

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

WINE DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER

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Get Excited About Austrian Wine!

—*Rosemary Gray*

My adoration for Austrian wines started when I was just a baby in the wine business. I had only been officially working in wine for a few months when I tasted through a line up of Grüner Veltliner all imported by Terry Theise. This was at a time when I believed that all white wine tasted like white wine and wasn't really wine at all. I got four Grüners in and realized I was dead wrong. Admittedly at the time I had relatively zero experience with White Burgundy or German Riesling and very far from trying my first Saviennerre, but regardless of my lack of any point of reference for good white wine, I knew Grüner was it. Despite its somewhat obscurity (though if you live anywhere other than Idaho it's not so obscure any more), I will agree with Theise that Grüner Veltliner is the other grape making truly great whites on the level of Chard and Riesling.

In February I put in a fair amount of time visiting and revisiting Austrian wines. The trick I learned for approaching Grüner Veltliner, and all of the unfamiliar Austrian varieties, was to mimic my first naïve introduction to the wine. It required me to untether myself from my developed expectations of what great white wine is. I can't expect or desire Grüner to be German Riesling, White Burgundy, Loire Chenin, or Alasctian Gewurztraminer. Grüner is something completely different, both in flavor profile and style, and its character and essence is not reminiscent of any other type of white wine. Grüner is more delicate than all of these, less tangible, pure of character with a fruit and spice profile all its own and racy acidity. It's sexy in a chic, mysterious sort of way. Edmund White's book 'The Flauner,' about strolling through the streets of Paris claims the French will love you if you are both chic and amusing. Grüner is just that; and for me, chic and amusing is more ethereal and

alluring than any other sort of obvious attractive bliss.

And it's not just the Grüner. Zweigelt and Sankt Laurent are equally as enamoring. Zweigelt leans toward blueberry and St Laurent cherry – both are sultry in their fruit profiles, Zweigelt somewhat like Cabernet Franc and St Laurent somewhat like good Zinfandel only they both possess the finesse and grace of Pinot Noir.

This month we've also featured Zierfandler and Rotgipfler which on earth are only planted on a mere 217 hectares in Thermenregion. These old, rare indigenous grape varieties yield unique wines with exotic flavors of quince and orange with nervy acidity, voluptuous body and enormous aging potential.

I'm thrilled by all of these wines and wineries. Ott, Mariell, Stadlmann and Buchegger are all imported through Bill Mayer who has been traveling with Terry Theise for over a decade. Mayer and Theise have arguably been the two most critical players for bringing in quality Austrian wines and getting Americans interested about them. These producers are all highly regarded and are working to create great wines true to Austrian terroir. Ott is currently the superstar of Austria, Stadlmann has been ranked one of the best wineries in the world, and Buchegger and Mariell are making mind-blowingly good estate wines under \$20. I've showcased Pittnauer Zweigelt in the wine club before. Wait until you taste the St Laurent, it's Pittnauer's speciality.

Honestly, this article has been tough to write. It is easiest to write about subjects I'm indifferent to. It's a challenge to communicate my enthusiasm for these wines (did I tell you I *love* them?). I'm sipping Grüner right now, and I keep getting distracted as I find new online articles and websites about this country and her wines and wineries and dreaming of the day I get to import Austrian wine.

MARCH CLUB PICKS

Ehmoser Gruner Veltliner 04

Winkler-Hermaden SB 04

Buchegger Zweigelt 04

Pittnauer Sankt Laurent 05

Stadlmann Zierfandler 04

Mariell Zweigelt 04

Stadlmann Rotgipfler 04

Der Ott Gruner Veltliner 05



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- *March Wine Club All Austrian! No way!*
- *Cult California Wines*
- *Spring Picks*



2005 Burgundies are Arriving! Pray You Win the Lottery!

—Divit Cardoza

The current hype about the 2005 Red Burgundy vintage has already reached a fever pitch and most of the wines have not even been shipped yet! Allen Meadows, noted Burgundy lover and writer of “Burghound” (a publication that reviews Burgundy, Burgundy and more Burgundy) called it nothing short of the greatest vintage he has ever seen. This has sent pricing and hysteria into the stratosphere and the calls and e-mails are coming in from Burgundy lovers around the country who are suddenly our best buddies.

So what is a Pinot Noir lover to do? Short of selling my house and living in a hole in the ground, it is unlikely that I will be able to buy any of the celebrated Grand Crus in 2005, so I am looking at Bourgogne rouge and Hautes Cotes de Nuits for wines I can afford to drink as well as

some select Premier Crus for the cellar. Look for a slew of great Pinot Noir in the \$20-\$40 range for the smart Burgundy shopper. You can get started now with Raphet Bourgogne (\$28), Dubois Savigny Les Beaune “les Picotines” (\$30) or Delarche Pernand Vergelesses “les Boutieres” (\$24) all of which are in stock already. Look for more Burgundy buys to show up through the year.

Don't Forget The Whites!

While every pinot noir nut is scrambling to get a grip on 2005 reds the 2005 whites are here and they are DELICIOUS! The wines from Macon & Pouilly-Fuisse are wonderfully rich Chardonnays with plenty of lush fruit up front, good weight in the middle and a fine acidity to balance the finish. These wines have more fat on them than the pristine 2004 vintage which makes them more accessible early. Look for killer Macon-

Vergisson from both Barraud and Lassarat (\$22) as well as the best Pouilly-Fuisses I have tasted in 20 years! We have a wide selection of vineyards to choose from starting with Barrauds “Alliance Vergisson” (\$32) and including “En Bolland” and “Les Crays” from Barraud and “Clos de France” and “La Cote” from Lassarat (all priced around \$39) This is spectacular White Burgundy that is sure to bring a smile to any wine lovers face!

And don't forget Chablis! This northernmost Chardonnay only region of Burgundy has produced great wines in 2005 that are the perfect foil for shell fish. Dungeoness Crab anyone? My current favorite is F. Magniens Chablis V.V. (\$27) which has depth and complexity that grows in the glass with every sip. There are plenty more to choose from so come on in and take a look around, they won't last forever!

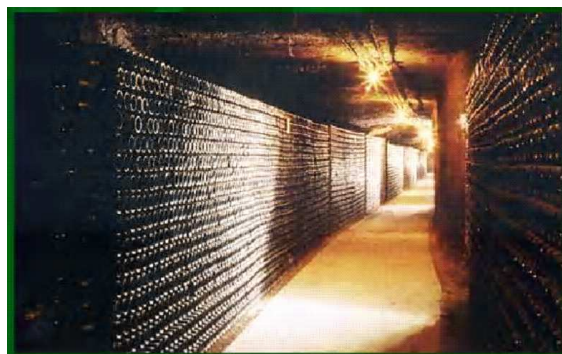
Christian Corresponds: The History of Monmousseau

In the heart of France lies the last free flowing river in Europe, — the mighty Loire. Much like the Mississippi of the U.S., it is a revered geographic landmark of great proportions. It has been a major thoroughfare for trade even before the Roman Empire, and has continued to become the garden of France. Beginning in the Velay Mountains of south central France it flows north to Orleans and then west through the rolling hills and plains of what is still today one of the most fertile valleys of France.

Monmousseau is located in the heart of the Touraine Region of the Loire Valley in the town of Montrichard, which is situated on the right bank of the Cher River about 25 miles upstream from the confluence of the Cher and Loire. The town of Montrichard is the site of a medieval donjon and castle whose remnants still remain on the hillside overlook-

ing the town. Along the banks of the Cher River, like many rivers in the Loire valley, exist extensive caves quarried out of the limestone cliffs. These ancient quarries, so important during the construction of the Chateaux, are today troglodyte houses, mushroom cultivation galleries, and caves for the slow elaboration of sparkling and still wines. Monmousseau owns one of the most extensive networks of caves within the Touraine Region, some fifteen kilometers. These caves are the perfect environments for the aging of Méthode Traditionnelle (Traditional Method) sparkling wine.

Monmousseau traces its roots back to 1886 the year when Alcide



Caves of Monmousseau

Monmousseau founded the winery. That year he discovered the extensive network of caves quarried hundreds of years before. The quarry was said to have produced much of the finest stone that was supplied to builders of the great Chateaux of the Loire. Chambord, Chenneceux, and Cheverny were all to have been built with stones from the caves of Monmousseau. ...Continue on pg 4

Cru Classe Club: Stadlmann Rotgipfler & Ott Gruner Veltliner

Ott is one of the hottest producers in Austria at the moment. Future releases of this wine will likely be allocated, and I've got friends on the east coast clamoring for me to ship them Ott, because they simply aren't readily available there. For what it's worth, Steven Tanzer gave this 2005 Gruner Veltliner 92 points. The wine has complex aromas of apple and pear. The fruit on the palate is medium-bodied with vibrancy and structure. Captivating herbal spices and appetizing apple lingers through. I paired this with my signature Hotter-than-Hell Chicken Curry and it stood up, refreshed the palate and the fruit and flavors never faltered. Drink now through 2014.



Rotgipfler is only ever grown in Thermenregion. Very little is made, but it's very good. Knowledge and winemaking has been handed down for seven generations at Stadlmann, a winery that focuses on creating great individualistic

wines that reject uniform "perfection" and stretch to reflect the specific place and year in each of their wines.

The Rotgipfler Tagelsteiner is one of the coolest wines I've ever tasted. The nose has a little petrol and white flower something like good Riesling, but the palate is rich glycerin, dense with spices and reminiscent of good cheese. As if it's the cousin of Alsactian Gewurztraminer — the totally different and unique cousin. The complexity of this wine is apparent by it's ability to keep your brain, palate, and nose on their toes as you navigate through the tastes and try to put your finger on something intangible and delicious. (Will age 7+ years)

Passport Club: Stadlmann Zierfandler & Mariell Zweigelt

Once again, I can't rave about Stadlmann's wines enough. Zierfandler is their top variety, their hallmark grape, and only exists with Rotgipfler on a mere 217 hectares in the Thermenregion. It's rare to begin with and even more rare to find and enjoy in the U.S.

This Zierfandler is very mineral rich with great lemon-lime acidity. And at around \$20 a bottle it is tough to find this good of quality for the price. Cool!

Importer Bill Mayer describes Mariell as, "both extremely modern, with a very design-y looking winery, and at the same time, quite old-fashioned, preferring to do everything by hand, building on a tradition of winemaking that goes back to around 700. The style here is not to make tannic monsters; rather to make supple wines that are good at the table and can develop for a number of years."

I realize that this is only Mariell's

entry-level Zweigelt, but it's still enamoring. Mayer calls it a racy Zinfandel; I prefer to think of it as a perfect conundrum of racy and elegant Cabernet Franc. You decide whatever you like, but I found it to have deep flavors of sweet blueberry and black raspberry. It is lively with just the right amount of rustic edge. It is intense enough to stand up to foods with lots of flavor, but elegant enough to compliment lots of food.

R & R Whites: Ehmoser Gruner Veltliner & Sauvignon Blanc R & R Reds: Buchegger Zweigelt & Pittnauer Sankt Laurent

Ehmoser GrüVe is something of a house wine for me. I defer to it when I don't know what else to drink, and it goes well with my culinary passion: spicy food. I have enjoyed this bottles with kick-my-ass barbeque chicken, Cajun kabobs, Thai fried rice, and Orange Chicken curry. Grüner is really one of the best wines for Hot And Spicy! food. It is a racy palate cleanser with subtle yet pronounced (is that possible?) flavors of melon and green apple. Medium to light bodied with a soothing texture.

Winkler-Hermaden Sauvignon Blanc is evidence of a different kind of Sauv Blanc, that is different from what most American palates are into — softly oaked with low acidity California Sauv Blanc or the grapefruit-zinging type from New Zealand. This one is well-

balanced with both acidity and a pleasurable softness that doesn't seem soft, but does make the wine more accessible and rich and not so bracing. This wine is full, full, full of minerality, which from what I can tell is the Austrian style for Sauvignon Blanc, something akin to the Loire Valley type and yet with that intangible grace of Austria.

(If you have read through all my ramblings of Austrian wine I can only imagine it's like I'm writing sonnets of affection over and over.)

Buchegger, Buchegger — these wines I can't say enough good stuff about them. Here's a head's up though: every Buchegger wine I bring in, buy. Try all of them. I've tried a couple, and my hunch is this winery hits the proverbial nail on the head when it comes to making great wine. This selection epitomizes what I

love about Zweigelt: similar fruit profile



as Cab Franc -
- blueberry,
violet, licorice,
but the finesse
and body of

Pinot Noir. Very complex, the bottle evolved throughout the evening and was always approachable sultry and enchanting.

Pittnauer St Laurent is a great bottle of wine. It is similar to Zinfandel, but a good zin -- plush dark cherry fruit with a chocolate finish and strangely good wafts of cheese, but still the finesse and body reminiscent of Pinot Noir. Clocks in at 12% -- totally soft and balanced. And all the freshness of a 2005. I'm thrilled with it. Austria makes great wines, and I'm making it my mission to get people excited about them!

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...Monmousseau continued

Alcide sought help from his nephew Justin Marcel in establishing a winery. Justin, being more adept at the winemaking business, found great similarities with the soil and climate of the Touraine region with that of Champagne to the north. He had already procured the perfect environment in which to age and store the wines at a constant 54° and dew point of 90°. Within 5 years of Alcide purchasing the caves Justin Marcel created the first "Grand Vin de Monmousseau."

By 1930 Monmousseau wines were sold all over the world. They were favored by the Royal Court of Sweden and were even exported to the United States shortly after prohibition ended. The style of the wines stayed true to the Dom Perignon Method of Champagne — sparkling wines produced with natural second

fermentation after dosage.

Monmousseau also has produced still wines from the beginning. As the popularity of the Loire grew with tourism in the "Valley of the Kings," the popularity of the wines grew also. Places like Vouvray and Chinon have become well know for world-class wine. By the time Justin Marcel died in 1972 Monmousseau was one of the most important producers of both still and sparkling wine in the Touraine region of the Loire.

After Justin Marcel's death his son Jean and then his grandson Armand followed his path and today the company is a proud producer of some of Frances greatest wines.

MONMOUSSEAU to try:
2004 Vouvray 10.99 & Brut Etoile 9.99

SPRING PICKS!

We're itching for spring! And here's our early spring-drinkin' preferences!

Corbillieres Touraine Sauvignon Blanc 2005 11.99

Eitelsbacher Karthaus Hauserhofberg Kabinett 2005 \$23.50

Der Ott Riesling 2005 \$25.00

Conde de Valdemar Rioja Crianza 2002 \$10.99

Hot California Cult Wines in Store Now!

For those of you hungry for the best cult wines California has to offer we're happy to offer our first selections of Sean Thackrey and Failla.

Sean Thackrey is the epitome of California Cult. He makes just a few, small production wines that are, unlike most of California, anything but cookie-cutter.

His base-line (as if it's base) wine is 'Pleiades' which he releases in installments because each one is a blend of various varieties and various vintages. We are happy to offer the most current release: XVII, made from a laundry list of grapes and yet somehow results in a deliciously unorthodox wine. 23.50

What Thackrey is really lauded for is Orion, his 100% Syrah made from the 102-year-old-vine Rossi vineyard

in St. Helena. Orion has won Thackrey comparisons to Guigal La Mouline and Chave Hermitage. Rare Wine Company is touting 2004 as one of the greatest Orions ever. Fancy that, we have some available, but hurry fast, because the winery's out and we have all we're ever gonna have. 85-

Look also for future release of Thackrey's Aquila (Sangiovese) and Sirius (Petite Sirah), they will be in store soon.

Failla (pronounced FAY-la), is a Sonoma coast estate run by the husband and wife team of Ehren Jordan and Anne-Marie Failla. Like Thackery Failla makes hand-crafted, unique, small production (all less than 500 cases) California wine.

Ehren and Anne-Marie run a down-to-earth winery com-



mitted to making quality wines reflection the place their from. They are anything but the cookie-cutter, cash-cow wine mentality that seems to flood the California market. And what a relief! And what great wines!

We've snagged much of Idaho's limited allocation snag a bottle for now and some to cellar before they're gone. On hand we have three 2005 Pinot Noirs: Keefer Ranch Russian River, Sonoma Coast and Rancho Santa Rosa. And the 2005 Phoenix Ranch Syrah.