

# Boise Co-op Uncorked!

BOISE CO-OP WINE SHOP  
NEWSLETTER

CORNER OF 8TH & FORT  
BOISE, ID 83702

## DECEMBER CLUB PICKS

## Any Port in a Storm

by Bruce Curfman

When the winter chill is in the air, what could be more civilized than a warming glass of Port by a roaring fire? Few other wines are surrounded by as much history, romance and tradition as Port.

True Port wine comes, of course, only from Portugal and principally the region around the upper Duoro River. It is a rich, intensely colored wine that is "fortified" by the addition of small amounts of brandy during fermentation. With that, fermentation is halted, which results in a certain amount of natural grape sugar and sweetness being retained in the finished wine. What happens next in the aging process determines which of the numerous styles of Port will be produced.



Vintage Port is made only from the best grapes, from the best sites and is produced only in the best years. It represents only about two percent of a producer's total production. Once selected, it spends about two years in wood and is then bottled to continue its long aging process. This could take from 7 to 15 or more years depending on the vintage. The most recent declared vintage, 2007, is thought to be one of the great ones, elegant, poised and near perfect.

Most Ports, however do their aging in wood and are not intended to develop further in the bottle. These start with Ruby

(aged 3 to 5 years) which is a rich, red, sweetish wine that can serve as a warming bracer or an after dinner drink. Next are the Tawnies, aged usually from 5 to 10 years (but sometimes decades) producing a softer, more mellow, lighter hued wine that is still rich in flavor and complexity. Some prefer a well aged Tawny even to great vintage Port, but be forewarned, those aged Tawnies can be rather expensive.

Finally, you have a group of Port styles including Vintage Character, proprietary "Reserves" and Late Bottled Vintage (or LBV). This last category is wine that comes from a particular vintage, then aged an extra two to three years in wood, retaining some of the characteristics of vintage port without the need to be further aged in the bottle. Vintage Character and the proprietary wines are a blend of fine reserves of various vintages that are similarly bottled for immediate consumption. Their popularity is well-deserved for they can be a very rewarding experience without all the hoopla and fuss of a rare vintage Port. Here are a few Wine Shop recommendations in each category:

**Warre's Warrior, \$15.99**

**Fonseca Bin 27, \$16.99**

**Graham's Six Grape, \$21.50**

**2000 Pocas Late Bottled, \$19.99**

**2003 Graham's Late Bottled, \$20.50**

**2003 Ramos Pinto LBV, \$24.00**

**1994 Warre's, \$79.00**

**2000 Churchill's, \$65.00**

**2003 Taylor Fladgate, \$108.00**

**2007 Dow's, \$65.00**

**2007 Graham's \$75.00**

**Churchill's 10 year Tawny, \$34.00**

**Dow's 10 year Tawny, \$29.50**

**Noval 10 year Tawny, \$31.00**

**Fonseca 20 year Tawny, \$50.00**

**Graham's 20 year Tawny, \$51.50**

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Raymond Reserve Chardonnay,  
Napa, 2007

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Casa d' Ambria Aglianico, 2008

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Marco Cecchini Tové, 2007

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Flora Springs Merlot, Napa 2005

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# Champagne Celebration

by David Kirkpatrick

I've said it before—sparkling wines are so versatile and food friendly it's a shame most people think of them as special occasion bottles. But the simple fact is that bubbles will always be connected with celebration. And I'm guessing more corks fly on New Year's Eve than any other day of the year. Who am I to argue?

This year we have at least one good reason to celebrate. Let's face it: the first ten years of the 21st Century have had their share of bad news and troubles. But now is the time to look ahead, and though it's just a symbolic tick of the clock and flip of the calendar, tradition marks the moment as one of hope and change. Reason enough for me to ante up for the genuine article. I mean, if I'm going to celebrate, why not splurge and make it Champagne.

It has to come from that region in France to carry the name Champagne on the label. And if you love Veuve Clicquot or Moët Chandon, go for it. The big producers do a good job of offering a consistent house style. So while I'd never say no to a flute of Bollinger Special Cuvée, I find the recent availability of Grower Champagnes much more enticing.

Where the big Champagne houses act mostly as negociants, sourcing grapes from around the region, Grower Champagne makers are as the name implies: they own the vineyard, they tend the vines and they make the wine. And where the style and price of big Champagne houses is driven by the market, growers make wine that expresses their



*terroir* and price it according to their production costs. The result is not necessarily cheaper, but to my taste you get a lot more character and bang for your buck. If you are looking for something special and unique understand that Grower Champagne accounts for only 3% of the market (the big houses control 80%).

How do you know it's from a grower. Well you can always ask one of the Wine Crew, but if you are

in a strange shop in an unfamiliar town, look for the initials RM. They stand for *récoltant-manipulant*,



indicating a grower who makes their own wine. Here's a list of most of the ones currently in stock at the Wine Shop:

- Aubry Brut Rosé, \$54.00**
- Chartogne-Taillet, Sainte-Anne, \$45.00**
- Chauvet Brut, \$35.00**
- Chiquet Blanc de Blancs d'Ay, \$49.00**
- Chiquet Tradition, \$58.00**
- Diebolt-Vallois, \$48.00**
- Doquet Rosé, \$59.00**
- Drappier Blanc de Blancs, \$46.00**
- Egly-Ouriet Brut Rose, \$79.00**
- Egly-Ouriet V. P Grand Cru, \$78.00**
- Gimonnet Blanc de Blancs, \$48.00**
- Goutorbe Prestige Brut, \$45.00**
- Goutorbe Brut Rosé, \$52.00**
- H. Billiot Brut Rosé, \$56.00**
- Jacques Copinet Brut Rosé, \$43.00**
- Larmandier-Bernier Blanc de Blanc, \$48.00**
- Marc Hebrart Selection Brut, \$42.00**
- Marc Hebrart Brut Rosé, \$45.00**
- Margaine Brut, 375 ml., \$24.00**
- Margaine Demi-Sec, \$45.00**
- Vouettet et Sobree Extra Brut, \$85.00**
- Vilmart Cuvée Rubis, \$68.00**
  
- 1997 Jacquesson Auzie, \$75.00**
- 1997 Jacquesson Rosé, \$105.00**
- 1999 Lancelot-Royer Blanc de Blancs, \$56.00**
- 2000 Chartogne-Taillet, Fiacre, \$64.00**
- 2000 Egly-Ouriet Brut Tradition, \$110.00**
- 2000 Gimonnet Oenophile, \$59.00**
- 2000 Vilmart Grand Cellier d'Or, \$78.00**
- 2000 Vilmart Grand Cellier d'Or, 1.5 l, \$199.00**
- 2002 Gimonnet Fleuron, \$59.00**
- 2002 H. Billiot, \$65.00**

## *R & R Club*

### **2007 Raymond Reserve Chardonnay, Napa**

Roy Raymond, Sr. and his two sons, Roy Jr. and Walter founded their winery in 1974. This father and sons team worked together to plant and build Raymond Vineyards. The Raymond family and Napa's history are closely linked. Roy Sr. arrived in the Valley in 1933 and was hired as a cellar worker at Beringer Brothers in St. Helena. He met Martha Jane Beringer and they were married in 1936.

After Beringer Winery was sold in 1971, the Raymond family left to start making wine under their own name. They purchased 90 acres just south of St. Helena in the geographic heart of Napa Valley and planted vineyards. Their first harvest was in 1974. A metal farm building functioned as their winery for the first few years, the grapes were unloaded with pitchforks and shovels, and the tasting room and offices were in Roy Sr.'s backyard pool house. The quality of the wines attracted immediate attention from wine journalists, competitions and the public. Raymond wines now earn accolades across the country for their elegance, balance and finesse.

Their Reserve Chardonnay has always been a classic. While other wineries worked on how much flavor could be extracted from the grape and how much oak could be crammed into the bottle, Raymond bucked the trend opting for freshness and balance. The aromas are delicate, with honeysuckle, a lovely range of citrus (orange, lemon and lime), followed by pear and a touch of almond. There's a nice hit of citrus based acidity in the mouth to balance the honeyed peach and tropical fruit flavors. This one wants to be paired with roast chicken or most anything seafood, but it has the stuff to hold up to spicy Asian as well.

### **2008 Casa d'Ambria Aglianico**

With a vinous history that goes back to 800 BC, the island of Ischia in the Italian district of Campania has serious roots. Founded in 1888, the Casa d'Ambria winery has (and continues to be) a family affair. Francesco d'Ambria, originally from Calabria, founded the estate. His son, Mario, established Casa d'Ambria as the authority on Ischian wines made from its unique, native varieties. Today, winemaker and enologist Andrea d'Ambria runs the estate, managing the winery's vineyard that is planted in the rich volcanic island soil.

It is a rule that where you find volcanoes in Italy, you will also find Aglianico. This full-bodied, powerfully flavored and complex grape prefers the rich volcanic soils of Campania and Basilicata. D'Ambria's 2008 offers cherry and cranberry aromas with dusty touches of fennel and chocolate. Its bright and lively flavors are marked by strawberry rhubarb and tart cherry. An incredible value for such exacting quality and a wine that would go well with hearty winter soups. Pair it with pastas with red sauce, milder cheeses, and roasted poultry or pork, as well.

## *Passport Club*

### **2007 Marco Cecchini Tové Bianco**

In the world of Italian wine producers Marco Cecchini is a relative newcomer having been founded in 1998. But while they cultivate just 20 acres of vineyards, through careful acquisition half of those vines have an average age of 40 years, giving them a window into the recent past. Located in the Friuli Venezia Giulia in Northern Italy just a stones throw from Venice, Austria and Slovenia, the region is a crossroad of cultures that unites coast, vine clad hill country and mountains.

The name Tové is an acronym for the two grapes in the blend, Tocai Friulano (90%) and Verduzzo (10%). Technically that former grape can no longer be listed on Italian exports. Hungarian wine producers successfully argued that it might be confused with their indigenous grape variety bearing a similar name. That aside, Tocai Friulano, which is genetically related to Sauvignon Blanc, is one of the Wine Crews favorite varieties, offering the freshness of Sauvignon Blanc, but with a perfumed aroma and layered richness that sets it apart.

This wine certainly displays that combination both on the nose and in the mouth. The floral aromas include sweet pineapple, lingonberry and spicy fresh-baked apple pie, all backed by bright citrus. Ripe and creamy citrus fruit dominates in the mouth, along with baking spices and almond. The finish is crisp with excellent persistence. Makes for a food friendly wine with the depth of flavor you want in a winter white. Pair it with everything from antipasto to prosciutto wrapped chicken breast. Would go great with most any fish dish as well.

### **2005 Flora Springs Merlot, Napa**

The best wine producers utilize every tool and technique at their disposal when it comes to turning premium grapes into great wine, and Flora Springs' winemaker Paul Steinauer is no exception. First of all, he trusts his senses: The feel of the berry in his fingers, the flavor of the fruit, the fermentation smells, and then the taste of the wine as it evolves. Paul and his team also reach for the edge—a different yeast, a better pump-over technique, a gentler way to handle fruit, or a reliable method of measuring extractable color and character available in the grape, and so on.

The things that the best California Merlots have going for them is their ample smooth fruit and excellent balance. That makes for a wine that can be enjoyed in its youth, but one that will age gracefully, evolving into a wine with layers of complexity and enticing nuances of flavor. The Flora Springs exemplifies that style. The aromas are light and lovely with smooth blackberry fruit mingled with mocha and roasted Anaheim peppers. In the mouth, this wine has beautiful structure with supple red fruits, nice acidity that expresses itself in a just-tart cherry backbone, combined with ripe tannins that you feel on the finish. With a few years of bottle age it has really come into its own and would be the perfect wine to pair with prime rib or a rack of lamb. It would also work well with the comfort foods of the season—a rich dish of macaroni and cheese comes to mind.



### Champagne Tasting

Our Annual Champagne Tasting will take place on Saturday, December 12 starting at 2 p.m. in Cafe Vicino. It will be primarily Grower Champagnes with a big house or two thrown in just to keep things interesting. Chef Richard will prepare a few appetizers to match the wines, and cost is just \$30 per person. Reserve your seat by calling Cafe Vicino at 472-1463. This was a sell out the last two years so don't dawdle!

December 2009



Boise Co-op Wine Shop  
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### Wine Shop Hours!

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**10 am to 6 pm**  
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