

The Wine Guy's Wine Tasting Notes

October, 2011



Vietti, 2009 Dolcetto d'Alba Piedmont DOC \$17.

One of the reliable producers in the Piedmont region of Italy. The Dolcetto grapes are grown near the famous Barolo vineyards, so the terroir can be very good indeed. Well balanced, this slightly lighter brother of Barbera is a young drinking wine that works as an aperitif or with lighter foods.

Peter Lehman, 2008 Shiraz, Barossa \$18.

Now that the Barossa legend Peter Lehman has sold his winery, we need to see if the new owners can maintain his consistently high quality. This '08 Shiraz was made while he still operated the winery. With deep colors and rich flavors, this is what a Barossa Shiraz should be. The label states "vegan friendly". What exactly does that mean?

Dry Creek, 2009 Chenin Blanc, Sonoma Grassy Creek, 2008 Red Barn Blend, Yadkin Valley

Both tasted at the Diamond Back Grill in Winston-Salem. The Dry Creek has been a long favorite and, I think, one of the finest Chenins produced in California. Almost-bold flavors would work well with many foods, but I had it as a starter since I haven't tasted this in several years. Grassy Creek produces some of the best reds in the Yadkin Valley and this Bordeaux blend shows off what fine fruit they are growing. Rich, yet subtle flavors show off what a fine North Carolina wine can achieve.

Casa Lapostolle, 2009 Cuvee Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon, Apalta Vineyard, Colchagua Valley \$24.

Lapostolle produces some of the finest wines of Chile and even South America. Alexandre Marnier Lapostolle is the current face of the winery. Note her middle name and guess where the family got the money to develop these outstanding wines. The Cabernet is very young and showed the deep tannins from the Cabernet grape. I opened this wine because I had just purchased several bottles and had them in my car. We were at a gathering of people and I needed a bottle to share. This one was well-received, but watch these notes in about two years to see how it is developing in the bottle.

Melville, 2009 Chardonnay, Santa Rita Hills

Tasted at Noble's Grill in Winston-Salem. It has been several years since I've had any Melville wines and this Chardonnay reminded me why I should seek out more of their wines. The soft, delicate wine showed good fruit with almost no oak. It was a treat with my roasted red snapper.

Domaine Latour, 2005 Aloxe-Corton, Burgundy

The Louis Latour firm plays many roles in the wine scene in Burgundy. When we see a wine labeled "Domaine" it means that the wine comes from property they own and the wine is made at their winery. This Pinot Noir comes from one of the best vineyards in the area and the wine is dense and rich. Smooth is another term that can be applied to this wine.

St. Urbans-Hof, 2007 Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Spatlese

When you combine a very good vintage with a good Mosel vineyard, you get some of the best German wines. At 4 years old this young wine is drinking very well, but will continue to age in the bottle for years to come. The wine combines the classic German sweetness with the acidic bit to give it great balance. As an aperitif or with dinner, this wine is a treat.

Wine Tastings

I always look forward to the fall when there are several trade tastings that I can attend.

A trade tasting is one that is put on, usually by a distributor (wholesaler) or importer, to show off their products to retail stores, restaurant staff and even humble wine educators like me. Generally they will offer a wide variety of wines counting in the hundreds. I recently attended two trade tastings offered by Mutual Distributing Company and American Premium Beverage. These are always good times for me to try new wines, taste new vintages and renew old acquaintances.

I also attended a charity tasting for the benefit of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC. Charity tastings can be large or small affairs and this one had six tables with about 8 wines on each. They offered some outstanding wines like Penfolds Grange, Caymus "Special Selection" Cabernet Sauvignon, Williams-Salyem Pinot Noir, Gaja "Sito Moresco" Langhe and many others of similar quality. These are wines we don't get to try very often and we were supporting a good cause at the same time.