

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

BOISE CO-OP WINE SHOP
NEWSLETTER

CORNER OF 8TH & FORT
BOISE, ID 83702

NOVEMBER CLUB PICKS

Holiday Wines—Thanksgiving

Let's face it—wine can be intimidating. And that's especially true around the Holidays when you want everything to be perfect. So you wander the Wine Shop aisles searching for the perfect bottle. You check out the shelf talkers looking for wines that scored 90+ points, after all, if the experts like it. A word of advise—you should stop obsessing over ratings and scores and pick what you enjoy drinking. Wine taste is inherently subjective and you are the best expert when it comes to knowing your own taste.

Of course wine is also about food. The good news is that the center piece of most Thanksgiving meals is the turkey, a rather neutral bird that's a friendly companion to most any wine. The bad news is that the rest of the meal, everything from cranberry sauce to oyster dressing, from green bean casserole to sweet potatoes and yams, is not so accommodating.

You might be tempted to pull out that special bottle you've been saving, maybe a well-aged Cabernet or a big, oaky Chardonnay. Resist the temptation. This is the wrong time for the wine to compete for center stage. What you want is a complement to the meal.

Sparkling wine would make a great choice, but if you're not into bubbles, think fruit—centered wines, and a hint of sweetness doesn't hurt.

When it comes to reds it's hard to find a more food friendly option than Pinot Noir with its fruit driven style backed by good acidity and soft tannins. Ever since the *Sideways* thing Pinot prices have gone through the roof, but if you look hard



enough you can still find a decent bottle for under 20 bucks. We did the leg work for you and are featuring a good selection of value priced Pinot for November. Check out these:

2007 Cono Sur Pinot Noir, \$8.99
2006 Echelon Pinot Noir, \$9.99
2005 Drouhin La Foret Pinot, \$10.99
2005 Angeline Pinot Noir, \$12.99
2006 Fleur Pinot Noir, \$13.99
2005 Drouhin Véro Pinot Noir, \$18.49
2006 Summerland Pinot Noir, \$19.99
2005 F. Magnien Côte de Nuits-Villages, Crois-Viollette, \$30.00

Some people only drink rosé in the summer, but I love it all year long and it's another great choice for Thanksgiving. Here are a few rosés that we still have in good supply, and a few are on sale:

2006 Grande Cassagne, *Sale price*, \$7.99
2006 d'Oupia, *Sale price*, \$9.99
2006 La Plaisir Mas Amiel, *Sale*, \$10.99
2006 Nicodemi, \$16.50

When it comes to white wine I stick with northern growing regions. Both Riesling and Gewurztraminer from Germany, Alsace or the Northwest have that fruit forward style with a light touch of sweetness that is beautifully balanced by crisp acidity. And Gewurz adds a nice touch of spice to the mix that complements any number of holiday dishes. Here's a varied selection of recommended wines at different price points:

2006 Ste. Michelle Riesling, \$6.49
2006 Kesselstatt RK Riesling, \$13.99
2005 JJ Prum Riesling Kabinett, \$21.00
2005 Schafer Frohlich Kabinett, \$23.50
2006 Ste. Michelle Gewurztraminer, \$6.49
2006 Valkenberg Gewurztraminer, \$10.49
2006 Albrecht Gewurztraminer, \$16.99

Pierre Sparr Alsace One 2006

Bodegas Farina Gran Colegiata 1999

Régis Minet Pouilly Fumé, 2006

Chateau de Bellevue 2004

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As the Wine Bubbles

by Drew Graham

Introduction

Find a very comfortable chair, dear reader, and I shall keep you on the edge of it with an epic tale of mystery, intrigue and danger! Okay, I'm exaggerating a little. Okay, okay ... I'm exaggerating a lot! In truth, I intend to recount for you the more pedestrian story of an average guy (that would be me) making a small batch of wine at home. The hope is that I can provide you with a bit of entertainment and an increased knowledge of wine. Let's give it a try.

Prologue

I'm the kind of person who likes to know how things work, so last year I decided to make a batch of wine in order to better understand wine in general. I attended a "Small Lot Winemaking" class at the College of Viticulture and Enology in Walla Walla WA. We met once a week for five weeks and I came away with more knowledge and a couple of cases of a decent Cabernet Franc, Carmenere blend. There were only two drawbacks to attending the class. First, with so little time together only a limited amount of information could be passed on. Hence, there was a bit of "put x amount of this stuff in there" without time for in-depth explanation or experimentation. Just to be clear, this is not a shortcoming of the school, they offer an awesome two year program in viticulture and enology and it's impossible to stuff two years into five classes. Second, while the class itself was pretty inexpensive, there was quite a bit of an investment in lost work hours, travel costs and hotel stays. So this year, armed with a little knowledge (yikes!) I decided to find some Idaho grapes and go it alone.

A few of the local winemakers visit our shop on a regular basis and I figured that asking them where I could buy grapes would be a great way to start. As luck would have it, the first person I asked offered to let me have, free of charge, enough Cabernet Sauvignon to fill my needs! I was taken aback and resisted but he would have none of it. We decided that he would let me know when it was time to come and harvest.



Episode 1 – Harvest

Today's episode is brought to you by the letters B, R and D (more on that later). It was a beautiful, if a bit chilly and breezy, Saturday morning as Bridget (my fabulous wife)

and I headed out toward Caldwell. I thought that we would be assisting in the harvest of my benefactor's grapes. Instead, he already had a picking team hard at work at the vineyard that he was buying his fruit from. He handed us some clippers, led us to the only two Cabernet Sauvignon vines on his property which are 26 years old, and said that we could have all of the fruit from those two plants. We would then fill out the needed 100 plus pounds with the grapes that he was purchasing. Needless to say, I was extremely pleased and grateful to be getting the fruit from the oldest vines! He drove off to collect some of his harvest while Bridget and I went to work snipping clusters. The vines shielded us from



the wind and the goatheads stabbed us in the knees. It was fabulous! Aside from just a tiny bit of pest infestation here and there, the grapes were terrific. Many clusters were truly picture perfect, too bad we didn't bring a camera! As our host returned with his first truckload of buckets full of grapes, we finished harvesting our two and a half buckets, or about 50 pounds.

Warning – geek speak ahead! We unloaded all of the grapes at the destemmer and he grabbed a refractometer to check brix. Yikes! I think some explanation is in order. A destemmer is simply a machine that mechanically



pulls the berries and the main stems apart, sending the former through a big tube to your desired destination and depositing the latter into a bin for composting or throwing away. The destemmer also has rollers on it that crush the grapes. Some folks remove these so that the berries are left more intact. Last year I destemmed without rollers and I'm excited to try something different this time around. Brix is a measurement in degrees of how much sugar is in a liquid. As we all know fruit gets sweeter as it gets riper which means that the sugar

Wine Club Selections

R & R Club

2006 Pierre Sparr Alsace One

The Alsace region lies at the foot of the Vosges Mountains on the northern border between France and Germany. Those mountains serve as a natural barrier for rain and wind, creating an ideal viticultural area. The Pierre Sparr estate has been taking advantage of this climate since 1680, with 9 generations of family creating some of the best wines of Alsace. Sparr employs mostly stainless steel to allow the true flavor of the grape to come through, unmasked by oak. This is true of the elegant 2006 Alsace One blend. My colleague Bobby Rowett put it best in his review: "This is a blend of everything Alsace! Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Muscat, Riesling and Gewurztraminer gently meld into a harmonious glass of delightful wine. Great with spicy foods!" **Robin*

1999 Bodegas Farina Gran Colegiata Crianza

This family run winery founded in 1942 is located in the Toro region, a Spanish Denomination of Origin famous for Tempranillo (Tinta de Toro) production. Toro is becoming increasingly known as one of Spain's most promising regions. The wines that come from here are characterized by their complexity and richness. The Gran Colegiata Crianza is no exception. With a nose of molasses, raisin, red cherry and oak, this vibrant wine does not back down on its palette, opening to a body of walnut, plum, molasses and dark fruit, backed by substantial acidity and tannin. Wines this good at such a low price are hard to come by. One of my new favorites that will pair up well with hearty fare. Great for the coming holiday season! **Robin*

Passport Club

2006 R. Minet Pouilly Fumé

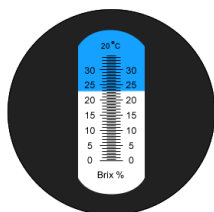
As popular as New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc is there are those who feel the best expression of the grape comes from the Loire Valley. Regis Minet's 24 acres of old vine Sauvignon Blanc (30 to 40 years) are in the same neighborhood as Didier Dagueneau but his wines are a world apart. Stainless steel fermentation preserves the purity of fruit in Minet's reserved style. The 2006 offers bright citrus and floral quince aromas backed by mineral, rose hip and light spice. It is an exceptionally well structured wine with green apple, lime, spice and vanilla on the palate. Smooth and supple up front—crisp and laced with mineral on the finish. **David*

2004 Ch. de Bellevue, Les Griottes

Importer Kermit Lynch has a knack for finding surprising value in Bordeaux and Chateau de Bellevue in Lussac Saint-Emillion is a prime example. Normally all the juice goes into his blend, but owner André Chartenoud found people liked his 2004 Merlot from barrel so much he decided to bottle it up on its own early enough to capture its beautiful fruit (and in a screw cap). The first sip is good, the second even better, and the wine continues to evolve with every glass poured. Very floral aromas of rose petal, pomegranate and blackberry. Elegantly structured with fresh ripe fruit and silky tannins. The soft cherry fruit is backed by a firm core of supple acidity on the finish. **David*

As the Wine Bubbles continued

content goes up and with it the degrees of brix. A refractometer is a cool little optical device used to read the degrees of brix in a liquid. He squeezed one of his purchased berries onto the refractometer's little window and peered through the eye piece. He quickly and emphatically uttered something like "Oh I don't even want to know that!" and handed

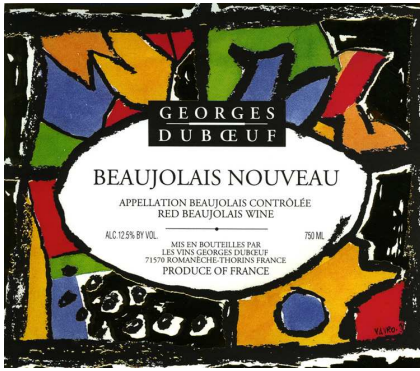


the refractometer to me. I peered through it but didn't see anything. He suggested I look toward the top of the scale. Now, when to pick is a matter of personal preference and much controversy, but I believe that it is safe to say that most folks would agree that the 29 degrees of brix that I read is really, REALLY high. High brix can cause trouble down the road but that is a discussion for a later episode. We finished destem-

ming and crushing enough grapes for my use. We hadn't checked the Brix of the grapes from his vines, but they were obviously lower since the resulting Brix reading from my mixed batch was 27.5 degrees. Better, but still a little high.

After processing some more of his fruit, our host treated us to a tour of his home and winemaking facilities, a great lunch accompanied by some awesome wines, a bottle of his yet to be released '05 Chardonnay, a bag full of fresh picked heirloom tomatoes and peppers, and of course great company! Whew! Many, many big thanks to him and his wife for their wonderful generosity and hospitality! After an exceptional morning and afternoon, Bridget and I headed home with our prize to start the next step in the wine-making process. Ah, but that discussion will have to wait until Episode 2.

Next time on "As the Wine Bubbles" ... Fermentation!



Nouveau Beaujolais

Okay, it's not much more than grape juice with a little kick—wine that was hanging on the vine a few months before. No, it is not the best that Beaujolais has to offer, but yes, it's a lot of fun. Think of it as a celebration of the harvest. We are talking Nouveau Beaujolais, of course, and this year that third Thursday release date comes early—November 15.

It looks to be a good vintage. An unusually warm April got things off to a quick start, but too much rain throughout the summer slowed down grape development. Still, harvest began rather early kicking off at the end of August, proceeding into September under ideally sunny skies. Good color (crimson red) and rich, fruity aromatics and flavors characterize the juice and argue for a very good vintage. Judge for yourself. We'll be offering free samples from the 15th

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Wine Shop Hours!

10 am to 8 pm
Monday
thru
Saturday

10 am to 6 pm
Sunday

Open House and Art Exhibition



Wine and art are natural companions. There are those who would assert that wine making itself is an art with the final product designed to appeal to the senses. To help promote the work of local artists as well as guest artists from around the world, the Boise Co-op Wine Shop is sponsoring the first of our bi-monthly exhibitions on Saturday, November 24. For this premier show we are excited to have with us Ninjin Puntsag who will exhibit her Mongolian Dreams collection. Ninjin, a young photographer and artist originally from Mongolia, has been living in Paris for the past few years fine tuning her photographic skills. Her show will display a hauntingly beautiful collection of landscapes, people, and a series focusing on form, shadow and light.



Join us from 1 to 5 pm on Saturday, November 24 at the Boise Co-op Wine Shop. Wine and light hors d'oeuvres will be provided.