

# Amherst Wines & Spirits

May 2012

## BUBBLY ON SALE

What with graduations on the near horizon we're putting one of our best selling bubbly on sale. **Crémant de Bourgogne, Lucien Bouillot** is a fabulous sparkler from France's Burgundy region. We carry both the Brut and Rose and cannot recommend them highly enough for lovers of classicly styled, dry bubbly. The Brut shows off a yeasty, toasty aroma, dry and full, with a hint of baked apple on the finish. The flavors and bouquet of the rosé are brushed with a wild raspberry sense, while still remaining dry. Really lovely. 10% case discount, mixed with other wines or solid, applies.



Brut

Regular price . . \$18.99

**Sale price . . . \$14.99**



Rosé

Regular price . . \$19.99

**Sale price . . . \$14.99**

## SATURDAY IN-STORE TASTINGS

Please drop by and join us on Saturday as we taste a bunch of wines. The bottles are open from 2:00 – 5:00 and we invite you to taste compliments of the house. It's a great way to learn about new things in a casual way.

### May 5: High Value Reds from Spain

*Spain continues to ship absolutely terrific reds at sensible prices. As we move into the casual dining season, it's worth knowing about some of them.*

### May 12: Not-Too-Dry Whites

*Who says they've gotta be tooth-rattling dry? We love whites with a just a bit of ripeness up front, especially in the warm weather. From Italy, France, California, Germany.*

### May 19: Great Reds from Portugal

*These have been flying under the radar for some time and we invite you to discover them for yourself. Many use the same grapes as Port, fermenting them to dry. Worth knowing about.*

### May 26: Chardonnay Around the World

*The world's #1 fine wine grape, but what a difference in style as we move from California to France, Italy, & South Africa! Experience the difference local preferences and growing conditions can make.*

## MOM'S DAY

Loads of wines to choose from, including some bubbly (see top) which always send the right message. Here are two other reasons to drop by:

- **WINE STEMS** – We're offering two beautiful glasses from **Riedel**, acknowledged by many in the wine industry as the world's leading designer of stemware. Lots of pricey stuff, to be sure, but we're asking you to consider a matching pair of red and white Riedel glasses for only . . \$5<sup>95</sup> each, 4 for \$21<sup>95</sup>. Come take a look. We think you'll be impressed. They are beautiful.
- **GIFT WRAPPING** – free gift wrapping for single bottles, attractive 2 and 3 bottle gift boxes for very few bucks, including your choice of tissue wraps. Presentation counts. Let us help.

## A VERY GREAT RED



Some of Spain's most dramatic and sought-after reds come from the Priorat region in northeast. The poor, stoney soil, abundant sunshine, old vines, and fiercely committed winemakers have etched Priorat on the map of world class wine sites. By most accounts **Clos Mogador** is at the head of the class. It's a spectacular red, a blend of 40% Garnacha (from 80 year old vines), 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Syrah, and the remaining 5% a mix of Pinot Noir, Mourvèdre, & Merlot. While the wine will continue to improve for 10 years, it is terrific now, showing flavors of black olive, licorice, spice & espresso in a dense, ripe, powerful frame. And all this without sacrificing complexity. There isn't much of it. We snagged what we could. This can be combined with other wines for 10% case discount. Reserve now – arrival later this month (May). Phone (549-0900) or email ([steve@amherstwinest.com](mailto:steve@amherstwinest.com)) to reserve. Quantity limited. Procrastination discouraged.

**Clos Mogador 2009 . . . \$79.99**

## SPRING WHITES

Here are a bunch which to us evoke the idea of Spring – fresh, clean, aromatic. Nothing too heavy. Nothing to overthink. Food friendly and just fine to sip by themselves on a warm afternoon. Stuff we like.

**Vinho Verde, Twin Vines 2011 (P'TGL) . . . \$7.99**

*Crisp & fresh with a light "crackle". Dry but not mouth puckering. Forget serious . . . this is just fun. Lower alcohol (10%)*

**Inzolia, Zabu 2010 (IT) . . . \$8.99**

*Sicily's Inzolia grape, fresh and feisty, with pretty spice aromatics. Flavors fairly dry with notes of lemon and minerals.*

**I Versi Bianco 2010 (IT) . . . \$8.99**

*Blend of 3 native Sicilian grapes – Grecanico, Inzolia, & Grillo. What you get in the carafe in the trattoria. Like being there.*

**Chapelle de la Bastide 2010 (FR) . . . \$8.99**

*The Picpoul grape from southwestern France. Dry, fresh, unoaked, as perfect an all-purpose white as there is.*

**Orvieto, Vignarco 2011 (IT) . . . \$9.99**

*Crisp, quite dry, minerally, medium full bodied . . . from Umbria.*

**Chardonnay, Piazzo 2010 (IT) . . . \$9.99**

*Laser-like acidity, flavors of green apple, unoaked. Classic European style Chard, drier & more crisp than CA.*

**Viognier "Y series", Yalumba 2011 (AUS) . . . \$12.99**

*Silky texture, flavors of apricot, pear, & almond, dry but not too. Opulent bouquet of Spring flowers.*

**Sauvignon Blanc, Heron 2009 (CA) . . . \$12.99**

*The flavors of fresh citrus are accented by a pretty spice. Full, juicy, totally delicious.*

**Vouvray, Picard 2010 (FR) . . . \$13.99**

*Just a tad off-dry with oh-so-pretty flavors of ripe peach, Anjou pear, & quince. Full-bodied & dramatic .*

## UNDER \$10 CABS – HOW GOOD?

There is a lot of commercial plonk out there. There is also much soundly made wine which presents strong value. We do our best to sort through all this and stock wines we can believe in. Here's how we've done it with Cabernet Sauvignon.

**Lotus 2008 (CA) . . . \$7.99**

*A bottling of various Cabernets bought on the bulk market, blended, and bottled at another winery (there is no Lotus winery). Some good values happen this way all the time in CA. This is one.*

**Santa Rita "120" 2010 (CH) . . . \$8.99**

*Chile's second largest winery, and this Cab proves that big can still be beautiful. The flavors have good size and enough structure to balance the fruit.*

**Avalon 2009 (CA) . . . \$8.99**

*Another big production label, this time from California. The grapes are sourced from several sources within the state. The style here is a bit softer than Santa Rita. Ripe and showing pretty black fruits flavors. Well made.*

**Mercedes Euren 2009 (SP) . . . \$8.99**

*There's not much Cab grown in Spain. After tasting this you may wonder why. The concentration and weight in this wine are normally found in pricier Cabs.*

**Riebeek 2009 (S. AF) . . . \$9.99**

*A more elegant style, more in tune with Bordeaux. We like this as a Cab which pairs well with dishes such as chicken, omelettes, even certain fish. Graceful, lovely cassis flavors.*

## THE NEXT STEP

The system for naming wines in major European wine producing countries has, as its goal, regional identity. This allows consumers to have some idea of what they can expect if they don't know the particular wine producer. For instance, all Chianti's should display some family similarity. In some cases, however, this system creates price expectations which act as disincentives for producers to rise above the norm. For instance, Muscadet, France's ubiquitous bistro white, is generally sold for \$10 - \$13 in most stores. But what if an ambitious Muscadet producer thought he/she could make a much better wine but it would sell for outside the normal boundaries of the appellation? For most, this is a deal breaker. We have uncovered two such wines, both from modestly priced appellations, and are proud to showcase them. They cost more than you would expect to pay for the appellation and they are worth every penny. Here's to raising the bar.

### Muscadet "Hermine d'Or", Domaine de la Louvetrie 2010 . . \$14.99

This small family-owned estate in the heart of Muscadet has been producing superior Muscadets from organically farmed grapes for some years. This is a small bottling, not their regular wine, from an area of vineyard with soils rich in sandstone on a bed of clay and it yields more intensely flavored grapes. Muscadet is known for its crisp, dry, mineral style. This is all of that but with a depth of flavor we have not experienced from other Muscadets. Should be a fabulous summer white. Quantities limited.



### Verdicchio "Podium", Garofoli 2009 . . \$19.99

The Marche region sits on central Italy's Adriatic coast and is an important production area for modestly priced reds and whites. Verdicchio is the major appellation for whites, Garofoli one of its leading producers. Verdicchio is the name of the grape and the appellation and has been growing here since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is generally not very expensive, selling in the \$9 - \$12 range, and the better ones (we stock Garofoli's regular bottling @ \$11.99) show a dry, unoaked, aromatic style with flavors of almond and lemon zest and pair beautifully with so many foods. Garofoli's "Podium" bottling is a few clicks up. The grapes are some of the estate's oldest vines and grow in two separate vineyard plots with superior soils and drainage. The flavors are quite full and show tremendous concentration and depth, balancing minerals, almonds and dry apricot. The finish is long. Podium neatly balances both power and complexity and is a great match for full flavored dishes from eggplant parmesan to grilled swordfish. Don't miss it.

## CALIFORNIA BLENDS ON SALE

There's something almost irresistible about some of the blends being put together by California vintners these days. In the past these were often catch-all labels for odd lots of wine left over from the standard varietal bottlings. Today many of these have become focus points for the wineries and the wines are assembled with the same care as the regular varietal (i.e., Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, etc.) labels. Here are two to prove the point, each showcasing ripe, upfront flavors, good weight, and easy drinking. A hedonist's delight.

### "The Other" 2009 . . \$12.99

*Totally delicious blend of 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot, & 10% Syrah from the warmer inland Lodi appellation. Flavors of cacao and dark fruits, silky texture . . this stuff is really good.*

### Stephen Vincent "Crimson" 2010 . . \$12.99

*The blend of 75% Syrah and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon is unusual, but wait till you taste the wine! There's a purity to the flavors which speaks of careful winemaking. You can really taste the grape. Blackberry, plum and a light earthy touch.*

#### SPECIAL OFFER

*Buy one bottle each for \$23.99 for the pair. If you really trust us, try a mixed case for 15% case discount. Offer ends May 31.*

## PICTURE PERFECT SANGIOVESE

The Sangiovese grape is grown all over central Italy, most prominently in Tuscany. We've found one from another place in central Italy, Romagna, which is one of the most perfect expressions of the grape we've experienced . . from anywhere. **Petrignone 2006** is Riserva Superiore, the highest ranking from this region, a selection from 40+ year old vines aged 8 months in small French oak. After 6 years this wine has matured to the point where all its complexity and elegance is on full display. Cherry, vanilla, spice, with perfect fruit/acidity balance and an elegance and complexity we rarely see, more Meryl Streep than Bette Midler. \$19.99 and definitely worth it.

## NEW ARRIVALS

### WHITE

**Villa San Martino 2011 (IT) . . \$7.99**

*This will be our "go to" warm weather white this year. Dry, fresh, crisp, with a pretty lemon zest style. Nothing too complicated, just really tasty stuff at a great price - what we need for the next few months.*

**Vevi 2010 (SP) . . \$11.99**

*Not familiar to most Americans, but the Rueda region in central Spain is worth knowing about, especially their better whites. No wallflower, this. Explosive bouquet of spice and pineapple. Richly flavored, white peach and hints of kiwi balanced with a mineral underpinning. The flavors show a lively, fresh style. Never heavy. A beauty.*

**Pinot Bianco, Castel Sallegg 2010 (IT) . . \$18.99**

*From the foothills of the Italian Alps. This full-flavored white marries flavors of white peach & lemon with a stony mineral core. Dramatic, quite dry, vivid flavors. One of our white Italian faves.*

**Pouilly Fumé, Serge Dagueneau (FR) . . \$25.99**

*Just across the Loire River from Sancerre and a real find for lovers of dry, minerally Sauvignon Blancs. A good Pouilly Fumé can match up to the best Sancerres. We love the lightly smoky notes accenting the flavors of lemon zest and peach. Long finish, elegant and complex. This is big league.*

### RED

**Venta Morales 2011 (SP) . . \$8.99**

*This Tempranillo-based red from central Spain really delivers the flavor goods, especially considering the price. Deeply colored, good weight, dusty tannins. High value vibes.*

**Malbec "Septima" 2010 (ARG) . . \$9.99**

*After a long search we think we've found the perfect \$10 Malbec. The flavors of blackberry and toasty vanilla are medium-full and beautifully balanced by the grape's natural acidity so it stays fresh and clean.*

**Martinez Lacuesta 2009 (SP) . . \$9.99**

*Tremendous value from Rioja, Spain's iconic red wine region. The classic earthy aromas give way to flavors which display perfect balance & harmony with the red cherry/earthy style for which Rioja is famous. Elegant & food-friendly.*

**Pinot Noir, Meomi 2009 (CA) . . \$19.99**

*One of the best California Pinots at this price we've tasted. A firm style, somewhat Burgundian in makeup, with clean lines and pretty black cherry flavors dusted with a fresh wild herb sense. Elegant, complex, this is a delight.*

**Navaherreros 2009 (SP) . . \$23.99**

*Only 1200cs of this most wonderful red exist and we're pretty fired up to have acquired some, even though we can't pronounce the name. 100% old vines Garnacha from high altitude vineyard sites north of Madrid. The aromas explode from the glass full of spice and flowers. The flavors exhibit perfect ripeness without (here's the key) being heavy and overdone. The style is sleek, with a long finish and layers of flavor. Still a bit young, will improve for another year or two.*

**Glenelly "Grand Vin" 2007 (S. AF) . . \$24.99**

*Chateau Pichon Lalande, under the direction of May de Lancquesaing, has been acknowledged as one of the very top Bordeaux chateaux. Every Bordeaux freak knows this. Why, then, would she sell the place and move her wine skills to South Africa at the age of 80? A long story, but here is the result. 44% Shiraz, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot. Lush flavors of blackberry, cassis, & black plum with ripe, fine grained tannins for support. Combines the ripeness and sensuality of New World reds with the elegance & complexity of great Bordeaux. Must be tried.*

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