

The Wine Guy's *Wine Tasting Notes*

September, 2011



MacRostie Winery, 2008 Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast \$24

It has been a while since I've tasted any MacRostie wines. This Chardonnay has medium oak influence, and I found it rich and well-balanced. Growing the grapes on the Sonoma Coast provides a cooler climate than the interior vineyards, and I believe this accounts for the very pleasant flavors.

Junius Lindsay Vineyard, 2009 Roussanne, Yadkin Valley

Michael Zimmerman knows that I like his Roussanne, and I have encouraged him to do a bottling of this varietal for several years. Previously he has been blending it with his Viognier to make a wonderful wine. Several years ago he planted extra Roussanne and now is able to produce a 100% bottling. This wine was bottled about 2 months before I tasted it, so it was over bottle shock, yet it has much more to give with some more aging. The rich Roussanne flavors are there, and the wine has the typical Rhône complexity. Since he made only 35 cases, I need to get a few more to age. I'll review this wine again in 6 or more months and see how it is developing.

Domaine Zind Humbrect, 2005 Pinot d'Alsace, France

Tasted at the River Birch Lodge in Winston-Salem, this wine, from one of the finest producers in Alsace, proved to be a mature wine after 6 years. The grape is the Pinot Gris, and it is a treat to have. The golden color showed the aging of the wine. Both the color and the richness were signs that this was the best time to open this bottle. It isn't often that a restaurant will have wines like this on the menu, and I really appreciate that.

Castel Giocondo, 2004 Brunello di Montalcino, Tuscany

This wine is produced by Marchesi de Frescobaldi who has been in business since the 1300s, so they should have it right by now. This is 100% Sangiovese and aged a minimum of three years in barrel and bottle at the winery. I've aged it further in my cellar, and it was well worth the wait. Soft and gentle, yet a remarkable backbone. This can pair with almost anything, and I opened it on a Thursday night which made it even more special.

Heimberger, 2009 Pinot Blanc, Alsace Reserve Particuliere \$22.

This is a producer I recently discovered, and I find their wines to be outstanding. Pinot Blanc is generally light in aroma and flavor, but this one has a richness that makes it enjoyable as an aperitif or with lightly-flavored dishes.

Henry Fessy, 2009 Regnie Chateau des Reyssiers, Beaujolais \$21.

As I continue to drink these outstanding wines, I can appreciate the fine dining potential of the '09 vintage and the richness this producer achieves.

The Kenwood Jack London Vineyard Dinner

NV Yalupa Cuvee Brut

2010 Yalupa Chardonnay

2008 Merlot

2008 Cabernet Sauvignon

2009 Zinfandel

All tasted at a wine tasting followed by the dinner at Vin 205 in Winston-Salem. The sparkling wine, a blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, opened the tasting and was a crisp starter on a delightful evening. We tasted through all the remaining wines then sat down for an evening meal with the same wines. The Chardonnay really came alive with the crab cake course and showed much better than the beginning tasting. Along with roasted lamb, we had the Merlot and Cabernet. The Merlot offered very little on the nose, while the Cab had enough aroma for both. However, each was balanced with the lamb and complemented the plate very nicely. The Zinfandel paired with a Zin-soaked cranberry shortcake was a fitting closing to a wonderful evening. This restaurant, which is in the same building as the Wine Merchants retail shop, is offering wine dinners almost every week, and they are outstanding bargains.

Rex Hill, 2009 Chardonnay, Willamette Valley

EveningLand, 2009 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley

St. Cosme, 2005 Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Rhone Valley

Inniskillen, 2006 Vidal Ice Wine, Canada

All tasted at Youssef 242 Restaurant in Hickory, NC, which has one of the finest wine lists in the state. The Rex Hill was a starter wine that showed the Willamette finesse with the varietal. I was very surprised to find the Evening Land on the wine list at less than \$30, which I thought was a bargain. This is one of Oregon's finest Pinots with soft flavors, yet the color prepares you for a bolder wine. The St. Cosme was decanted at least 40 minutes before we started to drink it, and we should have called ahead because at least 2 hours would be needed to mellow this bold, rich wine. While everyone else in our group had dessert I had the Vidal Ice Wine, a sweet dessert wine with rich flavors. The Canadian ice wines are some of the best in the world, and you pay for the privilege. But it was certainly worth every penny.