

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

Volume 5, Issue 17

July 29, 2016

Introduction

Historically, July is the slowest sales month for Orangewood's wine sales. Anyone with a second home or with thoughts of vacation will pick July to be beyond our sales reach. Gone are the days when you could put a case of wine in the overhead compartment - I last did it in 1989 bringing back a case of Margaux from Europe. "Why is August usually better?", you might ask, to which my answer is that schools open, families need to be back in town and parents need to have a glass of wine to celebrate.

Topic of the Month - Retail Sales Evolution

Way back when Laurie and I first got enthusiastic about wine drinking, we went along to the old Phoenix standby of Sportsman's Fine Wines on Camelback and 32th Street. There we found an assistant who was very helpful in making suggestions for us week by week. I think his name was Jim. Jim listened to our thoughts, made suggestions, solicited feedback the next week and guided us towards a better appreciation of wine. We tried reading wine magazines, but all those ratings and cryptic descriptions were no substitute for personal advice from Jim.

Fifteen years ago, when Laurie and I became wholesalers, the go to place for wine was Epicurean Wines, run at the time by John Scremin. I learned a lot about selling wine from John, both from a wholesale and retail standpoint. I would hang around there to taste John on new wines and listen to other distributors doing the same thing.

AJ's Fine Foods, the Arizona upscale supermarket, saw the opportunity to provide one stop shopping for food and wine and to provide experts on both at all their locations.

Epicurean and Sportsman's are no more. Wine has generally become more popular over the last 20 years, and, with that, retailing evolved too. The big box stores

In This Issue

[Introduction](#)

[Topic of the Month - Retail](#)

[Sales Evolution](#)

[Rambling](#)

New Customers

[Alexis Grill](#)

3550 North Central Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 279-0982

[El Cisne Mexican Restaurant](#)

4717 East Sunrise Drive
Tucson, AZ 85718
(520) 638-6160

[Mooney's Irish Pub](#)

671 State Route 179
Sedona, AZ 86336
• (928) 282-2331

[Salt Restaurant & Wine Bar](#)

476 West White Mountain Boulevard
Lakeside, AZ 85929
(928) 367-1819

[Second Story Liquor Bar](#)

4166 North Scottsdale Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(480) 945-5555

specializing in wine showed up - these would be BevMo and Total Wine. The smaller wine stores mostly went out of business or morphed into wine bars. AJ's Fine Foods has survived and maintains their niche. The continuing growth in wine consumption has woken up other retail giants. There is a Fry's store at Tatum and Shea where Dodi presides over a wine bar in the wine retail section of the store. She and her staff are trained to provide the kind of service that I expect in a "real" wine store. Mardi, at the Safeway at the Summit in North Scottsdale, has a great "wine store" hidden in the back. As one of my suppliers told me, some of the supermarkets are "upping their game". This is good news for all of us. We need some support in taking chances with wines we have not tried before. Now we can look for that support in more places than ever.

Rambling

Every year the award winning sales people in Orangewood take a trip to California to visit some of our suppliers. Last year more of our sales staff than ever qualified for the trip. It's always a great time. We visit the wineries, talk to the owners and/or winemakers, learn what is new or coming soon and maybe even taste some wine. I had been figuring that I would gather enough stories to keep me in material for the news letter for months to come. The team took this trip last month, but I was not with them.

Yesterday I was driving south into the 110F heat of Phoenix listening to the William Tell overture by Rossini, better known as the Lone Ranger's theme music. It is less well known as a tune for a song my Grammar School rugby team sang on the way home from away games. The only clean one. The song was "Dai's got a head like a ping pong ball". Dai is a stereotypical Welsh first name. (I guess the English and Welsh had a problem back then). You can listen to a politically correct version [here](#).

I just thought you would like to hear it.

The Rambler sings on...

Cheers,

Richard (newsletter writer) and Laurie (editor)
Orangewood Wines

<http://www.orangewoodwines.com>

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