

# Amherst Wines & Spirits

December 2012

## . . . AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

As the year draws to a close we want to thank our wonderful customers for your support, which is what makes it all possible. We work hard to bring you an interesting selection of products and to provide the kind of attentive service we ourselves would want as shoppers. Our small band of wine warriors wish you a prosperous, healthy, and peaceful holiday season and new year.

## IN-STORE WINE TASTINGS

We'll wrap up the year with some stellar tastings from 2:00 – 5:00 each Saturday, compliments of the house. Drop by for a few minutes and taste with us in a relaxed atmosphere. It's fun and you'll learn stuff.

### December 8: Zinfandel

*Better than ever, the current crop of California Zins showcase the state's coming of age with this unique grape. These full-flavored reds, with their wild berry & spice, are perfect for the holidays and the winter to follow.*

### December 15: Cabernet Sauvignon, California & Washington

*The signature red grape of the U.S. We'll taste some beauties and compare the style of California vs, Washington. This will be a tremendous tasting.*

### December 22: no tasting

### December 29: Sparkling Wines

*We'll taste from the U.S., France, Spain, & Italy. And yes – we'll taste some French Champagne!*

## GIFTING

Some ideas for the wine lover in your circle:

- GLASSWARE: We stock a wide range of stemware – all kinds of wine glasses, including Champagne flutes, as well as glasses specially designed to max out your enjoyment of scotch and Cognac. Here's a tip – the right glass does make a difference. We also offer lovely wine decanters to add a touch of elegance to your serving.
- GIFT CERTIFICATE: The giftee can have fun choosing with an Amherst Wines & Spirits gift certificate. You can order these via phone or email (and we'll send a finished attachment back immediately). So easy.
- WINE TOTE BAG: Holds 6 bottles, each in separate pocket. Sturdy, reusable, and only \$2.99. Great "stuffer".
- SHIPPING: We can pack and ship your gift orders, where legal. Cutoff date for pre-Christmas arrival is Dec. 15.

## A FEW VERY SPECIAL THINGS

A short list of some of the true gems we've come across. These are wines which set the bar for their respective categories and would be a singular wine experience for any wine lover (like you).

### **Felsina Chianti Classico "Rancia Reserva" 2006 . . \$46<sup>99</sup>**

*Made from a high altitude site (Rancia) on the Felsina estate, 100% Sangiovese aged in French oak. This is a wine which continuously improves with age and this 2006 is just reaching adulthood. A Chianti of both finesse and power with a remarkable bouquet, silky tannins, and a finish that won't quit.*

### **Azelia Barolo "Bricco Fiasco" 2007 . . \$67<sup>99</sup>**

*Astonishing example of Barolo, Fiasco is Azelia's finest bottling. We're in awe of the purity of the ripe fruit offering layer upon layer of flavors, powerful & refined – smoke, licorice, tea. Just coming into its best years, may get even better.*

### **Lapostolle "Clos Apalta" 2009 . . \$89<sup>99</sup>**

*Lapostolle is a French owned winery in Chile, Clos Apalta their top cuvee. The blend of Carmenère, Cabernet Sauvignon & Merlot is hand harvested, aged in new French oak for 2 years and bottled unfiltered. Silky texture, flavors of black cherry, cassis & spice. Long and elegant, this will require a few years of cellaring to reach its potential. It's a "wow".*

## PORT FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The steep slopes of Portugal's Duoro River are home to one of the world's great wines – Port, sweet reds of finesse, elegance, and power unmatched from anywhere else. Alone or with a nibble of cheese or fresh shelled walnuts this is a very special treat. We also stock a full selection of true vintage Ports, too many to list here. Come browse.

TAWNY PORT: More elegant and less powerful style than Rubies (see below), almost a hint of raisin in the silky sweetness. The good ones are never cloying.

**Croft . . \$10.99**  
**Kopke . . \$19.99**  
**Taylor Fladgate 10 yr. . . \$29.99**  
**Quinta do Noval Colheita 1997 . . \$47.99**  
**Fonseca 20 yr. . . \$54.99**

RUBY PORT: Darker color, more fruit-driven and powerful than tawnies. Perhaps just a click less sweet, but still showing the full range of ripe fruit flavors in a more muscular style.

**Croft . . \$10.99**  
**Taylor Fladgate "First Estate" . . \$17.99**  
**Dow's "Trademark" . . \$19.99**  
**Quinta de la Rosa "Finest Reserve" . . \$24.99**  
**Graham's Late Bottled 2005 . . \$21.99**  
**Dow's Late Bottled 2007 . . \$21.99**  
**Fonseca Late Bottled 2005 . . \$22.99**

## PARTY WINES

Holiday season parties present an interesting challenge – you want the wines to be good but not too pricey. With this in mind here are a few reds and whites we feel offer outstanding quality while keeping an eye on the budget. And remember, any 12 bottles gets you an additional **10% off**.

### WHITE

**Pinot Grigio, Stella 2011 . . \$7<sup>99</sup> (1.5 liter @ \$13<sup>99</sup>)**

*We recently requested samples of inexpensive Pinot Grigio's from several of our major suppliers. The opinions of the staff were unanimous – this is the one.*

**Chardonnay, Bouchard Aîné 2011 . . \$8<sup>99</sup>**

*From an old, respected Burgundy firm. They have gone outside the area to the south of France and bottled a crisp, dry, unoaked Chard which we think is terrific for the \$\$.*

### RED

**Baron d'Arignac 2011 . . \$6<sup>99</sup>**

*From a coop in France, our single best selling red of the year! It's the type of red you'd get by the carafe in a Paris bistro – simple yet beautifully rendered with dark fruits flavors and balancing acidity.*

**Sangiovese di Toscana "Ali" 2011 . . \$8<sup>99</sup>**

*Italy's Tuscany is famous for its great Chiantis. Here's the basic grape of Chianti, Sangiovese, but a bit more plump and fruit forward than the higher acid Chiantis. A perfect party red.*

## FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

We're constantly tasting new stuff, receiving intriguing buying opportunities, having a restaurant experience, etc. We thought it might be fun to share some of these as they happen. This makes good sense as we make quick buying decisions on wines of limited quantity, announce special events, and learn of something important happening in the world of wines. Follow us at [@winosteve1](https://twitter.com/winosteve1). We promise to keep it relevant, interesting, and (necessarily) short.

## CABS WE LOVE

Cabernet Sauvignon is widely considered America's best red. Styles vary. Here are a few we think are special.

**Milbrandt 2010 . . \$15<sup>99</sup>**

*Silky, polished, brimming with ripe blackberry with hints of chocolate. Full-bodied, ripe tannins. From Washington.*

**Carr 2010 . . \$19<sup>99</sup>**

*Firm style, dry and showing layers of black fruits flavors, a hint of mocha, and long finish. Not too heavy.*

**Summers 2010 . . \$28<sup>99</sup>**

*19 months in French oak imparts a toasty vanilla sense to the ripe blackcurrant, earthy flavors. This is a big boy.*

**Counterpoint 2008 . . \$31<sup>99</sup>**

*Elegance & complexity, aromatic notes of cinnamon introduce a seamless, Bordeaux-like Sonoma Cab. A beauty.*

## WINE SAMPLERS

Each year we put together 6 bottle assortments of some of our faves in an attractive box with carrying handle. These are great as gifts, also a fun way to introduce you to some new things you may not have found on your own. They are pre-packed in 6 bottle carrying cases so you can be in and out in a flash, no small matter this time of year. Each selection includes some familiar things and, intentionally, some less familiar (to expand your circle).

### **Budget White . . \$50<sup>95</sup>**

*Selection of well priced whites from Italy, France, Portugal, Argentina, & Chile*

### **Budget Red . . \$47<sup>95</sup>**

*Ditto above from Portugal, Italy, Australia, Spain, France, & California*

### **Mediterranean Reds . . \$77<sup>95</sup>**

*Outstanding selection from France, Italy, & Spain. Tuscany, the Rh6ne, Ribera del Duero, and others. Fab stuff here.*

### **Mediterranean Whites . . \$74<sup>95</sup>**

*The white version of above, featuring French Loire & Burgundy, Italian Tuscans, & Spanish treats which will amaze you.*

### **Southern Starz . . \$77<sup>95</sup> (4 reds, 2 whites)**

*Too much really excellent stuff coming from Chile, Argentina, & Australia to miss out. Cabs, Malbecs, Viogniers, etc.*

### **The 2%-ers . . \$144<sup>95</sup> (all reds)**

*If you're the ones whose taxes the President wants to hike, you'll want to check out this all-star selection while you can still afford it. Spectacular, no compromise reds from Italy, California, Argentina & France.*

## BUBBLES

*"Champagne is one of the elegant extras of life." - the words of Charles Dickens, the great 19<sup>th</sup> century English novelist, We agree totally. There are very few things which can illuminate a moment like sparkling wine, even if it doesn't come from France's Champagne region. We stock way too many to list here, but present a mercifully brief list of a few we think you should try this holiday season. Add a splash of crème de cassis (\$13.99/375ml) and enjoy a festive Kir Royale. These bubbly qualify for a **10% discount** when included with any other wines in a case (12 bottles).*

### **Prosecco, Villa Jolanda (IT) . . \$10<sup>99</sup>**

*The best \$10-ish Prosecco we've tasted. Nothing close this side of \$14.*

### **Aria Brut . . \$11<sup>99</sup>**

*From Spain, the flavors show a purity and ripeness, a bit rounder in texture than others.*

### **Gruet Brut (NM) . . \$15<sup>99</sup>, \$14<sup>99</sup> (December sale)**

*Our largest selling bubbly is from . . New Mexico! The Gruet family is from Champagne. They know how to do it.*

### **Crémant d'Alsace rosé, Sparr . . \$16<sup>99</sup>**

*Dry rosé bubbly from France's Alsace region. The aromas of wild strawberry are just perfect. Elegant, beautiful to see.*

### **Jean-Louis Denois Brut . . \$19<sup>99</sup>**

*A Blanc de Blancs from southern France and the closest you can come to the elegance & finesse of real Champagne, but at a fraction of the price. Crisp, dry, long-lasting mousse.*

### **Ferrari Brut . . \$23<sup>99</sup>**

*From the foothills of the Italian Alps and using the same grapes as Champagne (Chardonnay & Pinot Noir), this gorgeous bubbly shows balance, poise, elegance. In our opinion one of the great sparkling wine values.*

### **Louis Roederer "Brut Premier" . . \$47<sup>99</sup>, \$42<sup>99</sup> (December sale)**

*Founded in the same year as the U.S. (1776 for the historically challenged) the house of Roederer is known among Champagne groupies as among the greatest of all, best known for its top of the line "Cristal." The Brut Premier marries classic Roederer elegance with a richer, toastier style. We love it.*

### **- - "GROWER" CHAMPAGNES - -**

The most exciting trend in French Champagne is small growers with superior vineyards making their own bubbly instead of selling their grapes to the large producers. In the trade these are referred to as "grower" Champagnes since they reflect the individual vineyard sites of the various growers. Production is tiny, quality through the roof.

### **Selection Brut, Massin . . \$45<sup>99</sup>**

*The limestone rich soils of Massin's vineyards produce exceptional Pinot Noir and this is 100% Pinot Noir. Each parcel on their small property is independently picked and vinified and the wine spends three years aging on the lees prior to release. Richly flavored, creamy texture, with underlying mineral from the vineyard soils.*

### **Brut Blanc de Blancs, Dhondt . . \$49<sup>99</sup>**

*When only white grapes (Chardonnay) are used, the wine is called Blanc de Blancs. Intensely stoney/minerally in style, this wine offers tantalizing hints of white peach and grapefruit and finishes long and with crisp acidity. Elegance defined.*

### **Reserve Brut 1<sup>er</sup> Crû, Godmé . . \$51<sup>99</sup>**

*This tiny (4000cs all types) 5<sup>th</sup> generation family producer has developed a cult following worldwide. The blend of 55% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Meunier, & 10% Pinot Noir shows intensity, purity, and great length, the mark of a thoroughbred*

## NEW ARRIVALS

### SPARKLING

**Crémant d'Alsace Rose, Pierre Sparr (FR)** . . . \$16<sup>99</sup>

*A true Brut bubbly from northeastern France, exquisite aromas of fresh strawberries, delicate mousse, completely dry. These rosé sparklers are unmatched for beauty and drama.*

### WHITE

**Macon-Villages,"La Côte Blanche" 2011 (FR)** . . . \$10<sup>99</sup>

*A bottling from the growers' coop in Macon, just south of the very pricey Burgundy sites. 100% Chardonnay, crisp and quite dry, with hints of white peach and a lovely mineral underpinning. Versatile and a strong value.*

**Egeo 2011 (SP)** . . . \$13<sup>99</sup>

*From central Spain's Rueda wine region, 100% Verdejo grape. The scent of forest floor and pine is unique to this grape. Fresh & crisp, with mouthwatering flavors of apple and tangerine. You owe it to yourself to try a good Rueda.*

**Chardonnay, A to Z 2011 (OR)** . . . \$14<sup>99</sup>

*The Chardonnay grape is coming on in Oregon with its cooler climate. The A to Z is somewhat drier than its CA counterparts and showing an edgy green apple style. Unoaked, full-bodied.*

**Pinot Gris, Jones of Washington 2011 (WA)** . . . \$15<sup>99</sup>

*Richly flavored with tangy citrus flavors accented by fresh herbs. A creamy textured white with just a hint of ripeness up front, finishing crisp and dry. This is a dramatic wine. We love it.*

**Sauvignon Blanc, Honig 2011 (CA)** . . . \$16<sup>99</sup>

*This is a rich, textured white showing juicy melon, peach & lime flavors wrapped in a silky frame. Sexy stuff. The bouquet is forward and herbal. Can stand up beautifully to full flavored dishes.*

### RED

**Arancio Cantadoro 2008 (IT)** . . . \$16<sup>99</sup>

*Lovely blend of Nero d'Avola & Cabernet Sauvignon from Sicily shows the rustic, gamey side of the island's reds. Rich with plum and black cherry this ample red also shows a gamey, spicy side. The wine has a sense of place.*

**Shiraz, Kangarilla Road 2008 (AUS)** . . . \$17<sup>99</sup>

*This Aussie Shiraz from the McClaren Vale region in south Australia displays plenty of peppery fruit laced with currant and blackberry. The smooth, silky texture and chewy fruit make this an ideal winter red.*

**Sean Minor Red 2009 (CA)** . . . \$22<sup>99</sup>

*Six different grapes from Napa combine to make this lush red a symphony of flavors – red & white peppercorn and dried herbs serve as accents for the plum and black cherry flavors. Lightly smokey, a hint of coffee. Lots going on here.*

**Pinot Noir, Fess Parker 2009 (CA)** . . . \$24<sup>99</sup>

*Fab Pinot from Santa Barbara. A richly textured red showing exuberant ripe flavors of red plum, blackberry, cherry, and spice. Hints of cedar, Asian spice, and vanilla bean also kick in. A real beauty. For hedonists only.*

**Gigondas "Grand Montmirail", Brusset 2010 (FR)** . . . \$24<sup>99</sup>

*Gigondas is one of the prime vineyard sub-regions of the Rhône Valley, the good ones can rival most Châteauneufs-du-Pâpe. Brusset is one of the top producers here and this bottling frames the intense flavors of black cherry and blackberry with brushes of anise, toast, and spice. Still a bit young, needs another year or two, but a serious "wow" red even now.*

**Zinfandel, Ridge - Paso Robles 2009 (CA)** . . . \$32<sup>99</sup>

*From the original Zin master, Ridge. The thing about this winery is the impeccable sense of balance in their wines, in this case the ripe, jammy flavors of wild berry, cherry, & anise plays against a firm backbone of acidity to support the fruit. Yes!*

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