

The Wine Guy's *Wine Tasting Notes*

December, 2009



Sombras del Sol, 2008 Carmenere, Valle Central, Chile \$9.

Chile is on a roll adjusting from inexpensive, poor quality wines to better quality wines at value prices. This is one of the good examples. Carmenere has its origins in Bordeaux but isn't there any longer. It has become one of Chile's best red grapes. This inexpensive wine shows light intensity, which may be a result of a young vineyard, but the flavors are quite pleasant.

Freemark Abbey, 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

This is one of the older and better wineries in the Napa Valley and represents my campaign to promote these standard bearers while everyone else is seeking the newest, most tannic offerings. Freemark has old vineyards in Rutherford and gives these wines long aging in French oak. We had this with braised lamb shanks and it worked to perfection. Great now or for at least 5 more years.

Marco Felluga, 2007 Friulano, Collio DOC, Italy \$19.

The Collio Region is in the very northeast part of Italy, and the term Friulano is the name of the wine. There is a very wide variety of grapes planted and the possibilities are almost endless. What we depend on here is the producer, Marco Felluga. He, along with his brother Livio, produce wines of outstanding quality. This crisp, yet fruity, wine has a richness that few Italian whites can equal.

Pichler-Krutzler, 2007 Grüner Veltliner Supperin, Wachau \$28.

The Grüners are a favorite of mine, and the name Pichler drew me to this bottle. The two best producers in Austria are Rudi & F. X. Pichler. This one doesn't match their standards, but it is a light pleasant wine. Perhaps a bit of spice would add some excitement.

Chateau Montelena, 2008 Riesling Potter Valley

Beringer, 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon Private Reserve, Napa Valley

Louis Jadot 1991 Vosne-Romanée, Burgundy

Maison Louis Latour, 2003 Vosne-Romanée, Burgundy

Thanksgiving is a time for American wines, and my son brought the Montelena. It is an outstanding California Riesling with light sweetness and was a good prelude to our turkey. He picked the Beringer for our Thanksgiving dinner. This 20-year-old wine was calmed down enough to be a rich companion to Tom Turkey, et. al. We decanted it just before serving to remove the sediment and it had rich, cherry-like flavors, but it softened even more as dinner progressed. We hadn't finished our second helping

when I sent my son to find another bottle, and it was now time for him to get serious with Burgundies. The 1991 had lost much of its bite, but it was like essence of wine - remarkable. We followed with the '03, which was as rich and flavorful as a Pinot Noir can get. What a delight to sit at the table for a long evening with good stories and wonderful wines.

Stony Hill, 2001 Chardonnay, Napa Valley

Paul Jaboulet Aîné, 1991 Hermitage La Chapelle, Rhone Valley

Domaine des Baumard, 2001 Quarts de Chaume, Loire Valley

With my son home for the holidays we try to open some interesting wines. Stony Hill is one of our favorites and takes at least 5 years to blossom. This one was rich and elegant and a great starter. He selected my oldest La Chapelle, which we decanted just before dinner to eliminate the sediment. It was brilliant yet subtle at the same time. Finally, he selected one of his dessert wines. He has a large collection of Quarts de Chaume, and this sweet, rich, golden wine was the perfect conclusion to a bonding dinner.

Pietra Calda, 2004 Fiano de Avellino, DOCG, Campania

What did Jesus drink? It is very possible that He might have had some Fiano which was one of the great wines during those times. It is no longer viewed as such a lofty wine, but this bottle was one of the best I've had. With a golden color and rich flavors, it made a great opening wine before dinner and would have been a good match for a wide variety of dishes.