



The
**Wine
Stop**

A Beer and Beverage Boutique

The Wine Stop Newsletter

December 2007

Issue #47

Calendar of Events

Complementary Wine Tasting Every Saturday 1-5pm

December 1 - Seasonal Beer

December 8 - Sake Tasting

December 15- Exploring Italian Wines with Chef Donato

December 22 - Splurge Wines, After All You Deserve It!

December 29 - Champagne vs. California Sparklings

Holiday Wines

Let us help you pick the perfect gift wine for a friend, boss or loved one to fit any budget.

Back for the holidays by popular demand! Cliff Lede Claret, Napa 2005 \$32 Recently released, Cliff Lede's Bordeaux style blend is back after being sold out for much of 2007. This wine would make a great gift for a wide range of people because it is not too light and not too heavy. It has some lovely fruit components and a silky full body, great balance and structure. It's great with food or on its own. It is 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, and 4% Petite Verdot. It has complex aromas of fig, cacao, mulberry and cassis layered on top of some earthy spice notes such as clove, oolong tea and hazelnut. As you sip, flavors of blackberry and dried cherry tumble onto your palate.

Mi Sueno (my dream) Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Red Blend is in. Enough said, you will just have to trust us. . . . very limited. The price range is

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Champagne & Caviar
An elegant way to craft memories.

Holiday Gift Baskets



- Pre-set teirs
- Custom
- GC for Gourmet
Hawaii available
- Delivery Available

\$41-\$68. Yeah, it is a splurge but well worth it. don't tell too many people or there won't be enough for us.

More Gift Ideas

For the holidays, we've put together elegant gift baskets with boutique wines and delicious gourmet snacks. They are designed to impress. The "Celebrator" basket: \$50 includes two boutique wines and two gourmet snacks. The "Connoisseur" basket: \$75 includes two premium boutique wines, two gourmet snacks and a gourmet non-alcoholic beverage. The "Soire" basket: \$150 includes four premium boutique wines, 2 gourmet snacks, and a gourmet non-alcoholic beverage.

Champagne is one of the beverages of choice for the holidays and nothing marks a celebration more than champagne and caviar. We will make sure to have a good supply of Tsar Nicoulai caviar from California from December through February. For large quantities let us know at least a week in advance, so that you can have what you need when you need it.

For large parties, consider the Italian Prosecco. We will have plenty in stock. It's a sparkling wine that is not too dry and not too sweet but just right. It's a lot more affordable than champagne averaging around \$15 a bottle, and it still gives you that very pleasant bubble rush.

Holiday hours: we will be open at least an hour after our normal closing hours in December. During the holidays, you can also park in the driveway behind the store and in the far lot next door in front of the hairdressers and coin shop. The best parking is after **5pm** because the whole lot to the right of the store becomes available.

Liane's Corkey Trivia

People in the store often cruise the red wine section and ask me, "What's YOUR favorite wine?" I assess them carefully, and if I think they can handle the truth, I say,

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"Champagne." It's delicious, light, crisp, lower in alcohol, and the bubbles are refreshing. But, there was a time when it looked and tasted very differently.

Champagne bottles were once sealed with a piece of wood which was covered with cloth soaked in olive oil and tied securely onto the bottles with twine. Though I love the taste of olive oil, I'm not sure that I'd enjoy that particular flavor in my champagne. But then again in the early 1600s champagne was a light reddish color and often displayed a slight fizziness that was, and still is, considered a wine flaw.

The Benedictine monks in Hautvilliers Abbey hired Dom Pierre Perignon as chief treasurer and cellar master in 1688. Dom Perignon knew that the abbey's wine was being compared to wine from their neighboring Burgundy region and that their champagne was not as popular as the wines from Burgundy because wines from the Champagne region were known to be a little fizzy. Not only was champagne a little fizzy but it was also not as rich in color as the wines from Burgundy.

Dom Perignon set out to fix these faults and thereby boost the sales of champagne. He fixed the light-in-color problem by removing ALL of the color in the wine creating the world's first white wine made from red grapes. He worked this magic by minimizing the skin contact of the grape from its juice. He also improved the quality and consistency of the wine's flavor by blending Chardonnay with Pinot Noir and Pinot Munier. He worked hard to eliminate the fizziness but failed. Thinking outside of the box, he decided to make a virtue of necessity and figured out a way to exaggerate rather than hide the telltale sparkle inherent in wines from his abbey. He induced and regulated a second fermentation which changed champagne from a fizzy wine to a sparkling wine.

It was not uncommon in the cellars of champagne for the bottles to explode and take out surrounding bottles as well. So Dom Perignon knew that if he kicked up the sparkle in champagne, he would have to use a stronger bottle and a stronger closure to contain the increased internal pressure in the bottle (6 atmospheres of pressure in the average

champagne bottle). He decided to use cork. Like the piece of wood wrapped with oil soaked cloth, this cork too was tied onto the bottle with twine; the twine was later replaced by the wire cage we see today.

The new champagne was a huge success and his technological improvements in wine making and bottling were adopted in other winemaking regions of France. Soon exporting wine by the bottle rather than the cask became the common practice. The new stronger bottle allowed the carbon dioxide produced from Dom Perignon's controlled second fermentation to be re-dissolved back into the wine. This is why the happy bubbles in champagne are small and last a long time.

Count Dampierre has revived the tradition of tying the cork on with twine in his Family Reserve bottling. The champagne is toasty, and elegant with citrus, honey and walnut notes. The bottle is signed and comes in an "old-world-red" box with gold lettering. Packed inside the box is a golden handled scissors to cut the twine. This champagne weaves the aura of "old-world" charm, a wonderful experience for \$115. What a lovely way to reflect on the origins of champagne. Cheers!



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