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## What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Steals and Deals**
- **Important dates**
- **Sparkling wine—Express to downtown?**
- **Updating the Cellar**
- **Pedenza!**

## Steals and deals

I try to keep everyone up to date on the goings on in the wine world and this week we got a bad news/good news announcement about one of our favorite labels. The bad news is that the **Rickshaw** winery in California has been bought out by a bigger company. Our experience has been that the price to buy wineries like Rickshaw end up on the sticker price from the new owners. When we do get it back, the prices will probably rise from \$14.95 to \$18.95. Mind you, at \$18.95, the Rickshaw wines are still a fantastic value but it is disappointing to see a 20% jump.

Oh, I said there was good news. The good news is that we bought as much of the remaining current inventory at a brother-in-law deal. While we have the Rickshaw Pinot Noir and the Rickshaw Chardonnay, the price comes **down** to \$12.95 per bottle.

Historically, the **Rickshaw Pinot Noir** has always been the real deal. The **2016 Rickshaw Pinot Noir** shows that it is possible to find an excellent example of this grape variety at an affordable price. It possesses kirsch and black cherry notes, cola and baking spices from the kiss of French oak it sees. There is a persistent core of sweet fruit extract balanced with bright acidity. Endlessly energetic, this Pinot is the ultimate versatile wine, working well for an aperitif to pairing with king salmon or skirt steak with chimichurri. (**\$12.95 while it lasts**)

**The Rickshaw Chardonnay** is a staple in my home cellar. It is food friendly and the perfect wine to take to dinner with friends. The wine leads off with aromas of white peach and vanilla spice. In the mouth it bursts with notes of lemon, guava, honeysuckle and cream. The flavors are melded together in fine balance and underpinned with a vivacious finish and lingering sense of brightness. I did say **\$12.95**, right? Think of this week's deal as 33% off the future price!!

Another wine we rediscovered this week is the **2015 Lafage Bastide Miraflores**. This wine is almost too good to be true. A blend of 70% Syrah and 30% Grenache, the **Bastide Miraflores** is a ripe, sexy, heady beauty that exhibits a deep,

purple color as well as killer notes of smoked meats, chocolate, blackberry and black raspberries. Deep, unctuous, open knit and layered, it continues to change in the glass. It has a seamless and silky profile, with not a hard edge to be found. It's a sensational value that needs to be tasted to be believed. What makes it a sensational value? How about a **94 point rating from Wine Advocate** and a **\$15.95** price tag? I always say if you can find a wine rated 90 points or better and under \$20, it is a good enough value to buy a bottle. When it rates 94 points and retails under \$16, buy it by the case!

## **These dates are coming up SOON!**

Where would you have the chance to taste the best wines available AND nosh on the culinary creations of Chef Daniel Wendell? If you can avail yourself to this magical synergy of gustatory delights, sign up! Live life! We have set the date for our **annual 93 Point Tasting for March 8**. This is by far the best wine tasting event in Montana and we seem to sell out every year. The idea behind it is both brilliant and practical. Larry Johnson, local president of the American Wine Society noted that when he blindly buys a 90 point wine that costs \$14.95 and doesn't like it, it isn't a big deal to pour it down the drain. A 93 point wine blindly purchased for \$39 and not to his liking is hard to pour out but he would be forced to drink a wine he didn't like. His solution was to have a tasting where the best of the best bottles are opened and participants can decide for themselves what fits their palates. Taste the best, buy your favorites, and leave the risk and uncertainty behind. The 93 point tasting will begin at 6:30 PM, March 8 at the Food Studio on West Kagy. Tickets are \$89 and are available by calling the Wine Gallery at 586-8828 or by e-mail at [bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com](mailto:bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com)

\*\* Following the successful and sold out tasting at the **Saffron Table** last month, we have decided to do another one so the folks who were on the waiting list or just missed it will have a chance to join the fun. The tasting itself is done in an intimate group of 8 or less and demonstrates the best wine pairings for South Asian food. The tasting is done prior to your dinner reservation and makes a wonderful evening that is both educational and delicious. Mark March 27<sup>th</sup> on your calendar for the date. We will have three seatings: 5:00 PM, 5:30 PM and 6 PM. Tickets for the tasting portion are \$15 each and reservations can be made by calling us at 586-8828 or by e-mail at [bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com](mailto:bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com).

Note that your dinner seating will commence 30 minutes after your wine tasting session begins. Please also note that the tasting is a separate charge from dinner. Dinner is at your option but I would take advantage of this opportunity to get both.

## **Sparklers—The express to downtown**

I have often heard that sparkling wines seem to take effect faster than still wines. Until recently, I'd never heard anything more than anecdotal evidence to confirm the phenomenon.

I do know that various factors can affect the rate of absorption of alcohol by the stomach and intestines. About 20 % of the alcohol in wine is absorbed by the mucous

membranes in the stomach and the remainder is absorbed by the small intestine. If the digestive tract is full of foods that are high in carbohydrates or fats, the absorption rate is slowed. We all know the converse of that rule works in spades whenever we imbibe on an “empty stomach”.

Carbon dioxide—the cause of the bubbles in sparkling wine—also plays a role. CO<sub>2</sub> moves alcohol at an accelerated pace into the blood stream. An English study I read on the subject compared the perceived intoxication rate of people drinking Champagne vs. those drinking Champagne with the bubbles removed. (They used a blender to de-gas the Champagne.) At the 10 minute mark, the bubbly imbibers felt more effects than those who imbibed the de-gassed Champagne. However, after about 20 minutes there was no noticeable difference in how tipsy the subjects felt. The upshot is that the CO<sub>2</sub> seems to accelerate the absorption through the stomach’s mucosa.

To keep from getting too tipsy too fast, remember to sip sparkling wines at a slower pace. It might also be a good idea to nibble on some food at the same time. Sparkling wines are known for their versatility to match with almost any food. Cheers!!

## **Updating the Wine Cellar**

We moved into our permanent home in Bozeman a little under 14 years ago and I have begun the annual pre-Spring re-arranging my modest cellar. However, as I was doing that little organizational exercise, it occurred to me that there are some things I should do differently as I arrange:

- I should open the bottles I meant to open years ago. If they are good, it’s a nice surprise. If they aren’t, it’s on to the next one. None will die in my cellar.
- I should always buy two or more if I like the wine. It is fun to enjoy a wine as an old friend. Finding a “house wine” is a challenge, but enjoying that wine over a period of time is worth it.
- I will be careful about buying the same labels year after year just because the wine was good one year. I always end up with too much and (this is a sad fact about the wine industry) everybody produces a clunker every now and again.
- I really should do more blind tasting. Yes, it’s a real time saver to use the magazines as a guide, but the real discoveries are made when I don’t have a preconceived notion of what’s in the bottle. Blind tasting sharpens the senses and refines wine tasting skills.
- I will keep trying new grapes, new vineyards and new locations. A cellar full of Cabernets and Chardonnays from California limits my experiences.
- I will partake in more tasting with other wine lovers. It seems I always add something to the experience when I find out what others taste and when I hear someone else’s opinion. Is that a plug for the new chapter American Wine Society?

- I need to keep a better log of what goes in and out. It seems we are always short of white wine even though I think we only drink red.
- I should keep better track of when the wine will be best to drink. Like in the first item, I don't want to let one go too long but at the same time I should give some wines the right length of time to evolve.
- I will stock wines I buy on value. I will (patiently) weigh the quality of the wine against the price tag. If it's worth \$60, I will pay \$60. If it's not, I'll use the \$60 to buy something that is worth \$60—even if that means buying four good \$15 bottles.

## **Pedenza**

A local artist and craftsman Kyle “Buck” Jones came in earlier this month with a remarkable conversation piece. He calls it a “Pedenza” which is Italian for “slope.” The single bottle wine stand pictured below is 100% black walnut carved, polished and balanced to make a gorgeous centerpiece for your table. The cantilever design works with any size bottle and will fit almost anywhere. It is engineered, hand carved and beautifully polished by this local artisan. We are selling these for \$79.95 but don't just look at the picture. Come in and look at how stunning they are in person.

