

# Orangewood Wines

*Small Wineries, Great Wines*

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## Introduction

We have two seasons in central Arizona: Summer and Hell. Summer runs from mid September until the end of April. In last month's newsletter we were at the end of Summer and bracing for the start of the other season. In fact, we have had a reprieve, with continuing mild weather. June is almost upon us, however, and we have used up all our luck - 120 degrees Fahrenheit is likely in our near future.

This is the year in which Arizona has finally embraced Rosé wines. I had thought we were getting there in 2008, but the great recession dampened our adventurism. Now we are enjoying dry Rosés from Arizona, California, Oregon, France, Italy and Spain.

In this edition Leslie Zellmer, our brand manager, has writes about our recent portfolio additions.

## New Sales Consultant: Laura Zagnoni

About to retire from the world of pharmacology, Laura had been exploring how best to combine her knowledge and experience with her love for wine. She is currently attending sommelier certification workshops, so a second career in the wine industry makes sense. We are delighted to help with her ambitions. She is focusing on downtown Phoenix - close to where she lives.

## New Sales Consultant: Wells Blanchard

Wells has had a varied career in the hospitality industry. He has worked at wineries in Arizona and California, with duties in the cellar as well as the tasting room. He has worked at a restaurant and a wine distributor in Virginia. Realizing that Arizona is the place to be, he returned to work at a fine wine retailer. Now joining Orangewood, he is focusing on the west side of the East Valley.

## Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer

We recently expanded our French portfolio to include two lovely Loire Valley white wines. The importer, Kysela Pere et Fils, Ltd., was started by Fran Kysela, Master Sommelier, in 1994. Fran's approach to his portfolio is to provide classic examples of wines that are a great value. We have been working with Kysela for over four years now.

The Loire Valley is located in Central France and runs along the Loire River, the longest river in the country. It spans 170 miles and is home to many varieties of grapes. As in all of France, the wine label has a regional name; in our case: Vouvray and Sancerre.

Vouvray, considered part of Middle Loire, is known for its many styles of Chenin Blanc. It is an exceptionally malleable variety producing wines that are dry, sweet, sparkling, still and everything in between. We chose an "off dry" style from producer Alexandre Monmousseau, who is part of a movement called "Sec-Tendre", meaning dry-soft. And yes, it is both. The grapes come from a single vineyard, Clos le Vigneau, known as "the Lover's Gap". Most of the vines planted here date back to 1929. This wine shows aromas of earth, honey and pear, while the palate has flavors of lemon, melon and apricot. The finish is exotic, with such beautiful acidity that it keeps you heading back for another sip. The pairing options are plentiful with this beauty! My choices would be trout, salmon, chicken and pork. It can stand up to richer foods due to its fuller body. I would like to try it with my creamy butternut squash soup that is scented with clove, ginger and cinnamon.

Sancerre is east of Vouvray and is on the left (south) bank of the Loire River. Sancerre is best known for its world class Sauvignon Blanc. There are three distinct soil types in Sancerre: Silex, Caillottes and Terre Blanche. The producer, Domaine Michel Thomas et fils, uses vineyards in all three soil types in the bottling we selected. Each give a distinct quality to the wine. Silex imparts a gunflint quality. Caillottes, which is gravel and limestone, brings an elegant style with precision from beginning to end. Terre Blanche, clay and white limestone, makes for sturdier wines with body. We find this Sancerre Blanc to be driven by minerality and very fresh, with lots of citrus and limestone. It's pleasantly cradled in a touch of honey on the palate. The classic pairing for Sancerre is goat cheese. Other pairing options are shellfish, roast chicken, trout, salmon and pork.

## Rambling

One evening last week we had visitors (yes, Dan and Vivian, they would be you). Vivian made sushi; we bought Sapporo. Vivian preferred to drink wine, and we just happened to have some. After eating, we all helped with drinking the wine. To my horror the wine was corked.

TCA (2,4,6-trichloroanisole) is the chemical primarily responsible for a wine being tainted or "corked". Despite lots of precautionary testing and treatment, some corks continue to have a chance of containing a little of this stuff. It took me quite a while to be able to detect "cork" in a wine. Perhaps it was a couple of years after starting Orangewood that I admitted to a chef that

I hadn't mastered detection. No problem, he said, we had a bottle last night. It's right here. He poured us both some, and we sniffed and sniffed. I felt more puzzled than ever. The chef finally said that whatever they had detected the day before had "blown off". It was a couple of years later at a party, when Laurie and I opened a bottle which we all drank. Then another bottle of the same wine and...the first bottle was corked. The second bottle had wonderful fruity aromas and taste. The first bottle had been more muted and was a bit dry and earthy. One of the problems is that "cork" is not binary. It is a variable ranging from none, to a little (causing a loss of vibrancy in the wine) to a lot (making the wine undrinkable). What is a little? In the order of 5 parts per trillion. That is not very much. Since that time I have become more confident in detecting "cork", though at our sales meetings I will ask a second opinion before saying anything. So, over twenty years I have moved from clueless to somewhat capable of detecting TCA. And I practice all the time. What I am suggesting is that you should not feel inadequate if you can't detect "cork", and do not be bashful about asking other tasters for their opinions

Last week was a perfect time for our guests to learn about cork. Two otherwise identical wines, two glasses, one fruity and delicious, the other muted and dry. Sniff the bad one, try to remember that faint aroma of wet cardboard, mustiness...whatever. Then get back to enjoying the other bottle.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard (newsletter writer) and Laurie (editor)  
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