

September 1, 2008

The Sommelier Says....

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

I am back! I have missed you all and I am looking forward to a wonderful harvest season, and tasting some nice wines.

With TMK closing last week, I felt it was time to start up this newsletter again, and keep everyone informed of the latest in the world of wine. Also I will be announcing in this newsletter any upcoming wine trips and special wine tastings that will be happening in the Ventura County area.

Bottle Shock

Bottle Shock comes to Ventura County! FINALLY.....

A few weeks ago a few of us ventured out on a Sunday to see the new movie Bottle Shock in Camarillo. Having taught classes on the Judgment of Paris and read the book by George Taber, I was really looking forward to seeing the movie. I have to say that I was not disappointed! The story was 'fairly' accurate, the acting was great, you can't beat Alan Rickman as Steven Spurrier, and the visuals were amazing. Who doesn't love the way a vineyard looks at full bloom?

My only disappointment in the movie was that it did not mention the winemaker for Chateau Montelena, it appeared in the film, that the wine maker was Jim Barrett, when in fact it was Mike Grgich, (you did see a man in a beret in the barrel room scenes.) Mike Grgich is originally from Croatia, and is 'sometimes' credited from bringing Zinfandel to California. This success permitted Grgich (with business partner Austin Hills of Hills Brothers Coffee) to establish his own winery, Grgich Hills Cellar in Rutherford, California.

The winery, which changed names to Grgich Hills Estate in 2006, owns 366 acres of vineyards and produces 70,000 cases of wine each year. Its very first vintage won the Great Chardonnay Showdown, with 221 competitors from countries around the world.

In recognition of his contributions to the wine industry, Grgich was inducted into the Vintner Hall of Fame on March 7, 2008. The tribute comes at the same time that Grgich is celebrating his 50th vintage of making wine in the Napa Valley.

Back to the movie, I give Bottle Shock a 4-bottle rating! *(My scale goes from 0-4.... Yeah I know I don't rate wines, but I will rate a movie!)*

What is Malolactic fermentation?

This term refers to a secondary fermentation process that takes place after the initial alcoholic fermentation is complete. Its contribution to a wine includes flavor enhancement, acid reduction and stability for aging.

Acids are some of the components that are present in wine after primary fermentation, along with alcohol, tannin and other compounds that together create a balanced and tasteful wine.

One of the acids, malic acid, can sometimes be desirable in certain wines, such as Riesling and Chardonnay, in that it can create a crisp sharpness.

You can associate malic acid with the kind found in apples and lactic acid with that found in milk.

Upon completion of the malolactic fermentation, the wine's flavors become a little more pronounced and texture a little rounder on the palate.

The process has an added bonus of helping to make the wine less susceptible to problems triggered by bacteria while aging in the bottle.

Most red wines have undergone malolactic fermentation, along with many chardonnays.

The result is a smoother, more interesting wine with greater long-term potential. You will notice butter like smoothness on the palate when the process has been applied to most Chardonnays.

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.