



**Volume 18, No.23** (published by the Wine Gallery, Bozeman, MT) **June 6, 2018**

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

- **Back from France**
- **Summer events**
- **New look, new products**

### **Back from France**

Jeanie and I just returned from a few weeks in France. We did a lot of touristy things like climbing the Eiffel Tower and visiting museums, castles and cathedrals of course, but everyone asks us about the wine industry in France and did we do a bit of wine tasting?

Well the short answer is yes, we did a little tasting but it was mostly confined to trying wines of the region with the regional cuisine. I don't really know how to explain it, but I taste wine for a living and going on vacation to spend "time in the office" wasn't that inviting. I can report that the French are still pretty good at viticulture and winemaking. For instance, the first night we were in Paris, we ventured to a brasserie down the street from our hotel. We weren't looking for a Michelin three star restaurant, just a place to replenish our jetlagged bodies. We ordered a "pichet" (a little over a half bottle carafe) of Chardonnay to go with the grilled fish on the menu. This generic Chardonnay was one of the best I've tasted but the server had no idea about the brand. It was just their house wine.

After Paris, we spent about a week in the Loire Valley. The hilltop village of Sancerre was definitely on our schedule because of its picturesque site and its famous Sauvignon Blanc. Not that far away was Pouilly sur Loire whose less famous (and less pricy) Sauvignon Blanc turned out to be our favorite. We also visited some of the chateaux (castles) along the way.

Continuing southward, we spent a few days in Serlat in the Dordogne Valley. This beautiful area is home of many of the prehistoric cave paintings from 10-15,000 years ago. It is also home to the foie gras industry so we indulged in that delicacy a few times. We were in Serlat over the weekend which meant going to the farmer's market in the old walled city. As much as I love our Gallatin Farmer's Market, the French version is much more eye catching and complex. Imagine bundles of thumb thick white asparagus selling for under \$1.50 per pound. Or stop by the many stands that had handmade French cheeses and sausages. We even went by a stand that had fresh Perigord truffles at about half what we would pay here. I also have a picture of a wine stand where they were handing out free samples. We just don't see that every day in Montana.

Our last few days were spent in the Gaillac region where we visited hilltop towns, more castles and enjoyed more new wines and great food.

That said; it is good to be back. We are working on consuming less than a pound of butter per day.

Just a few acknowledgements: We would like to thank Nancy Bailey and Gary Herzberg for their work preparing a Montanan's guide to Paris. It was invaluable for getting around and seeing the sights. American Wine Society President Larry Johnson was also visiting Paris when we arrived. He arranged for dinner at the home of a French couple where we had a great dinner and made new friends. Fred Overby was kind enough to hook us up with a "gite" (French Airbnb) in the Loire Valley. Robert, the owner, is a breeder of Brittany Spaniels so we got our dog fix every day. We'd also like to thank Charles Ketterman and Ruth Kopec for recommending our wonderful B&B, Les Vents Bleus in Donnezac.

## Summer events

**\*\*Art Walk** is on again this summer. The first one of the season is **Friday, June 8** from 6 to 8PM at art galleries and participating businesses located along Main Street and at the Emerson Center for Arts and Culture. More good news is that **Miller's Jewelry** will again be hosting the Art Walk crowd this Friday at 6. As a special promotion, Miller's will have all watches on sale. And for every watch purchase, you will get a free bottle of whiskey from Copper Whiskey Bar & Grill. I am bringing 7 different and tasty wines for you to sample as you watch the watches.

**\*\*Join us next week on June 12<sup>th</sup>** for a fun evening at the Saffron Table. The questions we get asked most involve food pairing and we are using that as our agenda for this event. We plan to taste Champagne and Rose' just because



both are all-purpose, food friendly wines. Our schedule is to have each tasting session start 30 minutes before your dinner reservation. Seatings for the tastings are at 5 PM, 5:30 PM and 6PM. If you decide to stay for dinner, (why not? it's the Saffron Table!!) just let us know and we will reserve your table for you. Because we are tasting more upscale wines at this event, the cost for this tasting is \$25. While many restaurants in Bozeman charge \$15-19 per single glass for French Champagne, our 5 wine sampler is not only educational, it's downright affordable. I saw pan seared halibut as the special along with a South Indian meat entrée that will tickle your taste buds. Your dinner charges with the Saffron Table will be handled separately.

To reserve your spots, just call us at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to [bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com](mailto:bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com).

\*\*One other great thing about Montana is that her sons and daughters come back to the Big Sky each year to enjoy the best climate and most beautiful outdoors in the world. Michael Reynolds, cellist for the Muir String Quartet and founder of the Montana Chamber Music Society is someone who pays his respects to Montana every year. This summer on July 14<sup>th</sup>, Trinity Episcopal Church in Jeffers will host the Muir Quartet at a fundraiser for their 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. After the concert there will be artisan foods and a selection of premium wines. You can get tickets by calling Manny Hoag at 406-788-3254 (e-mail [mannyh@3rivers.net](mailto:mannyh@3rivers.net))

Not to drop names or blow my own horn but Michael Reynolds (his sister Kathleen and brother Terry) and I played together in the Bozeman High School

orchestra. I am convinced that the Reynolds' stellar music careers stem from my example of raw talent and dilettante lack of practice. They probably saw my future as the proprietor of a small town wine store while their futures evolved into world class musicians by virtue of hard work and innate talent. My advice: you can't do better than the Muir Quartet on the banks of the Madison on a July afternoon. Go back to the last paragraph and send Manny an order for tickets.

## **New Product, New Look**

Today the Wine Gallery is undergoing a minor facelift. We are re-doing the front bay where the gourmet foods and chilled wines are currently located. That bay will now have a tile floor to accommodate a new line we are VERY excited about.

In the past, we have struggled as a small retailer to find consistent gourmet suppliers and product lines. When we were casting around for high quality products and good suppliers we asked Brie Thompson at Olivelle here in Bozeman how she did so well with her product lines. Well, one thing led to another, and we landed on the Olivelle line itself as the one that made the most sense. Olivelle is local, the products are the highest quality, the packaging looks great, and we get great support. Not only that, they have a huge catalog of recipes so I will never run out for the Wine Club recipe of the month.

It seemed a good fit for the Wine Gallery because flavored olive oil and balsamic vinegar are sold the same way as wine. There are flavor profiles, complements and contrasts, and the actual terroir of the crop to consider. The real eye opener for me was tasting my store bought olive oil against the "regular" olive oil from Olivelle. The "store bought" seemed stale and bland; the Olivelle was fresh, flavorful and delicious. We were so taken with the flavor and quality, we have it set up where you can taste our fresh offerings any time you are in the store. (I wish we could do the same with wine!)

Our oils are sealed from oxygen so they are always fresh. Each bottle is poured while you watch. The bottles themselves can be re-used so you won't pay for another glass bottle if you return your used one. We will also offer the same pricing as the Olivelle store on 19<sup>th</sup> and our source is the same Olivelle plant just north of Bozeman.

The remodel should be complete by Thursday or Friday so come on in and check it out!