

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter Jun 20, 2008

JIT for Summer -a refreshing wine from Sicily

Hi friends, Back from a few weeks of no newsletter, during the past few weeks I took some time to celebrate my 20th wedding anniversary. I also had some minor knee surgery to make up for years of abuse on the ski hills- not so much fun but at least it's done. Since I have to take it easy for the next while I can see some major deck surfing time coming this weekend -maybe a little wine research. Perfect for this time of year.

Yes! Tomorrow marks the official start of Summer so I wanted to feature an easy drinking wine which will put a smile on your face without denting the wallet. When looking for good wine to enjoy during hot weather, a good rule of thumb is to look for something produced where hot weather is the norm. The Mediterranean countries especially Spain and Southern Italy fit the bill. Their cuisine which is so suitable for hot weather evolved for centuries around the local wines. So it's no surprise that today's wine may become your patio house white for those nice warm summer evenings.

Cassara Grillo IGT sicilia 2006 \$14- (or save a little by the case at \$150)

One of those native grapes you seldom encounter: Grillo (the cricket) is a native Sicilian grape used mostly in the production of that island more recognized wines Marsalas (the one used in the famous Veal Marsalas dish).

The locals also use this grape in dry white wines they enjoy young and fresh. Cassara the producer, is a relatively new winery which is now imported to the US. They specialize in many of the local varieties. According to the importer, it has gotten good recognition as one of the new "Up and Coming wineries" by Italian wine critic Luca Maroni.

I got to taste some of their wines several months ago and to my taste the Grillo was the star of the portfolio: A crisp young wine with captivating aromatics, it will appeal to most of you who love a good Sauvignon Blanc or a Spanish Verdeho. Yellow pit fruits are accompanied by scents of fresh herbs and cut grass, and there is a smokiness to that wine that makes is very complimentary to summer food. Be it fresh salads or anything on the grill, from fish, shrimp squid to chicken or light meats. Try it with an Octopus or sea food salad with zesty lemon, olive oil and fresh bread -I better stop as I am making myself hungry It is surprisingly substantial for a simple wine but the good acidity keeps it fresh and easy going with a nice balanced finish. Many times wines in this category can have a rough edge to them, but this has a silky quality to it that makes it a big crowd pleaser. I have taken several bottles to BBQ parties and it is always one of the first bottles to empty.

As a bonus, this relatively unknown wine has a price which is refreshing as well..I could see wine of this quality if produced in one of the more trendy parts such as Northern Italy coming to market at twice the price. This makes a perfect summer entertaining wine for that casual BBQ where you want to pull out something unique, good and inexpensive -one to buy by the case and keep a few in the fridge as a stand by to serve nice & coldI suspect you will deplete your stash long before the days get shorter. Enjoy.

Did you Know: As much as 10% of all wine sold can be damaged -it is most likely to happen in bottles that use real cork. Many wineries have switched to other closures such as screw caps or synthetic corks. (that is a subject for another day...) If you are trying an unfamiliar wine, recommended by someone knowledgeable, and the wine sucks -it could very well be that the wine is damaged. An easy solution is to always purchase at least 2 bottles of a new wine you are going to try for the first time, especially if you are planning to match the wine to a special dish. This way if the bottle you open is bad, you will at least have a back up. If you can't find a flaw, or the wine is good but just not your thing -you can always return the unopened bottle to your point of purchase -most reputable retailers should be happy to exchange it or issue a credit.

events:

June it's here: one crazy month with some of the nicest weather we get all year, so it is a great time to hang outside. Numerous free events from free movies at Infinity Park in Glendale to neighborhood street fairs and festivals such as the annual Greek Festival (20th-22nd)

Free jazz at city park on Sundays and so much more. Too many to list here.. check your neighborhood paper or the Westwards event page at <http://entertainment.westword.com>

Wine tasting dinner Wednesday June 25th: at AIX restaurant 4 course wine pairing dinner with Eberle Wines. Stacy Miller from the winery will be there to speak. 7pm \$65 [click here for menu](#)

Thanks again for all your support and referrals, tell your friends, Cheers

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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Please note that **you must be at least 21 years old** to order or receive alcohol from this newsletter. All orders require the signature of a person at least 21 years of age.