

# The Wine Guy's *Wine Tasting Notes*

April, 2011



## **Domaine du Grand Tinel, 2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Southern Rhône**

I have been drinking these wines since the early 1990s and always enjoy this producer. This '07 needs a few more years in the bottle before it will be in prime form. We decanted it, and it was still very tight so the remaining bottle I have will rest quietly for 4 or 5 more years. Stay tuned.

## **Tablas Creek Vineyard, 2007 Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc, Paso Robles**

Always one of my favorites. This Rhône blend consists of 67% Roussanne, 22% Grenache Blanc and 10% Picpoul. The Roussanne really shows through in this wine with its rich, yet elegant, flavors. This producer is a joint venture between Chateau Beaucastel and the Haas family, and their wines seem to get better each year.

## **Childress Vineyards, 2006 Cabernet Franc Reserve, North Carolina \$24.**

In my humble opinion this is the best wine produced by the Childress Vineyards. It is certainly the one I drink the most. With 85% Cabernet Franc, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Petit Verdot, this is a relatively soft wine while having a good bit of backbone to match with the richest of meals. This is my last '06 vintage, and they are about to release their '07 version, which I am looking forward to trying (see my tasting notes for September 2009 for a review of the 2005 vintage).

## **Robert Mondavi Winery, 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon Marjorie's Sunrise, Oakville**

This is the only time I've seen this vineyard select wine, and I'm glad I saved it for 13 years because it was drinking just right. The vineyard is a small section of the famous To Kalon Vineyard in the Napa Valley, which was Robert's first purchase after separating from the family business in 1966. The Cabernet shows off just why this grape variety has the outstanding reputation it has. Deeply developed flavors that just appeal at the front of the mouth and linger on the finish. Too bad I don't have any more.

## **G. D. Vajra, 2005 Barolo DOCG, Piedmont**

As the King of Wines, Barolo is usually a wine that needs about 10 years in the bottle to calm down. I opened this one a bit early because I'm preparing for my May trip to the Piedmont. I decanted it 45 minutes prior to serving, and it was a bit pale and light on opening, but the time in the decanter proved to open the wine to a rich fullness. It was balanced and a delight to have with my oven-roasted Ribeye.

## **St. Cosme, 2009 Viognier/Sauvignon Blanc, Rhône Valley**

## **Kenwood, 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Jack London Vineyard, Sonoma**

Both tasted at Noble's Grill in Winston-Salem. What to do on a quiet Thursday night? Well how about going out and having several fine glasses of wine. The St. Cosme is a favorite, and this new vintage proved to be just right. It was well balanced and showed rich flavors. The Kenwood proves a constant reminder to myself to go back to the old favorites from time to time. This wine is just good drinking. They have been making wine from the Jack London Vineyard for as long as I can remember and it is as good as ever. Let's do more old favorites.

**Duckhorn, 2007 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley**

Tasted at Noma Restaurant in Winston-Salem. As I commented above about the Kenwood, we don't go back to old favorites often enough, so seeing the Duckhorn on the wine list got my interest. This is a classic California Sauvignon Blanc, and I can not see how others could be any better. The rich flavors and smooth finish shows what good quality vineyards and experienced vintners can do.

**Yellow Tail, 2009 Sauvignon Blanc, Australia**

It is liquid and contains alcohol. Drink between May 2011 and July 2011.

**Domaine Chandon, 2006 Pinot Meunier, Carneros**

I was at a large family event and several wines had been served. Later in the evening our host poured me a glass of wine from a just-opened bottle, which was pleasant but nothing special, until I glanced at the bottle. This is one of my favorite California wines that I rarely see. The problem with my initial taste was that the wine needed some air in order to open it up. After swirling it in my glass for a few minutes, the wonderful aroma and flavors leaped out. I quickly cornered another glass and was very pleased to sit and linger over an old friend.

**Benton Lane, 2009 Pinot Gris, Oregon**

**Paul Hobbs "Felino", 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendoza**

Both tasted at the Haven Restaurant and Bar in Atlanta. It is always a treat to find a new and exciting restaurant in a city I visit from time to time. Upscale and casual at the same time, and as a plus, really good service. The Benton Lane was very smooth with rich aromas at the start and a lingering finish. The Hobbs is the famous California winemaker who is making a great name for himself in Chile. The Cab was rich, but without being overly tannic. Outdoor dining in early April with quality food and wines makes for a great evening.