

Amherst Wines & Spirits

March 2012

WINE DINNER: THE FOODS & WINES OF SPAIN

**** Important – the date for this dinner has changed. Please note new date below.**

We are pleased and excited to announce our first wine dinner of 2012 featuring the wonderful foods and wines of Spain. Gastronomically, Spain flew under the radar for a while, but no longer. Some of the world's most exciting cuisine originates from the Iberian peninsula and we will offer a menu faithful to the ingredients and preparations found in Spain. We will, of course, pair these with wines which illustrate the excitement and spirit of innovation running rampant in this historic wine region. Mauro Aniello, chef/owner of Bistro 63 at The Monkey Bar – his name sounds Italian but he is a student and fanatic of classic international cooking – is the chef de cuisine for the evening. Please attend if you can. This should be a beauty.

First Course

Gazpacho – classic regional soup, includes tomato, Spanish onion, bell pepper, zucchini, Spanish olive oil. Served with an Albariño from the region of Galicia.

Second Course

Calamari a la Plancha – delicately seared calamari with a garbanzo bean puree, roasted potato with chorizo, and pequillo pepper. A red from the Penedes region to accompany.

Third Course

Cochinillo Asade – roast suckling pig robustly seasoned with sea salt, black peppercorn, rosemary & chives drizzled with romesco sauce (sweet roasted red pepper & tomato puree, garlic, olive oil, paprika) and served with bean sofrito (puree of Spanish beans sautéed in brown butter). Served with a robust red.

Dessert

Pasteles – cold Catalan custard with crispy caramel coating.
Cream sherry (an excellent one) to accompany.

THE DETAILS

- Date: April 11 (Wednesday)
- Place: Bistro 63 at The Monkey Bar, private room in rear (parking in town lot just behind)
- Time: 6:30
- Cost: \$80, includes tax & gratuities

THE FINE PRINT

**** Reservations a must. Phone (549-0900) or email (steve@amherstwines.com)**

**** Prepayment required. Cancellations within 72 hours of the dinner will be honored with a 50% store credit if seats cannot be filled.**

**** Seating by place card. If you're coming with friends, let us know and we'll seat you together.**

WINE STEMS – A SMART BUY



We reordered the glasses used at our Saturday tastings and . . . got the wrong size – 11oz. instead of the 8oz. we taste from on Saturdays. It's a lovely glass, sturdy, dishwasher friendly, and just the right shape - but larger than we need for our tastings. Rather than go through the hassle of returning them and chasing credits from an internet company (you probably know what we mean), we're offering them for only **\$3⁹⁵** per stem while supplies last. We won't get rich but it seems like the best way to go. And – our customers make out a bit.

Red/White "Perception" 11 oz.

SATURDAY IN-STORE TASTINGS

Each Saturday from 2:00 – 5:00 we taste interesting wines in the store and you're invited to join us, compliments of the house. Here's what you'll get: 4 good wines to taste, your own tasting sheet to record notes and provide information about the wines, fresh baked baguettes, and wonderful people to taste with. A good deal, we think.

March 3: South Africa's Hi-Value Reds

Be it Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinotage, or blends we're finding more reds to like at sensible price points than at any other time.

March 10: Red Blends from California and Washington

U.S. wineries are bottling more blends, as opposed to single varietal reds, than ever before. These can be terrific, bringing added complexity to the wines.

March 17: Spain's Little Known Whites

While best known for its reds, we've been tasting some amazing whites from Spain and need to share them. Some from grapes you know, others showing off indigenous varieties.

March 24: Delicate Reds from Italy

Sometimes we don't feel like a muscular, super-charged red. Northern Italy is a treasure trove of more delicate reds made from local grapes which often don't make it out of the area.

March 31: Cabernet Sauvignon Around the World

The world's premier red wine grape is grown in many of the world's wine producing regions. We'll examine the similarities and differences between California, Washington, Chile, & South Africa.

GERMAN RIESLINGS – ANOTHER LEVEL

Steve first met wine importer Terry Thiese back in the New York days when Terry was putting together an “against-all-odds” portfolio of German wines. Terry had two big problems: 1) the overall quality level of the German wines currently being imported into the U.S., and 2) the American rejection of German Rieslings as too sweet. “How can they drink those California Chardonnays and say that good Riesling is too sweet?” he used to fume. Well, many of those fruit punch Chards have gone away, but Terry's fixation on the best German Rieslings has not. Today he is recognized as the leading voice in the resurgence of top tier Rieslings. He continues to seek out small producers whose passionate dedication to quality matches his own. His focus is on wines with precise, pure fruit flavors derived from the particular soils of their vineyards, along with crisp acidity to balance out the grape's natural ripeness and keep the wines fresh, clean, and elegant. They are not the least expensive German wines you could buy, but they do set a quality standard we think is unmatched. If you're up for climbing the quality ladder in Germany, here's your chance.

TJ Riesling, J & H Selbach 2011 . . \$13.99
Piesporter Goldtropfchen Kabinett, Reuscher-Haart 2010 . . \$21.99
Oestricher Lenchen Kabinett, Spreitzer 2010 . . \$23.99
Rudesheimer Magdalenenkreuz Spatlese, Leitz 2011 . . \$25.99
Kreuznacher Krotenpfuhl Kabinett, Donnhoff 2011 . . \$27.99
Gimmeldingen Trocken, Muller-Catoir 2010 . . \$33.99
Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Spatlese, Selbach-Oster 2010 . . \$33.99

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

** Pre-arrival offer
** Special discounts apply pre-arrival:
 Any 6 bottles . . **deduct 10%**
 Any 12 bottles . . **deduct 15%**
** Reservations encouraged, no pre-pay, wines arrive May 2012

ITALY'S DELICATE REDS

Sometimes we're in the mood for a lighter red, something to pair with seafood, pasta with an olive oil dressing, or just sipping. No wine producing countries we can think of come close to Italy in offering these kind of reds. Mostly from higher altitude vineyards in the foothills of the Alps and from grapes few have heard of. If you're hard-wired to the big muscle reds, no problem. But if you're up for trying something a bit different, here are some wonderful options.

Lagrein, St. Michael-Eppan 2010 . . \$13.99

Fresh, delicate, with light dusty tannins and hints of anise and earth. Reminds of a bit of Pinot Noir, Italian style.

Muri-Gries “Santa Maddalena” 2010 . . \$13.99

From the foothills of the Alps – we were just seduced by the charm of this red, a blend of 93% Vernatsch (we hadn't heard of it, either) and 7% Lagrein. Floral bouquet, flavor of ripe red cherry, little to no tannins. A sense of purity.

Teroldego, Lechtaler 2010 . . \$13.99

A genetic first cousin of the Lagrein grape, Teroldego is largely unknown outside the mountainous Trentino region where it yields charming reds which are consumed fairly young. This one shows a soft texture and earthy, black fruits flavors.

Lagrein, Colterenzio 2010 . . \$16.99

The bouquet is floral, the flavors show a red fruits style with light mineral underpinning. The overall impression is of purity and elegance. We love it.

BOURGOGNE ROUGE AT ITS BEST

FROM THE GREAT 2009 VINTAGE

Only a few hundred cases of this classically styled red Burgundy produced. Captures the beauty of this vintage at a great price. Ready to drink now, should hold beautifully for another 2 years. Standard 10% case discount applies. Grab some soon.

Domaine de la Monette Bourgogne Rouge 2009 . . \$23.99



OUR FAVORITE REDS UNDER \$10

Truth be told, there are too many to list here. We hunt hard for these, kissing many frogs along the way. Here are a few to ponder.

Baron d'Arignac 2010 (FR) . . \$6.99

From a coop in the south of France. Basic bistro red, well done. The largest-selling red for us . . ever.

Monte das Olivieras 2008 (PTGL) . . \$6.99

Portuguese reds show a firm, dry style and this adds a light herbal twist to the dark fruits flavors.

Père Caboché 2010 (2010) . . \$7.99

Another excellent red from southern France. Blend of Grenache & Syrah mimics Côtes-du-Rhône (except for price).

Cabernet Sauvignon "120", Santa Rita 2010 (CH) . . \$8.99

Can you imagine how many Cabs we had to taste to find one at this price that really tasted like Cab? A big number.

Sangiovese, Masi 2010 (IT) . . \$8.99

This Chianti producer bottles a straight Sangiovese, the principal grape in Chianti, better than most \$10 Chianti's we taste.

Shiraz, Indaba 2010 (S. AF) . . \$8.99

The Shiraz (Syrah) grape is a big deal in South Africa. This is an easy drinking, plump, earthy full-bodied treat.

Vitiano 2009 (IT) . . \$9.99

Blend of 1/3 each Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese, & Merlot from Umbria. Deeply flavored, firm, complex.

Barbera, Piazzi 2009 (IT) . . \$9.99

Barbera is the trattoria wine of Piedmont in northwestern Italy. Brimming with black fruits, balanced, fresh, vivid.

ITALIAN WHITES – BETTER THAN EVER

Although better known for their reds, we have found plenty to cheer about while tasting Italian whites. The wines are fresher and better made than in the past. As a group these wines display a good balance between fruit and acidity, the latter being a critical component of food compatibility. Here are just a few to consider.

I Versi 2010 . . \$8.99

Blend of 1/3 each local Sicilian grapes – Grecanico, Inzolia, & Grillo. Not exactly household words, but don't let that stop you. Dry, fresh, crisp style – perfect as pre-meal aperitif or with lighter fare.

Pinot Grigio, Caposaldo 2010 . . \$9.99

Perhaps our largest selling white from anywhere. There's no bottom to the price or quality of this popular white, but if you're willing to spend almost \$10 you'll get the real stuff. We tasted it "blind" vs. the competition. No contest.

Chardonnay, Piazzi 2010 . . \$9.99

From Piedmont in the northwest, Barolo country to you heavy hitters. This Chard shows perfumey aromas and crisp, crunchy, mouthwatering flavors of green apple.

Chardonnay, Tormaresca 2010 . . \$10.99

The Tuscan vintner, Antinori, has set up shop in Puglia, the "heel" of the "boot." Here's a terrific white, a bit rounder than above, and with a full, mineral style we love.

Verdicchio "Serra del Conte", Garofoli 2010 . . \$11.99

From central Italy's Adriatic coast, this Verdicchio delivers plenty of stuffing while maintaining its freshness. Notes of mineral and melon in the full, dry flavors. The best we've tasted at anywhere close to this price.

Gavi "La Rocca", Coppo 2010 . . \$16.99

Piedmont's most famous white, and this is a superb example. Full-bodied with a light sense of peach in the flavors. Dry without being too sharp, just a click of crisp acidity in the finish. Bold, great concentration. A beauty.

Solosole, Poggio al Tesoro 2010 . . \$19.99

This is the Vermentino grape from Tuscany's west coast, the Maremma. Medium-full flavors show ripe lemon zest, apple, & grapefruit accented with a hint of spice. Layered and complex. Crisp finish. Stylish and big league.

NEW ARRIVALS

WHITE

Grecante, Arnaldo-Caprai 2009 (IT) . . \$19.99

Grechetto is an ancient grape in central Italy. Rather full-bodied and dry, showing ripe flavors of apricot and melon with a zippy acidity which adds lift to the flavors and bouquet. Can pair well with more full-flavored foods. We love it.

Piesporter Goldtropfchen Kabinett, Spater-Veit 2010 (GER) . . \$19.99

The interplay of fruit flavors – apple, peach, apricot – show an astonishing sense of purity. This is on the drier side of things for Germany with a mouthwatering acidity which lifts both flavors and bouquet. A real beauty.

Sauvignon Blanc, Walter Hansel 2010 (CA) . . \$20.99

This tiny winery in the Russian River section of Sonoma makes only 1500cs of this wine. This is classic California Sauvignon Blanc, deftly made, with a seamless meshing of all the elements. The rich flavors of mandarin, lemon zest, and fresh herbs are perfectly balanced by the grape's natural acidity so it pairs beautifully with food. Limited quantity.

RED

Lagrimas de Maria 2010 (SP) . . \$9.99

From Spain's iconic Rioja region. This is a "joven" bottling, meaning it received no oak aging. The result – fresh, clean, vivid flavors of the Tempranillo grape. The flavors of red cherry have a brightness which we find irresistible. As well made as any we've seen at this price. More a mid- than a heavyweight.

Pinot Noir "Santé", Coppola 2010 (CA) . . \$11.99

Francis Ford Coppola has hit the nail on the head with this beautifully rendered and priced Pinot Noir. The flavors of ripe raspberry with a hint of earth are wrapped in a silky texture. Delicate, harmonious, & well-balanced. We don't often find Pinots as well made at this price.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Milbrandt 2009 (WA) . . \$15.99

Classically styled Washington red – deeply flavored and with a backbone of ripe tannins to support the big fruit. Tightly knit flavors of blackberry with notes of dark chocolate. Impressive concentration. We love these Washington reds!

Barbazzale, Cottanera 2010 (IT) . . \$16.99

Sicily's Mt. Etna hosts vineyards whose volcanic soils contribute a real sense of place to the grapes. This is 90% Nerello Mascalese grapes grown in high altitude vineyards, and leads off with a bouquet of spice and wild brush. The flavors of wild berry have a wonderful rusticity and minerality. No concessions to mass markets here – this is the real stuff!

Cerasuolo di Vittoria 2008 (IT) . . \$19.99

Another authentic, locally inspired red from Sicily, this one blends 70% Nero d'Avola with 30% Frappato, both indigenous Sicilian grapes. Aromas of fresh red cherry preserves. Firm style, elegant, medium-full, cherry & red currant flavors.

Syrah "El Olivar Alto" Vyd., Viu Manent 2008 (CH) . . \$21.99

Hand-picked to select only perfectly ripe bunches, then 15 months aging in French oak after fermentation. Hillside vineyard with rocky, mineral soils. The wine shows the restraint of cool climate vineyards, yet great depth of flavor and elegance. Sweet spice in the bouquet, dark fruits flavors, silky tannins. Serious stuff. . . a real beauty.

Pinot Noir "The Shop", Kasuge 2009 (CA) . . \$34.99

When a wine producer truly understands a grape, magical things can happen. Byron Kasuge is new to us and we are quite taken with his wines. Only 490 cases of this bottling from the cooler Carneros region were made and we were fortunate to snag some. It honors the delicacy and finesse of the grape while never being wimpy. Black cherry, a hint of the Carneros earth, elegant, complex, layers of flavor. Still a bit young. A true thoroughbred.

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