

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

BOISE CO-OP WINE SHOP
NEWSLETTER

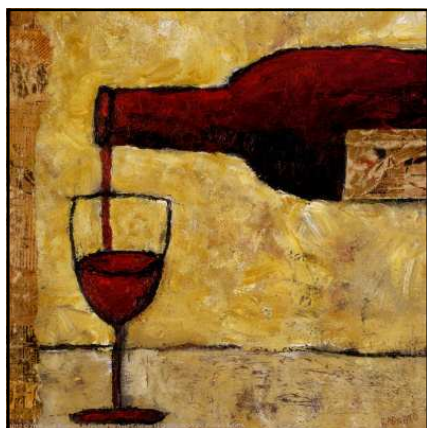
CORNER OF 8TH & FORT
BOISE, ID 83702

JUNE CLUB PICKS

Early Summer Reds

by David Kirkpatrick

With the transition from spring to summer, June marks the return to warmer weather. The forecast for the first week of the month (notoriously unreliable) calls for mild weather with the high temperatures pushing 80. And while I'm currently consuming more rosé than any other wine, when the meat comes off the barbecue I still crave the occasional glass of red.



Typically this time of year I turn to blends, especially those with Syrah and/or Grenache in the mix. The one exception is Zinfandel, the best of which make for a perfect barbecue match. Sadly, the trend has been toward one of excess, resulting in jammy, overripe, monster Zins that taste more like Port than table wine. But at a recent tasting I discovered a couple that offered all the rich fruit you could want, while retaining remarkable restraint and balance.

The **2005 Paul Dolan** is a great buy at \$16.99. It charms you with floral berry aromas and touches of nutmeg and pepper. A spicy wine with a nice core of ripe bramble berry flavors, the finish is long and silky with perfect acidity and hints of anise, vanilla and cinnamon. The fact that it is made from organically grown grapes is a nice plus.

The other discovery, the **2005 Pietra Santa**, also offers excellent value at just

\$15.99 a bottle. The aromas are all dark berry and black currant fruit laced with herb, smoke and light notes of caramel. A bit bigger than the Paul Dolan with ripe cherry flavors that are balanced by tangy acidity. Soft oak, black pepper and sage round out this fresh and lively Zinfandel.

At \$32.00 a bottle the **2002 Grant Burge Holy Trinity** is a bit rich for my budget, but I was lucky enough to be around when someone else opened one. The Burge family settled in Australia's Barossa in the 1850s and have been making wine for over a century. This Trinity is a mostly equal blend of old vine Grenache, Shiraz and Mouvedre. Very Aussie in style with extraordinary aromas bursting forth—bright berry and cherry fruit, anise, nicely integrated oak, white pepper, rose petals and just a hint of dill. Rich but not overwhelming with creamy cherry and red berry fruit flavors backed by subtle touches of pepper and earthy spice. If my retirement plan works out (I buy a lottery ticket every week) this one will definitely find a home in my cellar.

But since I will probably have to rely on my backup plan (a 401K that drops in value with admirable consistency) I'll have to stick with something more affordable like the **2006 Penfold's Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet** blend, priced at a very reasonable \$9.99. It's not like I'll be slumming—the *Wine Advocate* rated this wine a well deserved 91 points describing it as having meaty black currant, blackberry and blueberry aromas with remarkable focus and structure. I found it to be a lovely, fruit forward berry bomb balanced by good acidity. Just the thing for a backyard barbecue.

Another favorite from Australia is the **2006 Tait BallBuster**. At \$15.99 a bottle you could call it a medium priced wine, but that's the only thing medium about this appropriately named effort. As thick and juicy as a Kobe rib-eye (which would make a great barbecue companion), the

Selbach Riesling Kabinett 2006

Girardin Bourgogne Blanc 2006

Adriano Ramos Pinto Red 2005

Eisenhower Wild Thyme 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- *As the Wine Bubbles Episode 7, Bottling*
- *June Wine Club Picks*
- *Summer Solstice Wine Sale*



Continued on the back page

As the Wine Bubbles

by Drew Graham

Episode 7 – Bottling

At long last, dear reader, your tortuous wait is over! I now bring you the next, and next to last, episode of “As the Wine Bubbles.” The events in this episode follow a now familiar pattern. I agonize over the several little decisions that need to be made prior to performing the relatively simple task at hand. I do the job. Then I worry like mad over the potential results of my actions.

Decision number one involves closure and bottle type. I suppose that you could argue over whether or not I am a “wine snob, however, I can tell you unequivocally that I am not a packaging snob. I would love to use screw-caps on my wine. I have been on the wholesale, retail and consumer sides of this industry and I am down right sick and tired of having wines ruined by cork taint. That said, the use of screw-caps in home winemaking is not financially feasible. Hence, last year I used the inexpensive composite corks (I call them particle board corks) and Bordeaux style bottles available at any homebrew store. This involved steaming the corks on the stove top to make them pliable, playing ‘hot potato’ with each of them and enjoying an upper arm workout ramming the little devils into the necks of the bottles with a small corking tool. It all went just fine, however, two things have happened in the past year that have given me a different idea for this go around. First, having made beer in the past, I own a bottle capper and a supply of caps. I often find myself decanting a bottle of wine and transferring half of it into a 12 oz beer bottle for travel or storage. Second, here in the wine



shop we started selling fabulous Austrian wines in 1 liter bottles sealed with crown caps.

These producers are making a heck of a lot better wine than I am and they aren't afraid to use a beer cap! I came to the decision that I would bottle my wine in beer bottles with crown caps.

The next decision that needed to be

made is how many bottles of what sizes are required. Please recall that I have one gallon with un-toasted American oak, one gallon with toasted French oak and six gallons of un-oaked juice. Deciding on bottle size required that I take a guess at what I might do regarding blending (more on that later) without having tasted the wine! I assumed that I would want to bottle the three types separately and since I have so little of the two oaked wines I would use 12 oz bottles for those and 22 oz bottles for the un-oaked. After that decision, the number of

each size bottle is a matter of simple math. Even I can handle that!

Another decision involves the addition of sulfites. As I have stated before, I believe that sulfites have been unduly vilified but I also like the non-interventionist approach to winemaking. Furthermore, I have had a few bottles of “no sulfites added” wines that have tasted bad and/or spontaneously created a weird ‘goo’ in the bottle. Since I don't want to risk the loss of my entire batch of wine to instability and I have added no sulfites to date, I decided that a very minimal treatment prior to bottling would be wise. Calculating this minimal amount when you are looking at as little as one gallon of wine can be a challenge, as you will soon see. For the geekier among you, sulfites take the form of Potassium Metabisulfite powder which I purchased when I got the bottles. This powder is also used to make a sanitizing solution for the bottles and equipment.

Aside from bottles (with caps and capper) and sulfites, the equipment necessary for bottling is the same as for racking, with one notable exception. If you want to drastically minimize the mess in your kitchen, purchase a bottling wand. This is simply a hard tube with a valve on the end that stops the flow of fluid when moving from bottle to bottle. This results in significantly less spilled wine.



Off we go! Bear in mind that neither the Fabulous Red-head nor I have tasted the wine since the last racking. It is well within the realm of possibility that bad things have happened inside those carboys since last we checked. We nervously open the one gallon jug of toasted French oak juice and siphon out a taste. Drum roll please ... it is pretty darn good! Yes, it's too ‘vanilla oaky’ at this moment but that will integrate over time. We decide that this should be bottled unblended. The wine I made last year has a lot of trapped carbon dioxide in it which I theorize is because I was deathly afraid of allowing air to get to the wine. Because of this I decide to rack the wine into a bucket to ‘de-gas’ it and to leave the last bit of sediment behind. Now how much sulfite powder should I add to such a tiny amount of wine? Since I want the treatment to be minimal I decide that the residue left in the bottles and bucket from the sanitizing sulfite rinse will suffice. In short order gallon #1 is bottled and capped.

With only slightly less trepidation, we sample the un-toasted American oak gallon. Again, nothing has gone

Continued on next page . . .

Wine Club Selections

R & R Club

2006 Selbach Riesling Kabinett,

Although the 2005 vintage will forever go down in history for its exceptional wines, the 2006 vintage is not to be overlooked. The harvest yield was lowered due to poor weather conditions, but those wines that did succeed are just as good, and arguably better, than that acclaimed '05 vintage. The Selbach Kabinett is a good example of the high quality wines produced in Germany during this year. On the drier side, this wine has significant complexity and depth for a standard table wine. A nose classic of Mosel wines, characterized by honeydew, petrol and lemon, opens to an intense palate of citrus peel, lemon, wet hay and green melon. The finish has a unique grassy quality, backed by a relative amount of acidity to serve well as a food companion. This wine would pair well with spicy Asian dishes or lighter fare such as chicken and shellfish. **Robin*

2005 Adriano Ramos Pinto Douro Red

A blend of traditional Portuguese grapes: Touriga Francesa, Tinta Roriz, and Touriga Nacional, this traditionally-styled red provides a well-structured and vibrantly fruity composition which will make an excellent companion for red meats and barbecue. The nose shows fruit character of dark cherry and blackberry, with a subtle undertone of mocha. The fruit is juicy and vibrant on the palate and the tannins and acidity, while somewhat austere when the wine is consumed alone, become beautifully silky when paired with appropriate food. I paired this wine with rib-eye steak and sweet potatoes and found them to be excellent partners. **Leil*

Passport Club

2006 Girardin Bourgogne Blanc

Cuvee Saint-Vincent

The grapes for this elegant and nuanced Bourgogne blanc come from various vineyards around the village of Mersault, and are vinified and aged in 100% stainless steel. The nose opens with scents of toasted almonds, coconut, white pepper and grilled bread. The palate shows hints of peach and creamy tangerine, subtle minerality and marvelous acidity. Initially somewhat tight, it developed beautifully the longer it sat open, and proved to be an excellent pairing with my grilled chicken and salad. The wine also showed impressive aging potential, and should continue to evolve in the bottle for several years. **Leil*

2005 Eisenhower Wild Thyme

Washington wines have been steadily increasing market share while gaining accolades throughout the industry. A combination of long daylight hours in the growing season and an arid climate make for fully ripened grapes and result in bold, complex, and highly sought after wines. Eastern Washington vineyards grow 99% of the state's grapes. The Walla Walla appellation is one of the most famous, and is home to family-run Eisenhower Cellars. These wines are consistent in their quality, and amazing in their depth of flavor. The 2005 Wild Thyme nose hints of smoked meat, and dark roasted coffee, following through on a gamey palate comprised of leather, salami, peppercorn and herbs. Firm tannin and substantial acidity is balanced by lighter notes of vanilla and mocha flavors. There is a lot going on with this blend of 60% syrah and 40% cabernet sauvignon, and it is remarkably well integrated. This wine would benefit from food and would be an excellent companion to lamb, duck or venison dishes. **Robin*

wrong! We like it slightly less than the toasted French version but it is just fine and will be bottled unblended as well. Gallon #2 is bottled and capped.

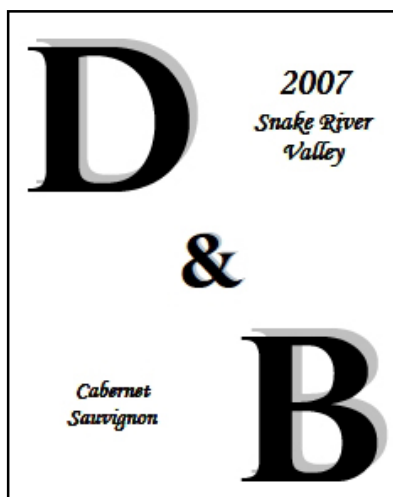
Again the nervousness as we open each of the three gallon carboys. Luckily, all is well with these too. Not surprisingly, this wine tastes a bit more 'simple' than either of the oaked versions. I question our decision to not blend. However, we have already started down this path so we bottle this unblended as well. The wine will likely knit together and gain complexity over time. If not, I figure we can always blend at the table later if need be. After much calculating and recalculating I decide to add only 1/16 of a teaspoon of sulfites to the six gallons. I hope it's enough. We just barely finish bottling and cleaning up when our neighbors arrive for dinner. The four of us have a wonderful time drinking the bottling leftovers with take-out pizza!

The last thing left to do to create a 'finished product' is to label the bottles. Last year the Fabulous Redhead was kind enough to put up with me as I asked her to make a myriad of minor adjustments to what is really a very simple, homemade, stick-on label. Hence, we only needed to change a few words this year before we

started emptying our black ink cartridge. See the accompanying picture for the results.

The wine is now done and stashed in the closet under our stairwell. However, as is my wont, I am now worrying that the wine will oxidize in the bottle because I didn't use enough sulfites, or I shouldn't have

racked into the bucket, or I left too much empty space at the top of the bottles, or all of the above or something else entirely. Argh! It does give you a certain respect for the Fabulous Redhead doesn't it? Regardless, you dear reader, need not fret. You need only wait until next month to read the final installment of this epic. I warn you now, it may contain a couple of surprises!



Early Summer Reds con't from page 1

Tait is a classic, in-your-face Barossa red with ripe fruit and notes of caramel and chocolate. The blend is heavy on the Shiraz (78%) along with Cabernet and Merlot. For all its richness it goes down oh-so-smoothly, though you might want to save this one for the cool of the evening.

A current favorite from France is the **2005 Mas de Gourgonnier** rouge from the little known southwestern appellation of Les Baux de Provence. The wine is a plush, if unusual blend of one-third Carignane and one-third Cabernet Sauvignon with the final third a combo of Grenache and Syrah. It's a dazzling effort from an outstanding estate, deeply pigmented with floral aromas that are laced with dark chocolate. The deep fruit flavors include plum and berry with a touch of cinnamon and earth. It is drink-

ing great now, but has excellent aging potential of a decade or more. At just \$14.99 a bottle, you can afford to lose a few in the cellar.



A vineyard in Provence on a hot summer day

JUNE 2008



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Don't Miss Out on Our Summer Solstice Sale

Featuring Robert Kacher Selections

To mark the longest day of the year and the official start of summer we are having a Sale-ibration (don't you just hate gimmicky words like that?). Every year we trek to France during the frigid month of January to preview the line-up of Robert Kacher wines, one of *the* premier importers in the States. His selections are an outstanding combination of quality and value. We seek out the best of the best, and then we buy in big time to get the lowest prices. The savings are passed on to you, our loyal members and they represent remarkable wine values, so there is no reason to wait for a sale.

But just in case you haven't already tried all of the Robert Kacher wines, we are going to be pouring them throughout the weekend starting Friday, June 20. Come in for a taste through Sunday. We will also be offering a special deal on all of these wines.

Friday, June 20 thru Sunday, June 22

Mix and Match and Save 15% off

On 12 or More Bottles of the New Vintages of Robert Kacher Wines, Red, White & Rosé!

Wine Shop Hours!

10 am to 8 pm
Monday
through
Saturday

10 am to 6 pm
Sunday

