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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Wine Club**
- **Valentine's Day coming up**
- **Women's health**
- **Mark your calendar**

Wine Club for February

We picked our first red wine for February back in October not knowing we were well head of Wine Spectator in selecting the **2015 Garzon Tannat Reserva** as a terrific value. Wine Spectator rated it 90 points and placed it **#41 on the Top 100** (out of 37,000 wines reviewed in 2017) last December. Its secret to success is the juicy, fresh demeanor on the nose and palate backed by silky tannins. Well-sculpted, with dense, rich flavors of dark plum, dried blackberry and dark currant all supported by firm tannins that coat the tongue. Christmas pudding and rich savory notes show on the finish. This is a sensational bottle of wine for the price. Lamb or barbecue ribs friendly, you may find it even better the next night. In an added note: February is Heart Month and Tannat is the grape highest in the procyanidins that protect your heart. (See article below) **(\$16.50)**

Our first white wine is **the 2016 Werner Stempel Pinot Blanc**. The variety is often regarded as Chardonnay's understudy. Like Chardonnay, it produces a well-structured, medium- to full-bodied style of wine with good acidity, which also responds well to oak maturation. Pinot Blanc is my favorite white grape these days and this one shows why. The February selection offers a rich aromatic perfume of cashew, honeydew melon, and mineral. On the palate the wine is elegant, displaying a fine mineral structure, a touch of oak with delicate floral notes, and flavors of lemon, melon, and apple. It is very versatile with light to medium rich dishes including seafood, poultry and Mediterranean cuisine. **(\$16.50)**

Folks who get two reds will receive the **2015 Skinner Smithereens Red Blend** from the Sierra Foothills. The organically-farmed Smithereens from Skinner Vineyards is a Rhone Valley-styled red blend made primarily from Grenache and Syrah, with a little Mourvèdre and Counoise thrown in -- all the grapes you find in classic Chateauneuf du Pape. The 2015 Red Blend has red fruit aromatics like dark cherry, strawberry preserves, and dried cranberry. Extra smooth and silky in texture, the wine has a lingering finish, too. Ripe and loaded with dark plum and black fruits, this is a rich, dark red that should be enjoyed with robust, earthy dishes such as duck, game meats, pot roast, or mushroom risotto. **(\$18)**

The portion of the Wine Club who take two white wines will have a real treat. Sourced from two vineyards in the Yakima Valley, the **2016 Corvidae Ravenna Riesling** underwent a long, cold fermentation in 100% stainless steel to keep all of the bright aromatics in place. This wine has a beautiful texture, while the clean, natural acidity provides a focused attack and a crisp finish. The **Corvidae Ravenna Riesling** is a great example of a beautifully balanced Riesling, showing stone fruits, ginger snaps and honey. Try it with Thai shrimp. **(\$11)**

Millennium Club members will receive the **2012 Walla Walla Vintners Petit Verdot** which is a wine only produced in select vintages. The ripeness and balance of the 2012 vintage helped this grape step out of the shadow of its “blending varietal” moniker. As a special tribute to the stellar Frazier Bluff Vineyard, this wine represents a field blend, adding 14% Malbec to the Petit Verdot to approximate the vineyard’s acreage. Heaps of black pepper and lush tannins march across rich, dark fruit flavors of black currant and plum, backed by hints of espresso and woody herbs. Just 129 cases were produced. **\$36**

Valentine’s Day is Near!!

Tiffany and Allyson have come up with some great ideas for Valentine’s Day. When you are in the store this next week, check out our Valentine’s Table. All the goodies are there: Rose’ wines, sparkling wines, chocolates, and other delectable items just in time for February 14.

A special item to note are special boxes of wine infused dark chocolates. I really didn’t expect them to be as good as they are but they are so scrumptious we put the Wine Gallery label on them. We have a great price on them so don’t be shy about treating your sweetie. They are a good match with a good red and a cozy fire.

Don’t forget that a gift basket with gourmet foods, a couple of wine glasses and some Champagne is the easy way to your true love’s heart. Give us a call and we can put one together for you in about an hour.

The Wine Gallery is all in favor of “amour” so we have spent a little extra time this year to get the best for your sweetheart. He or she will appreciate it.



Women's Heart Health Month

February is Women's Heart Health month and Monday many people will be wearing red to bring attention to this important issue. Heart disease is responsible for 1 of every three deaths for women in the US. What can women do to reduce this terrifying statistic?

Well, how about having a glass of wine every day? Yes, when consumed in moderation, wine may protect women's hearts – (moderation is defined as up to one drink per day for women, and up to two drinks per day for men, according to US dietary guidelines. Five ounces of wine is considered one drink.)

Benefits of moderate alcohol consumption such as wine include a 30% reduction in the risk of heart attack compared to non-drinkers, a finding that has been repeated over 30 years and in various countries, according to Eric Rimm, a professor of epidemiology and nutrition who has been researching the effects of alcohol and chronic disease for decades at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Additionally, alcohol consumption has been associated with a 30% to 40% reduction in the risk of Type 2 diabetes, compared to those who don't drink. Having diabetes means that you are more likely to develop heart disease and have a greater chance of a heart attack or a stroke. People with diabetes are also more likely to have certain conditions, or risk factors, that increase the chances of having heart disease or stroke, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol. If you have diabetes, you can protect your heart and health by managing your blood glucose with a little wine each day.

We have known for years that flavonoids in red wine are the heart healthy antioxidants. Chief among the heart healthy flavonoids are the procyanidins. The grape highest in procyanidins is Tannat. Our red wine for February is Tannat and a glass of that a day may not have you running marathons, but it will do the best for your heart.

We can't talk about wine without mentioning the active ingredient. Red wine contains ethyl alcohol or ethanol which has been shown to increase HDL, or the "good" cholesterol which keeps arteries clean. As we noted above, red wine improves insulin sensitivity, and slows down the ability of blood to clot. It also helps to decrease inflammation inside of your arteries, according to health professionals.

The benefits only come with one glass a day for women so don't overdo with too much of a good thing. Too much alcohol has a detrimental effect on the heart and can cause arrhythmias and muscle damage if the doses are high and prolonged. The good news is that if you eat dark chocolate daily and exercise regularly, that one glass of wine will help keep your heart healthy and reduce mortality from heart disease.

Mark your calendars

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. We plan to hold the 93 Point tasting at the Food Studio so you know the food will be top drawer as well. Come to the 93 point tasting. You will have a chance to try some of the best wines on the market and be certain you like them before you buy. Watch the Grapevine next week for more details.

Following the successful and sold out tasting at the **Saffron Table**, we have decided to do another one at the end of March 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. We will be firming up the date for that one in the next week or so as well.

Lastly, the Wine Gallery is also very excited to announce that one of Walla Walla's finest winemakers, **Marie-Eve Gilla from Forgeron Cellars** will be in Bozeman for a wine dinner **April 27th**. Marie-Eve was classically trained in France and holds a Double Masters in Oenology and Viticulture from the University of Dijon. She moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1991 and founded Forgeron Cellars in 2001. A US citizen since 2004, she was inducted into Les Dames d'Escoffier in 2013 and was awarded the Grade de Chevalier dans l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole from the French Ministry of Agriculture in 2016. Her last visit to Bozeman in 2010 was one of the best attended (and most delicious) wine dinners on record. She is also responsible for introducing our own Allyson Yund into the world of wine while Allyson operated the Forgeron tasting room several years ago. Keep your eye on the Grapevine for details in a future edition.