

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

BOISE CO-OP WINE SHOP
NEWSLETTER

CORNER OF 8TH & FORT
BOISE, ID 83702

JANUARY CLUB PICKS

My Top Wine Picks

by David

It's just the turning of a page on the calendar, but it seems like everybody likes to reflect on the year past when we first enter a new one. Add to that the human propensity (particularly here in the States) to create lists that rank things, identifying the "best of" in everything from vacation destinations to football teams, and it's understandable that wine would not be immune to that process.

Here then are my top wines of 2009, but with a little twist. As interesting as the *Wine Spectator's* "Top 100" is, it has always had a major drawback. I call it "A Remembrance of Wines Past," since the majority of those picks have sold out by the time the issue is released. So I took a



very subjective look around the Wine Shop, selecting worthy wines that have peaked my interest, to come up with a short list of currently available favorites. Not necessarily the best or most expensive wines we stock, but ones that deserve your attention. In a few cases, I highlighted categories rather than individual bottles. Here it is for all us list lovers:

2007 Quattro Mani Toh Kai, \$9.99

I dare you to find a better or more intriguing white wine for the money. When this wine first arrived I was totally blown away by its richness and complexity. Floral quince, melon, green tea and spice aromas—quince, fig, lime, almond and

more on the palate. I never get tired of this wine, and their Montepulciano is one of the best buys in red, as well.

2008 Ken Wright Pinot Noirs

It was a scary vintage in Oregon's Willamette Valley. September started out cold and cloudy, preventing the grapes from ripening. But then the sun came out in October, and with no rain, those who were patient harvest a fantastic crop. Ken Wright was patient and he sources some of the finest grapes from the best vineyards in Oregon. Highly allocated, I am always surprised at the selection of wines we get from this top Pinot Noir producer. All priced at \$46 a bottle, here's the lineup of vineyard designated offerings we have in stock: **Canary Hill, Carter, Freedom Hill, McCrone, Meridith Mitchell** and **Nysa**.

2007 Coiled Syrah, \$27.00

This Idaho wine is named for the winding path of the Snake River Valley AVA, the source for its Syrah grapes. Wine-maker Leslie Preston lives in Napa Valley, but with roots in Idaho she decided to source grapes from home state. Coiled's 2008 is everything you could want in a red wine. The dark berry and cherry flavors are rich but not over extracted. The wine is silky smooth with a velvety texture, creamy dark chocolate and coffee backing the forward fruit. The tannins are smooth and well integrated and there's a nice kiss of toasty oak throughout. Really shows the potential for Syrah here in our home state.

2008 Rosés

If you haven't figured it out by now, I love rosés, especially those from the south of France, and I drink them all year long. They are among the most versatile wines on the planet, charming on their own and very food friendly. I've sold a lot of these wines to people who thought

2008 Pacific Rim Riesling

2007 Aramis Shiraz Cabernet

2008 Bruno Giacosa Roero Arneis

2004 Lan Rioja, Riserva

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they didn't like pink, and I've never heard a complaint. Always reasonably priced at around ten bucks a bottle for most, with the next vintage just a few months away were dropping the price on a quintet of our favorites to just \$7.99 a bottle. Here are the rosés that are on sale:

Chateau Guiot
Domaine de la Petite Cassagne
Domaine de Saint-Antoine
Domaine Saint-Eugénie
Mas Carlot

The 2008 vintage is drinking beautifully across the board and makes a great alternative to white wine during the cold winter months.

2008 La Ferme St Pierre, \$11.99

Paul Vendran, winemaker and owner of this domaine that sits at the base of France's Mont Ventoux, is like many of his colleagues, believing that wine is made in the vineyard. He also believes that it is made to be drunk, and he strives to produce bottles that are rich and pleasing at a young age. He has more than succeeded with this Syrah based red with its heady floral berry aromas and its succulent red fruit palate. Smooth tannins add depth and structure and the finish lingers on and on. A remarkable value that delights with every sip..

2005 Turnbull Cabernet Sauvignon, \$43.00

Despite its acclaim, Napa Valley Cabernet is too often overpriced, overblown and a little disappoint-

ing. When the Turnbull rep came to town a few months ago, a taste of this wine reminded me why Napa Valley still garners that acclaim. Big, but not



overblown it was filled with ripe plum and dark cherry and berry fruit flavors in an impeccably structured wine with razor fine tannins on the finish. Not the flashiest wine on the block, but for me that's a good thing. Okay it's not cheap, but in this case you get what you pay for, and compared to some cult favorites, this wine is a bargain.

When wandering around the Wine Shop I jotted down two other wines for my Top Picks list: the **2007 Aramis Shiraz Cabernet, \$12.99**, an oh-so-user-friendly Aussie red, and the **2004 Lan Rioja, Riserva, \$20.00**, a wine that made the *Wine Spectator* 2008 Top 100 list, and remarkably is still available in Boise. Read about them on the next page, and try either one with the featured recipe.

A Winter Recipe—Potato and Chorizo Stew

I first had this dish at Bodegas Luberrri in Rioja, Spain, and it has since become a favorite comfort food. The best recipe I could find here in Boise was in the Basque Market cookbook, but it always seemed to be missing something. I tried adding bits of Piquillo pepper to the mix, and it came a little closer. Switching to Ajvar (a roasted red pepper paste available at the Co-op) with touches of tomato paste and hot chili sauce, while perhaps less authentic, best echoed the flavors I remembered from Spain. Goes great with the Lan Riserva or most any other full bodied red.

4 ounces olive oil
 1 medium onion, minced
 2 chorizo sausages removed from their casings and diced
 2 and a half pounds potatoes (Idaho russets are perfect),
 Peeled and cut into 1 inch chunks
 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons Mild Ajvar
 1 tablespoon tomato paste
 Dash of hot chili sauce
 6 cups water

Heat oil in a large stockpot of medium heat. Add onion and cook until soft. Add chorizo and cook, stirring until it becomes brown (about 1 minute). Add potatoes, paprika and salt and stir well. Add water, Ajvar, tomato paste and chili sauce, stir and then bring to a boil. Reduce heat low, cover and simmer gently until potatoes are fork tender (about 20 to 30 minutes, but watch carefully as it is easy to over cook the potatoes).

R & R Club

2008 Pacific Rim Riesling

Located in Washington's Columbia Valley, Pacific Rim is a now independent spin-off from Randal Graham's Bonny Doon. Their passion is Riesling, one of the most versatile and food friendly of the noble grapes. Purity is at the core of Pacific Rim's winemaking philosophy. They use stainless steel tanks exclusively, allowing the true character of Riesling to speak for itself. Their wines are fresh, vivid and elegant with delicate yet complex aromas.

Over 99 percent of all components for this Riesling are organic. They use native—not commercial—yeast to best present the natural character of the vineyard. The result is a wine with heady stone fruit aromas that play against ripe melon and fresh garden greens. There's a nice richness on the palate highlighted by sweet fruit kiwi, melon, apricot and balanced by crisp citrus (lime, grapefruit, lemon). At an easy to drink 10.5% alcohol, there's a bit of residual sugar, but the bright acidity makes for a lively finish. A very versatile wine when it comes to food. Would go great with every thing from shellfish to roast chicken, glazed ham to spicy Asian cuisine.

2007 Aramis Shiraz Cabernet

When we first tasted this wine we were impressed. All the big fruit flavors you would expect from a South Australia red, but with an admirable balance that is sometimes missing. An excellent wine but we guessed with a price tag to match—somewhere in the \$25 to \$30 range. We were floored to learn it would sell for half that.

John Larchet is the man behind one of our favorite import companies, the Australian Premium Wine Collection, and Aramis Vineyards a very exciting new addition to his lineup. Winery owner Lee Flourentzou has pursued his passion to produce rich and intensely flavored red wines. He purchased a 70 acre plot of dirt, just outside of the township of McLaren Vale back in 1998. He now has 64 acres planted, the majority of which is dedicated to Shiraz vines. Planted on their own rootstock in some of the world's oldest mineral rich soils and in the most temperate of Mediterranean climates, this low yielding vineyard is producing wonderfully intense fruit. Lee recruited Scott Rawlinson, a young McLaren Vale based winemaker, to capture the potential of the fruit from the Aramis Vineyard.

The aromas of plum, blackberry, soft toasty oak and spicy chocolate, while not exactly subdued, only hint at the flavor explosion that follows. Richly extracted, but not overdone intense raspberry and blueberry dominate, but there is a nice complexity that includes tar, anise, dark chocolate, coffee and a pleasant minerality that builds on the finish. A hearty wine for hearty dishes: beef stew, roasted game, pastas with meaty red sauce, but it would also work well with macaroni and cheese or most any pizza.

Passport Club

2008 Bruno Giacosa Roero Arneis

Before the 1980s, Giacosa was only one of the Piemonte houses to offer wine from this grape that originated in the Roero region. Traditionally it was used to soften the Nebbiolo grape that formed the core of the more famous Barolos. The Giacosa family has been making wine for three generations. Bruno Giacosa credits his winery's success to his respect for traditional winemaking methods which enhance the characteristics of Piedmont's varietals.

The Giacosa property covers 37 acres that are entirely cultivated to vines. The altitude of the estate, its ideal exposure (south/south-west), and the microclimate combine to create optimal winegrowing conditions. Giacosa makes wine not only with grapes from his property but also with grapes purchased from growers he has known for 30 years and trusts completely. In fact, he made his reputation as an outstanding selector of fruit. In the vineyard, yields are kept intentionally low (less than 2.5 tons per acre) to concentrate the flavors in the fruit. The winemaking methods employed are scrupulous and traditional without ignoring the benefits of modern techniques.

Nose has an enticing clover and spice component that nicely compliments baked apple and honey tangerine aromas. The palate offers a round and creamy texture that's intriguingly countered by tangy lemon zest. Tropical fruit flavors dominate up front (mango, papaya, pineapple), followed by green apple and sweet lemon with a nice kiss of black walnut on the finish. Would pair well with creamy sauced pastas, winter soups like butter nut squash or leek and potato, poultry, pork or grilled fish.

2004 Lan Rioja, Reserva

Even the most jaded wine professional, someone who has toured literally hundreds of wineries, is taking aback by the facilities at Lan. Here the traditional meets the latest in modern technology. This wine is a classic Rioja blend of 80% Tempranillo, 10% Mazuelo and 10% Garnacha aged in American and French oak, then spends at least two years in the bottle. Once it hits the barrel aging room, things take on a Star Wars like veneer. It extends over an area of 6400 square meters and is a unique setting with a pioneering and completely automated stacking, racking and climate control system. Type in a number and cranes and trains bring the specified barrel to the specified location. A reverse waterfall of bottles moves up from the barrel room to the bottle aging room. It is a mind boggling display.

None of that would matter if Lan wasn't producing some of the best wines in Rioja. They are. This one opens with beautifully fragrant and elegant aromas marked by dark coffee, cacao, currant and red berry with touches of anise and spice. Elegant also describes the palate with its velvety texture and crushed cherry and berry fruit flavors. Five years past the vintage, this wine is just starting to shine, but with its smooth tannins and impeccable acid balance it will continue to improve for at least another five. Roast leg or rack of lamb would be a classic pairing, or try it with a stew of peppers, potatoes and chorizo.

The wines that one best remembers are not necessarily the finest that one has ever tasted, and the highest quality may fail to delight so much as some far more humble beverage drunk in more favorable surroundings.

—H. Warner Allen

If God forbade drinking, would He have made wine so good?

—Cardinal Richeleu

Cabernet Tasting at Café Vicino



Join us for a Cabernet Sauvignon tasting on Saturday, January 16 from 2 to 4 pm at Café Vicino. The emphasis will be on Cabs from California and the Northwest with a few surprises, and Chef Richard will prepare something special to match the wines. Just \$25 per person, call the restaurant at **472-1463** for reservations.

January 2010



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The economy may be improving, but things are still tough out there. Let's be honest, we're sitting on inventory that we committed to before the crash. Given today's reality, we're talking way too much inventory. Because of that, you've been seeing a lot more sale tags in the Shop. But we're taking the discounts a step further, cutting the prices on all sale and clearance items. If you've been coming to the Wine Shop for very long, you know we stand behind all our picks. We don't stock what we won't drink, so while these wines are on sale, they are still great bottles. We just need to cut our inventory, and our loss is your gain. Here are all the details:

January Clearance Sale

One day only, Sunday January 31

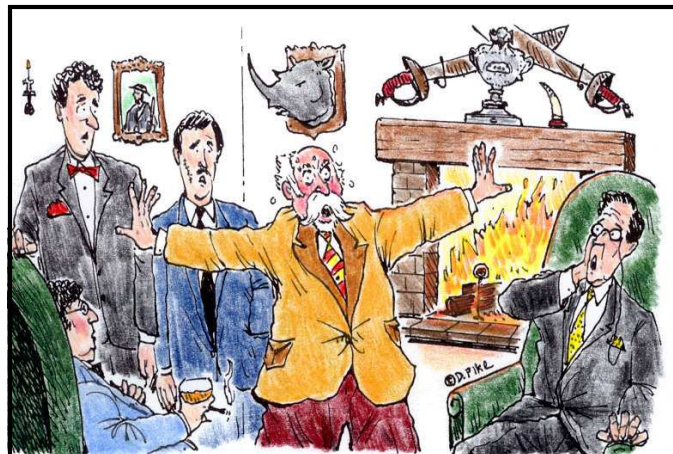
*Take an additional 15% off
all sale and clearance items.*

**Lot's of great wines at unbeatable prices,
some at below cost.**

Wine Shop Hours!

10 am to 8 pm
Monday
through
Saturday

10 am to 6 pm
Sunday



So there I was, alone in the aisle, heart pounding, without a bloody clue as to what wine I should bring our hosts.