

January 25, 2010

The Sommelier Says....

Hello and welcome to the newsletter for <http://www.wine-sommelier.com/>

Sommelier Says Goes BLOG!

**Please take a few minutes and signup for my wine blog
at:**

<http://sommeliersays.blogspot.com/>

**This will be the last issue emailed out- there will still be
PDF copies available on my web site at:**

<http://www.wine-sommelier.com/newsletters.html>

Some Wine Tasting Tips

When wine tasting, do you go with the mindset in buying more wines for your cellar, or are you just going out there to see what's new. Either way, I have a few tips for you.

1) First do some research on the various wineries in the area you are visiting, find those that have what you are looking for. Do you like Italian varietals? Whites only? Sweet wines or big red wines? Every winery has a different expertise in wine-making styles. Find the ones that make what you might be looking for.

2) When visiting wineries, take notes. Every winery has a sheet with tasting notes or a price list. Use those lists to make a few notes on the nose, and taste of the wines as you taste them. You can use this information when you finish tasting the 7 or 8 wines to decide what you liked and did not like. *(I actually keep those as my records of the wines I have enjoyed and not enjoyed).*

3) Give yourself a budget- by this I mean figure out what wines you need and how much you want to spend on each type. For example, after the Summer time heat, I am usually low on white wines, so I spend some time restocking those varietals.

4) Buy what you like, but look at what you might be eating while wine tasting and how that affects the taste of the wines. For example a few years back a few of us went wine tasting and we wandered upon a little winery, the wines were not anything to write home about. But while tasting the wife of the winemaker brought out of BBQ meatballs to have with the wines. Four of us ended up walking out of

there with cases of wines. Later, at home, opening the wines, I ended up using most of them for cooking.

5) If you find wines you enjoy at a winery, ask someone there who else in the area makes wines in that style- I have been very pleasantly surprised when a winery refers me to another local winery, one that might not have been on my radar.

6) It is okay to dump your wine if you do not like it... or spit (*your wine*) into the dump bucket. No one will think anything less of you.

Café Firenze- Redo

We had not been back to Café Firenze since 'the boys' left and we thought we would give them a try. So one recent Friday afternoon I gave them a call to get reservations for that night (something that was impossible to do a few months ago) and I got in at the time I requested- no problems.

We were seated in the old deli area, which they have turned into a nice dining room, and our waiter gave us the menus and wine lists and I selected a wine. The waiter then said they might be out of it and that he would have to check. Ten minutes later he came back (had not taken our diner order yet) with the bottle of wine and I asked for it to be decanted, as it was an older bottle. He then said he wasn't sure if they had any decanters... apparently they had a large party the week before and they broke a number of them. About 10 minutes after he told us that, he came back with the decanter and opened the bottle of wine to pour into the decanter. At this point he took our order.

We then waited for 35 minutes for our salads to arrive, during that time he never came back to check on us or pour any wine from the decanter. When the salads arrived they were very good. Shortly they're after our main courses arrived. The food was excellent- something that I had always expected from Café Firenze.

Following the meal we decided on dessert- looking at the menu we both decided on a glass of Lemonchello. A typical after dinner drink in an Italian restaurant. Unfortunately the waiter told us that they were out of it, even though it was on the wine list. That was the third time during the 3-hour meal that he apologized to us.

So my overall impression, the food was great, service not so much. I had come to expect a certain level of personal service from Café Firenze, that was totally lacking on this recent visit. How has your experience been there recently? Drop me a note and let me know if my experience was a fluke or the standard now.

Camarillo Crush Wine Tasting Weekends

This past weekend a few of us ventured out to a new wine tasting location in the Ventura County- The Camarillo Crush. Located just over the bridge on Lewis

(Lewis exit off the 101). At the light, turn into the Imitation Business Complex. Unit C.

The Camarillo Crush has over 40 wine labels that come from this location, many of them are very small production, and some are becoming cult classics in wine collecting circles.

Every weekend they will be open for wine tasting from 11-5pm, and they will offer up to three of the wineries selections for tasting. This list will change every weekend. The weekend we went, they were pouring Zuma, Graystarr, and Consensio Cellars. I ended up buying a bottle from each!

Give them a try and let me know what wines you discover there!

<http://camarillocustomcrush.com/>

Upcoming Events:

March 6/7- 32nd annual Barrel Tasting along the Wine Road! 100+ Wineries! To taste at any of the participating wineries these weekends, you will need to purchase the Barrel Tasting ticket (\$20 available online on January 18). <http://www.wineroad.com/annualevents/3>

My current plans are to fly up, Burbank to Oakland on Southwest airlines on Early Saturday morning the 6th of March.

Flight:

March 6- Southwest Flight 888, Departs Burbank @ 7:10am, Arrives in Oakland @ 8:25. "Wanna get away fare" \$59
March 7- Southwest Flight 1046, Departs Oakland @ 8:00pm, Arrives in Burbank @ 9:05- Web Fare \$82.

Total cost airfare per person: \$141

Hotel:

March 6- Travel Lodge Healdsburg, 178 Dry Creek Rd, Healdsburg, CA, 95448
\$150 a night

<http://www.healdsburglodge.com/>

Let me know your thoughts and drop me a note by January 25th if you are serious about coming along.

Cheers-

Tim

**If you would like to be removed from this list, please reply to me at tim@wine-sommelier.com and request removal from this list.
If you know someone that wants this list, please have him or her send me an email requesting to be included too!**