

Great Wine Buys

Newsletter: July 2015

NE Broadway Summer Super Sale July 17-19

**20% off all French wines
25% off selected bottles**

**Great French tastings: Sparkling & Champagne Friday
nite, more wines Saturday afternoon - details below**

**Find Great Deals, food & drink specials at
35 businesses along NE Broadway (a pet fair
too!)**

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Cue the Calypso, it's so Hot Hot Hot

Jeff Runquist 1448 California Red Wine 2012 \$14.99/\$11.99 by the case

Dubbed the ultimate BBQ wine by an adoring fan, this exuberant red and July living go hand in hand. Proudly following in the footsteps of unorthodox multi-varietal blends such as Abbot's Table and The Prisoner, this pan-Californian mixes eleven different varietals to great effect. Skillfully blended, wines like these can offer much more than the sum of their individual (often disparate) parts. Dominated by Petite Sirah and Petit Verdot, there is nothing petit about the 1448 (except maybe the label). Lushly textured and packed with flavor, the blue/black fruit is flashily accented with toasty oak, vanilla and smoked meat notes. Boisterous and in-your-face, yes, but unlike many similar reds, this has surprising balance and a zesty liveliness that keeps all those flavors humming along.

Graveirette Côtes du Rhône 2013 \$15.99/\$12.75 by the case

So many European wineries and vineyards are passed down through the generations, father to son, son to granddaughter, etc. but not Graveirette. Julien Mus knew from an early age that he wanted to be a vigneron but with no family land or capital he had to start from scratch. He learned winemaking in Burgundy, working for years at Joseph Drouhin before returning home to establish his own 10 hectare domaine on the northern edge of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Having worked hard to achieve his dream, he is extremely conscientious both in the vineyard (organic/bio-dynamic) and in the cellar. This care, along with his Burgundian training reflect clearly in the wine.

Elegant and expressive, this 100% Grenache bottling has a fresh purity to it and its texture is silky and clean. The floral red berry fruit is accented by zesty orange rind, savory herb and a cured black olive umami note. A good summer pick thanks to its jazzy medium-bodied style, there's still plenty of southern Rhône character making it a great match for grilled meats, garlic aioli, roasted tomatoes and more.

Jean Pabiot Pouilly Fumé 2012

\$22.99/\$18.40 by the case

Not only is this Loire Valley Sauvignon Blanc refreshingly crisp and lively, it's also crazy complex, making it a lot of fun to drink. If your palate is craving variety after too many simple heat-beating whites, this is for you. The exotic nose immediately got our attention, a Hawaiian farm stand of dried tropical fruits (pineapple, guava, lime zest, mango). Fresh sweet green herb, lemon verbena and fading honeysuckle then join the party, while dusty clay and limestone notes bring a mellow cerebral vibe. There's a light meatiness to the texture, round and toothsome, a quality that continues on the long sinewy finish. On the surface it's a nice dry French white; dig a little though and it reveals itself to be much more.

Rosé Round-Up

Ca Maiol Chiaretto 2014

\$13.50/\$10.80 by the case (Delayed - due mid-July)

A PDX summer fixture and deservedly so. The first wine of nine that Saturday, it proved to be the perfect hook. Opening with lovely mouthwatering aromatics, the palate then takes off with a refreshing watermelon tang before sliding effortlessly into sappy cherry, finishing crisp and clean. Confident and breezy with its simple charms, this held customer's attention through the whole tasting. A blend of Gropello, Marzemino, Barbera and Sangiovese from the

southern end of Lombardy's Lake Garda.

Dezat Sancerre 2014

\$19.99/\$15.99 by the case

There are many nice Pinot Noir pinks available but it's tough to match the complexity and flavor intrigue that good terroir delivers, which made this a standout. The nose offers a hint of appealingly earthy funk while delicate yet precise flavors of strawberry, bright cherry and peach tickle the palate. The finish is stony with an almost tannic grip, giving it punch and verve. The combination of airy delicacy and terroir-driven intensity keeps this refreshing and interesting glass after glass.

Andrew Rich Tabula Rasa Pink 2014

\$14.99/\$11.99 by the case

On the fuller-flavored end of the spectrum, this was a winner. Combining Pinot Noir, Syrah and Grenache doesn't always work but Andrew pulls it off beautifully. The nose immediately gives you something to ponder as floral lavender, savory herb and dark cherry aromas waft from the glass. Round and ample yet plenty lively on the palate, the cherry flavor goes full on kaleidoscope before turning peppery on the finish, echoing tangy red berry as a final surprise treat.

Small Vineyards Italians

Estimated arrival: late next week - Engine trouble delayed the ship and our cargo, but its headed our way!

Podere Elia Barbera d'Asti 2012

\$16.99/\$13.60 by the case

High-toned and singing from the first sip, the punchy cranberry notes dazzle the palate before settling into many

shades of cherry. The more it opens, the darker it gets, meatier and more powerful, a rumbling presence that crashes in waves on the muscular finish. It is fun to see how the red cherry fruit expresses itself: first as a hard candy tangy-ness, then a red licorice spiciness, followed by a pie cherry sappiness. Although made in a more international style with underlying graham cracker note and polished texture, it never loses its Piedmont edginess.

Brunelli Poggio Apricale Rosso

Toscana 2014 \$16.99/\$13.60 by the case

Predominantly Sangiovese Grosso (the Brunello clone), this offers classic Tuscan flavors and aromatics in an elegant medium-bodied package. Luca Brunelli is no fireworks shooter; his accomplished goal here is to convey a sense of his Brunello's classy restrained style, priced to enjoy more frequently. To him, daily drinkers need not be either rustic or stripped of personality and this is his proof. Fresh and clean, the fruit runs from aromatic blueberry to black cherry with woody forest floor notes and a youthful grippiness on the finish. A thoughtful and pretty interpretation of the Tuscan countryside.

Marchetti "Later Harvest" Verdicchio

2014 \$17.99/\$14.40 by the case

Still a favorite, still deliciously unique. While the 2013 had a precise and focused feel this 2014 is much more reminiscent of the 2012: a luscious feel-good creamfest, as I called it back then. The whole raison d'être for this wine is to showcase the flavors that develop when the grapes are harvested later and the 2014 rejoices in that mission. Intensely flavored and layered, the fragrant white floral aromatics roll into a pillow of nectarine, ripe melon and honeyed pear, all dusted lightly with baking spice. Its core is a focused beam of brilliance enveloped by succulent fruit while citrus zest and dried mango ride out the finish.

La Quercia Montepulciano d'Abruzzo

Riserva 2011 \$20.99/\$16.80 by the case

Very similar to the popular 2010, this traditionally-styled red is a world away from the mass-produced stuff of the same name. Like all good wines the quality starts in the vineyards with 40+ year old vines, strictly organic farming and very low yields: 1 plant = about 2/3 of a bottle. Aged one year in Slavonian oak followed by one year in stainless, the wine has character and depth as well as an open-knit developed personality. The blackberry and ripe plum fruit is colored by a background of wet dark earth, leather and milk chocolate while light smoky meaty notes peek out before jumbling all together on the chewy finish. Substantial and multi-layered, this shows how good Montepulciano can be.

Taste the new Small Vineyards arrivals with Tom Kelly on Saturday July 25 from 2-5pm.

July Tastings

Friday Evening Tastings:

Flights From 5-7:30pm - just come on by!

July 10 - No Tasting

July 17 - Champagne and Sparkling! It's tough to beat the feeling of a mid-July Oregon Friday night so let's make it even better and drink some bubbles! New and old favorites from both Champagne and non-Champagne regions including Margaine, Bérêche, De Chanceney Rosé and more. \$15

July 24 - New exciting white Burgundy arrivals are all but demanding a tasting. Let's pull some corks on these newbies and a few older vintages as well. Deux Montille,

Sauzet, Michelot and more. \$18

July 31 - No Tasting

August 7 - It's hot, **we want red** so let's head to the cooler climes of **northern Piedmont** where the vines grow in the shadows of the Alps. Expressive Nebbiolo-based wines from appellations including Valtellina, Ghemme, Colline Novaresi and more. \$17

Saturday Afternoon Tastings:

FREE Tastings From 2-5pm - Drop on in!

Come by and try new arrivals and old favorites from visiting winemakers, local distributors or our favorites off the shelves.

July 11 - A week after July 4, Shannon Robbins wants to **party Spanish style!** Rioja Blanco, Ribera del Duero Rosado, Priorat and more. FREE

July 18 - **All French wines are 20% off this weekend so let's pour French bien sur!** Refreshing Loire Valley white, Tavel Rosé, and more with the engaging Theresa Hannam. FREE

July 25 - The inimitable **Tom Kelly** is flying in from San Francisco to show off the **latest crop of Small Vineyards Direct Import Italians**. Come see the show as he pours a range of wines from all over Italy. FREE

August 1 - Battle of the **zippy Iberian Whites**. They're popular all summer long but we rarely taste them, let's change that. Vinho Verde, Txakoli, Alvarinho, etc. FREE

August 8 - **Northwest Rhône Blends**. There are many of them, let's crack some favorites. Owen Roe's Sinister Hand, Syncline Subduction Red, and more. FREE

July

Case of the Month - \$110

Abbazia di Novacella Pinot Nero 2011

Further proof that if you want to sell a \$25 Pinot Noir in Portland it should probably be from Oregon (or Burgundy). Originally \$25, this is a really cool buy for just \$11, delivering loads of Alto Adige mineral character in a pretty medium-bodied summer drinker. Gently soft and broad on the palate, the dusty cherry fruit fades into light tannins before a long wet granite note takes over, hanging on the palate well after the wine has left your mouth. As Kevin put it: take a bite out of the Dolomites! \$10.99

Giocato Sauvignon Blanc 2014

This personality-filled Slovenian white is arriving on the Small Vineyards DI shipment. Linear and racy yet surprisingly complex, there's a woody field of aromatics to breathe in, from gentle spring blossoms to spicy nettle, which provide an appealing complement to the wine's lemony mineral persistence. \$11.50

Mas de Martin Roi Patriote 2012

Hey wait, wasn't this in the June newsletter? Yes, however the distributor and winery are parting ways and they wanted this gone. So...we bought the rest, better price, fits the Case and here we are. Essentially a Bordeaux varietal blend from the Languedoc, the nose is floral and classic southern French, savory and brambly. The warm blackberry fruit is round and soft while the finish gets grippy and darker, trailing notes of cigar ash and macerated plums. \$11.99

Renegade Red Columbia Valley 2013

Made by Walla Walla's Sleight of Hand winery, this is just as solid as previous vintages. Dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon

(76%) and tasting like it, the splashes of Syrah and Cabernet Franc also have their say. Damp cedar, forest floor and peppery spice notes add depth and interest to the wild blackberry fruit, fruit that is plenty ripe yet lively enough to carry the flavors through the smooth finish. \$10.99

Sanguineti Cannonau di Sardegna 2012

Cannonau is Sardinian for Grenache, and expresses itself differently from Spain or southern France, given coastal Sardinia's soil and salty air. Dark in color with a sumptuous cocoa gingerbread nose, the flavors are brighter and more lively than expected - in a good way. To be sure, there's a soft richness to the fruit, a Mediterranean warmth and easy-going juiciness but its richness is wonderfully balanced by tangy red fruit flavors of cranberry, pomegranate and plum. A mild briny earthiness adds depth while lightly gripping tannins pull it all together on the finish. \$11.50

Sentier Vin de Provence Rosé 2014

With its electric pink color and snazzy label it was hard to resist this Aix-en-Provence-area beauty. After one sip, it became even harder to resist. Medium-bodied and nicely textured, the light raspberry and nectarine flavors are refreshing and clean while the finish offers a hint of limestone grip. \$11.99

Lorelle Pinot Grigio 2014

A northwest summer favorite, this new vintage is rollicking and jazzy in style, from its zesty aromatics to the long clean finish. Musky peach, fresh pear and a splash of lemon cream, all delivered in a roundly crisp fashion. \$9.99

Essay Chenin Blanc 2014

Fresh, floral, tasty and smooth, this new arrival displays a sassy side of South Africa's signature varietal. The 13% Viognier no doubt helps as flavors of fleshy peach, green grapes and tangerine bounce about in a haze of honeysuckle perfume. \$9.99

Alianca Vinho Verde 2014

A nice blast of that refreshing Vinho Verde spritz makes this a sure summertime winner. Riding on that spritz is a cocktail of ripe Asian pear and orange essence finishing with a snappy twist of lime. \$8.99

Sauvion Chinon 2013

Medium-weight and fine-boned, this Loire Valley Cabernet Franc offers a mellow fruit compote of wild strawberry and black plum while iris and wet earth aromatics lurk in the background. Incisive tannins and a vein of acidity keep the texture taut but there's enough fruit for cushion. It would be nice slightly chilled, served with something simple like grilled chicken with rosemary. \$9.99

Los Cardos Malbec 2013

Folks can't stop drinking them Malbecs! And why not when they're easy-going, juicy and versatile - like this one. No one is going to nominate this wine as a member of Mensa but we all agreed, for casual summertime drinking-with-the-neighbors, it more than works. The fruit is lively, polished and friendly, presenting many shades of marionberry and boysenberry while the finish offers a black peppery bite. \$8.99

Legado del Moncayo Garnacha 2013

Probably the most "serious" red in the case, this Spaniard comes from vines over forty years old, grown in rocky clay soil at a relatively high elevation. Wine critic Josh Reynolds called it a screaming value: "displays assertively perfumed scents and flavors of fresh raspberry and Asian spices, with a subtle floral quality and zesty minerality adding lift. Silky and precise, it finishes long and gently tannic, with floral and red fruit notes lingering." \$11.99