

***Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter September 2nd, 2008***  
**95 point Felsina , Rostaing Northern Rhone & A nice white**

Labor day is behind us, as well as the DNC, and hurricane Gustav. Chances are you are back from summer vacation, the kids are in school. You are getting ready for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter push at work, holiday events and the upcoming Winter. One thing you don't have to worry about is wine. Just stay tuned as we bring you some incredible selections over the following weeks and months. Keep in mind that if you are planing an event -the longer lead time you give us, the better the wines that we will be able to find -see the "Did You Know Section" for more.

Don't miss an incredible deal in the Collectors Corner today, as well as a return of a favorite from France but first, a find on a nice domestic boutique white everyone can afford from Walla Walla in Washington State

**Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$**  
**Somanna by Ash Hollow 2006 \$17-**

Take a small quality winery located in one of the buzz creating wine growing regions of the US -add help from a friend who is a proven star wine maker (Steve Clifton from Brewer- Clifton fame, we featured his Palamino last year and it was one of our most popular domestic whites ever!). Use hand select choice grapes to make an artisan white wine in small quantity, and offer it to us at a close out price-now you've got our attention!

This is a blend made from 50% Sauvignon Blanc and 50% Pinot Gris. The result; a medium to full bodied white (think the viscosity of a good Chardonnay) with a flavor profile that offers a crisp white. Enjoyable as an afternoon sipper yet has enough complexity & verve to pair well with food. A good all around wine to serve as your house wine or enjoy anytime. The combination of the 2 grapes offers a wine with a good base of white pit fruit, with citrus freshness. There is a ripeness and fuller mouth feel that you will find typically in the Pinot Gris from Oregon. All a bit more high toned due to the addition of the Sauv. Blanc. Which also adds a little herb spice and just a hint of that classic fresh cut grass. I like to call wines like that 4x4 as they can "go anywhere" -very diversified to match a large variety of foods. Made in small quantities this is a wine that typically sells in the \$25 & up range -offered to us on a distributor close out It is an excellent opportunity to pick up a case to keep around the house .

**Rene Rostaning Les Lezards 2005 from just outside Cote Rotie \$27-**

Sometime it pays to be patient. We featured the 2003 version of this wine back in August of 2006. At the time it was only the second vintage of this particular wine from one of the region's finest producers. Un-reviewed by the wine media, this wine has stayed a well kept secret. I have enjoyed several excellent bottles from my cellar over the past 2 years and wished I had put away an even bigger stash. Well -we just got offered the 2005 vintage on a close out, and once again the wine is excellent. We kept the margins super low -only a dollar more than 2 years ago. This makes this an even better purchase. After all this is a wine that is a bargain at its regular \$35 price tag (-if you can find it). Here is my original write up which tells the story well worth repeating. Comments on the 2005 follow:

From NFTC Aug 26,2006 : “Dom. Rene Rostaing, Les Lezardes 2003:

This is only the second vintage of this wine and luckily for us it has not been reviewed by the wine press. As such, largely unknown on most wine drinker’s radar. I had a bottle this past weekend and it is lovely and delicate with great black pepper aromatics that emerged after the bottle was open for several hours. This wine is already delicious to drink while young and will undoubtedly put on more weight & substance as it ages, so try & keep a few bottles for future consumption. Here’s a little write up from the original release by the importer the Rare Wine Co.: *"Until Marcel Guigal achieved acclaim in the mid-1980's, Côte Rôtie was largely an "insider's" wine. In fact—due to limited demand and the difficulty of cultivating its steep slopes—the number of acres had steadily dwindled for more than a century. Guigal's success soon reversed that trend, and by the beginning of the '90's Côte Rôtie was back on top. Demand for grapes surged; however, worries about overplanting led the INAO, in 1993, to pull in the appellation's boundaries. This deprived many former Côte Rôtie vineyards of the use of the name—and, of course, drove down their value. **An Opportunity:** One of the appellation's best growers, René Rostaing recognized the opportunity and began searching for such parcels with classic terroir. He acquired about two hectares in Lézardes, on the appellation's northern edge. Soon, Rostaing's "Les Lézardes" had a cult following for its unmistakable Côte-Rôtie nuance and character. Vinified and aged in much the same way as Rostaing's great Côte Rôties, it will be better than half the (wines) bearing the Côte Rôtie name and price tag. It is one of the great bargains of the northern Rhône The nose is marked by vibrant, classic Côte Rôtie aromatics—minerals, dark fruits, and game. In the mouth, it shows abundant fruit; a rich, creamy texture and excellent weight. A unique opportunity to enjoy Côte Rôtie quality at a bargain price."* Rostaing's cote roties are normally priced at \$85 & up. We got this wine at an incredible price and are offering it to you at \$26- quantities however are limited.”

**The 2005** once again offers the typical elegance and long term aging potential. These qualities make collectors world wide seek and pay premium prices for these wines. After all it's the unique combination of climatic conditions & soil that makes the northern Rhone region one of the finest areas in the world for growing cool weather Syrah. Delicate aromas of dark red fruit, raspberries and old leather with a hint of mint. Not big and heavy, but delicate and balanced -yet it offers a powerful frame with the stuffing to easily age well for another 5+ years and last 10 or more. This could be an excellent choice to serve with your Thanksgiving dinner or a nice compliment to stews and winter fare. In case you that you decide to try one in it's youth, you will want to give it a good 4-5 hr decant.

### **Collector's Corner**

This wine commands instant recognition amongst collectors of great Chianti. The Riserva has always been a favorite; since this bottling is typically a great deal in most vintages. The reason is simple: at it's initial release price range in the low \$40's it always performs well against wines typically twice the price. The 2004 vintage in Tuscany is now legendary and is recognized as one of the finest together with the 1997 and 2001 -some say it's the best of those 3. When this 2004 was reviewed in Steve Tanzer's IWC newsletter and awarded incredible score of 95 points the wine literally disappeared. Soon it reappeared at prices pushing \$50 and up furthered by another favorable 95 point review this time from Galloni -Robert Parkers Italian writer also known for his stingy scores. At one point I actually saw it being offered above \$80 per bottle!

Importers and wine merchants rushed to secure additional quantities yet demand from the public did not go up. The reason; -many of those who tried it for the first time simply based on scores did not understand this wine. This is a wine that requires some serious aging to show it's best -give it 8 to 10 years and you will be rewarded with something special. If you are going to try it young you may want to give this a half a day in the decanter or more. The 2005's are now arriving - a good vintage but not as good as the 2004 and the economy is tough. The distributor's can't afford to sit on wine and wait -so we got offered a crazy clearance price -yes we pounced on this one!

## **Fattoria di Felsina Berardenga Chianti Classico Riserva Rancia \$32- !!!**

A bottle I tasted this past weekend showed some nice ripe dark fruit with sweet notes reminiscent of a ripe cantaloupe. There is still strong notes of vanilla from the new wood as well as some lovely Smokey notes. No doubt it's a big wine that is still years away from it's true potential. Here is the original review from both Tanzer IWC & Parker's Wine Advocate:

*Impressive dark ruby color. Expressive aromas of blackcurrant, plum, mint and cigar box, all lifted by a mineral element. Dense and rich, combining pinot noir-like texture and refinement with syrah-like flavors of rare meat and raspberry liqueur. This boasts a wonderfully tactile feel and a remarkably long, palate-staining finish. A great Chianti with loads of personality...95." IWC 08/07 95 points*

*Wine Advocate # 177 Jun 2008 Antonio Galloni 95 points Drink 2012 - 2024 : I have tasted Felsina's 2004 Chianti Classico Riserva Rancia on at least three separate occasions and have never been anything less than deeply impressed. This is a serious Chianti endowed with endless layers of sweet dark cherries, smoke, minerals, flowers and sweet toasted oak. With air the layers fill out, revealing an expansive, richly-textured wine of pure breed. At times the wine has been incredibly primary and brooding, while at other times it has shown the sheer power it holds in reserve. This is a great effort from Felsina. Simply put, it is a wine fit for kings and queens. Rancia also happens to be one of the finest values in wine today. Needless to say, it is highly recommended.*

This will probably go down as our Collector's Corner deal of the year- get yours while the going is good!

### **Did you know**

Unlike most wine retailers -we don't inventory or pre-order wine based on demand expectations. Sure we keep small amounts of fine wine on hand to make sure we can assemble a nice case or two for you should the need arise. When you contact us for wine for your event we don't sell you something that has been languishing on a shelf that no one else would purchase. Instead we work with your budget and specific needs to procure the finest selections that are available. That does take some time. If wine is just an afterthought that you will scoop in the last minute than we suggest your local retailer....If you are reading this newsletter, chances are you demand higher quality for your \$. Give us some lead time -the more the better, and we will get you the tasty stuff. One thing we keep hearing back from our clients after an event is: Wow we can't believe

how much wine was consumed, folks loved it, etc etc...yes it gets noticed . If you are thinking of hosting an event that requires wine and you want the good juice -give us a quick ping.

### ***Events:***

Ever wondered what is it like to be a judge in a wine competition? Now you can participate in one Check it out ,as well as all the details of what is becoming a favorite Denver event at :

<http://www.denverwinefest.com/pretaste.html>

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

Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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Reach us at: tel 303-331-8008

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The buyer is solely responsible for the shipment of wine. We make no representations concerning your legal right to ship or receive wine into any state outside Colorado or any country outside the United States. By placing any wine order with us, you authorize Winepairings to act on your behalf to engage a common carrier to deliver your order to your selected destination.

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.