

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

Orangewood Wines' Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 30 June 29, 2013

Introduction

Mid year and Independence Day are upon us. This morning, for the first time this year, it was warmer outside than inside. It was 90F at 4:30 AM and our air conditioning is set to 80F. A good day to stay inside and gaze at our navels, searching for inspiration with which to write a newsletter. Is that a little fuzz I see...

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New Restaurants

[Cave Creek Smokehouse](#)

6245 East Cave Creek Road
Cave Creek, AZ 85331
(480) 488-3317

[Market Street Kitchen](#)

20825 North Pima Road, (DC Ranch)
Scottsdale, AZ 85255
(480) 278-7044

[Marketplace Café](#)

6645 State Route 179, Outlet Mall
Sedona, AZ 86351
(928) 284-5478

[Mesa Grill at Sedona Airport](#)

1185 Airport Road
Sedona, AZ 86336
928-282-2400

[Nello's](#)

8658 East Shea Boulevard, (Northwest corner of Shea & Loop 101)
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
(480)922.5335

[Twisted Rose Winery and Eatery](#)

15040 North Northsight Boulevard, Suite 104
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
(480) 398-7700

New Wineries

[Fiddletown Cellars – Sierra Foothills](#)

It must have been back in 2004 that I met Joe Shebl at Epicurean Wine as we were waiting for our turn to try to sell wine to John Scremin. Joe was the winemaker for Renwood back then. We exchanged cards and Joe didn't lose mine. He emailed me in 2009 to say that he was now part owner and winemaker at Fiddletown Cellars and would I consider representing his wine. I declined. He has tried every year since then. This is the year I said yes.

Fiddletown is a tiny sub-appellation in the Sierra Foothills. It is distinct because it is further up the Sierras (1700 feet elevation) than other sub-appellations. The winery has been built with "green" in mind - worrying about energy and water usage, together with many other aspects, including returning fruit pressings to the vineyards and using cardboard shipping inserts. The wine is good, too.

[Reynolds Family Winery – Napa Valley](#)

Earlier this year my mentor, Scott Lloyd, from Frank Family Vineyards, suggested I might consider other Napa Valley wineries for Orangewood's portfolio. He recently had been on a flight with Steve Reynolds. A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse.

Steve Reynolds began his career thinking he would be an oceanographer, but left college as a dentist. He finally succumbed to a passion for wine that he learned growing up in Germany. In 1994 Steve and his wife Suzie bought a chicken ranch at the south end of the Silverado Trail. It was to become the site of their vineyard and winery. Steve did much of the transformation himself and they made their first vintage in 1999 – a Cabernet Sauvignon made from the vines planted around the winery. Since then Steve and Suzie have added three children to the family and seven other wines. They have earned many awards, including best wine at the Houston rodeo two years in a row.

Wine Topic of the Month: Wine Tasting Vacations

Whether you are day tripping to a wine area nearby, taking a long weekend or touring for a week, more and more of us are enjoying tasting wines at wineries and dedicated tasting rooms. It is worth reflecting on why we do this. Visiting a winery and tasting with the owners or staff at the winery brings something to the tasting that reading the back of the bottle, or even surfing their website, does not bring. Most winery owners have no illusions about getting rich quick, more usually the opposite is true. “How do you make a small fortune in the wine business? Start with a large fortune!” Instead, they have the farmer gene embedded in them and the desire to produce wonderful grapes and to be able to turn them into correspondingly wonderful wine. This is not a momentary itch that is easy to scratch. It takes a long time and requires a passion. Visiting the winery is a chance to listen to someone passionate about what they do and to try the wines that are the end result of that passion.

In addition, visiting a winery is a learning experience. What makes this wine distinct? Special land, soil, elevation, sun, rain, yeast selection, barrel selection – there is more to learn about than you or I can absorb in a lifetime. The more I learn, the more I realize that I know very little. However, that is the charm of wine. There is more to learn – and learning keeps us young.

Your day trip or vacation will be improved with a little forethought and investigation. Start with a basic framework. Are you visiting 10 wineries a day or just 2 or 3? The answer to this question should be based on your capabilities. Everyone has their own ability to try wine and decide whether they like it. As for me, I can try 3 or 4 wines at 2 or 3 wineries before my taste buds wear out. So, for me, trying to schedule visits to more than that makes no sense. Decide what your number is. Next decide which wineries. Which are your favourite wines? Visiting the place they are made will only enhance your appreciation of them. Ask friends and wine suppliers for their suggestions. We are proud of all the wineries we represent. We don't represent anyone with poorly made wines or surly attitudes in the tasting room. All our wineries are listed on our [website](#) and each winery's website link is behind or underneath their name (it's magic). You can also research by looking at Trip Advisor or Yelp to get other opinions. Finally, check to see whether an appointment is needed to visit the winery. I would call to make an appointment anyway – it can't hurt, may even help. They may suggest the best time to visit or help you with directions if finding the place is tricky.

Rambling

I often tell people that it's easy to buy wine, selling it is more difficult. This is true whether you are a distributor like Orangewood, a retailer, restaurant or consumer. I adapt this for wine collectors who proudly tell me how many thousands of bottles they have in their cellar. “You have a drinking problem”, I tell them, “What is your plan to consume all this wine?” With that thought in mind, I select wines from my far-less-than-thousands collection and try to drink the older vintages. One night I selected a 2001 Merlot from a winery that I won't name to avoid embarrassing Mark. In 2002, when we imported this wine, the tannins were massive, and we realized we had no clue how it would evolve. The other night, when I pulled the cork, some wine had crept up perhaps a third of the way,

but it looked in good shape. I poured a little for Laurie and me – a tinge of brick colouring, but perfectly acceptable for a 12 year old wine. I took Laurie's glass to her (she was working diligently on commissions) and told her this was a test. Then in true connoisseur style, I swirled and sniffed. "Ouff!" I said. Laurie asked if I was OK, not looking round to see what I was doing. She took her glass, swirled and sniffed and "Ouff!" she exclaimed. We tried to identify what we were smelling – diesel fuel was our best guess. Then we tried to decide whether to actually taste this gem. After 5 minutes of swirling with the "ouff" factor not subsiding, we tried a tentative sip. Don't try this at home. If it smells that bad, you really don't need to go further. We wish we hadn't. In fairness to the wine, we did retaste it every hour for 3 or 4 hours, then every day for the next 7 days – it never got "ouff-free". Not all wines improve with age. If you buy a case of wine, try one each year. This will allow you avoid getting to "ouff" and keep your drinking problem (too many wines in the cellar) under control.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard

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

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