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What's New in the Grapevine this week?

- **Wine Club substitution**
- **Barreling along**
- **Art Walk next Friday**
- **Fourth of July**

Wine Club Substitution

Even though we ordered our first white wine for July months ago, the fickle finger of fate delayed delivery to our distributor's warehouse. We didn't find out until Friday afternoon that all the lovely 100% Melon based **Bedouet Muscadet** wasn't going to arrive. The distributor only had 5 of our 25 cases. So Monday morning we scrambled to find a substitute with a similar palate and profile.

If you have picked up your Wine Club wines already, you can disregard the rest of this. If you haven't picked up, be advised that your new white wine for July is the **2017 Scaia Bianco** from Italy. This white blend is like the Muscadet in that it is fresh and pleasant thanks to its sustained acidity. The Gargenega grape (55%) is the main feature of Soave (one of my favorite Italian white wines) from the Veneto in northern Italy. Chardonnay, well you know what that is. It's 45% of this blend. The nose is all white flowers of acacia, jasmine, with bouquet of citrus and tropical fruit like pineapple, grapefruit and orange, apple, pear and mango. The **Scaia Bianco** is an unoaked wine that would be a good bet for the folks who like smooth stylings of Gargenega and the full body of Chardonnay.

Speaking of liking things, I also liked a couple of things about this wine. First of all: it is 12.50% alcohol so it is light for summer. I also really like the closure Scaia uses. It's not a cork nor screw cap. It's a glass closure so it is easy to remove, easy to replace and will not taint the wine.

Barreling along

Wine and oak are a marriage made in heaven. Most medium to heavy bodied wines (both white and red) benefit from some contact with oak barrels. Oak is used as a spice to enhance the flavors and impart character to the fermented fruit.

Making oak barrels is a complicated process. Of the 400 odd species of oak, only three species are used to make oak barrels for wine. The ideal oak tree is over 100 years old, and has lived in a cool, dry forest. Cool and dry results in slower growth with grain or growth rings that are closer and tighter. As a result, the tannins are more evenly distributed and mellow when the oak comes into contact with wine.

After the tree has been harvested, the wood is hand split along the natural grain lines making the rough barrel staves. These staves are seasoned for 2-3 years outdoors in the sun, rain and wind. During this period, the harsh tannins are leached out and the mellow, soft tannins remain.

To make the barrel, the staves must be shaved so they fit as closely as possible. Any gaps in the staves would allow air to enter and wine to leak out. The barrel is formed over an open fire to make the staves more pliable and iron rings are hammered into place to hold the barrel together. The fire also caramelizes some of the wood's natural sugar into toasty, spicy, vanilla flavors. These flavors are ultimately imparted to the wine.

Oak barrels make wine softer and mellow through a couple of processes. One is the permeability of oak. Wine evaporates out of the barrel and oxygen seeps in. The slow oxidation of wine mellows the grape tannins and softens the hard edges. The interaction of the yeast and the wood is also important to the maturation of the wine.

Oak contains several organic chemical compounds which leave their mark on the flavor, aroma and texture of wine. Tannins in oak impart vanilla, tea, tobacco and even notes of sweetness. New barrels impart stronger flavors and used barrels contribute more subtle nuances.

Winemakers have many choices when it comes to barrels. American oak barrels impart a stronger wood flavor and more vanillin. French oak barrels impart more of the sweet spices of cinnamon and nutmeg. Some barrels receive toastier flavor from longer exposure to fire during the barrel-making process and toast may be more appropriate for certain white

wines. In addition, winemakers can age wine in new barrels, used barrels or a combination of new and used to achieve the proper seasoning for the wine they make.

Barrels can vary in size but most hold about 60 gallons (~225 liters). Hogshead are slightly larger at 80 gallons (300 liters) and are used when winemakers want less oak suffused into more delicate reds like Sangiovese and Pinot Noir.

Art Walk is next Friday

Every summer Bozeman hosts its downtown Art Walk on the second Friday of the month. This annual tradition affords us the opportunity to spend a leisurely summer evening marveling at the local artists and their works. The Art Walk officially starts **at 6:00 PM next Friday July 12**. The weatherman says it will be a beautiful night so plan to come to Downtown.

Join the folks at Miller's for their second annual Wine, Whiskey, & Watch Event! Once again, they will be featuring a large array of pre-owned luxury watches - in addition to the new Citizen, Tissot, and Michele timepieces. Miller's Jewelry are very excited to partner with one of their new neighbors, The Cannery, to bring you a bonus--- everyone who buys a watch during this event will receive a free bottle of whiskey!

As always the Wine Gallery staff will be back serving several exceptional wines for you to enjoy.

Have a watch to sell or trade? Receive a FREE EVALUATION on your timepiece from Gary, Miller's Jewelry visiting watch partner and expert.

Make a night of it and plan some stops at Bozeman's best restaurants and watering holes after the Walk. Summer is the best time of year to enjoy your city and the cultural benefits that are our blessing. See you next Friday!!!

Re-arranging the store

With three highly creative and results-driven women on the Wine Gallery staff, I have a time of it keeping up with the locations and merchandising that goes on weekly. The changes always make good sense

though I sometimes wonder what happened to my brain cells that are supposed to help me keep track of these updates.

This week they came up with a great idea I wish I had thought of: we moved our “Sale” table to the back part of the store and moved our “Featured” table to the front. The “Featured” wines are new releases or wines that have some seasonal significance. This table will always show you the latest and greatest releases. The wines are always interesting and always great to try.

The “Sale” table is just the opposite of the “newest”. The population of the “Sale” Table is made up of “last of the vintage” selections, discontinued releases, or wines we just can’t get again. There is nothing the matter with them; they just need a good home. I call them our “orphans”. Because we won’t be restocking the wines on the “Sale” table, they all receive a 15% discount at the register.

Be sure to check out both tables when you come in.

Fourth of July

The Wine Gallery will be closed Thursday, July 4th to celebrate the founding of our country. We will be open Friday and Saturday for the long weekend picnics and barbecues.