

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY

COMING EVENTS

Friday, Jan. 6, 2012
First Fridays Art Walk
 A Taste of Monterey
 Old Town Salinas
 5:00pm-8:00pm*
 Stop by A Taste of Monterey in Old Town Salinas on your journey through the First Fridays Art Walk. Enjoy art from a featured local artist, while we stay open later!

Friday, Jan. 27, 2012
Last Fridays Wine Bar
 A Taste of Monterey
 Cannery Row
 6:00pm-9:00pm*
 Join us on the last Friday of every month from 6pm to 9pm. A Taste of Monterey, Cannery Row is keeping its doors open later and offering special wine by the glass prices. Start your weekend off with a relaxing view and a glass of Monterey's finest.

* No new tastings after 5:45pm

JANUARY REFERRALS



Refer a friend to the Monterey Wine Club, and after they join, you get a \$20.00 Gift Card!



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FORTIFYING FOR WINTER

Now that we are in the midst of winter's chilly grasp, it's a perfect time to fortify your wine cellar...even if your "cellar" happens to be a small gathering of bottles in a closet. You could do this by stocking-up on red wines for those long frigid evenings, but you could also add some nice fortified wines to your inventory; these wines are great cold weather options for the warmth they provide and the longevity of once-opened bottles.

But what do we mean by the term fortified wines? The basic definition is wine that has had a distilled liquor added to it. This is normally a grape brandy; however, the "brandy" used for fortified wines is not like what you imagine as a deep amber colored liquor in a snifter glass... in reality, it is more similar to a clear alcohol. Further, the distinction between fortified wines and spirits made from wine grapes (such as brandy) is that the process to produce spirits involves distillation itself (a separate article topic of its own). And you may be surprised to learn that many names you'll recognize are in fact fortifieds.

So how are they made? The distilled alcohol is added to the wine before the fermentation process is finished and this infusion kills the yeast, leaving residual sugar behind. This results in the finished product wine having both sweeter and stronger (normally in the 20% range) qualities. The earlier in the fermentation process the distilled alcohol is added, the sweeter the resulting fortified wine will be. With dry styles of fortified wines, such as sherry, the distilled alcohol is not added until just shortly before the end of the fermentation period of the base wine.

Here at A Taste of Monterey you'll find fortified wines represented in our "port-style" wines (Pot Belly, Paraiso, Pierce and others periodically); they are purposefully called port-style instead of "port" for a reason - a fortified wine can only legally be labeled as port, port wine, or porto if it is produced in the Douro Valley in northern Portugal (established in 1756, it is the third oldest protected wine growing region in the world). Wines were originally fortified so that they would endure on ocean fairing vessels during long voyages...sailors don't only drink rum!



no time in contact with oak. Other differences between the two styles are that tawny ports tend to be lighter in pigment, less sweet, and possess a nutty aroma (attributable to oak-exposure). Ruby ports, therefore, are darker-colored, sweeter, and without trace of chestnut as one often encounters with their tawny cousins. Ruby ports are the more popular of the two as far as global production and, unlike tawny ports, ruby port wines do not tend to improve with age.

Outside of Portugal, this style of wine is primarily produced in the United States, Australia, South Africa, and Argentina. You'll also notice frequently that port-style wines are "non-vintage"...that is to say that the grapes blended were used from various vintages, which is not unusual for ports.

Now let's briefly address some other fortified wines...



Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

LOCKWOOD VINEYARD - 2007 *Partners' Reserve*



Cabernet Sauvignon is the major varietal in the Partners' Reserve, and they picked the fruit at perfect ripeness on October 25th. The fruit was stemmed, crushed and moved to a fermenter in the cool of the morning; yeast was added the next day. Fermentation lasted a full ten days, and the wine was pressed off to barrel. The complexity of this new wine developed nicely and was closely watched throughout the 23 months of barrel age.

The Lockwood Vineyard 2007 Partners' Reserve has a complex arrangement of aromas and textures. The bouquet is of tobacco leaf, olive, black cherry, plums and dried cherries. Flavors are of rich, concentrated fruit balanced by youthful tannins. The small addition of Malbec defines the depth of fruit and the Merlot adds a bit of spice on the finish.

98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1.75% Malbec, .25% Merlot

13.8% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2014

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

RAIL 2 RAIL - 2010 *Chardonnay*



The winemaker, Eric Laumann, is an avid surfer and named his wine with the surfer's term for riding "the wave of the day" by flying from one rail (edge) of the surfboard to the other. The grapes for this wine come from some of the oldest hillside Chardonnay vineyards in Monterey, the Santa Lucia Highlands. This Chardonnay was given the full winemaking treatment, barrel aging sur lie in 50% New French Oak to make a wine that is high quality and full of expression, pushing to each rail and maintaining balance and yet, under-priced. The nose is bright and refreshing, with the zest of lemon, tart pineapple, a touch of peach and a bit of vanilla. Its lively acidity makes the palate nice and crisp, with keen citrus and tropical fruit flavors, as well as a hint of white peach. Chicken marinated with lemon and herbs would make a delightful pairing.

100% Chardonnay

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2013

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

DETIERRA VINEYARDS - 2006 *Estate Chardonnay* (Club Blanc)



Grown in DeTierra's organically farmed estate vineyard in the Corral de Tierra at the foot of mount Toro, five miles inland from the Monterey Bay. Their vineyard is among the closest to the ocean in the cool climate Monterey region. Their Estate Chardonnay is barrel fermented at cool temperatures in French oak barrels. The wine is aged ten months in 50% new French oak with less stirring. They allow full malolactic fermentation for richness and depth of character.

A elegantly aged and well intergrated example of a classic Burgundian style of Chardonnay. The nose offers ripe pear, a hint of spice and a finish of very soft tropical notes. This wine has good viscosity, an excellent structure and a lingering finish on the palate, and is drinking at its peak now. It will pair beautifully with elegant seafood dishes, cream sauces and roasted chicken with garlic.

100% Chardonnay

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2012

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

DETIERRA VINEYARDS - 2006 *Syrah* (Club Red)



This Syrah was grown on the Coast View and Chalone vineyards. Both of the vineyards lay on the Gabilan Mountains which yields wines of unusual minerality. These vineyards have sparse and rocky soils and warm winds that blow through the afternoons; much like the Côte-Rôtie. Although the days are warm, the nights cool off to produce Syrah of uncommon complexity and richness.

The wine was made with clones of Syrah from the Coast View Vineyard, for its distinctive minerality, and Chalone Vineyards, for its exceptional ripeness and low acid characteristics. Classic Rhone aromas of hard spices, white pepper, cassis and raspberry join with vanilla and smoky oak flowing behind. Full and intense in the mouth, rich fruit flavors are joined by hints of succulent meats. Balancing acidity keeps this wine focused and produces a lush finish full of minerality. With twenty four months of bottle age, this wine is drinking quite well and its structure and intensity would indicate many years of enjoyment to come.

100% Syrah

15.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2013

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



Sherry: Like port, true sherry is a protected wine of origin, as only true sherry is produced within what is known as the "Sherry Triangle" area of Spain. Unlike port though, brandy is not added until after fermentation of the grapes - white for sherry - is complete, explaining why most sherry is dry (others are sweetened after the brandy is added).

Madeira: Madeira is a fortified wine made in the Madeira Islands (a region of Portugal). Madeira has lost its popularity these days, but a couple centuries ago it was highly favored in the form of both a dry aperitif and as a sweet dessert wine.

Marsala: Although you're probably thinking of the entrée "Chicken Marsala" right now, Marsala is actually a style of fortified wine originating from Sicily. It was initially crafted as a cheaper alternative to port and sherry and is still around today. Admittedly though, it is most often now used as a cooking wine.

Vermouth: Vermouth is a fortified wine that is flavored with herbs and spices from carefully guarded recipes... although it is believed that most contain some cinnamon, marjoram, cardamom, or chamomile. It's also believed that Vermouth was originally invented in order to mask using cheaper base wines for production of both sweet and dry fortified wines.

Vins Doux Naturels: Vins doux naturels ironically translates as "naturally sweet wines," though as it is a fortified wine, we now know that this cannot be true. These fortified wines from France use Muscat or Grenache grapes.

Historically, fortified wines found new popularity during the time of the Great Depression, when wineries began producing cheap, strong wines. This led to the original coining of the term "wino" for homeless wanderers seeking liquid warmth and comfort. Of course, most of us fond of wine these days wouldn't refer to ourselves as winos, or if we do, we say it in jest. Winos or not, I think many of us will continue to enjoy these unique vino creations that fortify our wine-loving hearts!

-Bryce Ternet

(Bryce Ternet is a contributing editor and is the author of three books.

"Like" him at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/M-Bryce-Ternet/124070024286223>)

RECIPE

ARROZ DE SEVILLA - (Fillet of Beef Tips)

Serves: 2

Ingredients:

2 oz	fillet of beef trimmings, in 1" x ¼" strips
4 T	olive oil
½ cup each	red and green pepper, chopped
1	tomato, diced
½ cup	green peas
6	mushrooms, sliced
1	onion & shallot, chopped
1	clove garlic, chopped
2 oz.	Sherry
½ cup	brown sauce (beef bouillon)
	salt and pepper, to taste



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No Corkage Fee
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Method:

1. In a hot skillet, brown beef in olive oil.
2. Add peppers and saute for a few minutes.
3. Add tomatoes and saute 1 additional minute.
4. Add all other ingredients and cook for 2 minutes. Season to taste. Serve over saffron rice.

A YEAR In the Vineyard



Once again, back to the vineyards. Last month we described expectations for the 2011 Monterey County harvest and provided a grower's prediction on the coming 2012 season. But let's return to what's been occurring in the vineyards themselves over the last couple of months.

Following the harvest, the vines continue to experience a degree of photosynthesis. During this time, carbohydrate reserves are created throughout the process and stored in the roots and trunks of the vines. This storing of carbs will go on until the vine can retain no more, after which time the chlorophyll in the leaves begins breaking down (we see this through the changing color of the leaves). From the time of the first frost, the leaves begin falling as the vine enters its winter dormancy period.

As the leaves have fallen, we have come to the conclusion of our discussion. It's been a pleasure being with you on our journey into the seasonal lifecycle of the vineyards over the past year. Just as the vines are now going dormant for their winter nap, we sign-off as well and look forward to the cycle beginning again in the spring. Cheers!



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PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

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CLUB SAVINGS

Remember, as a Club Member, you receive a 15% discount on all purchases (20% for Quattro and Cellar members) and a weekly complimentary tasting.

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