

Red Feet Wine Market
HANG TIME
“Washington and Oregon”
Thursday, October 29, 2009

PRICES ARE FOR:

1 BOTTLE – 6 BOTTLES – 12 BOTTLES (Mixing OK!)

Illahe Pinot Gris 2008 (Willamette Valley, Oregon)

100% Pinot Gris

\$16.25 each - \$14.63 (6) - \$13.81 (12)

Peaches and cream start the aroma parade, followed by honey notes and flowers. The palate offers white peach over honey, with a creamy texture and nicely balanced acidity. Meyer lemon and citrus pith lead into a zippy finish. Good with Thanksgiving fare.

Charles Smith's Eve Chardonnay 2007 (Columbia Valley, Washington)

100% Chardonnay

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

Pineapple, apple, ripe pear, stone, and toast aromas lead to an intensely pear and apple flavored palate. There are mineral, melon, and almond notes as well. Good food Chardonnay!

Velvet Devil Merlot 2007 (Columbia Valley, Washington)

100% Merlot

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

The name says it all! Aromas of violets, crushed red berries, vanilla, blackberry jam on toast; flavors of red and black berries, toast, cocoa, seamless and velvety with slightly grippy tannins to aid its pairing with food. This is not a shy Merlot; try with lamb.

Ex Libris Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 (Columbia Valley, Washington)

87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot,

1% Cabernet Franc, 1% Malbec

\$20 each - \$18 (6) - \$17 (12)

This elegant wine offers a nose of black cherry, chocolate, leather, blueberry, and honey. Smooth throughout with fine tannins, the palate offers black berries, blueberry, and a surprising amount of red fruit, especially cherry. Classic Cabernet.

Corvidae Wine Co. Lenore Syrah 2006 (Columbia Valley, Washington)

96% Syrah, 4% Grenache

\$18 each - \$16.20 (6) - \$15.30 (12)

Classic Syrah nose—game, leather, smoke, black fruit—that really comes together with a little air. Meaty black fruit (plums, cherries, berries) with spicy flavors that include clove, licorice, and allspice. Structuring tannins and a long finish.

See you next Thursday for HANG TIME!
Our subject next week will be
“Pinot Noir from Around the World”
EXPLORE THE WORLD IN YOUR GLASS.

Both states have a history of winemaking dating back to the mid-19th century, and both entered the modern world of wine production in the 1960s, but they differ greatly in climate, geography, soils, varieties produced, and style.

The Cascade Mountains run down the west coast of **Washington**; the major viticultural areas lie to the east, in the rain shadow. The soil is well drained and rainfall is minimal, so vineyards are located in river valleys where irrigation is possible. Washington's latitude provides more summer daylight than Napa gets, and its summer temperatures are warm rather than hot; these factors give a long, even ripening period for grapes. On the other hand, winters are brutal, with subzero arctic winds that can freeze vines, particularly Merlot. The Columbia Valley is the main growing area, an AVA of 18,000 sq. mi. Here in 1951, a psychology professor grew grapes and experimented with winemaking in his basement. His colleagues caught the bug, and in 1967 they built a commercial winery, the parent of today's Chateau Sainte Michelle.

Washington has been called the spiritual home of Cabernet and Merlot. The wines are lush, concentrated, berry-driven, supple, and seamless. Syrah is the up-and-coming grape, and Lemberger and Cabernet Franc are also grown. White grapes include Semillon, exciting yet consistent; Riesling; and Chardonnay.

Washington wines dominate the tasting. Charles Smith, founder of K Vintners, provides two—**Eve's Chardonnay 2007** and the **Velvet Devil Merlot 2007**. Both wines are made from Columbia Valley fruit, with Milbrandt Vineyards providing much of it. The Chardonnay is crisp and mineral with lively apple flavors suggesting no malolactic fermentation. It was aged in French oak (15% new) for 10 months. The Merlot was fermented in steel and aged 10 months in French oak (40% new), giving it a toasty, smoky richness and a velvety texture. **Ex Libris Cabernet Sauvignon 2006** is a house wine made for Polaner Selections. Connections to top wineries gave Doug Polaner access to superlative lots of wine which he blended and aged 16 months in French oak. It's as rich and exciting as a Napa Cab, but without the heaviness and high price tag. David O'Reilly of Owen Roe Winery shows his **Corvidae Wines Lenore Syrah 2006**. This new project offers great wines at affordable prices, and this spicy Syrah is a great example. Notice that all these wines are second labels or proprietary. This is a sign of the maturity and orientation of Washington's industry.

Unlike those in Washington, **Oregon's** main growing areas are exposed to rain and maritime air from the Pacific. The winters are milder, the summers cooler and wetter, the temperatures fairly constant. Most rain falls when vines are dormant. Ripening is an issue, so vintages matter. Soils are not fertile like in Washington, but that's a good thing for grape-growing. Since most wineries own only small vineyards, they buy fruit from specialized growers. The care needed to produce quality grapes in Oregon means that more than half the state's vineyards are organic, even if not certified. The Willamette Valley and its associated AVAs dominate production in the north, and the Rogue Valley is important in the south.

The story of Oregon wine is the story of its early (1960s) iconoclastic winemakers, many refugees from the UC Davis enology program. They rejected the “easy” of California for the challenge of European-style wine. Pinots—Noir, Blanc, and Gris—produce very fine wines. The **Illahe Pinot Gris 2008** is made from unirrigated estate fruit by father-son team Lowell and Brad Ford, with the help of Genius Loci winemaker Michael Lundeen. It is rich and round, loaded with stone fruits, closer in style to Alsace than northern Italy. Oregon's flagship grape, Pinot Noir, will be the focus of next week's tasting, hence its absence in today's flight of wines. Join us next week for a liquid geography adventure as we taste Pinot Noir from around the world.

Washington and Oregon