

# Orangewood Wines

*Small Wineries, Great Wines*

## Orangewood Wines' Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 33 October 20, 2013

### Introduction

In the last newsletter I was asserting that summer was over. Even though someone felt I was a bit premature (yes, that would be you, Alison) the temperatures did stay down. We are now in the happy season, with the heating and cooling turned off and windows open most of the time. I wish I could be as precise with my forecast of wine sales. We should be solidly into the season, but once again, not all cylinders are firing. Still, we are well out of the summer doldrums and the spinnaker is filling nicely.

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### New Restaurants

#### [Amaro Pizzeria](#)

28234 North Tatum Boulevard,  
Cave Creek, AZ 85331  
(480) 502-1920

#### [Five Palms Steak & Seafood](#)

3500 East Sunrise Drive  
Tucson, AZ 85718  
(520) 615-5555

#### [Estancia Club](#)

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

### **Ken's Creekside**

251 Highway 179  
Sedona, AZ 86336  
(928) 282-1705

### **North Restaurant**

2995 E Skyline Drive  
Tucson Arizona 85718  
520.299.1600

## **New Wine Stores/Wine Bars**

### **Sun Devil Liquor**

235 North Country Club Drive  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
(480) 834-5050

## **New Wineries**

### **Brookdale Vineyards**

I was visiting Debby and Mike Bird (my daughter and son-in-law) in Napa this summer. They were talking about something or other and the name "Kristi Seitz" floated across the room. Who was that? Apparently Mike is on a school committee with Kristi. The name had jumped out at me because Steve Reynolds had mentioned that there was a relationship between Reynolds Family and Kristi. (I have since learned that in Napa everyone is related to everyone else – especially Steve Reynolds). To avoid making a long story longer, Kristi sent me a sample of her wine, which showed beautifully in a blind tasting at one of our staff meetings. Kristi and her husband, Mike, founded Brookdale Vineyards in 2000. In 2003 Mike died in a farming accident. Kristi and their son, Charlie, continue to operate the winery. It is located just north of Napa town on Silverado Trail. This limited production wine is made with fruit hand-selected from some of Napa Valley's finest vineyard sites.

### **Cornerstone Cellars**

One of my favorite ways to find new wineries is when a customer says they love the wine and will carry it if we bring it in. Ali at Uncorked, the Unpretentious Wine Bar, was a repeat offender with this winery. She had been looking around Yountville and stumbled into the Cornerstone tasting room. They have a range of well made wines with some compelling labels. The winery was originally started by Dr Michael Dragutsky in 1991. He had previously established a preëminent group of Gastroenterologists in Memphis, Tennessee and decided to add a winery to his interests. Starting with 300 cases of Cabernet Sauvignon, the winery grew slowly to 2000 cases by 2008. At that point, Craig Camp was recruited to manage the operation with Jeff Keene as the winemaker. Cornerstone has expanded in offerings, vineyards and production, now including Pinot Noir and Chardonnay made in Willamette Valley, Oregon.

## **New Sales People – Leslie Zellmer and Nicole Silvestri**

For some time I have been on the lookout for a salesperson to help with the Central Phoenix area; so I was delighted to be referred to two people in one week. Leslie and Nicole are both very enthusiastic about wine and each has been in the industry for several years. Leslie has been more of an “on premise” person (restaurants/wine bars), while Nicole has been primarily an “off premise” person (retail). Both understand the difference in selling style required for wholesale sales and are ready for the challenge. I am pleased to say they have both joined Orangewood Wines.

## **Wine Topic of the Month: Wine Competitions**

Sometimes when you are shopping for wine you see a little card attached to the shelf, a sticker on the bottle or a ribbon hanging around the bottle’s neck (a shelf talker, sticker or necker in trade lingo), all proclaiming the wine has won a medal at such and such competition. This month I thought it would be a good time to shed some light on what goes on at a wine competition. One reason for this thought is that Jim Wallace (our Wine Salesman Emeritus) has recently been tasked with reorganizing and re-invigorating Jerry Mead’s New World International Wine Competition. Jim helps to explain the process in the following paragraphs, with much simplification.

Let us imagine that Plonk County, AZ, being proud of its wineries and after much debate, decides a wine competition would be an economically smart thing to have. They organize a team, set a date, and send a call for entries to all Plonk County wineries asking for current releases. “Please include varietal, price, appellation, residual sugar and a \$50 entry fee per wine”. They then set up panels of judges to taste the wines. The judges are likely to include a local wine reporter, journalists from other areas, key retailers, restaurateurs, winemakers, other wine aficionados, and even wine distributor personnel and an occasional sommelier. A consumer may also get invited on rare occasions.

A big part of the team will include a back room staff to wash glasses and to organize the wines by category (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Chardonnay, and so forth) and by price group (less than \$12.50, \$12.51 – \$25.00, \$25.01 – \$40.00). Judges are assigned to panels of 3 or 5 (an odd number to prevent a tie), and then each panel is assigned wines by category and price. The tasting (judging) is done blind, with wines delivered to the judging panels in wine glasses by teams of two from the back room. Each judge is responsible for tasting 8 to 12 wines per flight, tasting an average of 100 wines per day. Each glass will have a toe tag with a code identifying the wine in an anonymous way. For example, “CAB-G 11” could mean Cabernet Sauvignon, Green (price range \$25.01 to \$40) and the 11th wine in this flight. The judges then taste to determine that: 1) it looks like Cabernet, 2) it smells like Cabernet, 3) it tastes like Cabernet and has no off odors, etc., and 4) it is worth the money. If all those qualities are there, is it worth a medal? And if so, what metal - Bronze, Silver, or Gold? If the panel unanimously thinks it should be Gold, it is awarded double Gold. If the majority of the judges say Gold, it is Gold. The same process follows for Silver and Bronze.

At the conclusion of the judging, all those wines awarded Gold are brought together to decide best of category, regardless of price. Finally, the best of those are tasted to determine best red, best white and best wine entered in the competition.

So, when you see that shelf talker, sticker or necker, referring to a medal, you know that the wine has been judged by several serious wine professionals and declared superior to its peers at a competition. This is a big deal.

## Rambling

We are now past the Equinox, so for those of you who subscribe to my theory of wine cellar temperature adjustments, it's now time to decrease the cellar temperature by a couple of degrees for the winter (southern hemisphere increase for the summer) to allow a 6 month micro-inhale of oxygen. (See [Volume 4 Issue 11](#) for the background.)

Last weekend I had the opportunity not to say a word for three days. (Whispering, shouting and singing were expressly forbidden.) This was because a surgeon had successfully removed a benign cyst from my left vocal chord. With such an opportunity, you might think it would be a no brainer that I would write a newsletter. You would be wrong. Instead, I read a couple of paperback novels and limited my "conversation" to nodding and grinning and shaking my head. This weekend was the time for the newsletter writing. Hope you enjoyed the read.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard

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

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