

# The Wine Guy's Wine Tasting Notes

August, 2009



## **Fritz Haag, 2005, Juffer Sonnenuhr, Riesling Auslese, Mosel**

Last month I finished with a disappointing Haag wine so I opened the same wine from the 2005 vintage and was delighted. Haag's reputation is intact. This has the sweetness of a very late harvest wine with a rich golden color. The bonus is that it could easily age for another decade.

## **Maison Louis Latour, 2004 Pommard-Epenots Premier Cru, Burgundy**

We are very fortunate in Winston-Salem to have a Latour representative visit us most every spring and fall and do a tasting of these wonderful wines. These tastings are a do-not-miss on my calendar. This 2004 Pommard shows the deep color that is expected from the region, and the flavors are intense, yet delicate, at the same time. The nose coming out of my big glass is worth half the price of the wine by itself.

## **Stony Hill, 2006 Chardonnay, Napa Valley**

### **Stony Hill, 1998 Chardonnay, Napa Valley (Magnum)**

One of my wine friends from D.C. was visiting on his way to and from the Highland Games and we had the '06 and the '98 one week apart. What a difference. Stony Hill is a very limited wine with little or none available in NC, but we had gotten some from the mailing list. Their vineyard was planted in 1952, which makes them one of the oldest producers in Napa. The '06 was a pleasant wine, but these Chardonnays are made for aging and the magnum of '98 was brilliant. I'm sure that the '06 will follow a similar aging pattern. Stay tuned because I have another '06 and will open it in a few years. (My house guest must have put the '06 we opened in the back of my refrigerator because I found it 12 days later; remarkably it was still good and I had a glass and one-half which shows just how age-worthy this wine can be.)

## **Château Raymond-Lafon, 2003 Sauternes, Bordeaux**

Brought by my D.C. friend and really appreciated. I don't drink a lot of Sauternes, but always look forward to them because I am a big fan of Semillon (one of the grapes along with Sauvignon Blanc). This Château is planted with 80% Semillon and is near the vineyard of Château d'Yquem. Subtle, soft, sweet - what more do you want. A great example of Sauternes at its best - and still young.

## **Raffaldini, 2007 Montepulciano, Swan Creek, N.C. \$19.**

After a very pleasant visit to Raffaldini with my London son, I took this Montepulciano home. I took him there to enjoy the best view of any N.C. winery. This wine, which is the name of the grape as well as the name of the Italian region where it originated, is clearly the best red produced by this winery so far. The deep color and rich, bold flavors were right on target. The slight acidic tongue made this one terrific wine. While there, the winemaker also let me try the 2008 Vermentino which President Obama took for the Italian President, and it too, was rich and full-flavored with an almost Roussanne-like flavor. This one isn't for sale yet, but you should watch for it.

## **Newton, 2007 Chardonnay, 63% Napa & 37% Sonoma \$19.**

### **Newton, 2006 Napa Valley Claret \$21.**

I recently purchased these Newton wines and was very impressed by the quality and value. Newton is known for its higher priced wines so these seemed worth a try. The Chardonnay is lightly oaked with the creamy style of the more expensive bottles. The red is listed as Claret,

which usually means a Bordeaux, but the wine contains 3% Syrah (similar to the blend of RayLen's Category 5) and four other Bordeaux grapes. However, let's not quibble over terms. This is a fine wine that offers really good value.

**Jordan, 2006 Chardonnay, Napa Valley**

**Maysara, 2007 Pinot Noir, Oregon**

**Rex Hill, 2007 Pinot Noir, Oregon**

All were tasted at Noble's Grill in Winston-Salem. I've said it before but we need to drink some of the old favorites more often. **Jordan** has been a producer of quality wines for a long time, and it is as good as ever. This rich Chardonnay is a treat to have and to remember that for 30 years it has been consistently good. Just the opposite is the **Maysara** which I had never heard of, but plan to visit during my upcoming visit to Oregon. This is from the McMinnville A.V.A. where some of Oregon's best Pinot Noirs come from. Similarly the **Rex Hill** was of the same quality. It is good to have two wines from the Pacific Northwest that have such high quality.

**Etude, 2006 Pinot Gris, Carneros**

Tasted at 6th and Vine in Winston-Salem. Carneros is the southern part of Napa Valley, which is cooler than the northern part, so it is better for growing white grapes and Pinot Noir. The Etude has intense body yet subtle flavors and is made in the Alsatian style. The nice thing about this restaurant is that they offer about 50 wines by the glass and have a retail area where you can select fine wines like this.

**Bodega Numanthia, 2006 Termes, Toro, Spain \$29.**

This impressive wine is the third label from Numanthia with the other two being considerably more expensive. The wine is 100% Tinto which is another name for Granacha, and the vines are un-grafted. The Toro region is one of Spain's emerging wine areas located just east of the well-known Ribera del Duero in north central Spain. The wine is outstanding and can age in the bottle for at least 5 years. The rich, bold flavors need decanting and will match with beef and lamb dishes.