

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

Orangewood Wines' Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 17 March 9, 2012

Introduction

We are solidly into February. The introduction seems to be where I moan about the sluggish economy, so here it is: Business is not booming - just when we have a good couple of weeks, it's followed by a less than stellar one. This is the top of the season for Arizona – based on my historical view – and a time when things are at their best. That's not to say that we aren't well above our survival level revenues. We are. That is provided I don't get delusions of adequacy; but that's why I have Laurie, a Salesman Emeritus (that would be Jim Wallace) and a sales team to keep my humility level high.

Box Score

New Restaurants:	4
New Retail/Wine Bar Outlets	0
New Sales People	0
New Wineries/Importers	1

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New Restaurants

Estancia Golf Club

27998 North 99th Place
Scottsdale, AZ 85262
(480) 473-4400

Nimbus Bistro

7001 North Scottsdale Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85253
(480) 249-9212

Ritz-Carlton at Dove Mountain

15000 North Secret Springs Drive,
Marana, Arizona 85658 USA
(520) 572-3000

Rokerij

6335 North 16th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016
(602) 287-8900

New Winery – Ahnfeldt

Bruce Ahnfeldt moved to Napa Valley in the early 1980's. He planted his first vines in 1985. Now he owns 3 vineyards there. In 2002 he began making wines under the "Ahnfeldt" name, rather than selling all his grapes. Now he has three labels: Ahnfeldt, Carducci (his wife's name is Celeste Carducci-Ahnfeldt) and Provocative (I think he was looking for a provocative name). Recently he retained Paul Hobbs as winemaker. Available to us right now are wines from the Ahnfeldt and Provocative brands. Stand by for opportunities to try these wines.

Wine Thought of the Month - Restaurant Pricing

In last month's newsletter I talked about newly savvy wine enthusiasts looking for restaurants that have fair pricing. I got some feedback on what I meant by fair pricing, so I put more thought into that throw away comment. What is a fair price? This is not an easy question, so what I am working towards is gathering some data that may give us a sense of what is fair and some ways to assess a menu. Standby for questionnaire!

Restaurants come in many forms. Small, medium, large. Inexpensive, medium, expensive. Simple, medium, complex. Some restaurants are in a store front with 10 or so tables, others have 80 – 100 tables. Some have put together their ambience on a shoe string budget, others have spent millions getting the location and atmosphere they are aiming at. What I am getting at here is that a good glass of wine is going to be less expensive at some places and more expensive at others. So, just looking at the arithmetic, let's try to figure out what data might be helpful.

The numbers I'd like to have feedback on are the median prices of appetizers and entrées. The other number is the median price of a glass of wine. What do I mean by median? The definition says it is the most common price. If there is a glass at \$10, three at \$12 and one at \$15, clearly the median is \$12. In practice it's more difficult than that. Perhaps what we have to do is discard the highest two and lowest two and average the rest. Why am I interested in these numbers? My thought here is that if I am buying an entrée for \$20 or an appetizer for \$10, I am OK with paying \$10 for a glass of wine. If I am paying \$30 for the entrée or \$15 for an appetizer, \$15 for the glass of wine is OK. There is probably a number around here that I can use for reasonable entrée to glass of wine ratio. Please email to me these three numbers from restaurants that you own or frequent along with your opinion on the fairness of the wine pricing.

Rambling

Laurie and I have visited the Grand Canyon many times. We look at the view from the top and note how 2 dimensional it seems. The other side of the Canyon is some 20 miles away. The view looks just like the photographs. We have found that we better understand the size and beauty of it by hiking down into it. This is why, a couple of weeks ago, we were putting crampons on our hiking boots to avoid a precipitous icy decent in the 18 degree morning. We and 19 other people were about to descend through several climate zones and 9 rock layers to the bottom of the Canyon, where Phantom Ranch does not offer internet or cell phone service, but does offer the perspective from the bottom. It is just as difficult to comprehend the beauty of the place from the bottom, but the aches and pains acquired during the 5000 foot vertical drop remind us of the scale. In addition to hiking ourselves down, we also brought a selection of Zinfandels and Cabernet Sauvignons. Before dinner, on the two afternoons we were there, we spent a little time swirling and sniffing in an incredibly undisturbed and spectacular setting beside Bright Angel Creek.

You may have wondered why there was no newsletter in February...the Grand Canyon ate my homework.

The Rambler rambles on...

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