

Red Feet Wine Market
HANG TIME “Wine with Age”
Thursday, January 21, 2009

PRICES ARE FOR:

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

Chateau Les Pins de Bossuet Bordeaux Superieur 2003 (Bordeaux, France) 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon
\$12 each - \$10.80 (6) - \$10.20 (12)

A lighter style of Bordeaux, les Pins provides a nose of bright red cherry, cinnamon, and toasty wood. On the palate, cherry is joined by plum, cinnamon by clove and other spices, and the wood by a certain level of acidity. The wine has good length and a refreshing finish. Would be a good match with roast chicken seasoned with paprika.

Thomas Coyne Merlot “El Dorado Quartz Hill Vineyard” 2001 (El Dorado, California) 100% Merlot
\$13 each - \$11.70 (6) - \$11.05 (12)

This is a great example of an older wine that’s so integrated and balanced it’s hard to describe its flavors separately. Aromas of plum skin, ripe cherries, a bit of toast and caramel lead into flavors of boysenberry, black plum, black cherry and toasty wood. Very soft and incredibly smooth, with all the parts playing well together.

Museum Cigales 2003 (Cigales, Spain)
100% Tinta del Pais (Tempranillo)
\$19 each - \$17.10 (6) - \$16.15 (12)

The nose offers rich earth and smoke blended with aromas of red plums. Cinnamon, nutmeg and other baking spices season the juicy red fruit on the palate. Tobacco notes kick in on the finish. This wine has spent over a year in new oak, and it shows in the fine-grained tannins. Bright acidity also provides structure. Although not heavy, the wine is intense, with a long finish.

Graham Beck The Ridge Syrah 2002 (Robertson, South Africa) 100% Syrah
\$22.00 each - \$19.80 (6) - \$18.70 (12)

This single-vineyard Syrah shows both its age and Syrah typicity. Leather, minerals, earth, and hay dust dominate the nose—the fruit does not leap into the aroma profile but waits underneath. In the mouth, leather and black fruit—berry and plum—start things off, interwoven with fine tannins. Pepper comes in on the finish. More than medium-bodied and juicy, this wine would pair well with grilled beef or lamb.

See you next Thursday for HANG TIME!
Our next subject will be “Budget Wines #2.”
EXPLORE THE WORLD IN YOUR GLASS.

Wines With Age

Wine is a living thing, or more precisely, quality vintage wine is alive and goes through a maturation process. This process is affected by several factors. First, the grape itself—the type of grape; where, when, and how it was grown; how it was harvested and transported. Second, the fermentation process—the type of fermentation, the yeast, the temperature, the length of time, and the fermentation vessel. Third, the ageing process—the container(s), the contact with air, the length of time, and the storage conditions. Only certain wines benefit from cellaring or bottle ageing; most are made to be drunk within two or three years of the vintage. Others, however, increase in complexity and integration; in fact, they may need several years to reach their peak of aroma, flavor, and texture.

When wines are young, they are generally lively and fruity but not complex. A few months (or years, in some cases) after bottling, some wines close up, shut down, become surly, or lose their aromas without gaining a bouquet. Later, months or years, they become complete again, with more subtle flavors and greater length; all the parts start to sing together in harmony. With even more time, a bouquet emerges; astringency recedes and the wine feels round in the mouth; the wine shows complex flavor, good texture, length, and balance. After its prime drinking period is over, decay sets in, acidity dominates, and the wine falls apart.

If you were to eat a grape in the vineyard, you’d notice its taste, ripeness, juiciness, the thickness of its skin; Cabernet Sauvignon doesn’t taste or feel like Pinot Noir. Some grapes are sweet, some tart, some dry out your mouth. The grape is the raw material that provides the primary flavor of a wine, and each variety starts with a particular profile. This is the primary flavor/aroma.

Fermentation provides the secondary flavors of a wine. Chemical reactions occur and compounds are leached from pulp, skin, and seeds and react with each other, especially in the presence of oxygen. Using wood containers for fermentation also imparts a set of flavors. These are the secondary aromas/flavors.

Wine acids interact with alcohols, a process that starts during fermentation but continues in the ageing process, especially in bottle. The process is influenced by storage temperature, the state of the cork or bottle stopper, ullage (the amount of air in contact with the wine), the pH of the wine, and the sulfur dioxide concentration. These compounds (esters) provide the tertiary aromas and flavors. How do you know when a wine will reach its peak or how long to hold it? Hard to tell, but some grapes age better than others. Depending how they are grown and vinified, Rieslings, Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc have the best potential for whites. Cabernet-based wines are among the best-ageing reds, along with Pinot Noir, Nebbiolo, Syrah and fortified wines. As you taste today’s wines, look at color (whites turn darker with age, reds lose pigment and begin to turn brick or brown in color); smell for non-fruit aromas; taste for flavors that are so well-mixed they’re hard to describe; feel how soft and supple the wine is in your mouth. The best way to determine when a wine is at its best is to get to know the wine by drinking several bottles over a period of time.