

Amherst Wines & Spirits

October 2012

CALIFORNIA WINE DINNER – FINAL CALL

Our final wine dinner of the year will focus on the foods and wines of California. The Golden State's cuisine does not fit neatly in a box, but certainly it owes much to the influence of Alice Waters and her Berkeley restaurant, Chez Panisse. The emphasis on ingredients trumps all – fresh and local, and presentations which delight the eye. Here's what the menu looks like to date, a different wine accompanies each course. This will be awesome, a very special dinner.

To Start - Savory goat cheese tart with apples and pears, drizzled with caramel glaze

And then - Panco encrusted crispy fish cake served with corn salsa and Remoulade sauce

And then - Grilled pork loin with a porcini, chanterelle, & Portobello mushroom in a Pinot Noir reduction garnished with crispy broccoli

And finally - Roasted duck confit sautéed with pancetta tossed with Orichiette with truffle sauce

DATE: November 7 (Wednesday)

TIME: 7:00

LOCATION: Bistro 63 at the Monkey Bar (private room in rear)
63 North Pleasant Street, Amherst
Parking in town lot just behind

COST: \$80 (includes tax & gratuity)

Special Note: Mauro, owner/chef at Bistro 63, is preparing a special vegetarian menu. When booking your reservation, please ask for details if interested. P.S. . . . It's terrific.

SATURDAY IN-STORE TASTINGS

Please join us on Saturdays as we taste from the wide world of wines. Bottles are open from 2:00 - 5:00, ditto fresh baked baguettes to munch while you taste. A great way to experience new wines and learn about wine in a relaxed setting. All compliments of the house, including a tasting sheet you can mark up and keep. All in all, a pretty good deal.

October 6: New Finds from Bordeaux

Two great vintages in the pipeline + weak euro = time to check out red Bordeaux. Some wonderful new wines in at very good prices for the quality we're tasting.

October 13: Whites for Red Wine Lovers

Some whites are delicate while others are really packed with flavor. This tasting visits the latter – whites from all over with enough flavor volume to please most hard core red wine drinkers.

October 20: Standout Reds from Central Italy

Umbria, Emilia-Romagna, the Marches – not sharing the sex appeal of Italy's high profile wine regions of Tuscany & Piedmont but rather the bottles that grace the table in many households in Italy. These are terrific.

October 27: Chardonnay, U.S. Style

Better than ever, we say. Gone are the heavy, overoaked Chards of the past. We want you to taste some dry, food-friendly, elegant Chardonnays from California & Washington.

VINTAGE PORTS ON SALE

About 3 years out of every 10 the weather conditions in Portugal's Douro Valley are just right and the grapes ripen to the peak of perfection. Only in these years does true vintage Port happen. Each producer selects their best grapes for their vintage bottling. The wine rests in oak casks for two years after fermentation and is then bottled unfiltered and shipped. This is the top of the mountain for Port lovers and an eye-popping treat for the uninitiated. Richly flavored, sweet, powerful with layer upon layer of flavor experience. The Brits enjoy these after dinner with Stilton cheese and walnuts. The holidays are coming – take the opportunity to obtain some world class Ports for yourself or gifting. Here are some at the top of their game.

Taylor Fladgate 2007 . . . ~~\$105.99~~, sale \$84.99

Muscular and concentrated with layer upon layer of flavors which just keep coming. Big tannins for a long life. The bouquet of Asian spice, crushed boysenberry, and graphite is fabulous. One of the very best.

Graham's 2007 . . . ~~\$115.99~~, sale \$92.99

Opaque color, brimming with ripe fruit and showing perfume redolent of chocolate, ripe black fruits, and hints of smoke. Vibrant fruit, rich and silky, perfect balance of all the elements, still young. A monumental Port.

Graham's "Quinta dos Malvedos" 2009 . . . ~~\$62.99~~, sale \$52.99

In 2009 Graham's did not bottle a true vintage assembled from various sites but instead bottled a single quinta (vineyard) Port from the Malvedos vineyard, the heart of their true vintage blend. This will age more quickly and already shows a silky, plush texture packed with flavors of mocha, black plum, & spice.

NOTE: These may be combined with other wines in the shop to qualify for our standard 10% case discount. Sale prices end October 31.

A GREAT CHIANTI



Recent Press

"Stunningly beautiful . . . a core of red fruit, spices, licorice, leather & herbs . . . mid-palate density and sheer power . . . a great showing."

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

One of the great Classico estates, the current vineyards were planted in 1966 in the southeastern part of the Classico appellation. We are offering on a pre-arrival basis the **riserva** from this estate. The regular bottling from Felsina is one of our absolute faves. Their riserva bottling is awesome - 100% Sangiovese aged 12 -16 months in French oak. This riserva represents a selection from their best vineyard sites. Still in Tuscany, we'll have some soon.

Delivery December 2012. To lock in best price phone 549-0900 or email us steve@amherstwinestore.com. No prepay

Felsina Chianti Classico Riserva 2009

Pre-arrival . . . **\$28.99**
After arrival . . . **\$32.99**

DRY RIESLINGS

When folks see the tall, skinny bottle and the word "Riesling", they assume sweet. Not so fast. There is a world of dry Rieslings from all over and . . . many are totally terrific. In the spirit of adventure and discovery we urge you to check some of these out. If you like 'em with a touch of oak, these are not for you – they never see a barrel.

Wolf Blass 2009 (AUS) . . . \$9.99

Medium-full, soft texture, showing hints of pear and grapefruit. From Australia.

Willm 2011 (FR) . . . \$11.99

Rieslings from Alsace are considered among the world's finest. Here's a great "starter" example – crisp and full.

Millbrandt 2010 (WA) . . . \$13.99

This wonderful white hits a midpoint between totally dry Rieslings and most German bottlings. Just a hint of sweetness upfront quickly gives way to a full-bodied, minerally style with a crisp, dry finish. A beautiful Washington white.

Ravines 2011 (NY) . . . \$14.99

Riesling is the #1 white from New York's Finger Lakes region. This has the power to stand up to full flavored dishes.

Spy Valley 2009 (NZ) . . . \$16.99

The flavors of apple and lemon persist in this lovely example from New Zealand. Soft, open texture. This is so pretty.

Domaine Zind-Humbrecht 2011 (FR) . . . \$26.99

Spice, herbs, marzipan & apple in a round, full, silky texture supported by a backbone of acidity. Crisp finish. Fantastic!

BORDEAUX < \$15

It's not often in the past 15 years that we are able to get so pumped about good inexpensive Bordeaux. A combination of some exceptional vintages and a relatively weak euro have created a great opportunity for all lovers of this iconic red and we have worked hard to find wines we can be proud of. If ever there was a time to stock up, this is it. Remember – you can combine any 12 bottles for 10% case discount

Chateau Despondet 2009 . . \$8.99

You walk into a bistro in Bordeaux and order a carafe of the local red. This is what you get. Simple, beautifully done.

Chateau du Couvent 2009 . . \$8.99

From Blaye, a small appellation on the right bank of the Gironde. Cabernet Franc is the major grape, delicate & earthy.

Chateau Les Arqueys 2010 . . \$9.99

Blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, & Cabernet Franc, the three principal red grapes of this region. If there's any \$10 Bordeaux that comes close to this, we'd like to know.

Demoiselle de By 2009 . . \$10.99

Our largest-selling red Bordeaux, and no wonder. Impressive concentration, ripe black fruits, all elements in balance.

Chateau Bellevue Lugagnac 2009 . . \$12.99

When the grapes are as ripe as they were in 2009, the flavors show a density and sweetness which is irresistible. This is a flattering, full-flavored Bordeaux, very good stuff.

Chateau Haut Pommarède 2010 . . \$13.99

The Graves region of Bordeaux sits just south of the city. The soil is rocky and its wines show a more firm style. Here's a good example balancing ripe black fruits flavors against the minerality which marks the Graves region.

Chateau Mylord 2009 . . \$13.99

Impressive concentration in this blend of 70% Merlot & 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. The flavors of black currant and black cherry show exceptional purity. The finish is long and smooth. This is a very, very good wine for the \$

Chateau Tour de Mirambeau 2009 . . \$14.99

Sometimes referred to as an "overachieving Bordeaux" and one taste will explain. The model of Bordeaux elegance, nothing over-the-top. The flavors of cassis & black currant are ripe and layered with a silky texture. Balance & harmony.

VINTAGE ARMAGNAC

We have uncovered a small stash of vintage Armagnac, the product of a single year. The producer is Chateau de Laubade (www.vignobles-lesgourgues.com), a family owned distiller making superb brandies since 1870 from the favored Bas-Armagnac terroir. Armagnac is a first cousin to Cognac, produced in southwestern France and featured at all the great French restaurants. We are able to offer a selection of single year Armagnacs, brandies which have been aged for many years and bottled unblended. These come in handsome wood boxes and would make a dramatic holiday present, or be a serious treat for you. We are offering the following vintages, but if you would like another year to match up with a birthday, anniversary, etc., please tell us. We will quote a price, if available.

Laubade 1990 . . \$129.99

Laubade 1986 . . \$137.99

Laubade 1979 . . \$159.99

Laubade 1970 . . \$224.99

Laubade 1962 . . \$299.00

Laubade 1959 . . \$479.99

The Fine Print

Please place order by end October for arrival late November. Phone (549-0900) or email (steve@amherstwinest.com). No prepayment.



SPANISH WHITES GET RESPECT

Best known for its reds Spain has (too) quietly cranked up the quality of its whites. These are not well known, but we think they are deserving of much more attention. One problem, perhaps, is that most of the best local white grapes have no international standing – they exist barely, if at all, in France, Italy, U.S., & Germany. There are several in this category but today we'll look at Spain's **Verdejo**, a grape worth knowing, full of personality.

Paso a Paso 2011 . . \$10.99

Oh-so-pretty bouquet of fresh citrus fruits, dry, with bright flavors of apple and tropical fruits. The brilliant fruit flavors are lifted by mouthwatering natural acidity. Lively and fresh.

Vevi 2010 . . \$11.99

The aromas of fresh pineapple leap from the glass, dry but not too, with a round, full style. The flavors of white peach and citrus are framed by minerality. This is bursting with style, demanding to be noticed.

NEW ARRIVALS

WHITE

Ribolla Gialla, Ca'Stella 2011 (IT) . . \$8.99

Ribolla Gialla is a grape indigenous to northeast Italy, not often seen outside the area. We spotted some and it's been flying out of the shop. Crisp, quite dry, with a hint of anise and wonderful bouquet of fresh herbs. This is a real find.

Passerina 2011 (IT) . . \$9.99

This white from organically farmed vineyards in the Marche region along Italy's Adriatic coast is a real find, we think. Full, dry without being too, hints of crushed herbs, fresh and unoaked. Definitely worth a shot.

Saint Regis "La Selve" 2011 (FR) . . \$15.99

If you've never checked out France's Viognier grape, here's your chance. The bouquet of wildflowers signals the grape. The flavors have a vivid brightness to them, full and dry with a touch of lemon grass and white peach. 100% Viognier.

Châteauneuf-du-Pâpe, Domaine Vieux Lazaret 2009 (FR) . . \$34.99

Yes – white Châteauneuf, rare & very special. Rich, lush, powerful with flavors of pear, peach, & fig in a silky framework. Hints of wild herbs add magic. The finish is a long, buttery affair. Serious & hedonistic.

RED

Château Agailoux 2010 (FR) . . \$9.99

One of the tremendous value reds from southern France, this one from the Corbières region. A blend of Syrah, Grenache, and Carignan offers up elegant flavors of coffee, black fruits, a hint of earth. Firm, aromatic, great value.

Perticaia 2011 (IT) . . \$12.99

The reds from Umbria seem to combine a lively style with a firm tannic backbone. The combination of ripe red fruits flavors and natural acidity makes these flavors come alive. The blend is mostly Sangiovese with a bit of Gentile & Merlot.

Shiraz, False Bay 2010 (S. AF) . . \$12.99

Shiraz is an important red grape in South Africa. This one reminds us of French Syrah in its firm style with near perfect balance between ripe fruit flavors with an earthy/loamy slant and acidity so the wine stays fresh. Beautifully done.

Otella "Gemei" 2011 (IT) . . \$13.99

We love the freshness and vibrant fruit of the reds from northeastern Italy. This blends the basic grapes of Valpolicella with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon to yield a ripe style bursting with flavors of red cherry. Full but never "heavy". Yay!

Pinot Noir, Joseph Carr 2009 (CA) . . \$19.99

Fruit forward Napa Pinot offering silky red fruits, supple and ripe, with an earthy slant. All you could want at this price.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Stuhlmuller 2009 (CA) . . 36.99

This muscular Alexander Cab shows awesome concentration, minty bouquet, and hints of anise and minerals. Lovely today, will certainly improve with time.

Barbaresco "Ovello", Cantina del Pino 2007 (IT) . . \$59.99

Piedmont's two great Nebbiolo based reds – Barbaresco & Barolo – share a common border. We think Barbaresco's often display better value, and this is a prime example. "Ovello" is designated one of Barbaresco's finest vineyard sites, a cool site that comes through in the depth and intensity of flavors. Still young, the wine already shows a silky texture, elegance, and suggestions of mint in the long finish. This will be a real beauty. Only 420 cases made.

AMHERST WINES & SPIRITS 233 North Pleasant Street Amherst

Tel: (413) 549-0900 www.amherstwines.com Email: steve@amherstwines.com