

Tasting Monterey

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

STORE HOURS



A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm*

Food service begins at
11:30am daily

*No new member tastings
after 6pm

**MARCH
REFERRALS**



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And The Winner Is.....



There is no doubt that one of the most enjoyable ways for a group of wine lovers to learn about wine is a "blind tasting" where the participants sample several wines without knowing what they are until after the wine is tasted. This is a wonderful way to learn about wine, however there are a couple of issues that you need to be aware of.

First, you want to be sure that your guests will enjoy and embrace the opportunity to examine and evaluate wines rather than simply quaffing it. This is a given for you Monterey Wine Club members, but you might want to sample sentiment among a few of your group before inviting them in for a semi-serious tasting session.

The second issue is a little more subtle: You'll want to set the degree of difficulty of your wine challenge to fit the level of knowledge of the average member of your group, and you'll want to avoid, by all means, having your blind tasting turn into a game of one-upmanship. Try being sensitive to the interests and feelings of all your guests, and avoiding having those who don't do as well feel bad about that. A good way to avoid this would be to make comments and voting anonymous. Simply have everyone write their comments, selections or guesses on a sheet and drop them into a hat. Then host the can tally the results.

Every group will have one, hopefully, self-proclaimed know-it-all. This person will do their best to make other's opinions seem unworthy. However, the great thing about blind tastings is that the know-it-alls will be instantly humbled because of the unique tasting format. This is because most of their knowledge of wines is based on labels and origins. Their preconceptions of wines cloud their sensory evaluation. Conversely, those who like certain wines just because they taste good will enjoy this type of tasting immensely.

Don't think of a blind tasting as a game, exactly. Think of it more like a learning experience that just happens to be fun. A group of wine lovers surrounding a festive table with three, four or six bottles wrapped in paper bags, trying to learn and discover by tasting, comparing and contrasting.

Having totally unknown bottles and requiring people to guess what's what is certainly the most difficult way to do this, and frankly, it is not recommend it for most groups. An easier, and perhaps more educational tasting format are the following variations:

What's This? (Varietal):

Select a few wines of similar-only-different type, let your guests know what the wines are, and invite them to try to determine which is which. This can be a very good way to sharpen your palate, and it would be easy to set this up as either a discussion-group event with no winners, or as a scoring game with points for each correct guess. You can do a flight of four red wines made from different grapes, giving your group the opportunity to pick out the differences between Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Syrah and Merlot or with whites like Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewurztraminer.



Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

DISTRICT 7 - 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon



The grapes for District 7 Cabernet Sauvignon are grown on their estate vineyard in southern Monterey County. This locale provides a prime environment for growing this classic Bordeaux varietal, with sunshine-filled days followed by the cooling maritime influence of the Monterey Bay in the late afternoon. These conditions allow the grapes to hang on the vine and develop complex flavors and intense varietal character.

Concentrated blackberry and black raspberry flavors are framed by well-integrated tannins. The District 7 Cabernet Sauvignon finds the sweet spot where the power and structure of this classic varietal meet elegance and finesse. The balance of fruit, acidity and moderate tannins makes this wine a perfect companion to fine cuisine.

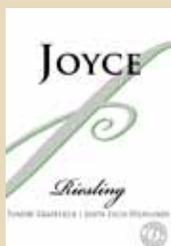
100% Cabernet Sauvignon

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

JOYCE - 2016 Dry Riesling



This Riesling was inspired by the sloped alluvial fans in which these vineyard sites reside. The well-drained soils of the alluvial fans are created as water drains down from the Santa Lucia Mountains down into the Salinas Valley, washing down a build-up of coarse grained sediment. Northern Monterey County is subject to strong maritime influences and ancient glacial soils consisting of sand and shale loam. These elements provide the perfect conditions for wine possessing freshness, complexity and elevated aromatics.

In the glass, the 2016 Dry Riesling shows aromatics of stone fruit & herbal citrus zest. The palate has great texture displaying notes of pear, mint and petrol. The finish is long, showing salinity and a laser beam -like focus.

100% Riesling

12.7% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

PIANETTA - 2013 Syrah (Club Red)



Pianetta Winery and Vineyard is located 15 miles north of Paso Robles, tucked into the hills of Indian Valley, where the vines enjoy daily sunshine and easy afternoon breezes. Planted in 1997 by John Pianetta, their estate is home to 65 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah vines. Their estate fruit is hand-harvested from terraced slopes to ensure quality in the field and on the crush pad. All Pianetta wines are well-balanced with a solid fruit base, aged in dominant tight grained oak barrels, and focus on the best fruit the vineyards produce.

Rich notes of spiced plum and earth. Mild leather folding into rich cassis and smoke. Full Bodied and coats the palate.

100% Syrah

14.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

DISTRICT 7 - 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Club Blanc)



Upon arrival at the winery, the grapes were gently whole-cluster pressed, chilled, and racked clean to a refrigerated stainless steel tank. The juice was slowly fermented at a cool temperature to enhance the varietal aromatics. To preserve the bright fruit flavors and varietal character of their Sauv Blanc, they fermented and aged it almost entirely in stainless steel. This allows the wine's crisp, zesty qualities and distinctive freshness to shine through.

A lively array of melon, passion fruit and citrus flavors glide across the palate. This is a vibrant wine that finishes with a refreshing, crisp acidity. The District 7 Sauvignon Blanc makes a lovely aperitif or as an accompaniment with simple seafood, herbal prepared white meat dishes, and spicy, ethnic cuisines.

100% Sauvignon Blanc

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



Where's It From? (Appellation or Origin):

Play a geography game, with similar Cabernet blends from California, France, Chile and Australia. Or for a more advanced group, with similarly priced Bordeaux from the Medoc, Graves, Pomerol and St.-Emilion.

Such A Deal (Bargain):

This tasting is a variation of the "What's This?" tasting. Pick your varietal (i.e. Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon), and ask your guests to bring their favorite wine under \$10 dol-

lars. Note: You should not bring any club selections for this because there is nothing we send out that is that inexpensive.

Once a style or format has been selected all that is left is to invite your guests, gather the wines, uncork the bottles, remove the capsules, cover the bottles, number them in non-sequential numbers (i.e. 34, 71, 8, 22), greet your guests, give your guests something to write with, provide a little food (nothing too strongly flavored or spicy), taste the wines with everyone, have some fun, collect the guesses or choices, tally the results, unveil the wines, serve some coffee and relax because you would have just thrown the coolest tasting party of the year. *Have fun!*

VISITING Varietals



PETITE SIRAH

The origins of Petite Sirah are equally as ambiguous as Syrah. We know Petite Sirah has been grown in California for at least 130 years. In fact, it was, until twenty years ago, the most planted red grape varietal in the state, mostly planted in the San Joaquin and Monterey Counties. In the early years, Petite Sirah was used for blending. The grape is thought to be a Rhône clone known as Durif, named after Dr. Durif who propagated the vines in France at the end of the 19th century. Interestingly enough, that was after the Petite Sirah was first known use in California. So what were they growing in California over 130 years ago and calling Petite Sirah? After DNA fingerprinting at UC Davis of current Petite Sirah vines, most were found to be Durif. Durif is a cross between Syrah and Peloursin (an obscure varietal planted in the south of France). This most recent study offers Petite Sirah vintners some peace of mind. No longer is Petite Sirah, Syrah's ugly step brother, it is Durif, that enjoys a long noble history in California.

The aroma, visual and flavor characteristics of Petite Sirah is just as interesting as its origins. These medium-bodied jewels are wines you can sink your teeth into. Often this wine is robust and deeply colored. In fact, this wine has been referred to as fountain pen ink. Its deep color is due to the smaller (petite) size of the berries which means a higher skin to juice ratio. Along with the color, there is plenty of flavor which is imparted into the juice during fermentation. Aromas of this wine include black pepper allspice and the following berries: black cherry, blueberry, strawberry and raspberry.

These unique and sometimes hard-to-find wines are great with a wide variety of foods. Fruiter and not too tannic wines which go nicely with hearty tomato-based sauces. Conversely, spicier and higher tannic wines will do nicely by being paired with tangy barbequed ribs.

RECIPE

Spice-Braised Short Ribs

Ingredients

- 2 chiles, seeded and chopped
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1½ teaspoons black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped, divided
- 8 bone-in beef short ribs (4 to 5 lb.)
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 1¾ cups dry red wine
- 1 14.5-oz. can whole, peeled tomatoes, drained
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, chopped (about 1½ cups)
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped (about 1½ cups)
- ½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ½ cup chopped fresh mint
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest



Directions

Stir together chiles, salt, paprika, oregano, pepper, cumin, cinnamon, ¼ cup of the oil, and half the garlic in a medium bowl. Rub ribs all over with chile mixture; cover and chill 12 to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 300°F. Let ribs stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Bring broth to a boil in a medium saucepan and cook until reduced by half, 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium. Working in batches, add ribs and cook until browned, about 3 minutes per side; transfer ribs to a platter. Remove pot from heat, discard drippings, and wipe clean.

Pour wine into pot and bring to a boil. Cook until reduced to 1 cup, about 5 minutes. Add reduced broth and stir to combine. Add ribs to pot along with tomatoes, celery, carrots, and onion. Return to a boil, cover, and transfer to oven.

Braise until meat is very tender and easily pulls away from the bone, 3 to 3½ hours.

Meanwhile, stir together parsley, mint, lemon zest, and remaining half of garlic in a small bowl.

Transfer ribs to a serving platter and tent with foil. Skim fat from cooking liquid and discard. Strain braising liquid and discard solids. Serve ribs with sauce, topped with parsley mixture.

CHEESE

Varietals



CHÈVRE

Pronunciation: she-vruh

Chevre is French for Goat's cheese i.e. cheeses made out of goat's milk. They are popular among elderly and children who are more likely to show low tolerance to cow's milk. Also, goat cheeses are lower in fat, and higher in vitamin A and potassium. They serve as a perfect substitute for many dieters. A majority of goat cheeses come from France, the most famous among them being Bucheron, Chabis and Crottin de Chavignol.

Goat cheeses have a unique, tart, earthy flavour that sets them apart from cow cheeses. This distinctive tang and aroma grows robust and bold as it ages. Milk production of goats, unlike of cow's, is seasonal from mid-March through October. Only a few cheeses are aged beyond four months, and they cannot be frozen without loss of quality. Considering the availability of limited milk production, experiments are on to make cheeses from frozen goat milk curd.

The flavor and aroma of goat cheese relies upon its moisture, density, aging and flavoring. It can feature a soft, semisoft, firm, or hard texture that indicates its moisture content. They come in many sizes and shapes, such as round patties, log-shapes, drum-shapes, pyramids, round loaves, long loaves etc. Chevres are excellent dessert cheeses, but are also often served as snacks or with dinner drinks.

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