnight instead travelling back in the dark. Believe me, the accommodations are first rate. The good news is the Madison Valley Ranch has a special deal for those who stay over (just mention the Wine Gallery dinner). It really can't be beat for a fun night away from the city. As a bonus, in the morning, we were served a delicious breakfast with some of the best coffee I've had in years.

If you just want a ticket for dinner, it is \$89 including everything. Call us for the wine dinner only option at 586-8828 and we will get you a seat. If you wish to book the dinner **and** lodging package, I would suggest a call to the Madison Valley ranch directly at 800-891-6158. Call soon, the last event sold out quickly.