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Notes From The Cellar "NFTC" Newsletter
May 20, 2010



Italian pre arrival part II: Tuscany & some insight to 2009 Bordeaux futures

Last Friday I wrote about the pre- arrival offer of the [wines from Piedmont](#). I featured a few affordable gems such as a great Barbera for \$17- and a delicious Dolcetto for \$20- which proves that you don't have to spend a fortune to drink very good wines. I also wrote about several Barolos and a Barbaresco that also offered the best value. If you missed it use the above link to check it out.

Today I will write about the top wines from Tuscany, in particular wines from the highly praised townships of Montalcino and Motepulciano tasted at the same pre arrival event. When evaluating all the wines I tasted, 3 stood out for both quality and value. They are featured here today. Again these wines are expected to arrive this summer and to obtain these special prices you have to order them (as well as any of the wines from last week's newsletter) by this weekend. Your payment will be required only once the wines arrive. Check out today's ["Did You Know ?"](#) section for some distinction between pre arrival and Futures as well as some contrarian thoughts about the current Bordeaux campaign....

\$\$\$ Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$

BOSCARELLI Vino Nobile Di Montepulciano 2007

\$31.50- /bottle, or \$30- / bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)

While Montalcino the neighbor to the West receives a lot of the glory, accolades and high priced wines, Montepulciano has been a place where many Tuscan aficionados find some of their finest values. This is another relatively high altitude growing area at just under 2000 ft. which has the climatic & soil conditions for excellent wine production. Boscarelli which was established in the early 1960's is regarded as one of the finest estates here.

I like this wine a lot for several reasons: First it is extremely tasty -it has everything I am looking for at a Tuscan wine. A beautiful rich perfumed nose of flowers and fruit, and a great mouth feel with a solid structure. Complex flavors and a nice full finish. It's approachable and a pleasure to drink yet it will continue to improve. It will probably reach it's peak in several years, and will be very enjoyable over the next 5-7 years and probably longer. Even if you are a collector of the top Brunellos this is one to enjoy while the other big boys continue their long evolution. The quality you get here for a \$30 bottle is just mind boggling -This to me was the finest bargain in the entire tasting. Keep in mind that the 2007 featured vintage is exceptional in it's quality . This estate makes several wines that are twice and three times the price, yet it is this basic wine that spanked it's big brothers and stole the show -an incredible over achiever -if you like Italian wines this is a must have.

Brunellos: Interestingly there were many "Riserva" Brunellos featured in the tasting; the new releases from the great 2004 vintage, these wines get released a year after the regular wines as they spend more time in barrel. -While the riservas can be big structured and very age worthy, I find that in many cases they are not as well balanced as the regular wines. Often they just have too much oak that actually detracts from the delicate fruit -more is not always better. At often twice the price it is hard for me to recommend these wines after we stocked up on some of the excellent "regular " Brunellos last year.

The 2005 Brunellos were generally very pleasant but in a similar vein to the 2004, only a few really stood out. The 2 that I feature here were just as good as the few 2004's we recommended last year.

COSTANTI Brunello Di Montalcino 2005

\$67.50- /bottle, or \$64- / bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)

Andrea Costanti is the kind of wine maker that takes full advantage of all the tradition and history of his winery (his family history here dates back to the year 1555) yet infuses knowledge and skills to elevate the wines to levels that make them world class. While he is still considered a traditional producers by likes of the Wine Advocate's Antonio Galonni (who by the way rated this wine at 93 points) I personally find this wine to be in that wonderful mid ground between traditional and modern. You get the Smokey complex yet delicate and structured elements that are often the hallmark of the traditional wines, yet you also get all the dark intensity smooth, yet

also lush components on the palate that the modern ones produce -the best of both worlds and with the 2005 this wine hits the Bull's eye. A winner! It is better than the very good 2004 from here. A classic Elegant Brunello one you will be very happy to own.

POGGIO ANTICO Brunello Di Motalcino 2005

\$67.50- /bottle, or \$64- / bottle- with our cash discount (checks are ok)

Poggio Antico makes 2 flag- ship Brunelli. This one is the more "traditional" one as this is aged in traditional large Slovenian Oak. Poggio Antico also make the more expensive Altero Brunello which reflects the cost of utilizing pricier French Oak. I personally find that their copious use of French oak can overpower the fruit in the Altero and once again considered the "white label" or normal bottling to be the better wine. So good was the effort here from 2005 that like in the case of the Costanti above I would consider it to be a superior wine to it's brother from the famous 2004 vintage. My tasting notes included the words "Gorgeous, intense balanced, rich & smooth -a nice elegant finish that never lets you forget the beautiful fruit." You really can't go wrong with this one. A stand out from a top notch producer and at a fraction of the price of their riserva.

Did You Know ?:

The wines we are offering today are priced as a "pre- arrival" deal. We give our indication of interest to the National Distributor of the wines and they place the orders with their overseas sources. The Wine than get shipped to the US and we notify you when they arrive for payment and pick up. The wines are expected later this summer and until than, you don't have to pre pay.

This is not to be confused with "Future" orders -In a nut shell; these are commitments to purchase wines that have not been released yet -in many cases the wines have not even been bottled. The most famous Future campaign is the one involving the wines of **Bordeaux**.

The indications are that 2009 produced excellent wines in Bordeaux -the hype has been building up as wine merchants are looking to boost sales in a market for luxury wines which was hard hit by the global financial crisis. Over the past few weeks the campaign has moved into high gear -I am getting bombarded with daily offers for those wines. Keep in mind that these wines are still in barrel, and most will not be released for 2 years or more.The future campaigns were a great way in the past to secure the most desirable wines at a considerable savings. Over the past 15 years or so the discounts have been shrinking while more players have been getting into the game. Also we now have much higher consistency and availability of good wines -for example the 2009 will be the third "Vintage of the century" in the past 10 years.

In the last several future campaigns I have noticed that many of the wines could be purchased at a few more dollars, once the wines arrived. In some cases when the vintage is not so great the wines can sometimes be purchased below future pricing. The big caveat with current offerings is having to shell out your money now for wine

you will most likely not see for almost 3 years. If in the interim anyone along the chain of procurement goes out of business, you will have to deal with not getting the wine, and potentially losing your money as well. In today's economic climate that does not make sense. As such, **I do not anticipate participating in Bordeaux futures for the 2009 vintage.** If you choose to do so, I recommend that you only deal with the most reputable merchants. At the least, use a Credit Card and contact the issuer of the card to pre determine the possibility of a refund if things go wrong.

Interestingly, there have been some excellent deals recently on wines from the last "vintage of the century" -the great 2005. Many of these wines are selling at very close to release prices and you can get them immediately and with some bottle age. If you take the "cost of money" into account- these are actually better deals than if you would have tied your money for the 2005's back in 2002! Of course this is only the case as long as you can verify proper storage and handling of the wine. For my money this somehow seems to be a much more logical play.

Another opportunity will probably present itself when the **2008** Bordeaux starts to arrive -the future campaigns since 2005 have been dismal, and while 2006 and 2007 are average vintages, the 2008; based on early reports produced some excellent wines that will be worth checking out. With all the attention on the 2009's some of the better wines from 2008 may prove to be much better purchases. If you really want to have some 2009's in your cellar consider this: I personally would rather purchase 2009's risk free when the wines arrive -**paying a few more dollars at that point. It may prove to be the cheaper alternative.** I will of course continue to monitor the market especially for deals on great wines we can obtain now.

**Thanks for all your support and referrals.
Tell your friends, share the wine, & spread the good vibe. Cheers!**

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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