

The Wine Guy's *Wine Tasting Notes*

January, 2012



Wines of the Year 2011

2008 Evening Land, Pinot Noir, Seven Springs Vineyard, Eola-Amity Hills (January)

2007 Nicholas Joly, Savennieres Les Clos Sacres, Loire Valley (May)

1985 Chateau Lafite, Pauillac (August)

2006 Inniskillen, Vidal Ice Wine, Canada (September)

2009 Domaine Weinbach, Pinot Blanc Reserve, Alsace (December)

January 2012 Wine Tasting Notes

Eyrie Vineyards 2009 Pinot Gris, Dundee Hills, Oregon \$20.

David Lett was one of the early winemakers in the Willamette Valley and with his passing, his son Jason is now in charge. I believe that Pinot Gris is probably the best white grape varietal being produced in the Valley, and this one is a standout. With that rich "Alsatian-like" flavor, the wine is easy on the palate yet very satisfying.

Rosenblum, 2007 Zinfandel, Paso Robles \$20.

I have often reviewed the Rosenblum wines, but I believe this is the first time I've had their Zin from Paso Robles. I haven't had a lot of Paso Robles Zin but, if this one is typical, then I should seek out others. The deep color of the wine is a sure give-away to the flavors, which are intense. Even at 4 years old, this is a candidate for decanting.

Extempore, 2008 Venica, Collio Sauvignon D. O. C.

Ronco del Gnemiz, 2009 Schioppettino, Collio Oriental del Friuli D. O. C.

My son recently returned from a trip to the Friuli region of northern Italy

and brought back some of their local wines. The Extempore is a Sauvignon Blanc like few others I've ever had. The wines I can think of that are most similar to the richness of this wine are the Pouilly-Fume from the late Didier Dagueneau, and the rich Chenin Blancs from Nicolas Joly. Granted, these are two outstanding winemakers, but the color and intensity of this Sauvignon is outstanding and unique. The Schioppettino is a new grape varietal to me, but Jancis Robinson indicates the grape is "newly resurrected." It is a light, fruity wine not unlike the 2009 Beaujolais that I have been writing about this past year. These two wines just continue to remind me that there are so many wonderful wines in the world and I must continue my exploration to try them all.

Crossbarn, 2009 Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast \$29.

This wine is produced by Paul Hobbs and shows his strength with making oaky Chards. While I am not particularly fond of highly oaked wine, when they are this good, I do appreciate their quality.

Gruet, NV Blanc de Noir, New Mexico

This long-time producer has always shown quality Methode Champenoise-styled sparkling wines. I find it interesting to watch the faces of the folks I'm tasting this wine with when they learn that it is from New Mexico. With small bubbles and rich flavors, this is a good value wine for such quality.

Robert Mondavi, 2006 Meritage Private Selection, California \$12.

Just what does Private Selection mean? I don't think it means anything at all, but the wine is very good. In fact, it is one of the best \$12 wine I've had in the past year. It is a blend of 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot, 7% Malbec and 1% Cabernet Franc. The back label credits Robert's 1962 trip to Europe with the inspiration for this blend, but I just credit it as a great value wine.

M2 de Matallana, 2005 Ribera del Duero, D. O. \$40.

While the label does not detail the blend, this wine is clearly a mixture of Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon. Even at 6 years old, this wine has more aging potential. This is due to the Cab part of the blend. I detected a bit of rustic taste in the wine that would have benefited from some decanting. However, there is no doubt about the richness here.

Joh. Jos. Prum, 1998 Riesling Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Auslese, Mosel-Saar-Ruwer

**Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande, 1989 Pauillac
Chateau d'Yquem, 1999 Sauternes**

When my D. C. son is home, we always seem to have at least one evening of great wines. We started with the Mosel wine which I received as a gift

recently. Nineteen ninety-eight was a very good year for German wines, and this one should have been stellar. However, I think it had some storage conditions that sped up the maturity. Michael Broadbent tasted the wine in 2000 and commented: "pale, lovely, fragrant, peachy, medium-sweet, fairly rich, grapey flavour, very good acidity--drink between 2005 and 2012." The Pichon Lalande at 22 years of age showed very well indeed. This 2nd growth Bordeaux is always rather delicate compared to some of its neighbors that tend to be overpowering. It was decanted for about 40 minutes and drank to perfection. My son offered me a choice of dessert wine from his collection and just gave me the first letter of each. Y won hands down. This 1/2 bottle was just enough for the two of us. If this isn't the nectar of the gods, I don't know what is. The deep golden color is matched by the sweet aroma and the balanced taste. This is as good as it gets.