

The Wine Guy's *Wine Tasting Notes*

February, 2009



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Tangent, 2006 Sauvignon Blanc Paragon Vineyard, Edna Valley \$15.

The back label of this wine reads that it is a "departure from the ordinary." It further states that the wine is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc styles from the Loire Valley and New Zealand. I like this wine very much, but disagree with the comments since I think it tastes like the style of Bordeaux Blanc. I expected significant amounts of Semillon in this wine, but was told that it is 100% varietal. It has seen no oak and that suits me fine. This is a good value, and I look forward to acquiring more.

Lucia, 2000 Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands.

This is one powerful Pinot Noir. It should be able to age for at least 5 more years. The alcohol level is 14.1% which aids the balance of a very balanced wine. With such rich flavors this will easily stand up to any beef or lamb dish, and while it is a bit pricey, it is well worth the extra dollars for such an outstanding wine.

Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, 2007 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Kabinett, Mosel \$23.

Once again the German wine regulations have been changed to make their labeling more clear and understandable. Prior to 2007 the highest level of quality was called "Qualitätswein mit Prädikat", but from 2007 forward this highest level is called "Prädikatswein". The term Prädikat means with special attributes. This Reichsgraf wine is simply outstanding wine for the price and was listed as 79 on the Wine Spectator's top 100 list. It is listed as Kabinett which is the first level of sweetness but it tastes much sweeter than a simple Kabinett. The balance is just right between sweetness and acidity which makes this a great wine for sipping or with a very wide variety of foods.

Inama, 2004 Soave Classico, Veneto DOC

Soave is typically a light, mostly nondescript wine, but this one is anything but. All Soaves are made primarily with the Garganega grape and sometimes the Trebbiano grape may be blended in. They should also be consumed while very young, however, this 4-year-old wine has such richness that I could not detect any drop-off in flavor from an earlier one I tasted. This is a value wine well worth seeking out.

E. Guigal, 2001 Condrieu, Rhone Valley

Domaine des Baumard Savennières Clos du Papillon 2003, Loire Valley

Fiddlehead Cellars, 2001 Pinot Noir - Fiddlestix, Santa Rita Hills (1.5L)

Louis Latour, Volnay Ier Cru 'En Chevret', Côte de Beaune

Krebs-Grode, 2000 & 2001 Riesling Eiswein - Alsheimer Sonnenberg, Rheinhessen (.375L)

January is a great time for a wine dinner since everyone is available, and the cold weather helps to make the reds even richer. We started with the French Viognier, which at 7-years showed deep flavors but left plenty of clues as to what variety it was. The Baumard is one of the great Chenin Blancs in the world and the clean, crisp flavors proved to be a delight. With our entrée we had two Pinot Noirs. The Fiddlehead, served from a magnum, was deep in flavors and shows that after 5-years in my cellar the fruit was still very evident. The wine of the evening was the Volnay. From one of Burgundy's better vintages this was at one moment powerful yet never lost

its finesse. Certainly this will last for many more years (I have one other bottle). Finally, the dessert wines illustrated what vintages mean in Europe. I served the 2000 first and it had an almost light red color. The wine was very rich and sweet but due to its age was lacking a bit. However, 2001 was one of the best vintages in many years in Germany and it showed with this delicate, sweet, rich wine. The whole evening was a delight and it all centered around some great wines and good friends.

Laurel Gray, Chocolate Cabernet Wine Sauce, Yadkin Valley \$18.

With 4.8% alcohol, this 375ml bottle of sauce isn't exactly wine and it isn't exactly chocolate. What it is, is terrific. It's produced by a chocolatier in California using Laurel Gray's Cabernet Sauvignon. Served over a wide variety of desserts, it is very rich and flavorful. I always receive "Ahs" when it is first tasted.

Vinum, 2007 Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch \$13.

I first tasted this wine at my wine dinner at Zevely House last fall in Winston-Salem. I was amazed when I opened the first bottle at the aroma which seemed to leap out of the bottle. It just got better after that, and once I found the price to be such a bargain, I sought out this bottle. To cap off the accolades about this wine, Dottie and John of the Wall Street Journal rated this as one of their top 10 wines of 2008. With the aromas and rich flavors this is a wine to be tried. I wonder how it will age?
