

Subject: Wine at Orangewood Consulting 29, November 30th, 2002

Sent: Saturday, November 30, 2002 7:14 AM

To our Wine Aficionados,

Introduction

No records set this month, but we had fun.

Summary (Box Score)

No new places to drink our wines.

Vino Noceto now available at AZ Wine.

Content

Outline for the remainder of this newsletter

Event Notification – Newsletter wine tasting, December 16th

Event Notification – House of Trick's, February 4, 2003

Event Feedback – House of Trick's

Rambling Delivery Guy

Philosophy

Event Notification – Newsletter wine tasting Monday, December 16th, 2002

Exclusive! Wine letter subscribers only! Those of you new to the newsletter don't know how these work. Those of you familiar with the concept wonder why it has been so long. Here's the scoop. I get the loaves of bread and hunks of cheese. Laurie selects the wines. You arrive between 4:00 and 7:30pm and stay as long as you want (up to a point). We'll give you a taste of some of the new vintages and maybe some of the current ones. At least we will have the 1999 Vino Noceto Sangiovese Riserva and the 2002 Marinda Park Sauvignon Blanc, which just arrived in limited quantities – we have 11 bottles...and counting down. This will also be your opportunity to claim your Cuban Breeze prize. (See below.)

Orangewood Consulting is located in our home at 7334 North Central Avenue, Phoenix. It's on the southwest corner of Central and Orangewood. Be there or email me a good excuse.

Event Notification – House of Trick's February 4, 2003

If you don't yet have a calendar for 2003, this may be a good reason to get one. Reserve 5:30 – 7:00 on the evening of February 4. It's a Tuesday, you have no excuses. Trick's is holding a wine tasting with the tentative title of "Sangioveses of Vino Noceto" or should it be "Sangiovesi di Vino Noceto". We have not yet decided which five wines we will be tasting, but it will include at least the 1998 and 1999 Riservas and one of the single block Sangiovese wines. (These are like single malts. They are made from grapes that come from one area, that is a block, of the vineyard with a single clone of grape.) Trick's provides nuts and cheese for the event. Cost is \$15 and you will need to call for a reservation. (House of Tricks - 480-968-1114).

Event Feedback – House of Trick's

Dick and I arrived at the event early, as requested. Fortunately, we had been assigned a table in the shade. Dick warned me not to expect anyone from the Newsletter – all 300 tickets had been sold a couple of weeks ago. Our plan was to start pouring together and then take it in turns to wander off to sample the food and wine at other tables. As it turned out, we were both pouring and schmoozing at full speed until the wine ran out at 4:00 p.m. Dick's significant other, Sherri, brought us cheese, pâté, and smoked salmon to keep us going. Our table was very popular and we don't think it was because we were major stud muffins (speak for yourself says Dick).

Attendees were asked to note their favorite wines. Our four wines (Vino Noceto Sangiovese Normale and Riserva, RustRidge Zinfandel and Marinda Park Chardonnay) were all in the top 10. As a result, **AZ Wine** is now carrying the Vino Noceto Sangiovese. It is available by the glass at their wine tasting bar. AZ Wine has also sold half a case of the RustRidge Zinfandel - apparently people were bringing in their lists from the event. Finally, Trick's is saying they will put the Marinda Park Chardonnay on their wine list.

Rambling Delivery Guy

Laurie is off to Hawaii today. She is investigating the possibility of starting a new division of Orangewood Consulting – Vacation Property Division. The notion is to buy property and rent it out for a few weeks a year, leaving the remainder of the time for us! Well, we have grand dreams, if nothing else. Meanwhile I have to get the wine business pumping. So, after dropping Laurie at the airport I have some deliveries to make.

Lunch at **Caffe Boa**. As we mentioned in the last full newsletter, Boa faces Mill Avenue nestled between Long Won's and a tattoo and body piercing place. Things are pretty quiet at 1:15. I sit out front at one of the tables for two. There are 6 tables. Traffic noise does not drown out the low volume of BB King's guitar. Most people walking by are wearing shorts in spite of this being mid-November - the temperature is 80 degrees. I don't see anyone going in for a body pierce; I wonder when their busy time is. Casey pays the invoice so I bring in the wine. They are selling a lot of Sangiovese Riserva here. Jessa delivers a glass of wine and my pasta lunch. This delivery gig is tougher than you think. (Wink, wink.)

Delivering to **Nello's 1** (Dick is working on Nello's 2 – 4), I run into Larry, a friendly sales guy from a competitor. We talk about this and that, but I learn that their deliveries are done by a contractor – aha! another solution to a problem when/if this business expands beyond Laurie's and my delivery capacity.

Evening is approaching; I feel the urge to visit **Fleming's**. I take a seat at the bar and look at the wine menu. I'm looking for the Marinda Park Pinot Noir. I ask Nicole for the reserve list. No sign of Marinda Park. I try a different Pinot Noir and let Nicole know that Marinda Park is much chewier, more structure with some tannin. She is interested. Scott is not working tonight so I write down the wine for Nicole. (I called Scott 10 days later – the wine is now on the reserve wine list and at least one bottle has been sold.) If you ask nicely they give you a basket of chips – ones made in the kitchens here with a little garlic to add interest. I'm not up for a steak tonight, so I try the seared ahi appetizer. It comes with a spicy mustard sauce. The ahi arrives nicely presented and seared just enough to be warm. They are not kidding about the spiciness of the mustard. One of my favorite lines from the music we listen to is "pour me a Cuban Breeze, Gretchen." I have been to Caribbean style restaurants and asked if there is a waitroid called Gretchen or if they know what a Cuban Breeze is – I only get strange looks. I mention this because when I look at the cocktail menu here at Fleming's there is drink called a Tropical Breeze that has Ketel One Citroen (I thought this was a car maker but it's a lemon vodka from Holland), coconut rum and dashes of pineapple and cranberry juices. I didn't order one. The first 200 people to identify the source of the lyric or the recipe for Gretchen's Cuban Breeze will be invited join us for a glass of the Marinda Park Pinot Noir.

Philosophy

We have been reviewing the Orangewood Consulting philosophy lately. It seems to be that we have wineries that produce under 10,000 cases a year, run by mom and pop who grow their grapes on their own vineyards. Growing their own grapes should provide some consistency from year to year. We try to find retail outlets and restaurants that are enthusiastic about the wines and we try to provide them a steady supply of the wine, allowing them to build customer recognition of the brand. This is a niche approach to selling wine, but one that we can sustain. The big boys deal with allocations which they sell through quickly, it's then up to the restaurant or retailer or consumer to manage to spread the wine through the year. There's a lot of jargon there.

- What is an allocation? For cult wines or popular but limited wines, or wines that are rated well by a wine magazine - Opus One, Plumpjack, Petrus – wineries have more demand than supply, so they allocate their wine to the various distribution channels they have. Similarly each distributor sub-allocates the wine to customers or perhaps to sales people.

- What is “selling through an allocation”? The small allocation that a distributor has is sold within a month or two to favored customers. It’s sold out. This is good for inventory turns, but doesn’t enhance customer service.

The consistency from year to year brings to mind the notion of “Terroir” (the land). I have seen this word floating by in some of the magazines recently and my take is that a wine is primarily a function of where the grapes are grown. The winemaker is a caretaker who has to avoid screwing up the wines made from the grapes grown on the same vines in the same places year after year. Obviously there are some weather variations, and vines get older, and the barrels are replaced, and aging times can be varied, but the fundamental character and quality of the grapes is of critical importance. This contrasts with wineries that produce massive amounts of wine. They are growing or buying grapes from across a vast area. The notion of terroir is lost. Instead, the skill of a winemaker is required to try to blend something drinkable.

Feedback

Bill emailed me to let me know that he didn’t think he would be permitted to visit a house of tricks. Well Bill, I suggest that you take Christine along with you and give us some feedback on your meal and wine selection.

Cin-cin, alla salute!

Richard and Laurie

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