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

Newsletter: Late February/March 2016

I'd Like to Make a Joke About Trump Here...but I'm Afraid I'd Get Sued

Newsletter Features

Reverdito Barolo 2011

\$23.99/\$19.20 by case

This longtime bargain favorite had fallen a little under the radar lately as we turned our attention to new wines, producers, regions, etc. It quickly came back into view at a recent Friday night tasting where it wowed everyone including us. Dark, complex, hearty, expressive... this held its own with Barolo and Barbaresco more than twice the price. A direct import to Portland from a small family winery, its price has always seemed suspiciously low. Once tasted though, most people happily load up on multiple bottles. While 2010 rightly received high praise, most 2011s are actually drinking better now than the 2010s, which still need time. With a succulent open-knit personality and richly textured fruit this is a Barolo you can drink tonight, next week or in three years, and at this price you can do all that and more.

Gran Reconsind Crianca Emporda 2009

\$15.99/\$12.80 by the case

If you like your Spanish wine traditional in style, this is for you. If you're not sure, this is also for you, if only to experience an intentionally well-crafted old school red in a style that seems more and more rare these days. While not from Rioja (Emporda is on the Mediterranean just over the border from France) and not dominated by Tempranillo, this does a good impression of a wine from Lopez y Heredia, the iconic benchmark for traditionally styled Rioja. Medium-bodied with a dusty yet silky texture, there's a core of dried black cherry fruit at the center, chewy and compact, that radiates subtle yet detailed flavors. These are perceived more as aromas and hit the senses almost as a memory: old well-worn oak, exotic sandalwood and Indian brown spice, a forgotten cigarette now crumbled in your pocket... a bottle like this encourages you to conjure your own flavor memories, real or imagined.

Mas des Chimères Coteaux du Languedoc Terrasses du Larzac 2012

\$19.99/\$15.99 by the case

A southern French red whose quality transcends its general Languedoc appellation, this shows that there are still tremendous values to be found in France's ocean of wine. Not that Chimères is a new find, far from it; our customers have been happily enjoying their wines for over a decade and this new bottling should continue that history. The Terrasses de Larzac is a high basalt plateau northwest of Montpellier whose vineyards are touched by much cooler air than the surrounding hot lowlands. This moderating weather allows the grapes to ripen more slowly, which translates into wines with more acidity, freshness and aromatic complexity. Speaking of complexity, this is 20% each of five varietals - Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre, Carignan and Cinsault - giving it a variety of flavors and moods. The nose is pretty, inviting

and happy: fresh cut flowers and blueberry pie, crust and all, dusted lightly with white pepper. The sticky mixed berry fruit is balanced by crinkly acidity and tangy pops of red currant. "Seductive...vigorous yet fine" says the *Revue du Vin de France*; this unexpected refinement gives it an appeal beyond just Languedoc/Rhone fans. Hearty Burgundy anyone?

Dom. Michel Viré-Clessé Tradition 2014
\$27.99/\$22.40 by the case

The early buzz on 2014 white Burgundy is music to our ears (and palates). From Chablis in the north to the Maconnais in the south, it was a "textbook vintage" according to one top producer. Sounds like the right vintage to explore the joys of this uncommon example. Viré Clessé is a young appellation north of Mâcon, a nice step up from the more general Mâcon Villages. What really makes this wine special though is the lateness of the harvest which often leads to some grapes with botrytis. The result is a luxuriously creamy white Burg balanced by crisp acidity and an underlying minerality giving it an almost Alsatian profile. The snappy green apple bite glides gently into soft pear while brown baking spice notes linger on the finish.

Badiola "642" Maremma Toscana 2011
\$13.99/\$11.20 by the case

A modern style mash-up of six varietals, this Tuscan red is curiously different but deliciously so. The Maremma region is southwest of Chianti where Tuscany's rolling hills roll right into the Mediterranean. Home to many now-famous Super Tuscans, the region has a history of upending tradition and this wine fits right in. Yes, the Badiola estate is pretty posh - home to a luxury hotel, championship golf course and Italy's only Alain Ducasse restaurant - but this bottling is decidedly for the fruit-

loving masses. Juicy and accessible but packing a concentrated punch, the black cherry and ripe strawberry fruit is shaded by darker notes of clove, cured black olive and bittersweet chocolate. Full-bodied and immediately appealing, no wonder it's a popular by-the-glass option at many local restaurants; it should be at your house too.

New Northwest Releases...

Cameron Willamete Valley Pinot Noir

2014 \$19.99/\$15.99 by the case

Usually a spring release, John Paul and crew dropped this value-priced winner to brighten up the winter gloom. And wow is it delicious; thanks to the warmth of the 2014 vintage, this is remarkably plump and layered for a Willamette Valley bottling, although there is plenty of jazzy acidity to keep it fresh and lively. The black cherry and raspberry fruit is dotted with pomegranate highlights while mellow umami aromatics lurk in the background: cola, briar, licorice and wisps of finely ground pepper.

Résonance Vineyard Pinot Noir, Yamhill-Carlton 2013

\$59.99/\$48 by the case

The Willamette Valley wine world was excited when Maison Louis Jadot of Burgundy bought the Resonance Vineyard, an old and highly respected site in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA with some of the oldest non-grafted rootstocks in the Willamette Valley. In addition, Jadot's winemaker for 42 years, the legendary Jacques Lardière, would be making the wine. The inaugural release shows a compelling combination of old world and new, with the spiny structure and aromatic highlights of a Burgundy

encased in a robe of generous Willamette Valley fruit, all bathed in the charm of the 2013 vintage. Pretty now yet serious enough to promise better things to come, this is an auspicious American start for Monsieur Lardière and company. "Light and focused, showing distinctive subtlety. A layer of crinkly tannins underlies a pulsing core of mineral-accented cherry and red berry flavors, hinting at cinnamon as the finish lingers gently." 93 points, *The Wine Spectator*.

January/February Tastings

Old Northwest Releases...

1999 Oregon Pinot Noir Tasting

Presented by VH1's Where Are They Now?, we offer you a trip back in time to a cool vintage that was saved by a glorious Indian summer. Thanks to the long mild growing season most wines aged very gracefully for years but where are they now? Come taste for yourself as we pour Oregon history from the last century including Domaine Drouhin Willamette Valley, St. Innocent Seven Springs, Evesham Wood Cuvée J, Cristom Jessie Vineyard, Chehalem Ridgecrest Vineyard, with Cameron Abbey Ridge Vineyard as bonus. Limited wine available.

Friday March 18, 5-7:30 pm, \$25 (+\$5 bonus)

Friday Evening Tastings:

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

Friday Feb. 19 - Rioja Reserva Time Warp, 2001-2010

2010 Muga Seleccion Especial, 2009 Olabarri, 2006 La Antigua, 2003 Lopez y Heredia Tondonia and the 96 point 2001 Gran Reserva 904 from La Rioja Alta. Nice! \$18

February 26 - Valpolicella's Amarone and Ripasso

Quick, before winter is over let's warm our palates with the luscious richness of thee Italian beauties. Allegrini, Tommaso Bussola, Accordini and more. \$16

March 4 - No Tasting

March 11 - Weinbach and other Alsatian favorites

New 2014 arrivals from Weinbach and older vintages from Ostertag, Deiss, Kientzler and more. \$15

March 18 - 1999 Oregon Pinot Noir.

Let's take a trip back in time to a great vintage. \$25. See info above for details.

March 25 - No Tasting

April 1 - New Washington Reds from Walla Walla and Beyond

Spring sees many new releases, so let's catch up on recent arrivals and other fun stuff. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cab-based blends. \$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.

February 20 - 2014 White Burgundy

From Chablis in the north to the Maconnais in the south, 2014 was a happy vintage. Come check out new arrivals from Clotilde Davenne, Bernard Defaix, Drouhin, and the deliciously unique flavors of Domaine Michel Viré-Clessé.

February 27 - A Trip Around Tuscany

Theresa Hannam schools us in the different sub-regions of Tuscany: Chianti Classico vs. Rufina, Maremma and more. FREE (and educational!)

March 5 - Eclectic Wines from Europe

PDX Wines' John Soares will pour a fun mix from Europe including Chimères Languedoc, Fino Sherry, Cerdon de Bugey sparkling rosé and more. Find something new to love this spring. FREE

March 12 - El Corazon with Spencer Sievers

The man flies in from Walla Walla to pour new releases including First Crush Cab Franc, Mourvedre and other tricks. Always a slightly wild visit, the question is how wild? Come find out! FREE

March 19 - Zancanella Italian Favorites

Longtime local importer Greg Zancanella has a great Italian book. Join us as Mike DeMarte pours recent favorites including Reverdito Barolo, Montaribaldi Barbera, and more. FREE

March 26 - Easter-friendly wines for early (in the day) drinking

Rosé, sparkling, Pinot Noir and more. FREE

Late February/March Case of the Month - \$112

Tikves Vranec 2013

Finally a new vintage of this unique (in Portland anyway) and compelling red from Macedonia. The varietal is Vranec, coming from an ancient winegrowing region. Dark black in color, it's minerally firm underneath but glossy smooth on top with a saturated punch of boysenberry and marionberry fruit. These ripe flavors provide a colorful backdrop for more savory elements including black olive, rosemary and cocoa powder. Raise a glass of this for something fun and definitely off the beaten path. \$11.50

Cassagnoles Gros Manseng 2014

There's several tasty Gascogne whites in town but this "reserve" bottling is a step above. Made from 100% Gros Manseng (arguably the region's best varietal), this reminded us of Gruner Veltliner with fleshy white fruits and a mild white pepper bite. Peachy to start, the flavors frolic through kiwi, green grape and musk melon before ending with a citrus rind zestiness. \$8.99

Bagante Mencia Bierzo 2013

Mencia is the varietal, Bierzo the Spanish region, and this personality-filled red is a fun dive into a jungle of wild flavors. The nose offers an attention-getting combination of gamy brambly menthol notes and a minerally iron

edginess. Compact at first, it opens up dramatically with air, showing crushed mixed berry flavors and vermouth botanical aromatics. The mid-palate is soft and broad before firming up again on the sanguine iron finish. \$9.99

Jouclary Cabardès 2013

A unique appellation in southwestern France that marries the warm generosity of the Mediterranean with the more aristocratic elegance of Bordeaux, Cabardès is the only appellation in France that allows (and actually requires) a mix of Bordeaux and Languedoc varietals. The result, in this bottling anyway, is a graceful red with a wild side. The smooth black plum edges into wild blackberry and the autumnal dried leaf aromatics hint of more pungent landscapes without going too far. \$11.99

EXIT Pinot Grigio 2013

So-called orange wines aren't necessarily orange in color; made with white grapes, they get their color from lengthy skin contact. Unlike regular white wine production, they are left to macerate with the skins for weeks (or longer) and consequently gain color, structure, tannin and a variety of flavors. Currently a popular "new" category, the best known examples come from northeastern Italy (or across the border in Slovenia) and do not come cheaply. This bottling from Umbria might be considered orange wine "lite" but it offers an idea of the style for a great price (normally \$15). Textured, dry and somewhat tannic for a Grigio, the dried fruit flavors are subtle and fractured: the spicy note of Asian pear, the bitter rind of orange or lime and the grippy texture of peachskin. Looking to try something new? Here you go. \$9.99

CMS Red Columbia Valley 2012

A reliable northwest bargain, this is smooth and polished with Cab Sauv flavors dominating: blackberry and black

currant with red berry fruits popping up on the finish. Shades of wet earth and woody spice color the whole, providing structure for the rich fruit. \$11.99

San Polo Rubio Toscana 2010

100% Sangiovese from young vines in Tuscany's hallowed Montalcino appellation, thanks to an end-of-vintage deal this is about half its original price. Medium-bodied and supple, the black cherry and plum fruit flavors are precise yet rounded, with baker's cocoa on the nose and dusty clay on the finish. \$10.99

Cigar Zinfandel Old Vine 2014

Another almost half-price deal, not only were we impressed, this also received an enthusiastic four thumbs up from two Zin-crazy customers who were kind enough to taste with us. Despite its big bold personality it's surprisingly balanced, with no egregious over-oaking or alarmingly high alcohol. Awash in a riot of smoky blackberry and deep cherry kirsch flavors, the earthy peppery notes are a welcome addition, dimpling the otherwise polished frame. \$9.99

Albamar Pinot Noir 2014

This shows a distinctive Chilean personality while still tasting clearly like Pinot Noir. Medium-bodied and lively, the juicy sweet black cherry fruit is tinged with a variety of appealing plant-based background aromas: black tea, dried oregano, woody spice and a hint of orange zest. \$11.99

Sanguineti Vermentino 2013

A lovely harbinger of the coming spring, this Small Vineyards favorite delivers invigorating aromatics of just-sliced lemon and salty sea air. Creamy in texture, the fleshy pear is touched by an almond marzipan nuttiness,

all balanced by a pulse of lively yet gentle acidity. Normally \$15, the distributor had extra, hence the nice deal. \$10.99

Araldica Barbera d'Asti 2013

This value Barbera hits all the right notes: the light wet earth aromatics lead to dark but tangy boysenberry on the palate and the texture is smooth yet vibrant. There's enough fruit to sink your teeth into but a vein of food-friendly acidity keeps it all humming along, finishing clean and spicy. \$9.99

Chateau Paret Bordeaux 2014

This terrific direct import comes from the Côtes de Castillon, situated next to prestigious St. Emilion. Dominated by Merlot (although Merlot skeptics would hardly guess it as such), this delivers classic Bordeaux flavors in an accessible richer style. The dusty black cherry fruit is dark and smooth with an underlying chewiness and the aromatics of mineral, graphite and dried nettle scream Bordeaux, as do the expected food-friendly tannins on the finish. \$11.99