

The Wine Guy's *Wine Tasting Notes*

February, 2010

Trimbach, 2003 Pinot Gris Reserve, Alsace

Established in 1626, the Trimbach winery certainly has experience with Pinot Gris grapes, which is one of the 4 noble grapes grown in this region. The wine was remarkably rich for a Pinot Gris and had a very deep golden color.

Concannon, 2006 Petite Sirah, Central Coast \$11

Concannon is 40+ year-old winery that has consistently produced quality wines at reasonable prices. As I have always said there is nothing petit about Petite Sirah, and there isn't even any Syrah here. Full-flavored and bold, this is one \$11 wine that can handle some 20-30 minutes of decanting.

Schild Estate, 2007 Shiraz, Barossa \$28

I have read about Schild for several years, but this is the first time I've seen them in our area. The estate was started in the early 50s. What a rich, well-balanced wine. I plan to get some more and cellar them for several years.

Raylen Vineyards, 2008 Chardonnay South Mountain, North Carolina \$16

I have been drinking this Chardonnay for at least 12 vintages (see these notes from 8/07 about the '05 vintage). The grapes come from a 15-year-old vineyard in Morganton, and winemaker Steve Shepard has been making this wine since the mid-1990s when he was at Westbend. This may be the best South Mountain the Vineyard has ever produced! There is only a hint of oak on the wine, which gives a very Burgundian style to the taste and finish. The wine is only available at the winery and select restaurants and is well worth a trip to find it. This wine is even better since there was no 2007 vintage because the Easter freeze killed the entire crop from this vineyard.

Reserva de Familia, 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Carolina, Maipo, Chile \$17

Chile is rapidly developing its wine culture and exporting quality wines. This is an example of a fine Cab from Chile at a reasonable price. The deep red color reflects the vine development and the care taken to produce the wine. Bold and rich, this is a great complement to any beef or lamb dishes.

Freemark Abbey, 205 Chardonnay, Napa Valley \$22

Another old, established California winery that is consistently good for whites and reds. This Chard has crisp flavors, yet is soft, gentle and well balanced. It is a treat.

Hill of Content, 2005 Shiraz, Australia \$17

Australians are known for their blending of various grapes and wine regions. This Shiraz was made from grapes produced 57% in Western Australia and 43% in South Australia. This could be considered a value wine. With a deep, rich color and flavors to match, this long-time favorite of mine offers abundant taste of Syrah grapes at this price level. Australia is having some problems with their wine position in the market, but Hill of Content is a winner.

Twomey, 2003 Merlot, Nap Valley \$60

I purchased this at the winery during my 2007 visit to California. This is a small winery owned by the Silver Oak people. It has a small tasting room with a very attentive staff (many Napa tasting rooms are a bit off-putting, but not Twomey). It is rather expensive, but offers Merlot tastes that we can't find at under \$20 in California. This 6-year-old wine had deep colors and flavors that will continue to improve over at least the next 5-8 years. I don't drink many California Merlots and, while this is expensive, it is outstanding.