

COMPASS WINES

1405 Commercial Avenue • Anacortes WA 98221

www.compasswines.com

Spring 2017

They say spring is in the air; but it is snowing as I write this. I will take their word for it as I did see some sun peeking through the clouds a while ago, some frogs were singing a couple of days ago and the Red Winged Black Birds have made their presence known with their unmistakable chortling and chirping.

This newsletter is a tad bit late this time as I took a nasty fall on my bike in January and had to take some time off. The ladies ran the shop beautifully in my absence and for that, I give them great thanks. However, I would never ask them to take on the task of filling these pages, so this had to wait for my return. I am nearly back up to speed, but no vintage bike race for me in April, so you will all be subjected to my drivel once again.

Winter has been a hard one out here, but not nearly as nasty as some other parts of the country. We had more snow than usual, but nothing catastrophic, we have had lots of rain, but not like the poor folks in California and we did get pretty cold in the vineyards, but not like some of the 'bad' winters. The temps did hit the -10 degree area in a few spots, but luckily, there was a heavy layer of snow to protect the vines and especially the roots. Nature for sure did some extra pruning of the vines, but no one who I have spoken with has any real concerns about damage. Maybe just a bit more winter die off than a normal winter, specifically on Walla Walla Syrah, but a slightly reduced crop is probably not a bad thing.

Spring release season is fast upon us, as is typical this time of year, but everyone seems to be jumping the gun on pink wines this year. I don't think I have ever seen so many offerings this early before. What we have tasted so far has been fabulous, so this looks to be the year of the Rose. We are starting to bring them in already so come in for a look-see or give our 'Pink Princess', Sandy a call.

Alberto Brini from Il Conventino was just here for a fabulous tasting of his Tuscan treats from Montepulciano with the fantastic Italian foods from Ciao in Coupeville. Stunning wines, delicious foods and a great time was had by all. Those of you who made it had a blast and those of you who didn't, need to make sure you do next time!

The annual Taste Washington event is right around the corner on the weekend of March 25th and 26th. We will be manning the ded. reckoning booth once again, and also have the Soy Copper USA booth going strong with a fantastic selection on hand, ready to take home. There will be some special show pricing on the copper again this year so leave some room in that goodie bag or we can, of course, ship it to you.



Once again, I will be spearheading the 'Washington vs. the World' smack down tasting on Sunday morning at the Four Season's Hotel. Five fantastic Washington winemakers will be with me, plus the executive wine writer from Food and Wine magazine, Ray Isle. We will be pouring 5 standout Washington wines against 5 of the best wines in the world to see how we stack up. I think this is the 5th time I have done this event and it is a blast every time. We do have tickets to Taste Washington's Grand Tasting in the shop, but you will need to contact Taste Washington directly for tickets to this one.

Bring on the sun!

Doug, Will, Laura, Sandy, Ally and Brandi

WARMER WEATHER WINES

Leyda, Leyda Valley Pinot Noir 2015 was \$12.99, now \$9.99

Finding Pinot Noir which actually tastes like Pinot Noir and not just another red wine is always one of the toughest tasks in the \$10-\$15 range. I like my Pinot to be more on the delicate, stylish and elegant side of things, rather than the fat and ripe style favored by many. If I want a big and juicy wine, I will lean on a Rhone varietal or a Zin, not a Pinot Noir. For the style which I prefer, Burgundy is the natural choice, but finding one for 10 bucks is like finding a cheap Ferrari. What makes Burgundy so special for Pinot Noir is the cool climate, so naturally, finding a cool climate which grows Pinot Noir in an area where real estate is a tad more reasonable than Beaune is the key to finding an elegant, affordable example. Enter the Southern Hemisphere. In New Zealand, Tasmania and the Cape of Good Hope, the climate is perfect in many spots for Pinot Noir, but maybe still bit on the pricy side in terms of acreage. So zip around the corner to South American and Bingo! Some cool spots to grow fruit and land values which are conducive to affordable wines. In the higher elevations of Chile and along the coast, there are a series of valleys which have temperatures and heat units which are perfect for growing Pinot Noir. The Leyda Valley is one of these. Only about 60 miles long, and only about 8 miles from the coast, the elevations here range from about 150 feet to over 3000. The maritime weather patterns allow for a combination of cooling breezes, mist and sunny days, which are all the earmarks for great Pinot Noir, which also maintains a sense of elegance. Bright ruby red, with notes of strawberry, fresh mown hay, wintergreen and a hint of tarragon. Crisp acids remind me of red currants and citrus. Mouthwatering and oh so refreshing, this will pair perfectly with the classic dishes of lighter red meats, salmon and poultry. A delicious bargain which one needs to stock up on big time as we just don't see Pinot like this at this price very often.



Domaine Les Clos Des Lumieres Cotes du Rhone Blanc 2016 \$8.99

This winery name may ring a bell for some of you and not because it sounds like the talking candlestick in 'Beauty and the Beast', but rather because we have used the Grenache Blanc version of this wine in the newsletter a few years back. This time, we are going with the traditional white Rhone blend. In a wine like this, the varietals don't really matter. It is a case of the ends justifying the means. So yes, this has some Grenache Blanc in it, plus some Bourboulenc and Clairette, but I defy any of you to be able to pick them out of the scrumptious and mouthwatering bounty of tropical fruit goodness which resides in the glass. Mango, pineapple, papaya, guava, passion fruit and citrus all whipped together with lip smacking acidity with a bright and tingly finish. Fantastic all by itself, it is a perfect brunch wine for spring weddings, Easter and all those upcoming graduation parties out in the garden. Dry, but just enough fruitiness to take care of just about every white wine drinker in the room. This is one of those wines which is really hard to find fault with. They only make about 250 cases of it, so how they can get it over the pond for this price is anyone's guess. A fantastic value year in and year out, but this vintage is in my book, the best yet for them. Stock up on this one for summer as well. I can only imagine what an icy cold glass of this on a sweltering day will taste like. Maybe even a white wine sangria is in the offing here in a few months. In the meantime, grab a plate of briny oysters or a bucket of garlic laden steamed clams and let this one rip. Heavens it's tasty!



Bodegas Salentein Portillo Malbec, Valle de Uco 2015 was 10.99, now \$8.99

Across the Andes mountains from the Chilean coast, where the Leyda Pinot Noir comes from, is the famed Uco Valley of Argentina. Southwest of the most famous grape growing area in Argentina, Mendoza, the Uco Valley is becoming known as one of the top spots for growing sophisticated Malbec. The altitude ranges from roughly 3000-4000 feet, so the temperature swings between night and day can be really extreme. This is tough going if you are camping or back packing, but pretty awesome for growing grapes. The heat of the day causes the fruit to ripen, then the coolness of the night gets the vine to shut down, so natural acids remain and the fruit avoids becoming over ripe. The Malbec grown in area like this tend to be more complex with much more character than is typical. The down side is that it is more costly to farm like this so the wines are typically more expensive. Not so on this one. The bright berry and plum fruit, with chocolate undertones which one expects of Argentine Malbec are here in spades. But it also has spices like cinnamon, clove, allspice and just a hint of mint and dried lavender. We stepped up and bought this in big chunks and by doing so, were able to drive the price down by roughly 20%. This is one to stock up on in a big way. Inexpensive Malbec is not hard to find, but finding one with this much complexity for this price is a different story. Big time value here.



SPRING DEALS



Leaping Lizard California Chardonnay 2014 \$9.99

Who doesn't like buttery, oaky and vanilla laden California Chardonnay? If there was one category of wine which never seems to go flat, it is California Chardonnay with some oak on it. The various un-oaked wines seem to go in and out of fashion in the same way that bell bottom jeans, disco and neon colors do. Here one day, but gone the next. Oaky California Chards are like Levi 501's, classic rock and black leather. It seems like they never go away, and for good reason. There are always scads of people who appreciate them, so any intelligent marketing genius understands that to take them away, would be a really bad thing to do. The one thing that does seem to change with the times is the price of these Chardonnays. Oak barrels, from which these wines get their distinctive character, are continuing to go up in price all the time, so thus, the wines do too. That being said, there are some values to be had, if one looks in the right places. Leaping Lizard is not a brand you have probably seen before. It was a custom label made for a concern in California by a large producer of these styles of wines. Well, they did not buy all the wine which they committed to, so the producer wanted to find a home for it. Find it they did, with us. By purchasing this way, we can nail down some pretty snappy deals. Let the original folks who ordered it pay for all the custom labels and such, and we can then sweep in and pick up the pieces for a song when they drop the ball. Butterscotch, vanilla bean, ripe pineapple, pears and melon, with just enough oak to make its presence known but not be overpowering. Dry, but with a ripe, creaminess which appeals to so many people. A fabulous bargain here. We have one pallet of this, and then it is gone. Have some spring weddings or Easter parties coming? This would be the cat's meow.

2016 pink wines

As I write this, we are tasting and ordering all sorts of new rose wines from all over the planet. This vintage in France and Italy looks to be particularly tasty so give us a shout for all the new selections as they roll in or just let us fill a box for you. Spring is right around the corner!



All wines subject to prior sale.

WINE CLUBS



Welcome to the world of wine clubs.

We have several different clubs for all your hassle free wine buying. We will select your wines and either ship them to you, put them in your locker, or have them ready for pickup at the store. And best of all, by being a club member, all featured wines come to you at a minimum of 10% off our everyday price.

New Washington 'Hot List' Wine Club

Our new Washington 'hot list' wine club will provide the lucky recipient with two bottles of wine per month, of the newest, hottest and tiniest production wines in the state. We are lucky to be in a position to taste and actually have the opportunity to buy many of the ultra limited production wines made out there that often are only available at the winery (or through us). In many cases, we are talking about production levels in the range of less than 50 cases total. The price will vary each month, with the average bottle being in the \$30-\$40 range, and always discounted well below our usual price. If you want the newest and the hottest properties, and those hyper limited production wines that others just dream about, then this club is for you.

Washington Wine of the Month Club

One bottle, or one each of Washington State red and white wine per month, or 4 reds, 2 for drinking now and 2 to lay in the cellar.

\$14.99 single

\$28.99 for one red and one white

\$99.99 for 4 bottles

Unlimited Club

You decide what you would like, or let us decide! Would you like Grand Cru Burgundy every month? California Cult wines? How about a case of cider or sake every few weeks? Give us a budget and some parameters to shoot for and we will do the rest. Some restrictions apply. **Mkt/month**

Rare Washington Club

With every release, you will get the following wines: Leonetti, Quilceda Creek, Woodward Canyon Old Vines, Doubleback, Reynvaan, Rotie, Upchurch, Andrew Will Ciel du Cheval, Sleight of Hand Archimage, Betz Syrahs, Corliss and Walla Walla Vintners Select.

This club is currently sold out, but we do have some limited 'provisional' memberships available. Please contact us for details.

Washington's New Classics Wine Club

With the 'Rare Washington Wine Club' all filled up now, we continue to be bombarded with calls for a new club, loaded with a bunch of the new wine stars in the state. We will set aside any amount you would like of each of the following wines upon release.

We bill your credit card as the wine arrives, and either ship the wine, or keep it in the store for pickup. All of these wines are released periodically throughout the year, but we will not hit you with more than two in a given month.

You will get the following wines: **Cadence, Fidelitas Optu, Sheridan L'Orage, Mark Ryan Dead Horse, Two Vintners Syrah, Gorman Evil Twin, JM Tre Fanculli, Woodinville Wine Cellars Indomitable, Golden Ridge, Hightower Red Mountain Reserve, Lawrelin Cabernet, Avennia Justine.**

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1405 Commercial Ave
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Store Hours

Monday - Thursday 10 - 6
Friday 10 - 7
Saturday 10 - 6
Sunday 11 - 5

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday March 25 and Sunday March 26

Taste Washington Seattle

Come visit the ded.reckoning booth at Taste Washington and for the second time, there will also be a Soy Copper USA booth as well. We will be there both days, all day long and are also selling copper at the show with special pricing, plus we have both standard and VIP tickets for both days in the shop. We cannot sell these on-line, so please give us a call or stop by for details.

Friday, April 28 - Sunday, April 30

Northwest Wine Encounter at Semiahmoo

For the second year in a row, the folks from the stunning resort at Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine will be hosting the Northwest Wine Encounter. I will be a keynote speaker and such luminaries as Chris Figgins from Leonetti, Chris Upchurch from Delille and Tony Rynders Panther Creek along with other winemakers, growers, chefs and media folks will be pouring wines, hosting amazing dinners, answering questions and chatting around campfires and the like. Contact the resort directly for tickets to this fantastic event.