

Subject: Oranewood Wines Newsletter - Volume 3, Issue 34 – December 30th, 2009

Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009, 10:35 AM

Introduction

Another year and another decade, come to a close. It's time for reflection or perhaps a glass of Champagne to celebrate. Both are covered in this newsletter.

Box Score

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New Restaurants

[Bice Bistro](#)

6751 Sunset Boulevard, Suite E-110
Glendale, AZ 85305
(623) 877-4760

[Italian Grotto](#)

3915 N Scottsdale Rd .
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(480) 994-148

[Modern Steak](#)

7014 E Camelback Rd # 1433 .
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(480) 423-7000

New Retail/Wine Bar Outlets

[Oakville Grocery](#)

15015 N. Scottsdale Road,
Scottsdale, Arizona 85254
(Scottsdale Quarter)
(480) 596-8200

New Office Person – Sylvia Messner

It was a year and a half ago that I had tried to recruit someone to help in the office. Fortunately, that did not work out and we kept our overheads low through the recession; but now that we are optimistic about our prospects, we are training someone to run the office, and thus free Laurie and I up from our desks. Sylvia is someone we have been meeting on our hikes in the mornings, but recently it occurred to us that she might be interested in helping with the business. With a very rich background that includes writing, sales and attending seminary, she has the kind of experience that will adapt well to the bedlam that happens in our office. Don't be surprised to hear her voice when you call.

New Warehouse - Tempe

Unfortunately, the warehouse we were using up to a week or so ago was about to go into foreclosure. We did some research on alternatives and picked one close to the Intersection of 101 and 202 in Tempe. The new warehouse has more space and is closer to where our driver lives. The Saturday, Sunday and Monday before Christmas we packed up, moved and unpacked, ready for business on Tuesday. Sure sounds easy in retrospect!

Winemaking Method of the Month – Traditionally Made Sparkling Wine

It was autumn of 1989 and a beautiful Monday to drive from Paris to Brussels. I realized I would be going through the champagne district and thought lunch in Reims would be perfect. It would have been perfect, except that Reims and the Champagne district is closed on Mondays – at least it was that Monday. So instead of a bubbly beverage and perhaps a savoury crêpe, I kept driving with a grumbling stomach.

In France wines are named after the districts they come from rather than the type (varietal) of grape used. Similarly, the expression “méthode champenoise” can only describe that method when performed in the Champagne district. These two facts mean that this month’s section is winemaking “method” rather than wine “varietal”. (With such tight controls on naming, you’d think at least they would be around to pour some bubbles on Mondays!) The process for making such wines is fascinating, none the less.

These wines are usually made from Chardonnay or Pinot Noir grapes, and the resulting wine is often referred to as blanc de blanc or blanc de noir, respectively. Or the name is left blanc (as opposed to right blanc) if it’s a blend. Once primary fermentation is complete, the wine is put into bottles – the same bottle the wine is eventually sold in – inoculated with some yeast for a secondary fermentation and then capped with a crown cap (those things you usually associate with a beer bottle and then put in riddling racks to prepare for removal of the dead yeast. Riddling racks are wooden boards that are riddled with holes. The bottles start off with the necks largely pointing up. Each bottle is turned 1/4 turn per day and the bottom is raised just a bit with each turn to work the yeast into the neck of the bottle. At the end of the process the wine is fully fermented and the neck is level with the bottom. For sparkling wine, the dent (or punt) in the bottom of the bottle is there to make the bottle easier to grasp and turn. You may notice a mark, like a painted line, that helps the cellar rat know how much to turn the wine, and remind him or her where they have got to on the rack after a break.

The next step in the process is disgorgement – getting the yeast out of the bottle. Laurie and I were lucky enough to visit Frank Family Vineyards one day when the team was disgorging. The end result of this process is supposed to be a bottle with an oversized cork in it and the wire cage holding it in place. Hmm, we now have a bottle with a beer cap and a load of old yeast in there, not to mention all the carbon dioxide produced by the secondary fermentations. Seems there is a problem here. The yeast is now conveniently located at the top of the neck – the whole point of that riddling was to collect it there - and here is what they do: put the bottle neck down in super cooled brine or glycol, so the wine in the neck of the bottle just below the yeast freezes. Ah ha! The bottle is then turned upright, the beer cap removed and carbonation in the bottle blows the yeast out. Now it is almost ready for its cork. Almost. The only issue is what to put in the bottle in place of the yeast. It’s called dosage. Frank Family, like some super premium facilities, top up with vintage cognac. Most add wine with extra sugar dissolved in it. So there you have it. Add a label and the wine is ready for market.

Orangewood Wines carries traditionally made sparkling wines from:

Richard Grant Winery
Frank Family Vineyards

Rambling

Last month I was left gazing at my navel wondering what was happening with the world. Now that Christmas is behind us and the New Year is imminent, I have further examined my navel... Orangewood Wines was conceived nine years ago, shipped its first 3 bottles of wine 6 months later. We grew steadily until two years ago. We dropped a little in 2008 and stayed at the same level in 2009. In 2010 our plan is to resume growth. We think we are well positioned for this. Our weaker (or maybe unluckier) competitors have gone out of business or merged. Our stronger competitors should have worked through the oversupply of wine and will be stopping the ridiculous wine deals they were making for most of 2009. Our customer friendly policies are paying off with loyal existing customers and new customers. Our portfolio has strengthened over the last nine years making us more attractive to both customers and sales people. We are poised for growth. Enough of words. Our actions this month, recruiting someone to help in the office and moving to a new and bigger warehouse, demonstrate our optimism about what is happening. Thank you navel for your insights!

The Rambler rambles on...

Best wishes for the New Year and New Decade from all of us at Orangewood Wines,

Richard (newsletter writer), Laurie (editor) and Jim Wallace (another editor)
Orangewood Wines