

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

BOISE CO-OP WINE SHOP
NEWSLETTER

CORNER OF 8TH & FORT
BOISE, ID 83702

JANUARY CLUB PICKS

Spotlight on Idaho Wines

by David Kirkpatrick

Just two years back I put together a tasting of Idaho wines for a magazine article. I contacted every winery I knew in the then soon-to-be-approved Snake River AVA and asked them to send samples of what they considered to be their best wines. Fifteen responded, providing some 75 bottles for a panel of wine professionals who had volunteered. The results were a little disappointing showing that Idaho had ample room for improvement.



It was even more disappointing when you consider the history of the region. Vinifera grapes were first planted here almost 150 years ago, and at the turn of the 20th century a thriving wine industry was receiving national acclaim. Prohibition changed all that, but things started to get back on track in 1976 when Ste Chapelle opened their doors (a year before Walla Walla's first bonded winery, Leonetti). Still, 30 years later in 2006 Walla Walla was one of the darlings of the wine world, while only a handful of the usual suspects were producing decent wines along the Snake River. In my article I cited a number of reasons why things had progressed so slowly in Idaho, but the main point now is what a difference two years can make.

The Snake River AVA was approved in April of 2007—perhaps just a coincidence, but the recent opening of several new wineries, some with winemakers that have moved here after working out-of-state, makes me think that we are on the

culsp of an exciting new era. The new kids on the block, along with consistent performers like Brad Pintler (Sawtooth), Bill Stowe (Indian Creek), Greg Koenig, Kirby Vickers and Scott DeSeelhorst (Snake River), make it much easier to enthusiastically recommend Idaho wines. What follows is just a partial list of worthy wineries.

Ste Chapelle Winery

Idaho's oldest and biggest producer, and the only one with national distribution. They have positioned themselves to be a leader in what's called the "premium" wine market—something of a misnomer when you realize that the target price in that category is under \$8.99 a bottle. Still, it would be a mistake to overlook Ste Chapelle. Both their **2007 Dry Riesling** and **2007 Dry Gewurztraminer** are exceptional values at **\$6.49**. And their **2006 Riesling Ice Wine**, **\$20** is a consistent performer of excellent quality.

Sawtooth Winery

Founded back in 1987 by Brad Pintler and originally called Pintler Cellars, it joined Corus estates in 1998 and took on the present moniker. Always a talented winemaker, Brad has evolved over the last 20 years into one of Idaho's and the Northwest's best. Everything he bottles is worthy, but my current favorite is his **2005 Tempranillo**, **\$16.99**. For the price, just **\$9.49**, it's also hard to beat his **2006 Chardonnay**. Sawtooth is a member winery of the Rhone Rangers, a group that includes California maverick Randall Graham of Bonny Doon, so it's no surprise that their **2005 Viognier**, **\$9.49** and **2005 Syrah**, **\$9.49** are both standouts as well as remarkable bargains.

Indian Creek Winery

Bill Stowe also started up in 1987 creating an immediate stir with a string of elegant Pinot Noirs that were as good as any in the Northwest. They've had their ups and

Idaho con't on back page . . .

Wishing Tree Chardonnay,
Unwooded, 2007

Ringbolt Cabernet Sauvignon, 2005

Alma Rosa Chardonnay,
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2005 K Vintners Guido and pizza!

by Leil Cardoza from his wine blog



I've been holding on to this bottle for a while now. We didn't get much of it at the store, and I only managed to get my hands on the one bottle for myself. The first thing I thought when I tasted it was "Holy Batman, I wish I had a case of this!"

This wine completely changed my perception of the winemaker Charles Smith. His wines in general have gotten a lot of critical acclaim, and he's most well known for his Syrahs, and most of the ones I've had are very big wines, yet this Guido was astonish-

ingly delicate. It's 86% Sangiovese and 14% Syrah, and it showed more authentic Sangiovese varietal character than any Sangiovese I've ever had from Washington. My wine-drinking teammate and I actually had a bottle of 2005 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano a few weeks ago, and as we were drinking the Guido we both wished we had another bottle of the Vino Nobile just so we could compare the two.

The Guido smelled so perfectly like Sangiovese, full of cherries with just a little red licorice and dried flowers. The palate was delicious and elegant, again showing cherries and raspberries, amazing balance, and pairing extremely well with our Chicago Connection sausage pizza. My only regret is that we drank it so soon. It was so delicious, yet still seemed young, and I'm sure it would have continued to improve for a good long while. I've been keeping my eye on K Vintners' website and talking to my distributor, waiting for this wine's next release and I haven't seen anything so far. I REALLY hope Charles hasn't lost his vineyard source for this wine.

Check out all of Leil's ramblings posted on, I Think About Wine — <http://ithinkaboutwine.blogspot.com/>

January White Sale!!!

Times are tight—the economy is in the dumper—we need to reduce our inventory. So, to help entice you into splurging ever so slightly, we are offering some of our best wines at deep discount. We're talking white Burgundy—the quintessential Chardonnay. And just a thought—we don't want you to go into debt or max out those credit cards, but if you can afford to, take advantage of this sale. After all, if everyone stops spending, that downward spiral will only get worse. Here are all the details:

Starting Saturday, January 10, 2009

15% off all White Burgundies

Buy 12 or More and Get an Additional 10% off

That's a 25% Discount on 12 or More!!!

Come in Early for the Very Best Selection

R & R Club

This month we are highlighting one of the most promising wine regions in both Australia and the world. Vineyards were first planted in Margaret River in the 19th century but disappeared in the early 20th century as markets looked elsewhere. The development of the region as it exists today was largely due to Dr John S. Gladstones. At the end of 1965, he published his celebrated treatise suggesting that Margaret River could be Australia's next prime wine region, and by 1967, Tom Cullity was there, planting the Vasse Felix vineyard. The Margaret River story had begun. Defined by the Indian and Pacific oceans which merge there, the region enjoys a temperate, maritime climate with high winter rainfall and pristine, robust sea breezes, perfect for growing wine grapes.

2007 Wishing Tree Chardonnay, Unwooded

John Larchet put together the Australian Premium Wine Collection which represents such outstanding properties as Elderton, Hewitson, Pikes and Grosset. But he also acts as a negociant making wine under his own label, wines that represent exceptional value. Sourcing grapes from vineyards throughout Western Australia he produced this refreshing white wine named for a beautiful old Oak tree with a massive canopy that he remembered from his childhood. It opens with fresh and fruity aromas of sweet lime, pineapple and apple blossom with a faint touch of spiced bread dough. Ripe citrus flavors dominate the palate offering lemon, lime and blood orange backed by creamy peach and pear with a subtle hint of caramel. All the richness you could want from a Chardonnay sans the oak—I promise you won't miss it. Food wise, this wine is much more versatile than a big oaky Chard. Great with most all seafood, creamy pastas and poultry. It even holds up to spicy Asian cuisine. **David*

2005 Ringbolt Cabernet Sauvignon

Western Australia's southwest coastline is littered with shipwrecks, the wreck of the Ringbolt being one of them. It sank in the late 1800s in what is now known as Ringbolt Bay, located on the southern tip of Western Australia—the name Ringbolt honors the heritage of the Margaret River wine region. This is the second time I've tried this wine, and the second time I've found it to be an excellent value. The nose is rich with cassis, baker's chocolate, eucalyptus, mint, and cedar. The richness carries through to the palate, which shows excellent balance and acidity and paired marvelously well with my Christmas eve prime rib. **Leil*

Passport Club

2005 Alma Rosa Chardonnay, Santa Barbara

Richard Sanford stands as a legend in California winemaking. He was the first to plant vineyards in what would become the Santa Rita Hills, and with his wife Thekla, spent the next thirty-five years producing some of this country's best Pinot Noirs. He now makes wines under the Alma Rosa label from what he considers the greatest vineyard he has ever developed. The name is derived from the Spanish word for Soul, "Alama," with "Rosa," commemorating the areas 19th century Santa Rosa land grant. This Chardonnay shys away from the overtly oaky style often typical of California, showing more of the fruit and acid highlights the grape variety can offer, especially when grown in cool climate conditions. The wine is brisk and clean, with a racy mineral streak running through classic apple and pear flavors. Elements of lemon and honey come through, especially on the racy finish. In order to preserve freshness the wine is seasoned for only seven months in used oak barrels, and did not undergo malolactic fermentation. That style makes for a great food wine. Pair it with everything from simple pastas or roast pork, to elaborately sauced halibut or curried chicken. *"More hazelnut, toasted almond, and buttery popcorn characteristics are found in the 2005 Chardonnay Santa Barbara. Not as forceful, rich, or delineated as the single vineyard cuvee, it is an outstanding Chardonnay to consume over the next 1-2 years."* 90 points, Wine Advocate.

**David*

2003 Terre del Grico Don Felice

This delicious wine comes to us from the folks at the Seattle based company, Small Vineyards Imports. Their mission is to seek out limited production wines, most of which rank among the smallest 10% of their region. Their portfolio ranges from Piemonte to Puglia, which is where this offering from Terre del Grico comes from. Prodigy winemaker Massimiliano Apollonio and his brother Marcello inherited their family estate in 1995 and have re-invigorated the vineyard with an emphasis on quality. Their vine density is almost unheard of in Puglia and it is Massimiliano's goal to make "the greatest wine in Southern Italy." Aged in oak for six months, Don Felice (named for their father) is a wine with both power and balance. A blend of 50% Primitivo, 30% Negroamaro, 20% Montepulciano, it has lush orange peel and exotic spice aromas, notes of coffee and licorice. With only 850 cases produced, this is a selection not to be missed. Pair with strong, aged chesses, full-bodied pastas, spicy vegetable dishes, roasted meats and sausage. (To learn more about this terrific import company and their wines, visit www.svimports.com. It's a great website!) **Leslie*

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Cabernet Sauvignon Tasting, Saturday, January 17 at Café Vicino from 2:00 to 4:00 pm, \$30

Wine 101 Tasting, Saturday, February 21 at Café Vicino from 2:00 to 4:00 pm, \$20



"Oops, my bad ... It is vinegar."

January 2009



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Wine Shop Hours!

10 am to 8 pm
 Monday
 through
 Saturday

10 am to 6 pm
 Sunday

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downs since but have persevered over the years. With daughter Tammy and her husband Mike recently coming on board, it is the first multi-generational Idaho winery. Keep an eye on this revitalized enterprise and check out their **2006 Indian Creek Malbec, \$21.00**, an impressive wine that bodes well for the future.

Vickers Vineyards

The vineyard was established by Kirby and Cheryl Vickers in 1981, but it was 1992 before they bottled wine under their own label. An engineer by training and vocation, Kirby has shown a remarkable talent for making his first love, Chardonnay. Sparing no expense, he crafts wines that are Burgundian in style, remarkably long lived and he only releases them when he feels they are ready to drink. Check out both his **2002** and **2005 Chardonnay**, underpriced at **\$14.99** a bottle. For a real eye opener try his **1993 Chardonnay, \$19.50**—crisp, clean and complex with elegant fruit flavors—you won't believe it's a fifteen year old wine.

Koenig Distillery and Winery

Founded in 1995 by brothers Andrew and Greg Koenig, Andrew runs the distillery side of the business while Greg keeps very busy on the wine side, making wine for Koenig Vineyards as well as for a number of other estates. He's responsible for their top notch **2006 Riesling Ice Wine, \$20.50** as well as the outstanding **2006 Cabernet-Syrah, \$24.00**. In fact, if a bottle says Koenig on the label, you won't be disappointed. But it won't always say Koenig even though Greg is the driving force behind the wine. He has sought out some of the best vines from the best vineyards and encouraged owners to bottle under their own labels. The result has been some truly outstanding wine that would do well against any in the Northwest. Look for **Williamson Vineyards 2005 Syrah** (and their Viognier, when it's available), or his latest collaboration **3 Horse Ranch** whose estate wines are organically grown. Two of their new releases are not to be missed knock-outs: the **2008 Pinot Gris, \$15.99** and the **2008 Viognier, \$19.50**.

Snake River Winery

Scott and Susan DeSeelhorst purchased the Arena Valley Vineyard in 1998 producing their first wine two years later. They worked hard to enhance their holdings, and with improved vineyard management their wines have made impressive strides. One of their standouts is the **2007 Snake River Riesling, \$9.49**, but some of my favorites go against the grain a bit. Try their **2005 Barbera, \$16.50**, **2006 Syrah, Grenache, Mouvedre, \$16.50**, or **2006 Unwooded Chardonnay, \$10.99** to see the great results thinking outside the box will get you.



Rising Stars

Some of the newest wineries on the scene are making some of Idaho's best wines. With only two vintages under his belt Bill Fraser has crafted two of the best Northwest Cabernets to date. **The 2006 Fraser Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, \$24.50** made my top five of the year list for the Boise Weekly, and his **2007 Randonne Red, \$20.00**, a smooth and velvety eclectic blend of Syrah and Malbec is equally fine. **River Heights Vineyard** is off to a good start with their **2006 Red** blend of Merlot, Malbec and Cabernet priced at \$16.99. And Melanie Krause is doing such a great job at **Cinder Wines** that they sold out. You'll have to wait until March for new releases, but if her first vintage was any indication, it will be worth the wait. Her wines define the term "Rising Stars."