

The Wine Guy's Wine Tasting Notes

July, 2009



Domaine Vincent Girardin, 2002 Pommard Les Vignots, Burgundy

Still on a French kick from my recent trip, I opened this 7-year-old Pommard. The deep rich color leads to the rich Pommard flavors from the Pinot Noir grape. This wine always fascinates me since it is one of the richest Burgundies while the adjacent Volnay is so soft and delicate.

L'Esprit de Chevalier, 2005 Pessac-Léognan, Bordeaux

This is the second label for Domaine de Chevalier, which is one of the finest properties in the Graves area. Second labels can offer some of the best values from Bordeaux, particularly when they come from one of the really great years like 2005. A blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Merlot, this wine was a rich blend that was just right for a grilled beef tenderloin. I got this wine in D.C. since it is very hard to find these quality/value wines in our area.

Radford Dale, 2005 Chardonnay, Stellenbosch \$22.

We need to stay in touch with South Africa since really good things are happening there. Radford Dale is just one example. There is bold, oaky (yes, I know I don't usually go for oak but when it is well done I can recommend it) Chardonnay with a nose that leaps out of the glass. At 4-years-old, it seems to be in perfect shape.

Domaine de Coyeux, 1987 Muscat de Beaufort, Rhône

Recently we had dinner guests, and I decided to see if this wine still had any life. It was also a good jumping off point to talk about our visit to the Domaine. Remarkably this wine was still vibrant with a dark, golden color and deep rich flavors. I bought it in 1992 for \$11. These are usually lighter dessert wines, but this proved something to me about the fine wines from this region.

Château de Saint Cosme, 2006 Gigondas, Southern Rhône

Another wine that I opened from a visit to the Rhône last month. I always call Gigondas the sleeper wine since not many are aware of it, yet it goes so well with a wide variety of foods. While we relished that wonderful afternoon in Gigondas, this soft, almost elegant wine added to the pleasure of our beef tenderloin. In my June notes I commented on the 2007 that we had at the winery, which needed decanting; however, this earlier version was not in need of that, but would have continued to improve in the bottle for at least 5 more years.

Calandray, 2004 Reserve Côtes du Roussillon Villages, Roussillon, France \$16.

This wine defines the term "hot" wine and that does not mean one everyone is after. The taste is so strong that I checked the label twice to see what the alcohol content was--14.5%. It seemed much more. I left two glasses in the bottle for the next day, and it was still aggressive. The region--not one I taste wine from a lot-- is on the Mediterranean Sea at the French border with Spain.

Deutz Champagne, Brut, France

Prager, 2007 Grüner Veltliner Hinter der Burg, Smaragd, Austria

Tasted at Restaurant Nicholas in Middletown, New Jersey. It has been a number of years since I've had Champagne Deutz, and I need to have it more often. This classic Champagne has full rich flavors and exhibits a lot of complexity. The Prager was very disappointing in that it had very little to offer except a plain white wine. With the fine reputation and the aggressive prices at this restaurant, I was expecting a rich Grüner. Check out my January 2008 notes to see a similar review of Prager. This is why we keep notes.

Bruno Giacosa, 2007 Roero Arneis, Piedmont DOC

Pio Cesare, 2004 Barbaresco DOCG, Piedmont

Tasted at Restaurant Tosca in D.C. When you combine a nearly extinct grape like Arneis with a quality producer like Bruno Giacosa the results can be very interesting. This bold white wine is unique for Italian whites with an intense flavor. When I was at Tosca last (see notes from 3/08) I had the Prunotto Barbaresco and this Pio Cesare was much smoother but still had a rich Nebbiolo backbone.

Mongiard-Mugneret, 2003 Savigny-les-Beaune Les Narbantons, Burgundy

This Pinot Noir had as much body as any one I've ever tasted. The full body was carried over in the glass and in the mouth. What a treat to have sitting around a friend's pool in D.C.

Woodenhead, 2005 Pinot Noir, Russian River

This unrefined and unfiltered Pinot is new to me but I think it is a Cabernet lover's Pinot. The wine is bold and rich beyond most Pinots, but does not stray too far from the traditional flavors. This was served slightly chilled and worked well as a pre-dinner beverage.

Lachini Vineyards, 2003 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley

This is the second of three bottles I purchased in 2006, and I expect this wine to be good for at least 5 more years. As with the other one I opened, this is an outstanding wine with deep, rich flavors and dark color. It's about as bold as Pinot Noir can get.

Lagier-Meredith, 2004 Syrah, Mount Veeder, Napa Valley

A friend from D.C. brought this wine for me to try. I was very impressed with the color, richness and the fact that I had never heard of it before. Yes, there is always something new in the wine world. They make only 700 cases of the Syrah and it is terrific. Inky color and brilliant taste, this wine was decanted for about 45 minutes while I prepared the grilled pork chops. The wine didn't overpower but it is as bold as some of the single vineyard Côte Rôties.

Fritz Haag, 2003 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr, Riesling-Auslese, Mosel

As a lover of German wines, I was disappointed with this one. Haag has a great reputation, and '03 was a very good year, but this half-bottle did not have any of the rich sweetness that you should expect from an Auslese.