

Red Feet Wine Market
HANG TIME “A Chardonnay for Everyone”
Thursday, Sept. 25, 2007

PRICES ARE FOR:

1 BOTTLE–6 BOTTLES–12 BOTTLES (mixing is ok!)

Thevenet Mâcon-Pierreclos 2007 (Mâconnais, Burgundy, France) 100% Chardonnay
\$18.00 each - \$16.20 (6) - \$15.30 (12)

Aromas of almonds and apples introduce this wine. The palate opens with pears and minerals, adds apples and brisk acidity, and finishes with herb and lime pith. Medium weight, long finish.

Clara Benegas 2007 (Mendoza, Argentina)
100% Chardonnay

\$12.00 each - \$10.80 (6) - \$10.20 (12)

Peaches, flowers, mangoes, and honey on the nose. The peaches and flowers continue on the palate, joined by spice and pineapple with touches of vanilla and caramel. This medium bodied wine has a lingering, gentle finish. Both delicate and tropical!

Bacchus 2007 (California)

100% Chardonnay

\$12.00 each - \$10.80 (6) - \$10.20 (12)

A bouquet of thick greenery, pears, and toast. Citrus, toast, and pear flavors lead into a pineapple finish. This medium-bodied wine is great with food.

Castello Monaci “Èmera” 2007 (Puglia, Italy)

75% Chardonnay, 25% Verdeca

\$16 each - \$14.40 (6) - \$13.60 (12)

This unusual blend opens with pineapple, mango, herb, and honey aromas. Peach flavors are accented by notes of citrus pith, lemon curd, and sunflowers. The long finish is filled with apricots. The wine has a lovely texture and good acidity. Try with shellfish and scallops.

Matchbook 2006 (Dunnigan Hills & Russian River Valley, CA) 100% Chardonnay

\$17 each - \$15.30 (6) - \$14.11 (12)

The nose is full of hazelnuts and toasty wood together with tropical fruit touched by cinnamon. This creamy, round wine has flavors of sweet vanilla, cooked apple and pear, and a refreshing touch of lime. The long finish has just the right amount of acidity for freshness.

See you next Thursday for HANG TIME!
Our subject will be “Old World, New world.”
EXPLORE THE WORLD IN YOUR GLASS.

A Chardonnay for Everyone

Chardonnay is the most “classic” of the five noble white grapes. Widely planted throughout the world, it plays well with others (serving in blends) and stands tall alone. Chardonnay saw a huge surge in popularity beginning in the 1970s; increased plantings created a glut by the 1990s. The wine can be hard to identify because on the whole, the flavor is not that exciting. Its *terroir* (exact soil, weather, and

growing environment) are important in determining some of its personality, as is its *élevage* (how it is treated in the cellar).

Harsh, chalky soils produce wines with crisp minerality and acidity. The grape can stand a variety of climates, from the cool vineyards of Burgundy to the warmth of Australia and Argentina. However, pronounced day-night temperature contrasts play a major role in creating wines with finesse. The juice from even the best sites can turn into dull wine if the winemaker is not careful—too much manipulation and the wine loses its sense of place. Styles are very driven by fashion (and tradition), from rich buttery California Chardonnays to steely, stony Chablis. Many high-quality Chards are fermented with yeasts occurring naturally on the skins, while others use yeasts chosen to bring out particular traits.

Fermentation can take place in neutral vessels—stone vats, stainless steel or glass tanks, large old oak barrels; it can also be done in vessels that impart their own flavors, such as small, new oak barrels. Fermentation can happen one time or two. The second, called *malolactic fermentation*, converts the crisp malic acid (*malus*, apple) to softer lactic acid containing buttery diacetyl, creating a creamier wine. Fermentation occurs at cooler controlled temperatures, and when it is done, the yeasts die and fall to the bottom of the tank. When the wine stays in contact with these lees, it gains roundness and complexity, even more so if the lees are stirred. The wine may be aged in new or old oak or left in vat. Oak allows air in and out, concentrating the wine, and adds flavors of vanilla, toast, and sweetness. The goal, though, should be to create a balance that allows the grape, in all the glory of its *terroir*, to shine. Finished wine can show aromas and tastes ranging through apples, melon, citrus, tropical fruit, peaches, nuts, vanilla, stone, minerality, flowers, earth and varying levels of toast, depending on its clone, soil and vinification.

Today’s French white comes from the Mâconnais in the south of Burgundy. Pierreclos, in the heart of the Mâcon, is one of 43 villages allowed to use its place-name. Thévenet is a third-generation vigneron and one of the area’s stars. Grapes are hand-harvested and fermented twice in neutral vessels; the wine sees no oak. The Clara Benegas from Argentina is also hand-harvested, but is cool-fermented in French and American oak casks and aged on its lees with regular stirring. Our two California wines both show some oak influence. The Bacchus is the lighter, with crisp minerality from the fruit as well as toasty notes from the oak. The Matchbook is a bigger wine. It was fermented in barrel, left on the lees and stirred, and aged for seven months in oak. It is ripe (warm Dunnigan Hills fruit), rich, and round without being overdone. We’re also showing a Chardonnay blend from Puglia, in the heel of Italy’s boot. Blended with the indigenous grape Verdeca, this is clearly a warm-climate wine with a touch of sweetness.