

# Great Wine Buys

Newsletter: April 2015

## We're Going to Pump You Up

### **Fausse Piste La Pyramide Syrah Columbia Valley 2011**

**\$23.99/\$19.20 by the case**

Jesse Skiles at Portland's Fausse Piste winery is a true Northern Rhône freak and his dedication to finding a pure expression of Syrah from Washington vineyards has been highlighted here before. Yep, get ready for another winner. The La Pyramide 2011 is a multi-vineyard blend of Syrah co-fermented with 18% Viognier, then aged for several years in neutral oak barrels. Lift the glass to your nose and swirling aromas of dark cherry, blueberry and graham crackers mingle with nutty wood notes, herbs and violets. The flavors are no less enthralling, as cinnamon-spiced plums and even more dark cherry get a savory bump and then a high-toned lift from orange zest and a bracing lemony streak (the Viognier at work). The mouthfeel clearly has benefited from that extra time in wood - it's creamy and rich, with juicy tannins, hints of minerality and bright acidity that keeps everything in perfect balance. Tasty, classy, ready to roll and a great value - come on down!

### **Sineann Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2007**

**\$22.99/\$18.40 by the case    Regular price \$42**

You never know what fun things are hiding in Sineann's

basement until you look. Oh, what's this? A 2007 Napa Cab, labeled for some place in Ohio? Gently resting, gathering dust... So how's it taste? Explosive. If nothing else, this proves that glass stoppers certainly keep their seal; this seems as fresh and vibrant as a recent vintage, backed by a whole mixed berry pie of developed flavors. Mouthfilling and expansive, there's a beacon of raspberry tanginess surrounded by a pool of saturated kirsch and boysenberry flavors, dusted with powdered cocoa and crumbled vanilla cookies. A sappy powerhouse, if you like your Cabs big and juicy, this is for you. Originally \$42 (and arguably tasting like it), they'll let it go for \$23; after all, they hardly knew they had it.

## **Viña Olabarri Rioja Reserva 2009**

**\$19.99/\$15.99 by the case**

We know many of you enjoyed the 2005 bottling of this Spanish favorite from local importer Phil Smith over the past few years. The supply seemed to last forever - which was fine because it was so good. And now the 2009 vintage has arrived after being perfectly aged for five years in the cellar. Take a taste and you'll discover why it's been a best-seller here. Combining the Old World's slightly rustic dark cherry, savory herb, light oak and subtle earthy flavors with a touch of the New World's spicy dark marionberry, plum compote, black pepper and cocoa, the Olabarri is complex, balanced and just a bit mysterious. A traditional midweight Rioja, the 2009 is silky-textured, open-knit and bright, but also displays nice depth and a mouthfilling long finish. A bit less chewy and dark compared to the '05 version, this should be even more food-friendly and a perfect match for pork, grilled spring lamb, paella of course - and even a good juicy burger fresh off the grill.

## **Pascal Aufranc Beaujolais Chénas Vignes de 1939**

**\$14.99/\$11.99 by the case    Regular price \$26**

When someone says Cru Beaujolais, John usually throws Kevin a glance and watches his ears perk up. Even more so when said wine is produced from 70+ year-old estate grown vines, in one the most sought after appellations in the region - Chénas. As far as Kev's concerned, if you drink Pinot Noir how can you not love Gamay? The beauty of this wine is it shows like much more expensive cru's. Traditionally made and aged on the lees in concrete vats for nine months, Pascal teases out savory notes of herbal cranberry, tart cherry, wild strawberry and earthy rhubarb compote. In the classic Beaujolais fashion, the wine is medium-bodied with an elegant soft texture, propped up by taut minerality and laced with subtle tannins. Beautiful!

## **Teutonic Wine Co. Sprockets White Wine 2014**

**\$17.99/\$14.40 by the case**

To quote SNL's Deiter circa 1990, "Now is the time on Schprockets ven ve dance!" and this little number will have your tastebuds fired up and partying. Loaded with expressive flavors of ripe apricot, honeyed white flowers, lemon verbena, white peach, anise and some orange marmalade just for excess, there's tons of creamy mouthfeel and zippy acidity to keep it all rocking along. Whoa! Who else but Barnaby and Olga would create a crazy field blend of Scheurebe, Huxelrebe and Pinot Noir? Sourced from High Pass Vineyard in the far southern Willamette Valley near Eugene, the fruit basked in the warmth of 2014's summer growing season, but enjoyed cool mellow nights that kept things bright and fresh. This wine will be perfect for easy-goin' glugging on the porch by itself or in tandem with fish or a warm roast chicken. Dance very stiffly onward!

# **A Cameron Duo**

## **Cameron Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2013 \$19.99/\$15.99 by the case**

This Pinot Noir just landed and as always moves quickly so it's best to get the word out. Even though John Paul produces a relatively small amount of Pinot and could sell it all at higher prices he is committed to producing this, a high quality handcrafted Pinot for just \$20. Now if he would only make more...oh well, maybe in 2014. Anyway, this 2013 is typical Cameron-style - medium bodied with a crunchy waxy texture, the fruit is mostly high-toned cherry with nuggets of darker currant fading in and out. Throw in some brown spice notes, a light citrus edge and a little sweet funk on the nose and you're there. Very Limited.

## **Cameron Giovanni Pinot Bianco 2014 \$14.99/\$11.99 by the case**

The stories of 2014 fruit overload are starting to roll in, like this one. Normally all Pinot Blanc (hence the name), the 2014 has a good dose of Chardonnay and Pinot Gris as well - with an abundance of lovely fruit rolling in the door they just kept adding it in. All the grapes came from Abbey Ridge Vineyard, pretty amazing for a \$15 wine and the fruit quality is apparent. This wine was originally meant to mimic northern Italian whites but this vintage has more of an Alsatian profile. The deep river of fruit is bathed in a lanolin-like milkiness, creamy and lush, balanced by an airy edge of acidity. The mix of varietals gives this a nuanced flavor complexity from perfumed apple blossom on the nose to pear mid-palate to dried apricot on the finish.

# April Tastings

## A Beaujolais Primer

with Export Manager Aurélien Fiardet

Terroirs Originels is a group of like-minded artisan growers united under one export umbrella whose goal is to gain more recognition for traditionally-made wines of Beaujolais and Mâconnais. Individually their main focus of course is producing the best wine possible and as in most industries marketing a small self-run operation isn't easy. Joining forces in marketing while maintaining complete independence in winemaking allows their authentic product to reach a wider audience. Imported directly into Portland, their wines offer tremendous quality for the money. Aurélien will pour a variety of Cru Beaujolais and Mâconnais whites.

**Saturday April 18, 2-5pm. FREE**

## Friday Evening Tastings:

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

**April 3** - Spring sees many **new Washington red releases** from Walla Walla and beyond. Let's catch up on recent 2012 arrivals (great vintage) and other fun stuff. Cabernet Sauvignon, blends and more. \$17

**April 10** - Come check out some favorite **Oregon and French sparkling wines**. We'll pour the inaugural local bottlings of King Estate and Analemma Blanc de Noirs, plus the Davenne Crémant de Bourgogne, Chidaine Montlouis sur Loire, and one more to be determined. \$15

**April 17 - No Tasting**

**April 24** - There's a new crop of **Red Burgundy** in town that is made by smaller domaines who lack a fancy name but deliver the goods. Discover for yourself F. Gay, Verdet, Meix-Foulot and more. \$20

**May 1 - No Tasting**

## **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 own favorites off the shelves.

**April 4** - Let's pre-funk for Easter with **local reds and whites**. Carrie Anderson will pour Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris from Stoller, Sokol Blosser and more. FREE

**April 11** - We're heading for the sunny rocky climes of **Southern Italy's boot (Puglia, Calabria et al.)** to try some of the oh so tasty local reds. FREE

**April 18** - A **Beaujolais Primer with exporter Aurélien Fiardet**. See above for details. FREE

**April 25** - Time to go down the rabbit hole as **Barnaby and Olga Tuttle** pour their offbeat local wines from **Teutonic**. Wild white blends, a rare Pinot Noir clone, Rosé, etc. Six exciting well-made wines, two really fun people. FREE

**May 2** - Located in Lyle WA, **Cor Cellars** is one of a handful of producers making that small town a wine destination. Winemaker/owner Luke Bradford will pour Petit Verdot Malbec, Momentum Red and more. FREE

# April

## Case of the Month - \$110

### **Joseph Carr Cabernet Sauvignon 2012**

Normally \$20, this short-lived deal brings us a classy Napa Cab for just \$12. This is no monster fruit bomb - rather it's medium-bodied and elegant with a gentle wash of red cherry and currant fruit held together by light woody notes. There's plenty of flavor and texture, it's just delivered in a polished sophisticated way. \$11.99

### **Giuggiolo Rosso Toscana 2012**

When Corte alla Flora's Andrea Cragnotti poured here in February, this made lots of friends. It's always nice when a customer sips the first glass, nods approvingly and then is very happily surprised by the price. 100% Sangiovese, this is fresh and unoaked but packs plenty of Tuscan flavor. Floral and inviting, the lively cherry fruit is just shy of sappy and the dark spice notes on the finish seal the deal. \$11.50

### **Wither Hills Sauvignon Blanc 2013**

The price is down a few bucks this month on one of our best-selling Kiwi whites so let's dive in. Clearly Marlborough in style but showing some restraint, this delivers its zippy citrus-y blast of flavor without being obnoxious. There's a zesty limey edge throughout but the gooseberry and ruby red grapefruit flavors are rounded and supple, resting briefly on the palate before the snappy finish. \$10.99

### **Chateau Villotte Bordeaux 2010**

It's sometimes difficult to convey why certain inexpensive Bordeaux are good and others not but when you taste a good one, you just know - like this one. With several years of bottle age and from a great vintage, this possesses an easygoing confidence and clarity. Clean medium-bodied and juicy in a bistro wine sort-of-way, it otherwise delivers classic Bordeaux notes of dusty just-ripe cherry fruit and pretty

aromatics of dried flowers and woody underbrush. \$10.99

### **Fuente Milano Verdejo-Viura 2013**

This lively Spanish white offers a fresh springtime vibe, perky and eager yet gentle and relaxed. Its lemon-lime brightness is balanced by a fleshy tropical/peach suppleness while nutty thyme notes linger on the mild finish. \$9.99

### **Saint Cosme Little James Basket Press Vin de Table**

This little non-vintage Grenache (50% is from the 2012 vintage) packs a whole lot of complexity and finesse. We popped a bottle and thought wow! that's a killer value wine from a formidable Gigondas producer. Right out the gate, the nose is like taking the lid off of your favorite raspberry jelly, only as you dig deeper, you find beautiful layers of sage and crumbled earth. Unlike the darker denser 2011, this one has more crunchy red fruit and a nice tangy lift on the back end, while maintaining a smooth supple texture. Dare I say playful? Seriously, it's like going to the symphony in flip-flops and shorts. \$11.99

### **Montaribaldi Barbera d'Alba 2013**

Another character-filled Piedmont red from a hard-working local importer, this is a lot of wine for the money. Peasant wine in the best way, this offers a jumbled mix of pastoral aromatics blended with wild berry and fresh grapey fruit flavors. Mostly smooth in texture, there's an appealing gamy cedary bite that keeps you guessing. Purple flowers, smoked meats, damp woodland aromas...this is pretty fun. \$11.99

### **Rio Madre Graciano 2013**

The new vintage of this Spanish curiosity is as good as the last. Graciano is a minor blending varietal in Rioja used to add aromatic complexity, color and soften Tempranillo's rustic edges. Not often bottled separately, it's fun to taste it on its own and see what it brings to a blend. Quite dark in color and soft in texture, this is dominated by flavors of fresh blackberry pie with notes of dried black cherry and rhubarb woven in. A light cigar smokiness and dried herb notes add complexity on the lingering finish. \$10.99

### **Marius Blanc 2013**

The well-dressed man in the chair is back, fast-forwarded three vintages. A unique southern French blend of Terret and Vermentino, this is again bracing and vivacious, a burst of floral lime, herb salt and green apple skin flavors all riding on a waxy rounded texture. \$8.99

### **Gougenheim Malbec 2013**

The Goug is back! Always a Case of the Month favorite, the 2013 version is as good as ever and smacks you with notes of wild iris, subtle wood toast and herbs, cradled by dark blue fruits emanating wafts of inky delight. This baby is super well-balanced with great silky texture. Lush blueberry and raspberry flavors give way to a bright mid palate lift, saving it from the blandness of the "typical" Malbec. \$9.99

### **Menguante Garnacha 2013**

Most Spanish Garnacha in this price range are fun fruit-driven wines with little sense of place. There's nothing necessarily wrong with that but this is not one of those wines. Made by a hundreds year-old family winery committed to biodynamic farming this transmits much more than simple fruit flavors. Average vine age is over eighty years old giving this a broader palette of flavors than expected. The fruit ranges from blue to red, a soft mellow plumminess accented by herbal spice and a cooked beef broth note while a haze of potting soil earthiness colors the whole thing. \$8.99

### **Vidigal Vinho Verde 2013**

New to Portland, this festive summery white seems to have more going on than the average Vinho Verde, maybe because it's made by a small family winery as opposed to the big co-ops that dominate the area. Notes of fresh hay, lemon and pear crackle & pop their way across the palate backed by a slightly fizzy stoniness. \$9.99