

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter Mar. 19, 2008

Happy Easter!

It's coming so early this year that the bunny saw his shadow & went back into the hole... (I know; pretty lame but I couldn't resist...) . So once again what to drink with the Easter meal ? Pretty much anything you like – I have noticed a trend towards less traditional meals with a larger variety of foods. So why not change it up a bit with a different kind of wine? Chances are good that there will be a dish or two that will pair great with that Pinot Noir, or Australian Shiraz you like. If you bring a Chardonnay or Riesling there will be something to match it as well. Still not sure ? -keep the following in mind. Wines with less oak and higher acidity are generally more food friendly and will work with a wider variety of foods. Certain varieties of grapes such as the wines below, (Riesling and Gruner Veltliner) also work with a broad selection of dishes. Rose is also a good one especially for brunch. I tend to stop drinking Rose as the summer ends, but with Spring in the air, it is always a good opportunity to come back to those food friendly fun wines. When all else fails, try Champagne (French of course). No need to stress -if the wine is good it will be consumed.

I searched for a couple of suggestions of “classic” pairings, with just enough bottle age to make them fully enjoyable and ready to drink. Of course we can happily accommodate other request -I'll be delighted to work with you on a nice mixed case for you and your guests.

\$\$\$ Special wine deals \$\$\$

Markus Molitor Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett Riesling 2004 \$23- (the original release price for this was \$26-29)

Another gem purchased at old exchange rates: From one of the most famous vineyards in Germany in the Mosel Saar Ruwer comes this delicious wine. This Kabinett has a mouth full of yellow fruit bursting with ripeness and slight effervescence. There is ample acidity to keep it fresh and the initial hint of sweetness in check. It always amazes me during tastings to see how many people who only drink dry wines actually like a German Riesling when introduced to a good one! This is also a great wine to serve before the meal as an aperitif or a “palate opener” in wine speak . Warning:tasty, once you open a bottle it may not stick around long enough to accompany the meal. A classic pairing with ham or Turkey. The quality of wine for the price here is exceptional.

Here's a review from Wine Spectator Magazine:

Loads of flavor and personality here. Apricot, orange, black currant and mineral aromas and flavors introduce this kabinett, which wields a little more power than usual. Still, it's crisp and balanced, with a focused, lip-smacking finish. Drink now through 2018. 350 cases made. 91 Points

Hirsch Gruner Veltliner Heiligenstein Kammern/Kamptal 2005 \$24-

(the 2004 version which is on par quality wise, is now retailing for an average of \$40-)

For those who just can not take any hint of sweetness in their wines a dry minerally and structured Gruner Veltliner (GV) from Austria is just the ticket. These wines have set the culinary world on fire. Pick up any Foodie magazine or wine publication such as Decanter, Wine Enthusiast or Wine

Spectator and chances are you will find some famous chef raving about the virtues of this food friendly wine. I have written before about the versatility of this grape -the natural high acidity makes it handle difficult dishes such as green vegetables and salads with ease. Take for example Asparagus which is now coming into season -this is one of the few wines that can handle it, and it's terrific with a variety of sauces as well .

In the past 3 years (2004/05/06) Hirsch has been producing a superb wine from the Heiligenstein vineyard -the name of the vineyard roughly translates to the Holly Stone. The structure and minerals of the slate from this vineyard form a great background to the rich and complex fruit profile. While the 2006 may prove to be the finest of this trio in terms of age- ability, I find the 2005 the easiest to drink early -but we are splitting hairs here. I was fortunate to find a small quantity -this is a wine that can easily compete with GV's selling 50 -100% higher . Those of you who love the complexity of the fine white wines from Burgundy will find the price of this wine down right silly. (at about a quarter of the tariff of a comparable quality Burgundy)

David Schildknecht who criticizes the Austrian wines for the Wine Advocate -a notoriously tight scorer , gave this wine a **90 point rating**. Here's his review:

With the 2005 Gruner Veltliner Heiligenstein we remain in the same realm of clarity and light, but with concentration and complexity on a wholly different order. Citrus, melon, herbs, and pepper merge in an unobstructed corridor of fruit, finishing with sizzling minerality, underlying nutty richness, fruit pit and citrus oil. This will certainly set your tongue aquiver and reel you in for the next sip.

Events:

It's equinox time tomorrow -a great excuse to celebrate the arrival of spring with someone you care for, and a good bottle of wine -no event needed.

Did you know :

Today: In 5 years we have never had a "sale"! We don't raise our base price to give you an inflated discount -sure we keep an eye on the market -your price is based on our purchasing ability- if we don't get a good deal we don't touch it.

Thanks again for all your support and referrals, tell your friends, Cheers & Happy Easter!
Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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