

Tasting Monterey

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

COMING EVENTS

Friday, May 4, 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, May 25, 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.

NEW! - NEW! - NEW!
Extended Hours
 A Taste of Monterey
 Cannery Row
 11:00am-7:00pm
 Our Cannery Row tasting room will be open 1 hour later on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

* No new tastings after 5:45pm

MAY REFERRALS



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



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The Wide Reach of

CHARDONNAY

Chardonnay...What are your first thoughts when you hear the varietal's name? White, golden, buttery, creamy, oaky, tropical fruit flavors - all easily come to mind. The varietal is an intriguing subject as it is grown and produced by wine rookies and veterans alike around the globe. Chardonnay produces menial, mass-produced wines and highly specialized wines alike.

Everyone has heard of Chardonnay, but where did it originate? You've perhaps noticed that Chardonnay appears to be from pretty much every wine region out there, and you see it from places you didn't even know produce wine. Chardonnay's original home is Burgundy in eastern France, which also happens to be Pinot Noir's motherland (interesting to note that Monterey County shares the distinction of producing world renowned Chardonnay and Pinot Noir wines).

Some of the finest Chardonnays are from Burgundy, although the history of the grape there is ironic. Historically, the grape was so widely planted and used for wine it was generically referred to as "White Burgundy." Today is quite a different story as Chardonnay is revered and held to great esteem. Due to French labeling traditions, you'll not often see "Chardonnay" on a French wine bottle, but popular growing areas you may recognize include Montrachet, Côte de Beaune, Mersault, and Mâconnais. These Chards tend to present butteriness, but not oakiness.

In France, Chardonnay is also grown outside of Burgundy, notably in the Chablis and Champagne regions, and in Chablis, Chardonnay is often quite the opposite of both buttery and oaky. Yes, "Chablis" is actually Chardonnay, despite the fact that it became used as a general term for any mass-produced white wine. And you may be surprised that, as in France, the majority of sparkling wines in the world are made from Chardonnay grapes.

Why are Chardonnay wines seemingly produced everywhere? To explain, we need to jump into the vineyards and dive into the barrels. However, the quick answer is that it's reputed as one of the easier varietals to grow and coax into wine - don't think this indicates though that it is only a mediocre varietal unable to display greatness.

In the vineyards, Chardonnay is the typical make or break varietal. It's the varietal most often planted by a new winery in a new area...the thought being that if one can produce a good wine with it, they will have graduated and can move on to other varietals.

That is not to say that it's a carefree endeavor at all. The varietal is early budding, making it susceptible to spring frost damage. The vine is also prone to a host of other vineyard complications, including being highly vigorous and requiring intensive pruning and canopy management. Harvest time is also very critical as the grapes quickly lose their acidity just after ripening, and if they are not harvested promptly, the juice produced from the grapes will suffer for it.

The grape is famous for its ability to adapt to conditions it is exposed to. Chardonnay is considered to be "malleable" by growers and winemakers. This means that it is very eager to embrace its terroir conditions and also a vintner's particular style.

In winemaking, Chardonnay is made in all forms from still to sparkling to late harvests. After considering terroir conditions that may influence the grape, the two most important factors impacting Chardonnay wines are oak and malolactic fermentation, both of which result in two characteristics most often associated with Chardonnay wines: oakiness and butteriness. The wine would not have these characteristics otherwise, explaining why you see new world Chardonnays which have neither oak or butter and are instead lighter and fruitier in style. These wines tend to exhibit tangy flavors such as green apples and tropical fruits. If malolactic fermentation (sometimes referred to as secondary fermentation) is not introduced by a winemaker, butteriness will not be present. Also, if the wine is not oaked during fermentation and later barreling, there will be no oakiness. Other winemaking influences include temperature during fermentation and time spent aging "on the lees" (i.e. the wine's contact with dead yeast cells after fermentation - called sur lie aging).

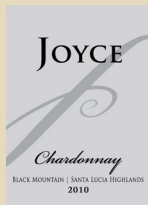
Let's talk food pairing for a moment. Chardonnay is actually considered difficult to match with food, especially heavily oaked and buttery Chards. Although if you think about it, match oak to oak/toasty flavors, and match butter to butter as much as possible. Heavily-oaked Chards can pair well with smoke-flavored and spicy cuisine. And buttery cream sauces are a great fit for buttery Chardonnays.



Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

JOYCE VINEYARDS - 2010 *Black Mountain Chardonnay*



The Black Mountain Vineyard is nestled in the heart of the world-renowned growing region of the Santa Lucia Highlands. This vineyard is nestled high in the SLH appellation back up against the SLH mountain range which separates the Salinas Valley from Carmel Valley. This special vineyard is composed of Dijon and Wente Chardonnay clones. The setting of this vineyard combined with the ideal climate conditions of mildly warm days with cool nights blanketed by coastal fog allows these Chardonnay vines to produce some of the finest fruit the SLH appellation has to offer. This vineyard uses all natural farming practices.

This Chardonnay was aged in French oak barrels for 1 year. When aging, this Chardonnay received only 25% new oak barrels while the rest was aged in neutral French oak barrels. This Chardonnay has flavors of gentle citrus, pear and peach, which combines with nice flavors of wet stone-like minerality and then finishes with a very clean & crisp balance of acidity.

100% Chardonnay

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2014

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

NOBEL WINES - 2010 *667 Pinot Noir*



Over centuries, the French have carefully singled out the most coveted vines in Bordeaux and Burgundy, naming each vine with a unique number to identify its exceptional attributes. Here in California, we've planted a selection of these French vines exactly where they will flourish best. 667 Pinot Noir was inspired by treasured Dijon Clone 667 which adds luscious structure and texture to the wine. The gentle slopes of the Monterey vineyard estate produce a well-balanced cool-climate Pinot Noir with concentrated flavors and supple tannins.

The 2010 vintage exhibits appealing aromas of red cherry, earth and light vanilla notes. Plush tannins and balanced acidity support core flavors of ripe Bing cherry, bittersweet cocoa powder and delicate hints of sage. 667 Pinot Noir can be enjoyed on its own or with poached salmon, veal Parmesan or grilled lamb.

Gold Medal, 90 Points and US Best Value Pinot Noir - 2011 World Value Wine Challenge

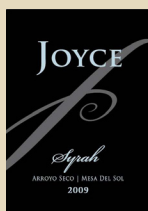
100% Pinot Noir

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

JOYCE VINEYARDS - 2009 *Mesa Del Sol Syrah* (Club Red)



The Mesa Del Sol vineyard is a special 15-acre slice of heaven. Jake Houghum created this vineyard in the late 1980's. Unfortunately, Jake (was taken to the next dimension), but he asked his dear friend Frank, owner/winemaker of Joyce Vineyard, to make a 100% California Syrah from the vineyard. The vineyard is 100% sustainable/organic. The vineyard is hand farmed and hand harvested year after year. The climate of Arroyo Seco is perfect for Syrah. Warm days and warm nights allow these vines to thrive producing some very deep bold flavors. Well known neighboring vineyards such as J.Lohr and Carmel road coat the landscape with rows upon rows of California Syrah.

This Syrah was cellared in 35% French oak for 2 years. It boasts big bold layered flavors of blueberry, tobacco, leather and anise with just a hint of toasty oak & white pepper on the finish. This wine is 100% unfined & unfiltered syrah.

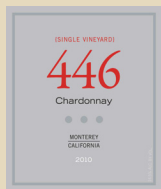
100% Syrah

14.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

NOBEL WINES - 2010 *446 Chardonnay* (Club Blanc)



446 Chardonnay begins in the vineyard, where the winemaker closely monitors the development of flavors, and the grapes come from 10 diverse blocks within San Bernabe Vineyard and are harvested at the peak of ripeness. The grapes are delivered to the winery and gently pressed into either oak barrels or stainless steel tanks, depending on the level of acidity found in each distinct lot. The leaner lots are fermented in stainless steel tanks to retain their more delicate aromas, brightness and acidity, while the richer lots are sent to barrels for fermentation and aging. Following fermentation all lots start malolactic fermentation, and are stirred bi-monthly until the best lots are blended together, just prior to bottling.

The 2010 vintage exhibits appealing aromas of golden delicious apples, apricots and pineapple. Medium bodied with a creamy mid palate, this delightful wine offers flavors of peach, coconut and hints of toasty vanilla spice. 446 Chardonnay can be enjoyed on its own or with grilled shellfish, light pasta entrees or with curry dishes.

Gold Medal - 2012 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

100% Chardonnay

13.7% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2014

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



In the U.S., one can find Chardonnay vines planted in more than 30 states. Although, let's be honest ...Chardonnays from Iowa or New Jersey really don't compare with those from California. Chardonnay was first planted for commercial production by Wente Vineyards in the Livermore Valley in the 1940s. Monterey, Santa Barbara, Napa and Sonoma Counties produce the most prominent Californian Chards. California's Chardonnay first reached acclaim and world-recognition when Napa's Chateau Montelena beat out French competitors in the 1976 blind tasting event known as the Judgment of Paris (Monterey's own Chalone Vineyards came in third place at the event).

These days in Monterey, we still find a wide variety of Chardonnay wines produced and offer some of the finest, not only in California, but in the world. The coastal influenced Santa Lucia Highlands AVA, in particular, is a spectacular setting for Chardonnay vines, which is reflected in its numerous outstanding Chardonnay wines.

In recent years, there has been a trend for winemakers to move away from the oaky or buttery style Chardonnays in favor of producing "clean" and crisp wines, often highlighting muted pineapple or apple undertones. Although these stainless steel aged and/or no malolactic fermentation Chards are interesting and savored by some, it's clear that there will always be a significant group who love the big oaky/buttery Chardonnay. Here at A Taste of Monterey, we're honored to showcase some of the best Chardonnays found anywhere.

-Bryce Ternet, Contributing editor and author of three books. See www.mbryceter.net.com.

RECIPE

Crispy FAVA BEAN RAVIOLI *with* TRUFFLE CHEESE FONDUE

Fava Bean Ravioli Filling

2 Cups	fresh fava beans - blanched and peeled
1	small clove garlic, minced
1 Tablespoon	dijon mustard
2 Tablespoons	Arbequina Olive Oil (or other Premium Olive Oil)
2 Tablespoons	Chicken or Vegetable Stock
2 Tablespoons	Fresh Tarragon, finely chopped
	Salt and pepper to taste

Place fava beans in food processor, pulse until coarsely ground. Add remaining ingredients and puree until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Ravioli

1 #	Pasta Sheets - 6"X22" (approximately 5 sheets)
1	Egg, beaten
1 cup	Bread crumbs
	Canola or olive oil for frying

Lay pasta sheet over large 2.5" 10 count ravioli mold, depress to indent spaces with indent plate. Fill each space with 1 1/2 Tablespoon of fava bean filling. Brush another sheet with beaten egg and lay over top of filled raviolis, egg side down. Seal, turn out and cut apart. Par cook 2 minutes per side in boiling salted water. Remove to tray lined with towel to drain briefly. Toss in bowl with bread crumbs, remove to tray to dry. Heat oil to 325 degrees, fry raviolis in small batches until crisp and golden brown. Serve warm with truffle cheese fondue.

Truffle Cheese Fondue

1 Tablespoon	butter
2 Tablespoons	shallots, finely chopped
1/2 cup	white wine
1/2 cup	whipping cream
1 Tablespoon	cornstarch
2 1/2 cups	shredded Bothwell Black Truffle Cheese
	Truffle oil, optional

Melt butter in a heavy saucepan over gentle heat. Cook shallots until soft. Add wine and reduce by 1/2. Add whipping cream and simmer for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Mix shredded cheese with cornstarch and add, Whisking constantly until all of the cheese is melted. Puree with hand blender until smooth and glossy. Hold in warm place until ready to serve.

*Be careful not to boil the fondue once the cheese is added.



AQUA TERRA
CULINARY

Head of the fast growing AQUA TERRA Culinary (www.aquaterraculinary.com), a special events and catering firm based in Pebble Beach, California, Chef Ford is extending his passion for fresh, local and sustainable ingredients with several innovative food services: AQUA TERRA kids!—a nutrition-smart school lunch program and AQUA TERRA @home—chef prepared meals to-go. In addition, Ford operates Point Pinos Grill in Pacific Grove.

A native of British Columbia, Ford steadily advanced through the ranks in some of the most celebrated kitchens in the Pacific Northwest before heading to Hawaii where he immersed himself in Pacific Rim cuisine. Moving to Los Angeles in 1996, Ford served as the Executive Chef for Gai Klass Catering (repeatedly voted Best Caterer in Los Angeles by Zagats), as well as the Huntington Museum, and the prestigious Jonathan Beach Club in Santa Monica.

In 2005, as Executive Chef at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Ford was a celebrated leader in the Seafood Watch Program's initiative to protect our oceans by cooking only with sustainable seafood. Prior to launching AQUA TERRA Culinary in 2010, Ford was Executive Chef at the renowned Ventana Inn and Spa in Big Sur. Recently named Celebrated Chef of the Year by the American Culinary Federation Monterey Bay Chapter, Ford has received numerous accolades for his culinary talents and has been featured in Sunset Magazine and Coastal Living Magazine and has also made appearances on The Food Network.



Point Pinos Grill is located in Pacific Grove, California near the Asilomar Beach and Conference Grounds, Point Pinos Lighthouse and Pacific Grove Golf Links. The restaurant is professionally managed — since early 2011 — by AQUA TERRA Culinary, Chef / Owner Dory Ford and General Manager Diane Kleindienst.



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3 Reserve Wines / Quarterly
For More Info, Call:
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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In order to better serve our members, we need to receive any new info and changes regarding your status (i.e., change of address, new credit card number, etc.) by the 20th of each month.

PLEASE NOTIFY US BY CALLING
(888) 646-5446 Ext. 13

Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

A Taste of Monterey
Attn: Elaine Hewett
127 Main Street
Salinas, CA 93901
(888) 646-5446 Ext. 13
club@tastemonterey.com

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.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Elaine Hewett - Club Manager
Robyn Rauh - Executive Editor
Ken Rauh - Creative Director
Bryce Ternet - Contributing Editor

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ANY OF THE CURRENT OR PREVIOUS CLUB WINES TO RECEIVE **25% OFF 12 BOTTLES** OR **20% OFF 6**

MAY SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 07/31/2012	REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
 Joyce Vineyards 2010 Black Mountain Chardonnay		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
 Nobel Wines 2010 667 Pinot Noir		\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
 Joyce Vineyards 2009 Mesa Del Sol Syrah		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
 Nobel Wines 2010 446 Chardonnay		\$14.00	\$10.50	\$11.20
APRIL SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 06/30/2012			
 Holman Ranch Vineyards 2010 Pinot Gris		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
 Crū 2009 Montage Pinot Noir		\$23.00	\$17.25	\$18.40
 Hammond Vineyards 2006 Dua		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
 Yosemite View 2009 Chardonnay		\$13.00	\$9.75	\$10.40
MARCH SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 05/31/2012			
 Bernardus 2010 Griva Sauvignon Blanc		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
 Bocage 2010 Merlot		\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
 Parrot Ranch 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
 Marin's Vineyard 2010 Viognier		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB	PRICES EXPIRE 05/31/2012			
 Boëté 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon		\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80
 Scheid 2007 Reserve Chardonnay		\$45.00	\$33.75	\$36.00
 Aïena 2008 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir		\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80

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*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.