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Hours: Monday - Saturday: 10:30 am - 7 pm, Sunday: Noon - 5 pm

Newsletter: January/February 2016

Winter Welcome Wines

Newsletter Features

El Corazon Cabernet Franc First Crush

2013 \$34.99/\$27.99 by the case

Coincidence or not, First Crush is the perfect name for this wine. It was the first wine we tasted and sold from this now-favorite Walla Walla micro-producer, and by extension the first wine that turned on so many customers. This new vintage was just released and the scant 98 cases won't last long so best to get the word out. Despite his tiny production, Spencer has been able to get consistent fruit sourcing—same block as ever from the Weinbau Vineyard, one of the oldest commercial vineyards in Washington - so the style and flavors are welcomingly familiar. Fleshy and richly textured, yet with well-defined flavors, its Cab Franc composition shines through: woody, peppery and aromatic. Youthful and almost elegant to start, with air it opens up revealing a bigger darker personality with flashes of toasty oak poppers trailing out on the finish.

A. Gallety Côtes du Vivarais 2011

\$21.99/\$17.60 by the case Regular price \$36

A distributor-switch deal shaves 30% off this serious muscle-y red, a little-known Kermit Lynch import. Situated on the west side of the Rhône river, the Côtes du Vivarais is roughly equidistant between Hermitage in the north and Châteauneuf in the south, and its wines taste like it. Offering the broad warm enveloping richness of Grenache

paired with the black pepper punch of Syrah, this is chewy and dense and cries out for hearty winter fare. The nose is a bit wild: floral black tea notes mingle with a gamy barnyard essence while the palate is a rolling mix of dusty black plum, wild berry and savory herb, powerful and layered. The 40 year old vineyard is farmed organically, fermentation is natural and neutral oak barrels are used for aging. In short, this wine is old world for sure - and very welcome because of it.

Aurelien Verdet Bourgogne Rouge "En Lutenière" 2013

\$24.99/\$19.99 by the case

So rare for red Burgundy, this manages to be expressive and accessible, fairly priced and still offer plenty of true Burgundian character. Also rare for a simple Bourgogne rouge, the fruit is sourced from a 40 year-old vineyard in the village of Vosne, as in Vosne-Romanée, as in usually very expensive. I'm not saying this is Premier Cru level wine but its single vineyard provenance gives it a cohesive quality and sense of place that even many blended village-level wines lack. Add to this foundation of terroir a pretty open-knit texture and vibrant personality and wow, this is actually really nice! The fruit leans red, cherry to raspberry, with deeper blues peeking in. Aromatics of black Asian spice and damp earth add a welcoming bite while the structure is gently encased a soft red plummy.

Rotllan Torra Priorat 2010

\$18.99/\$15.20 by the case

When looking for a warming winter red the burly wines of Priorat are near the top of the list, and this direct import over-delivers for the price. An almost equal blend of Grenache, Carignan and Cab Sauv, this showcases the unique flavor profile of Priorat in an accessible satisfying way. Dark meaty and mineral, this is clearly marked by the region's famous black slate soils: graphite chalkboard aromas are a constant companion to the just-ripe blackberry fruit joined by dustings of dark chocolate. There's an elegant red-fruited lift midway to balance all the dark, before finishing with more mineral, wet clay and tenderly chewy tannins.

Molino Barbera d'Alba 2014

\$14.99/\$11.99 by the case

A longtime favorite here, this new vintage is hard to argue with: easy going, supple and enjoyable. Its jazzy exuberant profile is blue fruited all the way, from tangy boysenberry to darker blueberry coulis notes, flavors that are delivered on a smooth clean piquant wave. Hints of crushed fresh thyme and cured black tobacco add interest but it's the purity of fruit that really shines. Aged entirely in stainless steel, there's no oak or wood flavors to interfere. 2014 was a cool vintage in the Piedmont; Molino harvested his Barbera fruit a full month later than normal, and that extra hang-time helps explain the full flavor saturation.

Thierry Laffay Chablis 2013

\$22.99/\$18.40 by the case

Despite the craving for hearty reds this time of year, the yearning for good white Burgundy never seems to fade. Laffay is a small producer imported directly to Portland and his wines offer great value for true, well-defined Chablis. We recently sold out of his Vaillons bottling so decided to revisit this and are glad we did. The nose immediately puts you in Chablis, a mouthwatering mix of lemon cream, tart nectarine and an oyster shell briny-ness. This electric raciness continues with the first sip before shifting mid-palate, turning taffy-like in texture before finishing with a dry stony salty kiss. 100% stainless steel aging keeps the flavors focused and precise and at just 12.5% alc., it stays refreshing glass after glass.

**Check Out the improved
greatwinebuys.com website**

For all the up-to-the-minute info about tastings, new arrival offers, flash deals and more, go to the refreshed greatwinebuys.com. Quickly click through to Instagram, Twitter, Facebook or our new blog to find wine-related (mostly) ramblings and links to the outside world.

January/February Tastings

Northwest Knockout Tastings

Beaux Frères Beaux Frères Vineyard Vertical 2003-2012 - in magnum!

With Winemaker Mike Etzel/Grant Coulter

What an incredible opportunity: ten consecutive vintages from one of Oregon's undeniably greatest vineyards. Poured from magnum no less... Plus thanks to the generosity of a longtime supporter, all proceeds will be donated to the Children's Cancer Association. Owner/winemaker Mike Etzel and/or winemaker Grant Coulter will give an overview of the vintages and talk about the vineyard's history and future. This very rare tasting will most likely sell out quickly.

**Friday January 22, 6 pm. \$100
(All proceeds donated to Children's Cancer Association)
Reservations and prepayment required**

Ken Wright Pinot Noir 2014 & 2015

With Julianne Nelson

To most Oregon wine fans Ken Wright needs no introduction. Ever since starting Panther Creek Cellars in 1986, he has been an outsized figure in the local wine scene, promoting Oregon Pinot Noir worldwide and giving back to communities that are the backbone of the Willamette Valley. An advocate of single vineyard bottling as far back as the late 1980s, he now produces 12 different vineyard designates, each expressing their individual terroir. Seemingly always in demand, these Pinot Noir sell out quickly and almost unheard of in Oregon, sell

mostly as futures. The charming Julianne Nelson has been our contact there for several years and offered to pour some still-available 2014s PLUS bring a handful of 2015 barrel samples as well. Come taste the future!

Saturday February 6, 2-5 pm. FREE

****Washington Syrah All-Stars****

After all that Pinot Noir, we need some BIG reds. Let's climb right to the top and revel in the best Washington has to offer:

- * Cayuse Cailloux Vineyard 2013 (94-97 Wine Advocate)
- * Corliss Columbia Valley 2010 (96 Wine Advocate)
- * Reynvaan Foothills Reserve 2013 (95 Wine Advocate)
- * K Vintners The Deal 2012 (94-96 Wine Advocate)
- * Owen Roe Chapel Block 2012 (#2 wine in Seattle Times Top 50 Wines of 2015)

**Friday February 5, 5-7:30 pm. \$25
Limited wine availability.**

Friday Evening Tastings:

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

January 8 - No Tasting

January 15 - Burgundy!

Zancanella direct imports some of our favorite artisan producers at more than fair prices. Let's share before they're gone: reds and whites from Chablis, Meursault, Gevrey-Chambertin and more. \$17

January 22 - Beaux Frères Vertical Tasting 2003-2012! See above for details. \$100, **reservations required.**

January 29 - Barolo, Barbaresco and the varietal that makes them, Nebbiolo

From new arrival 2011s to a well-aged 2005 including Brovia, Ratti, Punset and more. \$18

February 5 - Washington Syrah All-Stars

We will pour some of the best and brightest including Cayuse, Reynvaan, K Vintners and more. See above for more info. \$25

February 12 - No Tasting

February 19 - Classic Rioja

Let's do the time warp again, this time Rioja-style as we pour a range of vintages from 2011 to 2001. Reserva and Gran Reserva from Muga, Valenciso, La Rioja Alta, La Antigua and more. \$18

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.

January 9 - Northwest Hits

The old warhorse Bob Bain kicks off 2016 with a look back at some of December's hits: 2007 Carriage House, 2014 Hawks View Pinot Noir, Morrison Lane Viognier & more. FREE

January 16 - Languedoc Imports from Russ Raney

Former Evesham Wood front man Russ Raney returns with a new assortment of Languedoc wines imported directly to Portland in tiny quantities. Come let their flavors and low prices transport you to the wilds of southern France. FREE

January 23 - Winter European Reds

Estelle Imports' Chris Davis will pour a mix of popular winter reds from around the world: Rotllan Torra Priorat, Molino Barbera, La Mascaronne Provence and San Vincenti Chianti. FREE

January 30 - Value Pinot Noir

Let's check in on some local Pinot values including a new vintage Whistling Dog, Klee, Evesham Wood and more. FREE.

February 6 - Ken Wright Cellars

Julianne Nelson from Ken Wright Cellars pours current Pinot Noir releases PLUS 2015 barrel samples. Cool! FREE

February 13 - A Little Something Different From Europe

PDX Wines has one of the most eclectic books in Portland. Let's dip our toes in the uncommon as John Soares pours sparkling from the French Alps, Fino Sherry, Muscadet & more. FREE

January/February Case of the Month - \$112

Once again we offer the January/February *ne plus ultra* case of the month: Greatest Hits of 2015.

We've picked some of last year's best-sellers and most talked-about wines and brought them back for a lip-smacking' encore. Enjoy!

Gloria Ferrer Pinot Noir Carneros 2011

This year's traditional sole newbie - and a good one! We always like to include one new wine for January and this deal made the decision an easy one. Regularly \$22 and drinking like it, this is full-bodied and almost meaty for Pinot Noir, the black plum and cherry fruit turning brighter and redder on the spicy finish. \$11.99

Menguante Garnacha 2014

Made by a hundreds-year-old family winery committed to biodynamic farming. this serious Spanish red 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. \$9.50

Tintero Arneis Langhe 2014

One of the best Arneis I've tasted in this price range, the flavors are classic Piedmont yet delivered in a richer more succulent style. Fleshy and savory, the floral citrus and salty rock aromas lead to Asian pear and apple fruit leather on the palate, finishing with a white pepper bite. \$11.99

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

Morrison Lane Viognier 2013

New vintage, very similar to the 2012. Despite its Walla Walla appellation from a warm year this is made in a crisp fresh style for Viognier, delivering flavors of juicy green grapes, white peach and dried apricot before finishing snappy and lightly saline. Originally \$24, good deal says \$10.99

Montfaucon Les Gardettes 2012

Medium bodied and elegant, this caught our attention with its pretty nose, silky texture and overall flavorful profile. An unusual blend from the southern Rhône's right bank, this has 50% Cinsault, 15% Mourvedre, 15% Grenache, 10% Syrah and 10% Carignan. That high percentage of Cinsault probably accounts for its inviting floral aromatics and fresh personality while the other varietals fill in the rest: strawberry jam and black raspberry fruit with a balancing dose of

dusty earth on the finish. \$11.99

Ridge Crest Syrah 2013

On a day when we tasted close to 50 wines, this Columbia Valley red was appreciated for its clean medium bodied fruit, smooth texture and relative restraint in the oak department. Riding a wave of black cherry, light blueberry and muted pepper it's satisfyingly rich without being too heavy. \$9.99

Man Pinotage 2013

A hybrid varietal created in South Africa, Pinotage is an unlikely marriage between Pinot Noir and Cinsault (usually found in southern France). 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

Luchetti Lacrima Morra d'Alba 2013

And now for something completely different. From the school of highly aromatic Italian reds comes this closeout deal. Rarely seen in Portland and certainly not at this price, here's a fun opportunity to try one. One whiff and you'll know why this varietal is a breed apart; intensely fragrant, it's like walking through an overflowing garden mid-summer, late afternoon where every flower and plant is at peak scent output. Iris, rose and violet roll into boysenberry and wild strawberry while crushed marjoram and an exotic Chinese five spice mix hangs in the background. Soft supple and medium bodied, it fills out nicely with air but stays bouncy on the palate. \$9.99

La Quercia Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2014

We featured La Quercia's Riserva in our Small Vineyards direct import offer last spring/summer and wow, was that popular. The same attention to detail is given to this, even though it is made in an easier-going casual style. Clean lively and fragrant, the juicy red cherry fruit is lightly dusted with cocoa, cinnamon and fennel, flavors that roll

about the palate before ending with gentle tannins. \$11.50

Chateau Pajzos Dry Furmint 2014

A dry Hungarian white with a big personality. Offering flavors similar to a Pinot Gris from Alsace, this is mellow yet full flavored, with dried peach and apricot spilling broadly across the palate. Spicy in a pumpkin pie sort of way, these brown spice notes provided way posts for the fruit and the prickly finish nicely balances the overall richness. \$9.99