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What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **Tonight**
- **Bottle Variation**
- **Upcoming events**
- **New Wine/Food Book**

Tonight

As we previously announced, tonight **May 8th**, we have a special treat in store with a visit by **DeLancelotti Vineyards**. You need to mark your calendars for this one. DeLancelotti Vineyards grow grapes in some of the best vineyards in the Willamette Valley. Their newest Chardonnay just received a 95 point rating from Wine Spectator and their Pinots always seem to receive ratings above 90. DeLancelotti vineyard holdings are organic and/or biodynamic.

We plan to taste the 2017 **La Sorella Chardonnay** and **2017 La Sorella Pinot Noir** (not yet rated), the **2015 Anderson Chardonnay (92 points Wine Advocate)**, the **2015 Lachine Pinot Noir (92 Wine Advocate)**, the **2016 Famiglia Pinot Noir (94 Points)**, and the **2017 Lachini Pinot Noir**.

To pair with these extraordinary wines we have some classic culinary synergisms for crisp Chardonnay and Oregon Pinot Noir. Chef Wendell gave us a peek at the menu and it sounds delicious!! Chick pea and sage dumplings, grilled chicken, King salmon, morel risotto with duck confit, a lamb offering then ending with a mixed berry and mascarpone dessert.

The cost for this extraordinary evening is \$59 per person. To make it even more exciting, we will also refund your **\$59 tasting fee** if you buy a case (mix or match) of wines purchased at the event. (One refund per customer.) We ended up with a few seats still available so if you need a spur of the moment adventure, call us today at 586-8828. The event will start at 6:30 PM at the Food Studio (2251 West Kagy). This will be a memorable event, so don't miss out!

Bottle variation

There are a few observations I have made from my years in the wine business. One of them is a paraphrase of Heraclitus: You never drink the same wine twice. (The

familiar corollary to this is the one I have often quoted: the best wine you ever have is when you are on vacation.)

We are all familiar with the concept of vintages and that wine varies from one year to another with average temperature, date of the last frost, the timing of summer rains and the length of the growing season. All those factors have an impact on what a wine tastes like each year.

So what happens when you try a wine at a wedding and it is just so-so yet when you have it six months later at a wine tasting, it knocks your socks off? What happens when you have a wine at a tasting and it knocks your socks off and when you pull a bottle out of the cellar six months later, you wonder what ever possessed you to buy it?

Well, some of that wonder and excitement comes from the way we are accustomed to living modern life. We expect milk to taste the same no matter where we are. Bud Lite is remarkably consistent from day to day and from state to state. McDonald's fries always taste the same. We have become trained to expect that modern manufacturing processes and quality control methods will deliver the same quality every time. Repetition rates with variation of less than 1 in one million are common in many mass produced items these days.

Wine is a little different because like humans, it is a living thing. And like humans, every wine has a different set of variables that shape its existence. So how can the same wine be different from one sample to the next? The answer is "bottle variation".

Most wines are made from grapes harvested over a period of two to five days. Grapes harvested on Thursday won't be as ripe as those harvested on Sunday. The size of the fermentation vessels may vary and the temperature in the winery is different for each batch that goes through the winemaking process.

Barrels are made of wood and there are no two oak trees that are exactly the same age, the same size or the same shape. As a result, the barrel in which the wine is aged will differ from the one right next to it. Each barrel will have a different permeability to oxygen and each stave will vary in grain density. Just those two minor factors will have an effect on the finished product. Indeed, much of the skill in winemaking is finding the best barrels of wine and selecting their contents for premium cuvees.

At the end of the process, as the barrels of wine are pumped into bottles, more variation can occur. The clearest wine will be at the top of the barrel and the dregs will be at the bottom. Depending on where the wine came from in the barrel may have some effect on how the wine ages. Again, no two barrels are the same so even though all the grapes came from the same vineyard, the winemaking process will itself generate a host of variables.

The way the wine bottle is sealed may also cause bottles from the same batch to vary. Wines sealed with a cork are notorious for this variation. Wine cork is a natural organic product and each cork has a different permeability to oxygen. This is due to factors like of where on the tree the cork was taken, where the tree grew, the age of the bark and so forth. Oxygen ages wine so a good tight seal will keep wine fresher longer.

A defective seal will either age the wine prematurely, allow aerobic bacteria to grow or just oxidize the wine.

Once the wine is in the bottle and sealed, it has to be shipped. The temperature inside the truck will have some bearing on how the wine will taste when it gets to its destination. The most susceptible to temperature damage are wines shipped by Fed-ex, UPS, and other common carriers with no temperature controls inside the truck. Think about that the next time some wine club offers you wines for \$6.99 and then ships them across Nevada in the heat of summer or across Wyoming in the dead of winter. Even local delivery can be dicey. We get our wines delivered in the morning when there is little time between temperature controlled environments. That said; there have been a few below zero mornings when we receive wine that needs no further chilling.

Vibration during shipment causes “bottle shock”. Wines freshly off a transcontinental semi will have spent 1,000 miles being jostled. The result of that jostling is the condition known as “bottle shock”. Wines just off the trailer are flat, lack expression and generally do not show well. For most of our suppliers, a rest period of a few weeks is required for wines to recover to their winery freshness. Trying a wine that just arrived yesterday will be decidedly different from tasting that same wine that has slumbered for a year or two in your cellar.

I don't know if I have cleared the air on why you can't step into the same wine twice but the next time you are sharing a glass with friends or family, appreciate that wines are like humans: environment shapes us all.

Upcoming Dates

** Due to unforeseen circumstances, we had to postpone our last **Wine Smarts class**. However, we now have it re-scheduled for Monday night, May 13th at 6:30 at the Food Studio. If you couldn't make the last one, sign up for an informative and fun evening. The agenda for this class is to identify the major red and white grape varietals, their characteristics, and the wine regions that produce the best expressions. This class will cover botany, geology, geography, chemistry, history, folk lore, and the arts in a wide ranging overview of the core of wine culture. All that “book learnin” will be followed by a wine tasting lab session where we identify and compare grapes using wine tasting evaluation methods that will last a lifetime. The cost for this class is just **\$49**.

We will be presenting a single session this time: Monday, May 13 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. To reserve your spot, just call us at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com.

Every year the Bozeman Noon Rotary presents its **Wine and Beer Fundraiser. This year the event will be May 16th from 5:30-8:00 PM at the Holiday Inn. Tickets are \$30 or 4 for \$100. The ticket includes the opportunity to taste 60 wines that I selected for the event, appetizers and cheese, and the opportunity to take

part in the Silent Auction, Cork Pull and Instant Wine Cellar Raffle. Your ticket will automatically register you and assign a bidder number. Also, this year there is online and mobile auction bidding!! Please contact a member of the Bozeman Noon Rotary for tickets or go to bozemannoontrotaryclub@gmail.com

Mark your calendars for the evening of **Thursday, June 6th for a special wine dinner featuring wines imported by Rosenthal Wines Merchants, a top importer of Old World wines. The evening starts at 7 PM and will feature seven wines expertly paired with small plate culinary creations prepared by Chef Daniel Wendell of the Food Studio. Joanie Karapetian of Rosenthal will be on hand to present each wine and answer questions. This event is sponsored by the Bozeman Chapter of the American Wine Society, the Wine Gallery, Rosenthal Wine Merchants and Cardinal Distributing. You can get tickets (\$59) by calling us at the Wine Gallery (406-586-8828) or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com.

New Wine/Food Book

If I may make another observation about wine lovers, it is this: Wine lovers tend to be “foodies” too. Wine and food have a natural affinity but nothing can start a fun conversation faster than what wine to pair with what food.

This week, we received a shipment of the book ***Wine Food*** by Dana Frank and Andrea Slonecker. This book is not just a cookbook, but a volume full of good advice. The authors stress that a great wine shop will save you time, money and aggravation when it comes to preparing meals that will wow your guests. The wall of wine, cute labels, foreign languages and an astonishing spectrum of prices make wine selection frustrating for most folks. The Wine Gallery can help you with that because we are highly trained in the wine profiles that will enhance whatever dish you make. After you have read *Wine Food*, you will know the exact questions to ask our staff to create the meals that make life worth living

Wine Food puts a lot of our advice in a concise, easy to read format. Great recipes and coordinated menus are fare for many cook books. What sets this book apart is the general application of food pairing theory to specific foods and preparations. Indeed, each chapter has a cheat sheet for everything from fancy pheasant under glass to the best wines to serve with pizza, burgers or rotisserie chicken. We love it because we can reinforce your predilections for food with the right wine you know you will need.

We have ***Wine Food*** in our book section. It retails for \$25 but pick it up with your Wine Club wines and receive 10% off. Get yourself some new adventures in drinking and cooking.