

SML-Uncorked

The Wine Newsletter of Supermarket Liquors
Fort Collins, Colorado

Issue 2 Sept - Oct 2005

Issue #2 of *SML Uncorked* finds Reno's golf score on the improve, our first Wine-of-the-Month on the shelf, several wine events scheduled, and another new wine program in the chute. In the next issue we'll have membership details about the new SML Wine Club, the focus being the finer wines of the world, brought to you at substantial discount. This issue features Supermarket Liquor's first Wine-of-the-Month selection, a program whose goal is to offer our customers the finest under-\$10 wine we can find. Our criteria are simple. The selected wine must:

- elicit at least one joyful profanity from the staff when we taste it
- be authentic (no wine beverage flaunting cute southern hemisphere animals on the label need apply)
- be produced by a winemaker who leads us to believe he or she actually cares
- express a sense of place
- be unquestionably better than its peers, both in quality and value
- be something we would buy for ourselves

My first selection surprised me: the L de Lyeth 2002 Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon. Months pass without hearing the words "value" and "California Cabernet" in the same sentence, so while I was very pleased at the level of complexity, force of flavor, and firm frame exhibited by this wine, the price cinched the deal. Given the ultra competitive state of the market and California's lackluster record in this price category, I don't know when we'll see another California wine chosen.

If you have any requests, please don't hesitate to call me. Tracking down special wines is one of the small joys of a wine buyer, and the search frequently leads us to interesting discoveries.

Cin-cin,

Tom DeLia

* newsletter prices on all wines are in effect through Oct 15 and limited to stock on hand



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Hurricane Katrina Fundraiser

100% of proceeds donated to American Red Cross.
Pasta dinners at Domenic's & Buca.
Sunday, September 18, 2005.

Seatings:

4:30 pm 6:00 pm 7:30 pm 9:00 pm

\$19.95 per person. Includes three pastas, salad, wine, and beer.

Locations:

Domenic's	Buca
931 E. Harmony	130 S. Mason
Fort Collins, CO	Fort Collins, CO
970-207-0411	970-407-8100

Call for additional information and reservations.

Wine-of-the-Month

L de Lyeth Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon 2002 (California)

Reg. price: \$9.99

Sale: \$7.99

In 1988, Lyeth Winery was one of the founding members of the California Meritage Association, a producer group dedicated to promoting blended wines using the five great red Bordeaux grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Petit Verdot. (The Bordeaux whites—Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Sauvignon Vert, and Muscadelle—are also part of the Meritage palette, but the term is virtually synonymous with blended California reds at this point.) The L de Lyeth series focuses on varietal bottlings like this Cabernet Sauvignon sourced from Sonoma County vineyards. Rarely do we see Cabernet of this caliber—let alone from Sonoma fruit—that shows such solid value. At \$7.99, it is a dandy medium-bodied wine showing a nice sense of complexity, depth, and a frame of moderate tannins, which carry and balance the fairly rich fruit. Unmistakably Cabernet Sauvignon, its layered flavors reveal blackcurrant, plum, blueberry, a touch of herbiness, and distinct notes of mocha, toasted oak, and cedar. I am pressed to think of a California Cabernet that offers more substance for less than \$10—so much so, in fact, that this is our first Wine-of-the-Month selection. Match it with a spice-rubbed, grilled steak before the winter winds blow. (TD)



Featured White Wine

Santa Barbara Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico “Le Vaglie” 2004 (Italy)

Reg. price: \$15.49

Sale: \$13.49

The name of the grape is *Verdicchio*; the name of the wine is *Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi*; the producer is the *Casa Vinicola Santa Barbara*, and *Le Vaglie* is this particular bottling. Confusing, yes, but let us worry the details while you enjoy one of the finest Italian whites to cross our path this year. Imagine a new wool blanket covered with silk, and you have an idea of the wonderful texture of this updated version of one of the classic central Italian white wines. Partly fermented in wood, partly in stainless steel, and then divided into thirds to age in neutral tanks, large wood barrels called “botti,” and oak barrique, the result is a vision of loveliness we find completely seductive. The wine’s elegant balance is its defining feature, an elegance that doesn’t mask its wonderful richness and drive of flavor: dried pears, lemons, and the characteristic almond/hazelnut finish. Superb white wine here—not to miss! Match this with Chef K’s seared scallop recipe, page 8. (TD)

White Wine Selections

Domaine le Peu de la Moriette Vouvray 2003 (France)

Reg. price: \$11.99

Sale: \$10.49

Vouvray is a pretty little town on the northern bank of the Loire river, just to the east of the city of Tours, from which the region of Touraine takes its name. Vouvray is a wine made of Chenin Blanc from the village of Vouvray in the Touraine, where the chalky, limestone soils and generally cool weather give the wines bright, crisp acidity, and ground stone flavors. The Chenin Blanc gives flowery melon, grapefruit, quince and honeysuckle. Together they create white wines that are remarkably long-lived, delicious and refreshing, widely complimentary to food, and having the uncanny and rare combination of firmness and elegance. Jean-Claude Pichot's family, proprietors of Domaine Le Peu de la Moriette, is one of the oldest in Vouvray, with origins as viticulturalists dating back to 1739. The yields are astonishingly tiny and the hillside vineyards are cultivated without chemical pesticides. In an era when most Vouvray is the product of negotiants, the stylish wines of the Pichot family (Jean-Claude and son Christophe) continue to show the perfumed elegance of Chenin Blanc, an authentic expression of a particular terrain, climate, cellar and producer's art. (Steve Kershner)

Wine Tip

You can enhance the pleasure of your everyday wine drinking by using simple crystal stemware instead of glass. It looks and feels special, shows any wine at its best, and makes even a glass of White Zin feel like an occasion.

Villiera Stellenbosch Bush Vine Sauvignon Blanc 2004 (South Africa)

Reg. price: \$13.99

Sale: \$12.49

This is a single vineyard Sauvignon Blanc from older, low-yielding, untrellised vines. This form of vine training, with denser canopy providing more shade on the bunches, results in an unusual style of wine with grassier, herbaceous flavors. The old vines provide small yields that ensure intensity of flavor. There are hints of stony minerals, flint, wet river stones, green pepper, and fig. This is a very dry, crisp style Sauvignon Blanc, not unlike Sancerre or Quincy from the French Loire. Serve this with steamed or roasted vegetables, mussels, Parma ham, smoked fish, goat cheese, for a few ideas. This is very well made wine for the style. (SK)



White Wine Selections Continued

Clusserath Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Kabinett 2001 (Germany)

Reg price: \$13.79

Sale: \$11.99

Trittenheim is a village in Germany's middle Mosel, and Apotheke is a steep, slate slope, southwest-exposed vineyard site, prime Riesling garden. The wine is made by the Clusserath daughter Eva, who is young and talented. Talk about your small producer—they own less than 10 acres and make only about 2000 cases of wine. The wine is delicate, but vibrant; off-dry and round; subtle and interesting; mineral shades as if shaped from deep in the earth, but spring water fresh; balanced and pert; lip smacking fruit flavors of golden apple and Asian pear, with energy-giving licks of lime and hints of tarragon. There is a creamy, leesy richness, and that ever-present middle Mosel minerality. I think I could drink a gallon, it's that delicious, tender, and refreshing. (SK)

Fernand Engel Alsace Gewurztraminer 2002 & Tokay Pinot Gris 2002 (France)

Reg. price: \$10.99

Sale: \$9.99

Situated on the west bank of the Rhine River and wedged between the rival geopolitical claims of Germany and France, the region known as Alsace has been a rope in the tug-of-war between the two countries for centuries. After WW I, Alsace reverted to French rule after nearly fifty years under the Prussian imperial crown, and today the two cultures are inextricably intertwined, albeit with a deep French veneer. For the casual wine buyer such a mix can be a bit misleading. Alsace winemakers—most have German names—use green flute bottles that are often mistaken for the semi-sweet wines usually associated with Germany. Where German wines are

delicate, Alsace's tend to be powerful; where Germans are often sweet, Alsace's rarely are; where Riesling is the grape of choice for virtually all serious German wines, in Alsace Riesling shares top billing with Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer, and Muscat. Alsace's wines are predominantly white, and its best are numbered among the world's finest. I don't, however, pretend to make that claim for these two modest, yet delightful, wines from Fernand Engel. Both offer a glimpse into the pleasures of Alsace, but they merit your attention solely on the basis of their quality and value.

Gewurztraminer 2002 ... aromatic, softly textured, off dry, and filled with roses, lychee, and orange blossoms, i.e., varietally true. The classic complement to authentic Muenster cheese.

Pinot Gris 2002 ... shows a slight whiff of honeysuckle and a peach-like core, medium body, a texture more opulent than that of its Italian cousin, Pinot Grigio, and a soft presentation. If you enjoy the weight of Chardonnay but would like to escape the cliché of sweetness, oak, and butter, this is a fine choice. (TD)



Red Wine Selections

Chateau Puygueraud Bordeaux Cotes de Francs 2002 (France)

Reg. price: \$ 17.99

Sale: \$15.99

This estate is owned by the respected Thienpont family, proprietors of many Bordeaux estates including Vieux Chateau Certan, Le Pin, Pavie Macquin, and Lebegorce-Zede. They are right bank Bordeaux specialists. The Cotes de Francs area lies east of St. Emilion, the highest and driest of the Bordeaux appellations, with limestone and clay soils. Merlot and Cabernet Franc vines do well here, and like their St. Emilion and Pomerol cousins, the wines are generally a bit softer than those Cabernet Sauvignon–based wines of the Haut Medoc on the left bank. 55% Merlot, 25% Cab Franc, 15% Cab Sauv, 5% Malbec; 5000 case production; 18 months in various wood casks, 25% new. This wine is fairly lush and round; black fruit flavors abound; great wine for beef; high quality and an amazing value in Bordeaux for mid-term. (SK)

Clos de la Coutale Cahors 2001 (France)

Reg. price: \$13.49

Sale: \$11.99

This wine from past vintages has been a newsletter item a few times through the years. It is still an exceptional value and still a very solid wine, produced in a unique and interesting area in the south central part of France, about 100 miles south of Bordeaux. The grape varieties are Malbec 70%, Merlot 20%, and Tannat 10%. Tannat is gathering some popularity as a wine grape in Argentina and Uruguay. The Malbec is also known as Cot (especially in the Loire Valley) and is also locally called Auxerois. The wines are often referred to as the "Black Wines of Cahors" due to their rich, nearly black color. The area is well known for the production of truffles. It is deep, dark wine, with substantial flavor; black raspberries, earth, cedar, animal fur and leather hints, and complements flavory, rich stews, game and beef dishes, and is a good companion to grilled foods. No wimp here—robust and full flavored and well worth the price. (SK)

Mapema Mendoza Tempranillo 2003 (Argentina)

Reg. price: \$13.99

Sale: \$12.49

This traditional Spanish grape variety finds an accepting home in Argentina. This is 100% Tempranillo, grown at over 3000' altitude in La Consulta Argentina, hand harvested from vines over 40 years old. The wine was aged 12 months in new French and American oak. Only 500 cases were produced. The wine shows the intense fruit character found in typical Tempranillo from Spain but has a beautiful richness in the finish that is uncommon. There are blackberry and black cherry and black raspberry flavors, spicy shades in the finish like cardamom and allspice, and a touch of smokiness from the new wood barrels. This is a surprisingly elegant wine considering its ample rich flavors, beautifully balanced. Serve with grilled chicken, pork, and lighter beef dishes. (SK)

Red Wine Selections Continued

Toad Hall Carneros Pinot Noir Lavender Hill Vineyard 2003 (California)

Reg. price: \$22.99

Sale: \$19.99

Since the release of the film *Sideways* last year and the jaw-dropping demand it created for Pinot Noir, is any newsletter complete without one or two? This issue of *SML Uncorked* features two: a workhorse, value-priced Argentinian, and this, a beautifully wrought example of Carneros Pinot Noir, a grape that doesn't suffer kindly any missteps in the winemaking process. Here are my immediate notes along with later comments: "amazing elegance and grace" (admirable overall balance between succulent Pinot Noir flavors, acidity, alcohol, and tannin), "well-structured" (all the acids are harmonious and sufficient to focus the fruit without being obvious), "raspberry, boysenberry flavors, French oak" (fermentation occurred in oak barrels followed by nine months in barrique, a third new; no fining, no filtering), "like wonderfully worn-in leather" (judicious oak ageing provides a subtle smoky character and velvety tannins). Were we point scorers here at SML, this would get ... a lot. Toad Hall's success with a wine of this caliber reassures us that California is making solid and continuing progress understanding this most finicky of all the great grapes. (TD)

Dessilani Colline Novaresi Spanna Riserva 2000 (Italy)

Reg. price: \$12.99

Sale: \$11.49

Toward the end of the Roman Republic, the warring consuls Marius and Sulla fought a battle in the Novara hills of northern Piemonte. Sulla (Silla, in Italian) won and awarded land to his bravest soldiers, who became known as "dei sillani," which evolved into "Dessilani," the name of the family that produces this Nebbiolo-based red wine. (Spanna is the local name for Nebbiolo.) Dessilani's wines have been sold in Colorado since at least the early 1980s, but until recently I've often found them to be dried-out, lean, and oxidized, a occasional gem here and there, but reliably uneven. Someone obviously is paying attention now, because we are in the midst of a good run of vintages at this 113-year-old estate. The 2000 Colline Novaresi Spanna shows warm deep flavors, soft ripe tannins, and all the complexity one expects from Italy's premier black grape. The rose, cranberry, and dark cherry aromas are seasoned by notes of leather and holiday spices. Drinking well right now, and much softer than I expected, this wine could match well with just about any preparation of game or as the lead-in to a special bottle of Barolo. (TD)



Red Wine Selections Continued

La Calonica Toscana Sangiovese 2003 (Italy)

Reg. price: \$9.99

Sale: \$8.99

In economic terms, Sangiovese is Italy's most important wine grape, grown in more than 85,000 hectares of vineyard, fully 10% of the country's total land under vine. It is central Italy's classic red variety, being the heart, body, and soul of the great Tuscan trio of Chianti, Brunello di Montalcino, and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. If you've ever enjoyed Chianti, you've tasted Sangiovese. The Cattani family of La Calonica farms 32 hectares of vines in southern Tuscany near Montepulciano and Lake Trasimeno, where they produce this light-bodied red, a modern mix of 70% Sangiovese and 30% Merlot. The Merlot rounds out the wiry, lean frame of the Sangiovese, yet preserves its typical black cherry/pie cherry profile on a firm frame of tannin and acidity. At only 12.5% alcohol (in contrast to the 14-16%+ monsters we see on a daily basis) this is a wine happy to play a supporting role at the table. (TD)



Upcoming Events

November 8: Spanish Wine Dinner at Chimney Park Bistro, Windsor, 6:30 pm

Chef Florian Wehrl promises a superb dinner with a Spanish flair to match the wines of importer, Steven Berardi, a Colorado-based broker of fine Italian, French, and Spanish wines. An Italian and French specialist, Steve recently added an array of Spanish wines to his portfolio, which he tasted several months back with Robert Parker at the don's restaurant headquarters outside Baltimore. For some fifteen years we've known and respected Steve's wine savvy. This promises to be an enlightening evening of food and wine. If you've not yet tried Chimney Park, think about joining us to experience one of northern Colorado's most delightful dining venues (406 Main Street, Windsor). Tickets are \$85, exclusive of tax and gratuity; call 970-686-1477 for reservations.

Wine Classes for Beginners

We are sponsoring an autumn series of wine classes designed for the novice wine drinker to be held at Jay's Bistro in Fort Collins on September 27, October 11, and October 25. SML wine buyer Tom DeLia and Mark Eppel of Baroness Imports will moderate the classes, which, while aimed at the beginner, will appeal to anyone who enjoys lively wine conversation, interesting wines, and Jay's delicious hors d'oeuvres. We guarantee a pain-free, no-attitude wine experience. 6:30-8:00 pm; tickets are \$35 per class or \$90 for all three. Call 970-482-1876 for reservations; seating limited to 18 per evening. Schedule:

September 27 – White Wines

October 11 – Red Wines

October 25 – Quality Factors in Wine

Chef K's Table

SEARED SEA SCALLOPS WITH PANCETTA AND SAFFRON BEURRE BLANC

12 large sea scallops
4 tablespoons olive oil
4 ounces Caramelized Onions
1 cup Saffron Beurre Blanc
Crispy Pancetta

In two sauté pans over high heat, sear the scallops in the oil until golden brown and just cooked through, about 30-45 seconds per side. Re-warm the onions, divide on four plates and top with 3 scallops. Spoon the sauce around the scallops and sprinkle the pancetta over the dish. 4 appetizer servings.

Caramelized Onions:
2 tablespoons olive oil
6 medium yellow onions, sliced thinly
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

In a large pan, add the oil and onions. Cook over low heat for about 40 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes, until the onions are soft and caramelized. Add the salt and pepper.

Crispy Pancetta:
4 ounces finely diced Pancetta
2 tablespoons olive oil

Heat the oil in a sauté pan. Add the ham and cook over medium-low heat until lightly brown and crispy. Drain the pancetta and let cool on a paper towel.

Lemon-Saffron Beurre Blanc:
1 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon shallot, finely diced
1/2 teaspoon saffron threads, crumbled
3 tablespoons heavy cream
6 ounces cold unsalted butter
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Reduce the wine and saffron with the shallots until syrupy and nearly dry. Add the cream and reduce by half. Slowly add the butter and whisk until emulsified. Add the lemon juice, zest and salt. Hold warm.

To place an order, contact us at:

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Fort Collins, CO 80524
970-221-2428
wine@sml-uncorked.com

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