



Volume 13, No. 15 (published by the Wine Gallery, Bozeman, MT) **April 19, 2017**

What's new in the Grapevine this week?

- **May Wine Club due Friday**
- **New arrivals**
- **“Factory” wine**
- **Upcoming events.**

May Wine Club Due Friday

We have some excellent wines again for May Wine Club. Leading off is our first red, the **2014 Côtes du Roussillon Villages Chimeres**. The Chimeres is 60% Grenache, with 30% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre. Aged in a combination of concrete tank and oak barrels, it makes the most of a difficult 2014 vintage. There is terrific purity in its raspberry, violet, licorice and olive-laced aromas and flavors. Ripe, finely textured with bright acidity, it will drink nicely over the coming 4-5 years. **(\$14)**

I have been after my suppliers to bring me a great Sicilian white wine for the Wine Club and we have a beauty for you this month. The **2016 Tasca d'Almerite Regaleali Bianco Sicilia** is a zippy white--lithe and lively, with a pleasing mix of green melon, lemon zest, honeysuckle and grapefruit granita flavors. Made up of Inzolia (43%), Grecanico (24%), Cataratto (20%), Chardonnay (13%) it is smooth and silky with fresh, juicy fruit and tangy acidity; ripe apple and quince; long and balanced on the finish. If you don't drink it tonight, keep it for a hot summer day. **(\$13)**

The folks who get a second red will receive the **2013 Cr5 Meses** from Spain. This 50-50% blend of Syrah and Mourvèdre delivers lively red fresh fruit flavors of plum and blackberry. The palate also offers licorice and loamy earth notes, supported by firm tannins and orange peel acidity, leaving a refreshing finish. This is a deep wine with oak notes and complex flavors that beg for grilled meat. **(\$16)**

Our second white is the **2015 Domaine de Guillaman Cuvée Louis** from France. The bouquet of the Cuvée Louis is exuberant, with enticing aromas of fresh fruit, including lemon, grapefruit, lychee, passion fruit, and a hint of acacia. The taste is well-rounded, and fresh and very amenable to spring menus. There is good follow-through from the fruity bouquet with enticing aromas of fresh fruit, including lemon, grapefruit, lychee, passion fruit, and a hint of acacia. **(\$11.50)**

For Millennium Club members, we have the **2014 Cocodrilo Corte**. "Corte" is the word used in Argentina to denote blends and the Cocodrilo is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon with 14% Cabernet Franc and some 9% Malbec. It also mixes origins, as it

contains fruit from Valle de Uco, Maipú and Luán de Cuyo in similar proportions. It fermented in stainless steel tanks followed by malolactic and aging in barrels (20% new) and made of American oak in oak to complete an élevage of 15 months. Tasting this side by side with other vintages, you clearly notice a riper and warmer vintage in 2014, with plumier notes, an herbal touch and nicely integrated spices. The palate is round, lush and sleek, with fine-grained, plummy tannins. **(\$32)**

New arrivals

Two wines from K Vintners in Walla Walla arrived this week. One of them, the **2014 Motor City Kitty Syrah** is an aromatically brooding wine which brings aromas of scorched earth, smoked meat, iron, violets, orange peel and blue and black fruit. The flavors coat the palate from end to end with silky soft, unabashedly appealing fruit and savory notes. It hits the delicious gong hard, with an enduring finish. **93 Points Wine Enthusiast (\$35)**

Smoky, gamy aromas provide an intriguing entry into the **2014 Eberle Syrah**. The nose also conveys toasted blueberries, thyme, rosemary and lavender. Leathery, rustic flavors show on the palate, alongside hints of boysenberry, cracked peppercorn and roasted venison. **92 points Wine Enthusiast (\$22.95)**

Aged in 25% new 165 gallon barrels, the **2014 Lafage Cotes Catalanes Nicolas** is made from 100% Grenache which comes from the rolling hills and gravel soils in Southern France. The Nicholas represents an incredible value, boasting fabulous notes of black raspberry, licorice and crushed violets to go with medium-bodied richness, fine tannin and a supple, pretty profile on the palate. This is far from an over-the-top fruit bomb and it has real class and elegance. Buy it by the case and drink it over the coming 2-3 years. **92 points Wine Advocate (\$15)**

The **2015 St. Cosme Cotes du Rhone** is ripe with vivid blueberry and boysenberry fruit, harnessed on the back end by a bold graphite edge. Anise and violet notes add range. **#43 on the Top 100 for Wine Spectator (\$16.95)**

We also got **#51 on the Wine Spectator Top 100** to share. The **2013 La Montesa Rioja** is a cheerful wine, with an indescribable vitality. Full of Mediterranean orchard fruit aromas including nectarines, pomegranates and oranges, the palate 'contains vibrant and rich flavors of stone fruits, discrete spice and a vibrant chalky minerality'. Perfect when enjoyed by-the-glass on its own, La Montesa's multi-faceted flavor profile will pair well with any kind of cuisine. (Garnacha, Tempranillo, Mazuelo **\$21**)

About “factory’ wine

You won't find me griping about a \$150 million home being built in Big Sky or the necessity to raise the tax rate to pay for new and better schools. I have a constitutional right to gripe and it helps to vent every now and again.

My gripe this week focuses on the wine business, not because I think it is especially important compared with issues such as peace, poverty or education, but simply because this is my bailiwick.

I get to taste a lot of wines and it is upsetting to me to find so many of them are impostors. They are dressed up to look like interesting wines; made to sound as if they

have been lovingly created from a single vineyard by little old winemakers in small, rustic cellars – aged gracefully in oak barrels with the attentive hand of the grower never far away.

The truth is they are industrial formulas produced in gigantic refinery-like wineries from machine-picked grapes that come from huge, flat, irrigated vineyards, and conjured up with all manner of winemaking chicanery. (Don't get me started on MegaPurple). These chemical engineers blend juice together to offend as few consumers as possible the sell it by deep discounting to give the consumer some measure of satisfaction at having a “good”, cheap wine.

OK, far be it from me to suggest that we shouldn't have cheap wine. Nothing thrills me more than to find a great wine at a great price. But why can't we have cheap, honest wine? Cheap, honest wine still exists, and thanks to small growers and vintners, it looks like it will have a future.

The modern retail environment, with its demand for uniformity, continuity of stock, and large volumes means that only the big wineries get invited to the party. You won't find small artisanal wines at Wal-Mart, Target or even at the major supermarkets. Smaller growers who make honest, affordable wine can't deal with the quantities needed by major retailers. They also can't afford the “big stick” discounts that are demanded by the Costco's and Sam's Clubs of the world. Sadly, they can't produce those big volumes of wine without resorting to chemical sleight of hand.

You can't blame the big guys for wanting to make a buck. They want to present the most affordable, good tasting, recognizable wine they can find. It is no wonder that Doritos and Cheez-whiz (two other “factory” comestibles) are always on sale at deep discounts. Both are easily recognized, affordable and made with enough salt to make them taste good to almost everyone. A peek around the corner at the wine aisle will show you hundreds of brands that are “factory made”, taste good (in a generic way), are deeply discounted and have familiar labels.

What can stem this rising tide of factory wine? I reckon some gently subversive counter movement is needed. Help me to champion the small well-made labels. If there's an increased demand, then perhaps the continued existence of real wine will be assured. Here are a few things I look for in a good inexpensive wine.

- The wine is made from grapes grown in one vineyard, or several neighboring vineyards.
- The vineyards supplying the grapes are usually owned by the people making the wine, or are supplied by growers on long-term contracts
- There is limited or small production
- The wines are subject to vintage variation
- Convenience and availability are sometimes a problem, because of the limited production
- You won't see their ads on the Super Bowl

Upcoming Events

*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 another wine dinner at this gorgeous venue on June 2nd. 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 the first Friday in June.

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 was 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, spring lamb as well as beets, parsnips and cheeses. Tiffany and I came up with some delicious wines to pair and I would say, all in all, it was 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.

***The 2017 Extraordinary Tasting event is set for Wednesday, May 17th and we will be graciously accommodated by Riverside Country Club.** This annual wine tasting is staffed by winemakers, senior winery personnel, wine marketing professionals and our great suppliers. For interested wine consumers, this tasting is the most informative of the events we do each year. We plan on showing wines from Washington, Oregon and California as well as the best of European and Southern Hemisphere wines.

Last year we brought nearly 50 wines to taste from domestic and imported wineries. The response was overwhelming as wine tasters got the chance to taste wines and consult with winemakers ***before*** buying. I know I say this a lot but if you are going to buy wine for summer, the opportunity to find the wine you want is our Extraordinary Tasting. Whether you want a patio sipper, a picnic wine, or just a big red for a steak from the barbeque you will have a chance to audition some great candidates on May 17th.

Tickets are on sale for \$69 each. This price includes the wines, scrumptious small plate delicacies from Chef Sanford Isobe's kitchen, full service by the Riverside staff, and gratuity.

To order tickets, call us at 586-8828 or send an e-mail to bozemanwinegallery@gmail.com.