

The Wine Guy's *Wine Tasting Notes*

April, 2010



Hanover Park Vineyards, 1897 Grand Reserve Red Wine (2003) \$28

This is a wine that Michael Helton, owner and winemaker, takes great pride in. It is a blend of various wines grown on his property in Yadkinville, blended and further aged as the blend. In total the wine was in barrel for 56 months. It has a mellow flavor that only older oak can give, yet it can stand up to the heartiest of meals. 135 cases were made.

Archery Summit, 2006 Premier Cuvée Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley

This winery is owned by the Andrus family who also own Pine Ridge in the Napa Valley. Pine Ridge specializes in Bordeaux grapes making great Cabs, but in Oregon they have different priorities. A few whites are available but it is their Pinot Noirs that are world-class and worth the visit to their tasting room. Deep, rich flavors yet subtle at the same time. This is an amazing wine with 5 to 10 years to improve.

Steele, 2007 Pinot Blanc Santa Barbara Hop Kiln, 1985 Primitivo Sonoma County Sebastiani, 1986 Barbera Sonoma County Ridge, 1992 Zinfandel Lytton Springs Sonoma County

All tasted at Noble's Grill in Winston-Salem. It is always good to have friends who store wines so that we can taste mature wines. We started the evening with the Steele from the restaurant's wine list. This is one of my favorites because of the rich flavors that they get from this rather simple grape. We were fortunate to have a young, but experienced waitress who worked hard to get these older bottles opened and decanted. Hop Kiln has been out of business for a number of years but they did produce high quality wines in their day. This one tasted thick and rich with flavors similar to late harvest Zinfandel. Primitivo is a distant relative to Zinfandel. The Sebastiani was drinkable, but a bit tired. The star of the evening was the Ridge. One of the older producers in California, and one of the best. The Zin had a wide variety of other grapes added, all in minor portions. The wine was vibrant after 18 years and added to the already lively conversation. We, of course, shared our older wines with the restaurant manager and the waitress.

Albrecht, 2005 Riesling Reserve, Alsace Joel Remy, 2004 Pommard Les Vignots, Burgundy

Both tasted at the Violette restaurant in Atlanta where the French cuisine is excellent, the wine list is very broad and well-priced and the service is inept.

The Riesling was a good choice because it was exceptionally rich for a Riesling and offered broad flavors. The Remy was a new name to me but had wonderful Pinot Noir flavors with a balance that we all commented on.

Westbend Vineyards, 2003 Vidal Blanc White Port, Yadkin Valley

We don't see a lot of White Port in America and even less that is domestically produced. The Vidal Blanc vines at Westbend were planted well over 10 years and have produced very pleasant dessert wines in the past. This was their first effort at a port wine as far as I know. This is an expensive wine to make and sold for almost \$24 for a 500 ml. bottle. For an after-dinner drink this is very mellow with soft flavors.

Stoller, 2007 Pinot Noir JV Estate, Dundee Hills \$26

Just when you think you know a region pretty well along comes a wine not previously known. I tasted this wine at a recent wine tasting and needed to purchase a bottle to prove to myself that it was as good as I was touting to others at the tasting. My small taste was accurate. This is a delightful Pinot Noir. It is very soft yet with a back bone that would stand up to the roasted London Broil we had with it. Score yet another winner for the Willamette Valley.

The Chateau Cos d'Estournel Dinner

Calvert Woodley, a large D.C. wine shop, hosted a wine dinner featuring the wines of Chateau Cos d'Estournel with guest speaker Jean-Guillaume Prats, the owner of the Chateau.

We started the evening with a **2006 Cos Blanc**. I have visited the Chateau and never knew that they made white wine. I don't feel too badly informed since this is only the second vintage, and they only produced 3,000 bottles. This rich white wine was outstanding. I had suspected about 20% Semillon, but was told that it was only a very small proportion. This was followed with a 2009 barrel sample, the 2006, 2007, 2000 and a 1995 Merlot and Cabernet blended wine. Mr. Prats told us that the 2009 vintage would be the wine of the century following the 2005 and 2000 which were also wines of the century. But seriously, he did compare the 2009 to the Cos 1945 which is very high praise. Each wine was very different but the 2007 and 1995 were the stand outs. The wines were paired with Pheasant Ravioli, Double Lamb Chops, Braised Veal Cheeks and a Date Linzer Torte. With dessert we had a **2001 Imperial Tokay Hetszolo Aszu 5 Puttonyos**. Over 100 people attended this wonderful evening.