



Wines of the Month Club

How the club works

- Two bottles of specially selected wine each month
 - Free Delivery to your home or office
(within our delivery radius)
 - Tasting Notes and Food Pairing suggestions
- Members only discount on reorders of monthly selections

Our wine buyer Colin Southcombe, searches the international market place for wines that are new, different or highly rated. They are then evaluated by our tasting panel. The wines come from all over the world and the selections range from lesser known native grapes from the Old World to block buster varietals from the New World. They are always wines that are new to the store and are offered to members before they are put on the shelves. They are wines that you will not find in regular liquor stores.

Members can choose to receive one white wine and one red, or two reds. We even have some members who choose to have all three. The monthly charge is \$50 or \$75. The wines will fluctuate in individual price, however they will average out over a year to more than \$25 per bottle, so membership represents a distinct saving. Membership is normally for six months or one year and paid monthly by pre-authorized credit card.

It also makes a fabulous gift that provides the recipient with an ongoing experience of distinctive and hard to find wines delivered every month. You can give that special someone a trial membership of three months for only \$150!



June 2010

Welcome to the Wines of the Month for June.

The California wine industry has a much longer history than our own domestic one, which really only came of age in the past couple of decades. So there are many British Columbians who honed their wine taste buds on Californian wine. Now with the invasion of good wines from South America at lower prices and many from the old world too, they may find the Californians relatively quite expensive.

Still there are some superb wines made in California and Napa Valley Cab Sauv is an obvious example. The movie "Bottleshock" witnessed the level that these can reach on the world stage. For my selections this month I was quite challenged to find wines at our \$25-30 price level and on that basis, Cab failed to make the cut. The second most widely grown grape and typical of California is of course Zinfandel and this month's leader.

The bonus in showcasing California came when I found all "eco friendly" wines. I use this term in the store to cover the range of wines that are sustainably farmed, organic or even bio-dynamic. No matter what level or what you call it, there is huge value in going back to basics in farming, using beneficial bugs, organic composting, specific plantings on the vineyard floor to deter pests, etc. These folks run sheep or chickens through their vineyards for natural manure. This is caring for the land and we know that the quality of the wine is made in the vineyard, especially when the minimum of human interference is used from that point on.

A word about sulfites, as this topic always comes up when organic wine is mentioned. All but a tiny fraction of wines contain sulfites, small amounts of which are a by-product of fermentation and these diminish after several months in the bottle. However some winemakers add more to prevent spoilage and oxidation. As a few people are allergic, it is required in the US to state on the label if the wine contains 10 ppm or more.

For the next 3 months members can purchase additional bottles of any of these wines, or selections from the past 3 months at a flat rate \$25, significantly less than the shelf prices. Subject of course to availability.

Cheers,

Colin Southcombe

De Loach Russian River Chardonnay 2006, California

Vinyard:

In February of 2010 the De Loach Vineyard was certified as Bio Dynamic, the highest level of organic accreditation to be given to only 64 wineries or vineyards in the world. The owners don't see this as a destination for their winery, but as an affirmation that they are on the right track. Their Mission is to constantly restore health to the land. While this particular wine predates the certification, it is a product of seven years of sustainable farming and winery practices. Sheep graze and trim the vegetation beneath the vines; bees pollinate the half acre organic gardens and the cover crops planted between the rows of vines, which grow in volcanic, calcium rich soil. All is natural here.

Background:

The vineyard was started in 1976 by Cecil De Loach and was one of the first wineries established in the now world famous Russian River Valley, Sonoma County of California. In 2003 the De Loach estate of 17 acres was purchased by the Boisset family of Burgundy, France, who brought their experience of sustainable and organic practices to the estate.

Grape:

100% Chardonnay, one of the varieties for which the cool climate Russian River has become famous.

Wine Making:

A strict terroir approach and selected grapes from carefully tended vines, yielded exceptional fruit. After malolactic conversion the wine was fermented in 35% pre used oak, 20% new oak and the balance in stainless steel tanks. The wine was aged in French and Hungarian oak for eleven months before bottling in late 2007.

Appearance:

Light straw with good legs.

Nose:

Ripe pear and apricot with vanilla notes and a hint of star fruit.

Palate:

A leaner style than many Chardonnays from this area, there is notable acidity, which gives it a slightly prickly mouth feel that actually adds to its food friendliness. Intricately layered with delicate complexity and style. With soft fruit and a hint of spice and smoky flavours, it finishes dry with a clean aftertaste. The wine has good structure and definition.

Ratings and Awards:

Wine & Spirits Magazine named De Loach a Top 100 Winery for the tenth time in 2009. Wine Enthusiast 88 Pts. Wine Spectator 87 Pts. Gold Medal San Francisco.

Food pairing:

Serve well chilled with local fresh halibut, freshly shucked oysters or grilled chicken sausages. It's also great on its own for those who like their Chardonnay just slightly oaked.

Wine Buyer's Comment:

Oak is evident to be sure, but this is how I like Chardonnay, when the oak is subtle and balanced with the distinctive fruit. No need to cellar this wine; it is ready to enjoy, right here and right now. CS



Sobon Estate Old Vines Zinfandel 2007, California

Vinyard:

One of the oldest wineries in California, the historic D'Agostini Winery in Amador, was purchased in 1989 and renamed Sobon Estate. Several blocks of old Zinfandel vines were retained and the rest of the vineyards were replanted with the best varieties and clones. Right from the start, a strict regimen of sustainable farming was employed. Organic composting, beneficial bugs and other natural growing techniques, encourage healthier grapes and better tasting wines from their deliberately low yielding vines.

Background:

Leon Sobon founded Shenandoah Vineyards on 1977 as one of the first four wineries in Amador County's now well known Shenandoah Valley appellation. Leon and his wife are still active and the successful combination of the 125 acres of Shenandoah and Sobon Vineyards is now a family affair with their two sons and son in law in the key roles of winemaker, business manager and sales and marketing director.

Grape:

All the grapes are estate grown, 97% Zinfandel from several blocks of old vines dating back to the days of D'Agostini and 3% Petite Syrah to add a subtle difference to this Amador County classic.

Wine Making:

Trained in France and Australia, Paul Sobon is the winemaker and a Zinfandel fanatic. The grapes are picked, selected and fermented using traditional methods and the wine was matured for 11 months in older French and American oak, before bottling in August 2008. Subsequent bottle aging has contributed further and this is predicted to continue through 2011. Paul's emphasis is on high fruit and low tannins.

Appearance:

Bright ruby with depth and lustre.

Nose:

Classic Zinfandel nose. Ripe berry fruit, green pepper with a hint of mushroom and even dill pickle.

Palate:

Generous full mouth feel, gently oaked and velvety. Not perhaps as spicy as many Amador Zins can be, but full bodied with delicious fruit flavours of deep, rich, ripe blackberry. Long smooth finish with soft tannins. For a wine at 14.9% alcohol, it is extraordinarily well integrated, with no hotness.

Ratings and Awards:

Silver Medal California State fair 2009, 90 Pts "Just Wine Points".

Food pairing:

Mild cheese or appetisers, or on its own. It will match with many foods, but don't overwhelm this magnificent wine with strong flavoured dishes.

Wine Buyer's Comment:

Synonymous with California, as it is not widely grown in other parts of the world, Zin has been grown there since the 1850's and is the 2nd most planted grape after Cab Sauv. The Sobon family is serious about their environmental consciousness. The entire winery roof is covered in solar panels, so that they can generate 100% of their electrical needs for lighting, heating, cooling. Everything is recycled, paper, glass, metal, etc. They even make their own compost (600 to 800 tons a year) from grape skins, seeds and stems. They care and you can tell from the wine! This is a winner! CS

