

Shoulder Season Wines

Sometimes we forget that wine is a seasonal beverage. Sure, great wine is drinkable anytime, but we tend to shy away from a quaffable Rose in a foot of snow or a deep tannic red at a summer picnic in the park. The sensory experience of wine is enhanced by our surroundings. So, the dilemma here is what to send out this month? Folks on the east coast recently had a foot of snow, while on the left coast we skied over the weekend, but biked to work in shorts today. One solution is to pick generic crowd pleasers (read *boring* wines) that tread the line of mediocrity and seasonal diversity with aplomb. But as you know, that's just not our style. Instead, we decided to bring you a couple of unique wines to expand the pallet. The white - a Sauvignon Blanc (think summer), from Chablis! Sounds like a typo, we know as this is Chardonnay territory – so perhaps a more complex white for a cool night? The red - a Cabernet Franc, but not overly tannic to scream cold winter night, yet perfumed aromatics that make us crave warmer weather. So, enjoy them in the snow with your shorts on!

Our first wine this month comes from the Loire valley where a plethora of great wines and wine values are still to be found - quality continues to rise yet prices remain reasonable. Cabernet Franc is best known in Bordeaux as taking a back seat to its sister grape Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. There, it is used as a blending grape to contribute elements of spice, herbaceousness and tobacco. But in the Loire Valley, Cabernet Franc is more prominent. It is widely planted and blended with other varietals in the Anjou, Bourgueil, and Saumur-Champigny regions, and in the appellation of Chinon, it is the primary contender. Cab Franc is highly yield sensitive, with over-cropping producing wines with greener, bell pepper and herbaceous notes. At Chateau de Coulaire yields are very low resulting in a concentrated, fuller style of Cab Franc allowing the varietal to stand on its own here. The Chateau de Coulaire vineyards are organically farmed, all grapes are hand-harvested and vinified with minimal intervention. This property has been controlled by the same family since 1300 with records showing vineyards on the property for the past 700 years. It is probable that they have been organic all along, but went official in 1997 and were the first certified vineyard within the appellation. The finished wine has soft, velvety tannins making this wine food friendly approachable now.

Our second wine comes from The AOC Saint-Bris which sits just a few kilometers away from its well known neighbor, Chablis. Like a good neighbor, they share many commonalities: a crisp, pungent acidity and a distinct minerality. But unlike its neighbor, the varietal of choice here is the Sauvignon Blanc grape, rather than the Chardonnay. This is what makes this wine so unique - it is the only AOC from Burgundy that allows the use of Sauvignon Blanc. Who knew a white Burgundy could actually be a Sauvignon Blanc!? But unlike your typical New Zealand and California Sauvignons – anywhere from tutti fruity, to green, to cat pee. This cool weather region captures the leaner essences of the varietal with grassy and lemony/ citrusy aromatics, yet it has some density and rich Chardonnay like mouth feel. Finish is crisp and full of lively acidity, so drink this with food as this is a classic food pairing wine. The vineyards have been certified organic since 2004 and are farmed using biodynamic principals. Jean-Marc Brocard sums it up well, "Our policy is to encourage the natural auto-immune system of the vine," says Jean-Marc in reference to the lack of chemicals in the vineyards. "Ploughing replaces herbicides and a good dose of well-rotted cow manure encourages the natural microbial activity of the soil." His son Julien the vineyard manger adds, "The truth of wine lies in the soil where it has grown. The technique is an important factor in the wine growing but it is only an aid, the wine is essentially a product of its soil."

Don't Forget, if you like what you are drinking you can usually order more. We even give case discounts when we can. Most of our wines are very limited production, but we will do our best to track down some additional bottles for our faithful club members...

Questions, Concerns, Suggestions, Extend your Subscription?? Please, speak your mind!!

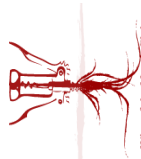
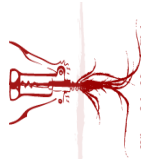
Purevinewines.com, (877) 404-1121

Until next month,

Joe, Tom, & Andria

(over for recipe of the month)

“fighting for the soul of wine..”



This Month's Biodynamic® / Organic Selections

Bonnaventure Chinon

Cabernet Franc
**Region: Chinon,
France**

Vintage: 2010

Here's a lovely Chinon from Château de Coulaine, an estate that dates to 1300. Etienne de Bonnaventure farms his Chinon vineyards organically and vinifies his wines simply and naturally using indigenous yeasts. The wine is a rich ruby red, its intense dark berry flavor laced with Chinon's characteristic spice and pepper. The texture is silky, the tannins tamed. Certified organic with Biodynamic methods also used.

Hey, why did my wine come in a used box?

In conjunction with Portland Wine Storage and our commitment to the environment we re-use wine shippers as many times as possible making them 100% recycled on our end.

Jean-Marc Brocard Saint-Bris

Sauvignon Blanc
**Region: Saint-Bris,
France**

Vintage: 2010

This next door neighbor to Chablis is from AOC Saint-Bris and has bright acidity with grapefruit-and-citrus characteristics. It has Chardonnay like density and richness, yet is fruity and forward which betrays its true nature – a Sauvignon Blanc. Yes, a sauvignon Blanc from Burgundy. Balanced acidity makes it very food friendly. Certified organic.