

Notes From The Cellar (NFTC); Winepairings e-letter November 25,2008

Classics from Down Under at great prices.

The deals keep rolling in. Today we are featuring a few gems that have come in over the past few days. We are happy to offer them on hand now - just in case you have a pre- holiday wine emergency. I also have a few more of those “ too few bottles to write about “ available if you need to round up a case or two before the guests arrive. Happy hunting

Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$

One of Australia's best values every year since it's introduction in 2000 has been the D'arenberg Laughing Magpie. A Northern Rhone inspired Shiraz co fermented with a touch of Viognier to enhance the aromatic profile and aged on French oak. At the \$30 release price this wine is a very heavy hitter offering the quality and pleasure one finds in much more expensive bottles. It can be consumed and enjoyed now, and based on a stellar bottle of 2001 which I recently drank, can also be a great selection for aging. We have featured this wine several times over the years but never at such a low price . At today's special offering of \$20 I challenge you to try & find a better wine for the money from any where. Quantities are unfortunately very limited so this will sell out quickly.

D'Arenberg laughing Magpie Shiraz/Viognier McLaren Vale Australia \$20-

From Robert Parker's Wine Advocate: “ *The 2006 The Laughing Magpie is composed of 94% Shiraz and 6% Viognier. Deep crimson/violet in color, it offers up notes of cherry, ginger, black tea, tar, and blueberry. Medium to full-bodied, layered flavors of cherry, blueberry, and dark chocolate make an appearance accompanied by ripe tannin and excellent concentration leading to a long, refined finish. It will benefit from 3-4 years of cellaring and drink well through 2020. 92 points*”

From Steven Tanzer 's IWC : “*Ruby-red. Seductive red and dark berries on the nose, with deeper soy and dark chocolate notes. Fresh and juicy, with energetic blueberry and cassis flavors, a hint of violet pastille and dusty tannins. Firms up on the finish, taking on notes of licorice and plum preserve. Impressively persistent, sappy and really delicious now.*”

I managed to get a hold on a few more bottles of the fabulous NZ Pinot Noir from our last newsletter just in time to go with your Thanksgiving cranberries, so if you missed it here is another chance :

Rockburn Central Otago Pinot Noir (NZ) 2003 \$35-

Bright red fruit profile, with nice spice notes and good acidity on the finish and a touch of earthy hints, this is quite mouth filling (for a NZ -don't expect a central coast fruit bomb here). Shortly after it's release this got a 90 point rating from Wine Spectator: Jul 2005, : “*Tangy and rich, with lovely, ripe strawberry and blackberry flavors supported by zingy acidity, all of it lasting nicely on the generous finish. Drink now through 2009*”.

Since then the wine had a chance to age and gain complexity and is now in it's optimal drinking window although it should hold out well in your cellar for several more years at least.

The 2003 Rockburn was awarded a **Gold Medal** at the New Zealand International Wine Show. As well British wine critic Jancis Robinson gave it a very lofty score of 18/20 points. Add to it the fact that the discounter's are selling the current (un-reviewed as of yet, 2006 vintage) at \$40 and above, this 5 year old Pinot in perfect condition makes it a hard

one to beat for value.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

2004 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Shiraz Michael (limited release) \$32-

Back in 1955 David Wynn realized that one of his 500 gallon vats was truly special. The longer he aged the wine the more he was convinced that something unique and magical has happened. The wine was released as a special cuvee he named Michael after his son. This wine has become one of Australia's rarest wine legends -with a current auction value of over \$3000 per bottle! It wasn't until the 1990 vintage that Wynn's winery released another Michael. It is a special release, only made in exceptional years (5 releases since the 1990) This wine has a cult following in Australia where it quickly evaporates at around the \$50 price level. It is becoming well known in international wine circles but has stayed a bit under the radar in the US- probably due to the overwhelming amounts of Australian wine imports we have seen over the last few years. With big demand in it's homeland and limited production there is really no need for them to promote it here.

Older vintages routinely fetch over \$100 a bottle. There is not a lot of this stuff around. James Halliday one of Australia's most respected wine critics evaluated the 2004 in Oct 2006 and gave it **95 points** he described it as : *“Powerful, intense and firm black fruits with balanced oak; will be very long-lived”* from the winery the description is *“Inky black red with a vibrant purple hue. Lifted aromas of red cherries with hints of black pepper and cinnamon oak rise from the glass. Exactly what you would expect from an ideal, cooler region shiraz. Finely structured yet powerful. Layers of fruit are framed by restrained oak, ensuring this is a wine for the long term. Fleshy red currant and plum flavors flood across the palate, leading to a delicate creamy and spicy oak finish”*.

We took advantage of a small stash at a supplier and lucky for us we got a fabulous price -if you are looking for a classic age worthy Shiraz, at a give away price look no further.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL OUR READERS -without you the dream would not be possible and I appreciate your patronage and support!

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.