

Red Feet Wine Market
HANG TIME “Pacific Northwest”
Thursday, August 28, 2008

PRICES ARE FOR:

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

Foris Pinot Gris 2006 (Oregon) 100% Pinot Gris
\$15 each - \$13.50 (6) - \$12.75 (12)

Lees and apple lead into a rich, round body of apples with a touch of spice. It's oilier and richer than it was as a crisp, young wine as it is now showing wonderful development.

A to Z Chardonnay 2006 (Oregon) 100% Chardonnay
\$17 each - \$15.30 (6) - \$14.45 (12)

Delicate aromas of peach, pear, and melon continue to the palate, where their flavors are joined by lemon curd. The wine is fresh and focused, with a long finish. Not oaky or buttery, just ripe and pure.

Hinman Vineyards 2006 (Oregon) 90% Pinot Noir, 6% Grenache, 4% Merlot
\$16.50 each - \$14.85 (6) - \$14.03 (12)

Baked cherries and wood smoke on the nose. The palate leads to a hint of earthiness, tobacco and spice. This wine is medium bodied with fine, supple tannins. Perfect for grilled salmon. This is a terrific value for Pinot Noir.

Castle Rock Merlot 2005 (Columbia, WA)
\$13 each - \$11.70 (6) - \$11.05 (12)

Aromas of black fruit and berries. Slight acidity and tannins on the palate lead to a long, licorice finish. A very food friendly wine.

Kamiak Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot 2005 (Columbia Valley, WA) 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot
\$14.50 each - \$13.05 (6) - \$12.33 (12)

Soft and supple, the nose hints of vanilla and toast with notes of berry and cherry in the background. Flavors are also berry and cherry with undertones of toasty oak, cassis and choke cherry. Red sauces and red meats are the best matches for this wine.

J. Bookwalter “Subplot No. 22” multi-vintage (Columbia Valley, WA) 31% Cab Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 18% Malbec, 14% Cabernet Franc, 10% Syrah, 5% Petit Verdot
\$21 each - \$18.90 (6) - \$17.85 (12)

Dynamic nose of spice and ripe red fruit. On the palate the spices are undeniable clove and cinnamon followed by cherries and plums. This was the hit of the evening. A complex wine full of twists and turns!

See you next Thursday for HANG TIME!
Our subject will be “Loire Valley”
EXPLORE THE WORLD IN YOUR GLASS.

Pacific Northwest

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 there the similarity ends.

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 sandy loam, and rainfall is as low as 6”/yr. Vineyards must be located in river valleys where irrigation is possible. Washington's latitude provides two more hours of daylight than Napa gets, and its summer temperatures are warm rather than hot; these factors give a long, even ripening period for grapes—they're both sugar-ripe and flavor-ripe. Large day-night temperature differentials preserve the freshness and naturally bright acidity of the grapes, making for lively wines. 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 wine-making in his basement. He sparked an interest among his colleagues, and in 1967 they built a commercial winery. In 1960, there were 15 wineries; today there are over 450 and the number grows by the dozens each year.

Washington has been called the spiritual home of Cabernet and Merlot. The wines are lush, concentrated, berry-driven, texturally supple, and seamless. Syrah is the up-and-coming grape, and Lemberger and Cabernet Franc are also grown. White grapes include Semillon, Riesling, and Chardonnay. **Castle Rock** offers a **Merlot** from Columbia Valley grapes, aged in barrel for 18 months. The **Kamiak Select Red** is a blend of Cabernet and Merlot and shows the ripe lushness of Bordeaux blends. The **Bookwalter Subplot 22 Blend** mixes wines made from six different grapes across four different years. Blending evens out flavors, weights, and textures, since different grapes may do better in certain years. The wine is very rich and intense but not heavy, a hallmark of the state.

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, and the temperatures fairly constant. Most rain falls when vines are dormant. Soils are not fertile, and ripening can be marginal, so vintages matter. Since most wineries own only small vineyards, they buy fruit from specialized growers. The care needed to produce quality grapes 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, individualistic 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. Early on, producers decided that if Chardonnay worked well in Burgundy, it could be good in Oregon. Only in the last decade have they worked with the right grapes (Dijon clones) to produce truly elegant wine. **A to Z Chardonnay** is an example of a wine that has not seen wood or malolactic fermentation; and so it retains delicacy, freshness and complexity. The **Pinot Gris** from **Foris** is typical in its use of grapes from multiple (four) vineyards followed by blending of wines. Fermented and aged in stainless steel for freshness, it spent two months on the lees to add complexity and richness. No Oregon tasting would be complete without a Pinot Noir, and the '06 **Hinman** is very unusual—it is a blend of 90% Pinot Noir, 6% Grenache, and 4% Merlot. Grenache continues the red cherry flavors, Merlot adds black fruit, and both contribute weight. The result is a wine with typicity and flavor well beyond its price.

These wines are well-priced introductions to what the Pacific Northwest has to offer. All pair well with food, are easy to like, and still provide interest to experienced liquid geographers.