



February 2009

Grapevine

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Store Hours: Mon — Sat, 9am-9pm & Sun, 12pm-6pm

Legends and Celebrations for Valentine's Day

How did the holiday of love and romance originate, and how will *you* — whether *committed, dating or footloose* — celebrate this 'lovers' holiday? To answer, let's embark on a little time travel:

The Committed Crowd: Some historians trace the origin of Valentine's Day to the Ancient Roman Empire when February 14th was observed to honor Juno - the Queen of Roman Gods and Goddesses. The following day began the fertility festival called 'Feast of Lupercalia'. In order to bring together young boys and girls, girls' names were written on slips of paper, placed into jars and drawn by boys on the eve of the festival. The young couples were paired for the duration of Lupercalia and often married afterward.

The Dating crowd: Another story goes that Ancient Roman Emperor Claudius II believed that a soldier's duty to fight was impeded by devotion to love and family and cancelled all marriages and engagements in Rome.



A crackling fire, wine, dinner and candlelight: The best restaurant on Valentine's Day is at home.

A romantic at heart, Saint Valentine defied Claudius by marrying couples in secret. Once discovered, Valentine was brutally beaten and sentenced to death on February 14, circa 270 AD. While in prison, Valentine had fallen in love with a jailer's daughter. Before his death, he wrote a farewell letter to his sweetheart signed 'From your Valentine,' after which he was named a Saint.

The Footloose Crowd: Other historians document that the festival associated

with Valentine's Day comes from the belief that this is the day in Spring when birds begin mating.

So what does any of this have to do with wine and with how you will celebrate Valentine's Day? Looking back through centuries of history, countless religions, rituals and empires have risen and fallen; but, the constant presence that has graced them all is wine.

Zoom ahead to 2009. No matter where you reside on the *Lovers'* spectrum or

which legend you choose to believe, there is a wine to be enjoyed on this special evening. And the best dinner and wine to be found anywhere is at home. Just choose your legend and take home: a bottle or two, a bouquet, candles, chocolate and someone with whom to share it.

Committed: Moutard Brut Rosé Growers Champagne **\$33.99** (reg \$39.99) Sweet strawberry aromas and racy fruit will remind you of your first fabulous date eons ago.

Dating: Domaine Chandon Blanc de Noirs (Sparkling) **\$14.99** (reg \$17.99) Cherry and cocoa aromas and the spicy orange zest on the palate will make you think 'this could be the one.'

Footloose: Taittinger Bouvet Ladubay Rosé (Sparkling) **\$13.59** (reg \$15.99) The wild berry bouquet and thirst quenching crispness are as free and fun and easygoing as you are.

So with these choices, there is no need to feel left out — or even *go out*. Salut! ■

Sale Prices & Everyday Pink Pricing

CHARDONNAY

Frei Brothers Reserve 2006 Russian River Valley **\$14.99** (reg \$17.99)

Rodney Strong 2007 Sonoma **\$9.99** (reg \$13.99)

Taz 2007 Santa Barbara **\$14.99** (reg \$21.99)

Chateau St. Jean Sonoma 2007 CA **\$9.99** (reg \$13.99)

Schug 2007 Sonoma **\$16.99** (reg \$20.49)

Simi 2007 Sonoma **\$11.99** (reg \$15.99)

Toasted Head 2007 CA **\$10.99** (reg \$13.99)

Chateau Ste. Michelle 2007 Columbia Valley, WA **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99)

Sterling Vintner's Collection 2007 CA **\$7.49** (reg \$9.99) 88 Pts (WS)

Featured Chard:

Souverain 2007 Alexander Valley **\$13.59** (reg \$15.99) 90 Pts (WS) The aromas in a glass of this elegant but approachable Chardonnay range from citrus and pear to apple and honey-suckle, with touches of toasty oak. Full-bodied, rich and elegant, it has a long, smooth, lingering finish.

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Wild Rock 2008 Marlborough, NZ **\$12.99** (reg \$14.99)

Pomelo 2007 CA **\$7.49** (reg \$9.99)

Palo Alto Reserve 2008 Chile **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99) 87 Pts (WA)

Dancing Bull Winemaker's Reserve 2007 CA **3/\$24.99** (reg \$9.99)

Nobilo Regional Collection 2008 Marlborough, NZ **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99)

St. Supéry Estate Bottled 2007 Napa Valley **\$16.99** (reg \$19.99)

Kim Crawford 2008 Marlborough, NZ **\$14.49** (reg \$16.99) 91 Pts (WS/ Top 100 List)

Kendall-Jackson Estates Grown 2007 CA **\$10.69** (reg \$12.99)

Benziger 2007 Lake and Sonoma Counties **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99)

Featured Sauvignon Blanc:

Concha y Toro Terrunyo 2007 Chile **\$14.99** (reg \$19.99) Lean and bracing at first, with flint and lime notes, this Terrunyo slowly opens to showcase gooseberry, chive, flower and sea salt flavors. It would be beautiful with a green salad lightly dressed with vinaigrette and graced with buttons of goat cheese.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

St. Francis 2004 Sonoma **\$16.99** (reg \$21.99)

Sebastiani 2005 Sonoma **\$13.99** (reg \$16.99)

Joseph Carr 2005 Napa Valley **\$16.99** (reg \$19.99)

Rodney Strong 2005 Sonoma **\$13.59** (reg \$16.99)

Geyser Peak Block Collection Walking Tree 2005 Alexander Valley **\$19.99** (reg \$44.99) 91 Pts (WE)

Wyatt 2007 CA **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99)

Robert Mondavi Reserve 2005 Napa Valley **\$79.99** (reg \$119.99)

Louis M. Martini 2006 Sonoma **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99) **90 Pts (RP)**

Markham 2003 Napa Valley **\$23.99** (reg \$28.99)

J. Lohr Seven Oaks 2006 Paso Robles **\$12.99** (reg \$15.99)

Featured Cabernet:

BV Beaulieu Vineyard 2005 Napa Valley **\$15.99** (reg \$18.99) **90 Pts (WE)** This Complex Cab "opens in the glass with

layers of black cherry, ripe plum and hints of chocolate. Full-bodied and bold, it is a classic expression of a Napa Valley Cab. Pairs beautifully with a sizzling steak dressed in nothing but its own meaty juices.

PINOT NOIR

Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Reserve 2007 Chile **3/ \$24.99** (reg \$9.99)

Cambria Julia's Vineyard 2006 Santa Maria Valley **\$17.99** (reg \$20.99) **93 Pts (WE)**

Willamette Valley Vineyards Whole Cluster 2007 OR **\$16.99** (reg \$19.99)

MacMurray Ranch 2007 Sonoma Coast **\$12.99** (reg \$14.99)

Wild Rock 2007 NZ **\$16.99** (reg \$19.99)

Castle Rock 2007 Mendocino **\$10.99** (reg \$12.99)

Sterling Vintner's Collection 2007 Central Coast **\$13.59** (reg \$15.99)

Fleur 2007 Carneros **\$14.49** (reg \$17.99)

Robert Mondavi Winery 2007 Carneros **\$19.99** (reg \$23.99)

Featured Pinot Noir:

Laetitia 2006 Arroyo Grande Valley **\$17.99** (reg \$24.99) "Light and fruity with warm cinnamon and spice, Laetitia has Pinot's telltale acidity and fine tannins."

ZINFANDEL

Windmill Old Vine Zinfandel 2006 Lodi **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99)

Dashe 2006 Dry Creek Valley **\$19.99** (reg \$22.99)

Sterling Vintner's Collection 2005 Central Coast, CA **\$7.49** (reg \$9.99)

Rosenblum Cellars Vintner's Cuvée XXX CA **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99)

Sale Prices & Everyday Pink Pricing

Earthquake 2006 Lodi **\$19.99** (reg \$24.99)

7 Deadly Zins 2006 Lodi **\$12.99** (reg \$15.99)

Mettler 2006 Lodi **\$15.29** (reg \$17.99)

Bear & Lion Old Vine 2006 Napa Valley **\$19.99** (reg \$29.99)

Rancho Zabaco Sonoma Heritage Vines 2007 CA **\$11.99** (reg \$13.99)

Featured Zin:

Klinker Brick Winery Old Vine 2006 Lodi **\$15.99** (reg \$19.99) Aromas of cherry, berry, plum and spices emanate from the glass. The flavors are mind-blowing: first, there is unmistakable milk chocolate, leading to orange peel and finishing with smooth, dark coffee at the very back of the palate. This Zin is well balanced and smooth with a smooth, lingering finish. With a rich meaty stew

slow-cooked with herbs and red wine: sublime.

SANGIOVESE

Antinori Peppoli Chianti Classico 2006 Tuscany **\$23.99** (reg \$27.99)

Carpineto Dogajolo Super Tuscan 2007 Tuscany **\$8.49** (reg \$10.99)

Monsanto Chianti Classico Riserva 2005 Tuscany **\$17.99** (reg \$20.99)

Banfi Centine Tuscan Blend 2006 Tuscany **\$8.99** (reg \$10.99)

Villa Antinori Toscana 2004 Tuscany **\$18.99** (reg \$21.99)

DaVinci Chianti 2006 Tuscany **\$10.99** (reg \$12.99)

Silvio Nardi Rosso di Montalcino 2007 Tuscany **\$21.29** (reg \$24.99)

Antinori Santa Cristina 2007 Tuscany **\$9.39** (reg \$10.99)

Featured Sangiovese:

Mazzoni Toscana Rosso 2006 Tuscany **\$16.99** (reg \$19.99) This Super Tuscan was handcrafted from estate grown fruit and boasts concentrated ripe dark berry aromas and flavors. The Sangiovese provides a firm backbone and substantial body, while the Merlot brings a luscious mouth feel and lingering finish. Anything from cured pork and strong cheeses to a rich ragout and polenta would be an incredible match.

Come along as we explore
Springtime in a Glass
in the March 2009
issue of
Grapevine

"The soft extractive note of an aged cork being withdrawn has the true sound of a man opening his heart." — William S. Benwell, "Journey to Wine in Victoria"

February Staff Wine Picks

Sheila - Souverain 2007 Alexander Valley **\$13.59** (reg \$15.99) 90 Pts (WS) The palate is creamy and round with luscious flavors of lemon and pear that harmonize with notes of vanilla bean and spice. Bright acidity balances this Chardonnay's richness. Perfect for a crisp-skinned roasted chicken and buttery potatoes.

Damian - Villa Puccini Gold Label (2001) Tuscany **\$15.99**) Predominately Sangiovese with a little Cabernet Sauvignon, this dry, rich and harmonious Tuscan is right at home with roasts or pasta with porcinis, and it would welcome old and new friends alike to any dinner table.

Seaborn - Natura Gewurztraminer (2008) Chile **\$9.99** . Made from organically grown grapes, this Gewurztraminer has aromas of roses and passion fruit and is a perfect partner for curries or other spicy Asian fare. Not to mention, it might make a welcome spicy addition to your Valentine's Eve in front of the fire.

Denise - Toad Hollow Dry Rosé Pinot Noir (2007) CA **\$13.99** With a nose of rose petals and violets, this bone dry Rosé has bright acidity and white strawberry notes on the palate. It pairs beautifully with salmon or baked ham.

Ian - Howell Mountain Vineyards Bear & Lion Old Vine Zinfandel 2006 Lodi **\$19.99** (reg \$29.99) Tight and structured, this Zin has good fruit, black pepper and classic spiciness. It begs for grilled steak and mushrooms.

Hunter - Turnbull Old Bull (2006) Napa Valley **\$16.99** (reg 19.99) Made mostly of Merlot with a blend of six other grapes, this red has lush berry and black fruit flavors and a decadently rich finish. Excellent with smoky ribs.

Graham - Piper Sonoma Select Cuvée Sparkling Wine (NV) Sonoma **\$12.99** "Crisp and dry, this sparkler made according to Méthode Champenoise, has hints of citrus, cream and hazelnuts. Enjoy as an aperitif or with shellfish.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-8 & Sat, 2-6

Fri (2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27): Friday Sojourns: Taste wines from every grapevine and pocket of the globe on Fridays as we indulge our desire for whim. **Fri, 2/13 will be our 3-Olives Martini tasting.**

Sat 2/7: Malbecs from Argentina: Experience the differences in a range of Malbecs, and find other great bargains from South America.

Sat 2/14: Wild Rock Wines from New Zealand: We'll taste the Elevation Sauv Blanc, Cupid's Arrow Pinot Noir and Vin Gris Rose, as well as Korbel Champagne and Chambord. Chocolate-dipped strawberries provided by Perfect Blend Café.

Sat 2/21: He Makes the Wine; He Pours the Wine: Join us as we welcome California wine maker, Joseph Carr as he pours wines from his entire California portfolio.

Sat 2/28: Wines from the 90s Club: We'll taste a lineup of exceptional wines from our 90+ rated selection.

Crab fritters w/ soy chile mignonette (makes 10)

(Provided, courtesy of Erinn Benziger, Benziger Wines)

Fritters: 8oz crab meat, 1/8tsp celery seed, 1/2tsp salt, Cayenne pepper to taste, 1 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard, 1 T mayonnaise

Breading: 1/2 c flour, 2 eggs beaten, 1 c panko breadcrumbs, 1 qt grapeseed oil for frying

Mignonette: 1/4 c soy sauce, 1 1/2 T rice vinegar, 1/2 tsp hazelnut oil, 1 tsp chopped Thai chile, 1 T Benziger Signaterra Sauvignon Blanc

Method: Mix ingredients for crab fritters and form into 1 Oz patties. Chill in fridge for 20 minutes. Meanwhile set up 3 separate containers with flour egg and breadcrumbs. Bring grapeseed oil to 325 in 2 qt sauce pan. Combine ingredients for mignonette and set aside. Dredge chilled crab cakes in flour, egg and breadcrumbs. Fry until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Serve hot with mignonette.

(Benziger Signaterra Sauvignon Blanc is a clean, fruity white that balances the earthy soy sauce and spicy chile in the mignonette. A chilled glass served alongside the piping hot fritters would be a beautiful appetizer for your Valentines Eve dinner. Recipe by Ari Weiswasser, Chef, NYC.)

Check out Our Ongoing Store Specials

Case discounts — 12 bottles: 15%; six bottles: 10%

Pink pricing — 15% discount on select bottles

Two for Tuesday — 25% off

Mix & Match — Three for \$24.99 on select bottles

The 90s Club — Wines rated 90+ Pts for under \$20

Wine & Spirits offers year-round custom made gift baskets and a variety of wine bar gifts and accessories: Riedel glasses, foil cutters, corkscrews, decanters, wine stoppers and wine bags.

90s Club (90+ points, under \$20)

Olivares Altos de la Hoya Monastrell (2007) Spain **\$10.99** (reg \$12.99) Medium-bodied with dark berry, light mint, oak. 91 (ST)

Frei Brothers Reserve Zinfandel (2007) Sonoma **\$16.99** Rich blackberry, cherry and spices. 90 (RP)

Louis M. Martini Cab Sauv (2006) Sonoma **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99) Ripe black cherry, currant, spice. Pair with beef or lamb. 90 (RP)

Martin Codax Albarino (2007) Spain **\$10.99** (reg \$12.99) Floral nose; citrus, pear and peach flavors. 91 (WS/Top100)

Kendall Jackson Grand Reserve Chardonnay (2006) CA **\$16.99** (reg \$19.99) Lemon; toasted oak and spice. 90 (WS)

Spotlight on Benziger Wines

We had the pleasure recently of having lunch with Erinn Benziger of California's Benziger Wines and sampling the Russian River Valley Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir from the Signaterra Collection. A natural-born teacher, Benziger speaks conversationally and enthusiastically but with the authority of one who has absorbed her family's winemaking philosophy like the grapes that have absorbed the soil's nutrients. Winemakers since 1980, the Benzigers have been using "formal, sustainable grape growing methods since 1996." While none of the Benziger labels make any loud or obvious claims to organic certification, the wines are in fact made from sustainable, organically grown or biodynamic grapes. To qualify for this certification is neither quick nor easy and involves several years and deep commitment to stringently monitored practices. For the Benzigers, it is a matter of respect for the land and for the cyclical nature of winemaking and wine drinking. The 2007 Sauvignon Blanc has flavors of tangerine, papaya and herbs, and has strong minerality; the 2006 Pinot Noir has red fruit and spice flavors with soft, chalky tannins and a lingering finish.



Overlooking the 'bowl' of Benziger Wines' 85-acre biodynamic estate in California's Russian River Valley.