

Great Wine Buys

Newsletter: June 2015

**Note: GWB will be Closed July 4-5.
Enjoy the holiday weekend!**

Summer Came Early That Year

**Lemelson Six Vineyards Pinot Noir
Willamette Valley 2013
\$18.99/\$15.20 by the case**

Our best-selling under-\$20 Pinot several years in a row, we're always happy to see this return. As usual this delivers excellent bang for the buck (it's so nice they haven't raised the price) and here's why: made like all their other Pinot, much of the fruit is declassified from top vineyards (Meyer, Stermer, Mount Richmond, etc.), cropped at only 1.9 tons per acre, fermented with indigenous yeasts, yada yada yada...in short this is no tanker-truck castoff. It's also remarkably consistent in style vintage to vintage, which to us shows thoughtful winemaking. Expressive and aromatic, the sweet red cherry fruit turns darker mid-palate and notes of orange zest, black tea and woody bramble add depth and distinction. Fullish-bodied and long on the palate, it's hard to go wrong with this one.

Owen Roe Syrah Ex Umbris Columbia Valley 2012

\$21.99/\$17.60 by the case Originally \$28

David O'Reilly & Co. made a lot of this longtime favorite and recently lowered the price to blast into the next vintage. I've seen plenty of customers happily surprised at the lower price so I figured probably should spread the word. Originally created ten years ago to capture the smokiness imparted by wildfires close to the vineyard, this remains a dark, aromatic powerhouse; although there's no smoke, the fire of inspiration is alive and well. Like many northwest 2012s, this offers an abundance of fruit, blackberry and dark plum, and being an Owen Roe wine, the texture is gorgeous, lightly polished yet layered and toothsome. Throw in some dark chocolate, cracked black pepper and memories of distant wildfires and you've got a winner.

Mas de Martin Cuvée Roi Patriote 2012 \$14.99/\$11.99 by the case

Clearly recognizable by the French Revolutionary dude on the label, this Languedoc red has long been popular in Portland yet is still a curious anomaly. Although his winemaking regime is decidedly old fashioned, Christian Mocchi is an adventurous iconoclast in other ways, proudly embracing biodynamic viticulture, creative labels and wines made from non-traditional varietals. Despite being from the heart of the Languedoc just north of Montpellier, this is 50% Cab Sauv, 25% Cab Franc, 20% Merlot, and 5% Tannat. The result is a red that tastes mostly Languedoc with an added mysterious note that keeps the palate interested and guessing. The nose is floral and classic southern French with savory wild herb and a brambly spiciness. The warm blackberry fruit is round, soft and enveloping while the finish gets grippy and darker, trailing notes of cigar ash and macerated plums. Full-bodied and beefy yet mellow, it mixes the cerebral and the wild to great effect.

Manucci Droandi Chianti Colli Arentini 2012 \$12.99/\$10.40 by the case

There's plenty of mediocrity in the sea of Chianti but when a good one stands out it reminds us why these wines continue to be so popular. Versatile, food-friendly, flavorful yet lively... sure, its fun to try new things but sometimes nothing beats an old familiar friend, like this one. Made organically in the hillside region south of Chianti Classico and imported direct to Portland, this for years has been a go-to high quality Tuscan bargain. Airy and open-knit, the red cherry fruit rolls into dark plum, vibrant and clean, with mild forest floor and spice notes hanging in the background. Tasting descriptors such as classic, really solid, and tasty may seem banal but they suggest a happy comfortableness, and sometimes that's all we need.

2010 Brunello di Montalcino available

"Iconic, vintage of a lifetime, soaring beauty, the new standard in quality"... reviews like this sure are exciting, unless they so over-hype the vintage that the wines disappear immediately. Many of our favorites are imported directly in small quantities and some are already almost sold out (before even arriving). Prices are good despite the buzz thanks to a stronger dollar, making it relatively easy to get in on this legendary vintage. We have pre-ordered many but expect them to sell quickly. Altesino, Casanova di Neri, Campogiovanni, Fanti, Mocali and more. Please call for more details if interested.

**Refreshingly Off
the Beaten Path**

Ca' Montebello Pinot Nero Bianco

2014 \$16.99/\$13.60 by the case

The name may not ring a bell but hopefully your face will light up when you recognize the bottle. A seemingly unassuming white from Lombardy's Oltrepo Pavese region, this was a huge customer favorite a few summers ago, then disappeared after one vintage. A local importer had discovered it while visiting the area; sadly discord at the winery quickly cut off supply. It appears all is better now because this suddenly appeared last week and it tastes as good as we remembered.

100% Pinot Noir made without skin contact, this drinks mostly like the white it is but enough red fruit notes sneak in to make this a roller coaster of flavors: light apricot and white peach roll through tangerine and dried pineapple before shifting to just-ripe strawberry and cherry. The texture is just as fun: pliant and taffy-like, it shifts from zippy lemon saline highs to creamy gentle tannic lows, while maintaining a crackling fresh personality throughout.

Douloufakis Dafnios Vidiano 2013

\$15.99/\$12.80 by the case

If a Pinot Noir Blanc from the wilds of Lombardy isn't far enough away for you, take a trip to the Greek island of Crete and feast your taste buds on this, made from the indigenous varietal Vidiano. We (and customers) have had some fun lately with whites from Corsica, and this has a similar vibe. On one hand it is dry yet full-flavored, its gently creamy texture dappled with bread dough and a ripe musk melon fruitiness. Then the bracing sea breeze blows in, carrying with it a brisk salty note that echoes with lemon zest and a wet rock minerality. Rare and generally unknown to everyone except zealous fans of Greek wines, this is a tasty, affordable, adventurous summer fling; if you can't travel to a Greek island this summer, at least you can drink their wine.

Special Tastings

Turley on Tap

It's been a few years since we did an all-Turley Zinfandel tasting and with the 2013 vintage single vineyards getting ridiculously good reviews we figured it was time to dive back in. As always, limited availability. (Scores are from Robert Parker, *The Wine Advocate*):

Rattlesnake Ridge, Howell Mountain, Napa 2013 98+ pts
Dragon, Howell Mountain, Napa 2013 97 pts
Mead Ranch, Atlas Peak, Napa 2013 96 pts
Pesenti Vineyard, Paso Robles 2012 91-93 pts
Fredericks Vineyard, Sonoma 2012 92-94 pts

Friday June 26, 2-5pm, \$20

Rosé, Rosato, Rosado, Pink

We have a long July 4th weekend to look forward to and the shelves are awash in a lovely rainbow of pink. With so many choices it's hard to pick just one (or even a few) so let's open a bunch and see where we end up. A world tour including Oregon, Washington, Italy, Spain, Austria, and of course favored regions of France including Loire, Languedoc and Provence. 8 to 10 pink-hued wines and let's hope, lots of sun.

Saturday June 27, 2-5pm, FREE

June Tastings

Friday Evening Tastings:

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

June 5 - Summer appears to have arrived (90 degrees anyone?) so let's cool off with a variety of **Loire Valley Sauvignon Blanc** from Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé and Menetou-Salon. Good producers (of course) \$13, plus an aged Didier Dagueneau for bonus.

June 12 - No Tasting

June 19 - Wines from France's Jura region get many a wine professional excited but they remain little known in general. Come taste your way through a quick primer; red and whites such as Trousseau, Poulsard, Savagnin and more from a range of good producers. \$15

June 26 - Let's celebrate July 4th a week early by pouring five single vineyards of America's signature varietal, **Zinfandel**, by an undisputed master - **Turley Wine Cellars**. See above for details. \$20

July 3 - No Tasting. Happy 4th of July weekend!

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.

June 6 - Early June heat wave says keep the refreshing theme going; let's travel west down the Loire and drink **Muscadet**. Crisp, brisk, saline...ah, that's the ticket. FREE

June 13 - Summer on a Greek island? Let's do it! The ever-adventurous Mike Wheeler will pour exciting red and white from Crete, Santorini and other **regions of Greece**. Hard to pronounce, fun to drink. FREE

June 20 - A rarity in Washington, **Angel Vine winemaker Ed Fus** focuses his production on Zinfandel and Petite Sirah. Come taste some northwest Zin and ask Ed where he finds all these grapes! FREE

June 27 - Rosé, Rosato, Rosado, Pink. Let's get ready for July 4th picnics with a big ol' Rosé tasting. 8-10 wines. See above for more details. FREE

July 4 - No Tasting. Closed for Independence Day, but we hope you're drinking something good somewhere fun. Cheers!

June

Case of the Month - \$110

Chanssaud Côtes du Rhône 2013

A Châteauneuf du Pape mini-me, this delivers classic southern Rhône flavors in a softly undulating, approachable package. Woven into the ripe strawberry and blackberry fruit is an aromatic backdrop of Herbes de Provence, lavender and dusty footpaths while the finish stiffens with a beefy insistence. **\$12.99**

Cuné Monopole Rioja Blanco 2013

This 100% Viura is lovely almost every vintage but the 2013 is extra special, landing at #64 in the Wine Spectator's Top 100 with this 90 pt. review: "This focused white shows bright, juicy flavors of white peach and Meyer lemon, with herbal and

mineral accents. The texture is quite rich, but crisp citrusy acidity keeps this lively." **Normally \$13, new vintage arrives soon so now just \$9.99.**

Chateau Guiot Costières de Nîmes Rosé 2013

Riding the previous-vintage-closeout-deals while we can, we scooped up the last of this succulent southern Frenchie. 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah, this offers a more flavorful profile compared to the airy delicacy of most Provençal pinks. Summery aromas of red rose petals lead to watermelon and cherry jolly rancher flavors on the palate before it all finishes dry and snappy. **Regularly \$15, here just \$10.99**

Iniesta Tempranillo 2013

A more-than-solid Tempranillo given the price, this direct-to-Portland Spaniard is made in a bold, smooth crowd-pleasing style yet retains plenty of Spanish character. The dried cherry fruit is soft and broad on the palate while notes of cocoa powder mingle with aromatics of savory brush and light cigar smoke. **\$8.50**

Pascual Toso Malbec 2013

This was a shop favorite years ago but got lost in the river of similarly priced Malbec. After tasting this new vintage we're glad to see it back. Medium-weight and nicely balanced, this opens with a blast of blueberry fruit before turning to spicy red plum mid-palate, finishing with a burnished warm wood softness. **\$11.50**

Trim Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

Made by Napa heavyweight Signorello, this California Cab really shines for just \$12. Confidently avoiding any heavy-handedness, this has a friendly buoyant personality, with flavors of red currant, black cherry and a subtle campfire smokiness. The mouthfeel is plush yet elegant and the finish gentle and lingering. **\$11.99**

Holzer Grüner Veltliner 2013

Maybe helped by the excellence of the 2013 vintage, this has much more Grüner character than the price would suggest.

The texture plays a big part, tacky and grippy, while a subdued potpourri of diverse flavors dart in and out: ripe green apple, baker's yeast, white pepper and a burst of Meyer lemon on the finish. **\$9.99**

Raphael Rosso Piceno 2012

As we anticipate Small Vineyards direct imports next month, let this serve as appetizer. Produced as a side gig by Maurizio Marchetti, the idea here is fresh and user-friendly, uncomplicated and tasty. Designed to wash down the day's dinner (or lunch), for only \$9 it succeeds admirably. A 50/50 blend of Sangiovese and Montepulciano, it has soft black plum fruit, wisps of chocolate cookies and raisins and a clean palate-refreshing finish. **\$8.99**

Man Pinotage 2013

Man, this is surprisingly good Pinotage! Not that long ago (and possibly still) inexpensive bottlings were often a scary encounter, but not this one. A hybrid varietal created in South Africa, Pinotage is an unlikely marriage between Pinot Noir and Cinsault (usually found in the southern Rhône and Provence). For years dirty or chemical-tasting versions scared off many consumers but lately those dedicated to South Africa's homegrown red have been making much better wines. This one is clean and bright with piercing wild berry and just enough damp earthy thicket and underbrush aromatics to deserve the Pinotage name. The palate is sappy yet tangy, trailing black pepper and violet perfume on the finish. **\$8.99**

Tintero Rosso NV

This Piedmontese blend is classic old world in style, offering flavors typical of the region in a casually rustic daily drinker. Designed to accompany food, the mix of black cherry and red plum fruit is tangy and palate-cleansing while an underlying vein of firm minerality leads to wet earth savory notes on the finish. 40% Nebbiolo, 40% Barbera, 10% Dolcetto, 10% Cabernet Franc. **\$10.99**

McManis Syrah 2013

A stylistic antithesis to the above-mentioned Tintero Rosso, this is California red wine in all its full-throated happy ripe glory. McManis does a good job with many varietals, making easy-drinking fruit forward wines without pushing the flavor envelope too far. This Syrah revels in its boysenberry juiciness but finishes relatively crisp and clean with light tannin holding it all together. **\$8.99**

Acacia Chardonnay Unoaked 2013

Acacia made its name crafting luscious yet balanced Chardonnay from the prestigious Carneros district, located in the southern part of Napa and Sonoma Valleys. The fruit for this comes from farther afield but you can tell they know their way around a bunch of Chardonnay grapes. Dry and crisp but still Californian in style, this delivers a leesy bread dough softness and an apple butter creaminess before finishing clean and precise. **On deal in June so just \$7.99.**