

The Wine Guy's Wine Tasting Notes

May, 2009



The Noble's Grill Wine Dinner

We started with a **Wycliff Champagne** (the term used on the label) which is from Modesto, California, so guess who produces it. A slightly sweet, sparkling wine, it was a pleasant starter.

With our Risotto we had an **Espelt Vailet, 2006 Blanco** which was a blend of 60% Grenache Blanc and 40% Macabeo. It had an excellent aroma and a smooth easy-tasting flavor.

Our smoked Trout was served with a new wine to me from Louis Latour Vin de Pays called **Domaine de Valmoissine Pinot Noir**. I was confused by the flavors which were not quite Pinot Noir-like and upon researching found it was from the eastern part of the province in the Coteaux du Verdon region. It tasted like a light Syrah, yet this is a Rhône growing area. The climate is very warm with cool nights, and Louis F. Latour brother Charles is growing Pinot Noir in the area. This is a quality wine and is worth seeking out.

Our dessert wine was a **Shelton Riesling** which I always enjoy. The sweetness was just right for our Espresso Creme Brulee.

Bernard Morey et Fils, 2002 Maranges 1er Cru La Fussiere , Burgundy

Maranges is the southern-most wine region in the Côte de Beaune. The wine is 100% Pinot Noir and sells for a very reasonable price since few ever hear of this region. This 7-year-old wine shows just what "[terroir](#)" is about since it has full Pinot Noir flavors and a deep red color. The wine surprised me after all this time and is well worth finding. It's imported by Vineyard Brands, which is always reliable and was brought here by Danny Haas who does tastings in our area every few years.

Beringer, 2005 Chardonnay, Stanley Ranch, Napa Valley \$14.

I first had only a taste of this wine and was very unimpressed with the heavy taste. However, the owner of Wine Merchants in Winston-Salem was very high on the wine, and so I tried a bottle. It was reduced from \$20 plus so it seemed worth an experiment. Upon opening, it tasted the same, but as the air mixed with the wine it changed. Decanting can improve white wine in some instances. Over time it smoothed out and became rich and pleasant. I purchased 2 more bottles; one I will play around with by decanting, and the other I've marked to open in May 2011 to see what bottle-aging will do.

The **Washington, DC wine scene** is alive and well! At least it is on a friend's patio with about a dozen people bringing some favorite wines and a 22-pound strip loin of beef on the grill.

- **Château de Chasseloir, 2007 Muscadet de Sevre et Maine, Loire**
- **Le Rose de Canon la Gaffelière, 2008, Bordeaux**
- **Kistler, 2003 Dutton Ranch Chardonnay, Sonoma**
- **Kistler, 2002 Kistler Vineyard Chardonnay, Sonoma**

- **Chrysalis, 2005 Papillon, Virginia**
- **Poderi Luigi Einaudi, 2006 Vigna Tecc Dolcetto, Piedmont**
- **G. Alessandri, 1996 Barolo, Piedmont**
- **Alvaro Palacios, 2001 Les Terrasses, Priorat**
- **Steininger, 2006 Grüner Veltliner Novemberlese, Kemptal**
- **Croft, 1994 Vintage Port, Oporto**

Those of us who arrived early enjoyed the very pleasant **Muscadet** followed by one of the richest and most flavorful blush wines (**Le Rose**) I've had to-date. We got serious with the first **Kistler**, which was a bit on the heavy oak-like side, but the **2002 Kistler Vineyard Chardonnay** (I thought this was the best wine of the evening) was comparable to a Corton-Charlemagne. I had stopped at **Chrysalis** on the way to DC and offered this blind. One of our group guessed that the principal grape was Tannat but couldn't place it from Virginia. Who would! What a brilliant deduction. It was a blend of Tannat and Petite Sirah.

Now for the big boys. The **Dolcetto** was unique with deep flavors and the **Neal** was brilliant at 8-years-old (my choice for best red). We first tasted Neal at a wine tasting in DC about 6 years ago and really like their products. The **Barolo** was in top form, and I wished I had saved some beef to go with it. The **Palacios** was probably the best Priorat I've tasted (I brought this from home). **Steininger** from Austria was new to all of us and after a tasting, we decided that the sweetness level required it to be served after the reds as a dessert wine. This one will age for a decade. Finally, we had the 15-year-old **Croft** port which brought the evening to a wonderful conclusion.

- **Domaine des Baumard, 2005 Savennieres, Loire**
- **Panther Creek, 2005 Pinot Noir Freedom Hill Vineyard, Willamette Valley**

I was looking for some really good fish and chose to go to Kinkead's in DC with my son. Since he has a very deep collection of Baumard wines I wanted to start with the **Savennieres**. This was a wine with very subtle Chenin Blanc flavors and was a great match to my Cherrystone clams. I haven't had **Panther Creek** wines in many years so the second wine was easy to choose. Deep and flavorful this is a wine that will age for at least 5 more years and was a good buy at this DC institution for seafood.

- **Weingut Max Ferd. Richter, 1990 Spätlese Veldenzer Elisenberg, Mosel**
- **Château Lagrave-Aubert, 2005 Côtes de Castillon, Bordeaux**

Tasted at the Zaytinya Restaurant in DC for lunch. My son brought the **Richter** which he bought several years ago. Almost 20-years-old and still vibrant. The sweetness may have started to lose a bit of its edge, but what a treat. The **Bordeaux** was balanced with a slight rustic taste, but worked well with the eclectic, Mediterranean tapas.