

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

Orangewood Wines' Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 5
January 23, 2011

Introduction

In January two years ago I started including in the box scores the total number of each item at the beginning of the year, in addition to the new ones. I said I would do the same thing each January, so here is the third annual. In the ramblings I comment on these numbers, including a little secret about our editorial policy.

Box Score

New Restaurants:	4 (87)
New Retail/Wine Bar Outlets	0 (77)
New Sales People	0 (11)
New Wineries	1 (24)

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New Restaurants

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135 South 6th Avenue,
Tucson, AZ 85701
(520) 623-7700

[Flemings Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar](#)

20753 North Pima Road, (DC Ranch)
North Scottsdale, AZ 85255
(480) 538-8000

JW Marriott at Desert Ridge

5350 East Marriott Drive,
Phoenix, AZ 85054
(480) 293-5000

Sundial Garden Café

7 Sundial Circle Suite 4,
Carefree, AZ 85377
(480) 488-9825

New Winery - Solitude

I met with Jonathan Dreyer when I was in California last month to talk about the Seabiscuit Ranch and Il Cuore wines we represent, and he mentioned Solitude. Established in 1986 by Robert Litsch, and now owned by the Dreyer Family, Solitude makes Chardonnay from fruit sourced from Sangiacomo Family Vineyards in the Sonoma County part of the Carneros region. He gave me a couple of bottles which were test driven with my daughter, Debby, and son-in-law, Mike, in Napa and the Orangewood staff in Arizona. The results of the residue test were very positive - zero inches. (The residue test is measured in inches of wine remaining in the bottle following a "Tasting".) The first cases are in a refrigerated truck on its way to Arizona as I type.

Wine Varietal of the Month - Symphony

What is a varietal? In the same way that apples have different types, Granny Smith, Golden Delicious, Spring Surprise, so do grapes. I tend to think of them as grapes that have evolved over years to become what they are today. That is true of many of them, but many more are developed in laboratories in pursuit of specific characteristics. These characteristics may be suitability for certain soil or climates or may be for wine characteristics of aroma and taste. The current state of the art does not splice pieces of DNA into a grape's gene. Instead they are developed by cross breeding. At the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) the Symphony grape is a new grape bred by Dr. Harold Olmo - a latter day Gregor Mendel. It is a cross between Muscat of Alexandria and Grenache Gris and it began commercial use in the early 1980s. Symphony is most often used for blending, due to its ability to bring out aroma and flavors in other wines. It has been vinted on its own in limited quantities and is planted in limited amounts. Orangewood Wines has a wine that has Symphony as one of its components: Super Hero "One Last Kiss" from Scott Harvey. This white blend is an excellent choice for St Valentine's Day from a taste, name and packaging perspective.

Rambling

Some of you may have noticed that I was doing more deliveries over the holidays than usual. This was because our warehouseman/driver, John, had some gut issues and the medical profession took some time and organs to fix him up. He is now fully recovered and back in the saddle (an equestrian term that I know Laurie likes). I am delighted to be able to ramble in a less hurried fashion.

This is the third time that our box score shows not just additions since the last newsletter but also the absolute number of each item. This has been quite an exercise this year. I thought that everything would be pretty straight forward, count the current numbers and type them in. The activity precipitated (having grown up in England this is always a good word to use) some serious thought about different topics. Restaurants, for example, are customers until...they don't buy anything, but for how long, a week, a month, a year...?

Looking back over the year on wine stores, wine bars and restaurants, we have pretty consistently added in these categories. How to decide when they have gone away? They never call up to say, "By the way, we are not going to order from you again". Instead, I decided somewhat arbitrarily that if they didn't order anything in 2010 they should not be on our active list. Not perfect, but consistent. On that basis if we do sell to them again, they get to add to the "New" category again.

Looking at wineries at the end of December, I found that a number of them had not renewed their licenses. I took this as a subtle suggestion that I accepted in a couple of cases and pushed back in others. Overall we have less wineries now than we did a year ago. This does allow us to focus better on the remainder and gives us a little room to explore...

On the sales consultant front, we added people, we lost people, but overall we are about the same. The tenure of our staff has increased. This means our sales people are better trained and better able to provide the excellent service we strive for. This is a good thing.

The editorial policy I referred to in the introduction is that while the box score has all the added people, places and wines, it doesn't mention the subtracted ones. They quietly disappear. So if you study the numbers month by month we might start the year with 50, add one every month and finish up with 52. The difference is that some went away.

The Rambler rambles on...

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