



March 2015

Grapevine

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For the Love of Blends

Only Chard for me, I'm a Cab lover, Pinot Noir is my muse... Certainly they are all fabulous, but what about blends? There are plenty of blends wine-lovers out there, too, and they are on to something. Reds, our focus this go-round, are more commonly blended than whites — though there are some terrific white blends. So wiggle away from your tried and true purebreds long enough to explore the delicious possibility of blends — far from mutts — and prepare to be wowed.

Combining varietals allows for enhanced color, aroma, body, flavor and texture, creating a complex wine. Many regions around the world produce some oh-so-fine blends. Among the most well known, historically, are those from France's Bordeaux region and the Rhone Valley, California, Tuscany and Jumilla, Spain.

Bordeaux, located in the southwest of France near the Atlantic coast, grows Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petit Verdot and Carménère. Wines from the Right Bank are dominated by Merlot; the Left Bank by Cabernet Sauvignon. Right Bank Bordeaux tends to be fruitier; those from the Left Bank generally are more tannic. The **2009 Chateau Larose-Trintaudon Cru Bourgeois** from Haut-Medoc on the Left Bank is an excellent Cabernet Sauvignon dominant blend,



Castello (Castle) Banfi in the heart of Tuscany

aged in French oak, with notes of currants, earth and raspberries. 91 RP \$20.49

Meritage, rhymes with heritage, was coined from the words *merit* and *heritage* and is used for wines made outside Bordeaux in the Bordeaux style. The **2011 Franciscan Estate 'Magnificat' Meritage** from Napa Valley is a Cab-driven blend with touches of Merlot, Petit Verdot and Malbec, with velvety tannins. \$44.39

The Rhone Valley grows thirteen grape varietals, and some southern Rhone blends may include all thirteen. (Northern Rhones tend to be all Syrah or Syrah blended with Viognier, a white grape.) The five most well known red varietals are Grenache, Mourvèdre, Syrah, Carignan and Cinsault. The **2011 Yannick Alléno & Michel Chapoutier Côtes du Rhône** is a Syrah-Grenache blend with notes of tobacco leaf and blackberries. \$11.99

Rhone Rangers are Rhone blends from outside the Rhone Valley. The spicy, smooth Grenache-driven **2012 Beckmen Cuvée Le Bec** from Santa Ynez Valley is blended with Mourvedre, Syrah and Counoise and is a fantastic example of just how good a blend can be. \$16.19

Super Tuscan is a term used to distinguish wine from that made according to more stringent Tuscan DOC regulations and the less prestigious table wines. Producers of Super Tuscan wanted more flexibility in their winemaking, blending with non-traditional varietals like Merlot, Syrah or Cabernet Sauvignon. Born from a desire to step beyond the bounds, they are bold, rich wines more than worth some investigation. The **2012 Banfi Centine** is mostly Sangiovese, blended with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Barrel-aged, it is rich with supple tannins. \$9.39

Spanish reds are delicious, and they are great wine values. While Tempranillo is the chief grape in Rioja, Jumilla makes wide use of Monastrell, aka Mourvedre, with 80% of the region's vineyard land given to growing it. It has dense fruit and spice characteristics and is a great partner to a variety of grapes, including Tempranillo, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The **2011 Luzón 'Seleccion 12' Crianza** is Monastrell blended with Cab, Tempranillo and Merlot, and it tastes of pipe tobacco, allspice, toast and cocoa. 91 WS \$11.99

Growing grapes, making wine and creating the perfect blend is a marriage of art and science. Tasting and detecting the nuances of aroma and flavor of different varietals is a joy and a challenge. Invite friends over for a taste test with a few blends from different regions, and toast to Friday night. ♦

Incredible Savings!
15% off all Wine —
Every Bottle,
Every Day!!!

Did you know... Many American wines are blends, even though their labels may carry a single grape name. That is permitted if the grape makes up at least 75 percent of the blend. Many bottles labeled Merlot, for instance, are 25 percent Cabernet Sauvignon.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

Fri 3/6: High-End Pinot Noir Tasting: Different styles and from different regions, don't miss this Pinot Noir tasting.

Sat 3/7, 3/14, 3/21 & 3/28: New Arrivals: We'll pour a spectrum of our latest, greatest vinous gems.

Fri 3/13: Luck o' the Irish for Friday the 13th: Wines for your St. Patrick's Day corned beef and cabbage.

Fri 3/20: March Staff Picks: Try our favorite blended wines for March — old world and new world stunners.

Fri 3/27: New Arrivals Single Varietals: More new arrivals, but this time let us show you some single grape wonders.

News & Our Latest Goings-on

So Many Wines, So Little Time

By now, you've noticed that our Friday tastings typically revolve around a theme, while Saturday tastings feature new arrivals. The aisles of newly arrived wines is growing so fast, because there are so many good and interesting ones out there, and we just can't resist them.

You'll see a lot more New Arrivals tastings, peppered with holiday line-ups and Staff Picks. It's our way of introducing you to the numerous more-than-worthy wines out there, and we hope you'll enjoy meeting and tasting all these new gems.

With Spring on the way, the 2014 Rosés are arriving daily! Check out our Rosé Garden.

Mo's Pulled Pork

From customer and friend, Maureen Naughton

2 pork loins, fat trimmed
2 Vidalia onions, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
1 ½ cups red wine (*a blend would be perfect, with fruitiness and spice*)
1/2 cup spicy mustard
2 ½ cups good quality BBQ sauce (*Sweet Baby Ray's or Jack Daniels are delicious*)
1 Tbsp toasted sesame oil
2 Tbsp tamari or soy sauce
1 small can tomato paste



INSTRUCTIONS

Put pork loins in crock pot on high; add onions, salt and pepper; douse with red wine.

Mix spicy mustard with 2 cups BBQ sauce, sesame oil and tamari, then add to pork. After 30 minutes, reduce to low. Cook for 3-4 hours; add tomato paste and remaining BBQ sauce. Using 2 forks, pull the pork apart and continue on low for another 30 minutes.

Serve on brioche rolls with a good blue cheese, melted, or cole slaw. Open a bottle of your favorite Red Blend, and toast to friends.

Lucky Aqueduct *Adapted from Food & Wine Magazine*

This variation on the old-fashioned is named after the one racetrack located within New York City limits. Place your bets and see if you have the luck o' the Irish.

2 maraschino cherries, plus 1 maraschino cherry and 1 orange wheel skewered on a toothpick
1 orange slice, halved crosswise
1/4 ounce Simple Syrup
2 dashes of Angostura Bitters
2 ounces bourbon
Ice
1 ounce chilled club soda



In a rocks glass, muddle the 2 cherries with the orange slice, Simple Syrup and bitters. Add the bourbon, then fill the glass with ice and add the club soda. Pour the drink back and forth between the rocks glass and a pint glass 3 times, then pour it into the rocks glass. Garnish with the skewered cherry and orange wheel.

March 2015 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2014 Trivento Amado Sur Blanco (Mendoza) \$10.99 (reg \$12.99) A blend of 70% Chardonnay with the rest comprised of Pinot Grigio and Viognier. Lush pear, with notes of pineapple, white peach and apricot. *Pan seared scallops

Ted: 2011 Chateau de Paraza Minervois (Languedoc) \$9.49 (reg \$10.99) Blended from 40/40/20 Grenache/Syrah/Mourvedre, the medium weight palate is balanced and well integrated. * Bacon-wrapped filet mignon

Bill: 2012 Tablas Creek Vineyard Patelin de Tablas (Paso Robles) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) Just over half Syrah and the remainder coming from Grenache, Mourvedre and Counoise. Spice, fruit and mineral. *Roast chicken with herbs

Ian: 2011 Yannick Alléno & Michel Chapoutier Côtes du Rhône (Rhône Valley) \$11.99 (reg \$13.99) A Syrah-Grenache blend with aromas and flavors of tobacco leaf and blackberries, with a subtle note of black olive. *Smoked pork chops

Graham: 2011 Santi Solane Ripasso (Valpolicella) \$11.49 (reg \$13.49) Corvina and Rondinella grapes were refermented on partially dried whole grapes to enrich the fruity delicate aromas. *Spaghetti with slow-cooked tomato sauce and meatballs

Damian: 2012 Michael David Winery 'Earthquake' Zinfandel (Lodi) \$21.99 (reg \$26.99) 93 Pts (WE) Zin and Petite Sirah -- peppery and spicy with berry fruit and Provencal garrigue. *Baby back ribs with just enough spice

Max: NV Stratton Lummi The Riddler Lot Four (Sonoma) \$16.19 (reg \$18.99) 53/33 Merlot and Cab Sauv, with the rest Malbec, Cab Franc and Syrah. Spicy aromas of clove and cinnamon; dark fruit flavors. *Ribeye steaks on the grill