

COMPASS WINES

1405 Commercial Avenue • Anacortes WA 98221

www.compasswines.com

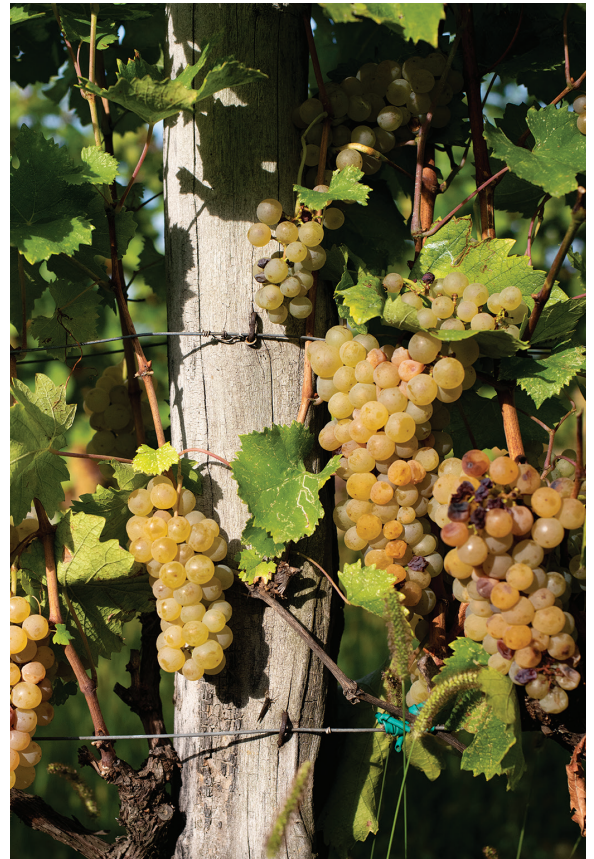
Cellar Notes Fall 2019

What a wacky summer it has been! Scads of folks visiting area this year, the San Juan Islands as busy as we have ever seen it, and then there is the bizarre rain/fog/hail issues. At least we have not had the fires up here which we have had the last few years. We still have some fire season left, so keep your fingers crossed.

Weather has been all over the map in Washington this year, but not in a bad way. It seems ripening is more even and on track for 'normal' than the heat driven years we have seen in recent years. However, there have been some oddities for us as well. Weird hail events in July and August, and as I write this, a rain laden, November style cold front is passing overhead. It should dry out by late tomorrow, but this is not something we normally see out here in the summer. This may plump things up a bit, but with a few weeks before harvest begins in earnest, it should be a non-issue.

Europe is a whole different story. Record heat in many places in Italy, France and central Europe, some crazy rain and hail storms in some places and hard frost in some others early on in spring. We won't see any really hard and fast numbers until the crop comes in, but it is not shaping up to be a 'great' vintage in most locations. Time will tell.

The issue of climate change is very real, whether or not people want to politicize it or not. Napa is looking at new varietals for hotter days ahead, but the biggest news is that in France, the almighty wine law folks have approved about a half dozen new grapes to be used to produce Bordeaux. This is huge news. As heat works its way north into western France, varietals originating in Portugal can now be grown to produce the most famous of all French wines. The French take their wine laws very seriously and for them the make this move, took some serious science and research. This is not 'fake' news. Chew on that a bit.



We have some great events on the horizon, so start planning now. For those who remember the last dinner we had with the folks from Mullineux, from down in the Swartland of South Africa, get ready to welcome them back for a tasting in the shop and a dinner to follow. Also, our favorite Tuscan winemaker, Alberto Brini from Il Conventino is making a visit this fall as well. His tastings are always a huge hit and a big crowd, so start your planning now. Details are on the back page of this newsletter. Our biggest day of the year is right around the corner as well; the annual Holiday Open House and storewide sale. All the final details are still being hammered out, so watch your email for specifics, but set Saturday, December 7 aside now. You will not want to miss this event.

We have had the busiest summer on record, and we see no signs of things slipping off, so another new face will be seen when you come in the shop and another cheerful voice if you call. Please say 'hi' to Alicia on your next visit.

Bring on college football!

Doug, Will, Laura, Sandy, Gabriela, Alicia and Theodore (remote as always)

FABULOUS FALL OFFERINGS

Mitchell 'The Wattle' Clare Valley White 2017 \$9.99

We don't often feature Australian wines in the newsletter, and even less often an Aussie white. However, the Clare Valley is a spot where white wines are produced which can compete on a global scale. This is actually one of the more northern spots in South Australia where grapes are grown, and at an altitude where the nights cool down substantially, allowing natural acids to develop. The resulting wines are crisp and mouthwatering, even the legendary Rieslings from this area, which this gorgeous wine is based on. With no hint of sweetness, lime zest, passion fruit, green apple and tangerine dominate the nose and palate, with the mouthwatering zing of lemon rind in the finish. I don't want to hear a single gripe about how much you don't like Riesling, and thus won't try this wine. If you are brave enough to be a member of this irreverent mailing list, you are man, or woman enough to spend a ten spot on this wine to give it a shot. If you hate it, let me know and we will swap it out for something else, and then laugh at you behind your back (only kidding about that last part).



Casa de Llana Expression Tempranillo 2017 \$9.99

Spanish reds and specifically those driven by Tempranillo are no strangers to this rag, nor are the wines of Basi, our importer buddy from Bellingham. He has this uncanny ability to track down fabulous wines at prices which are hard to beat and this is a classic example. Hailing from the youngest D.O. in Spain, Ribera Del Jucar, which got its status as a region only in 2003, (even though grapes have been grown here for centuries) it has that very much benchmark trait of red currants and raspberries, with fresh tobacco, tomato leaf and just a kiss of new saddle leather. As is typical of wines of this style, it is not a massive blockbuster of a wine, but rather a more medium weight wine with the stuffing to take on larger fare. Whereas Cabernet can sometimes come across like a big block from Detroit in about 1971, with lots of rumble and power to spare, this one is more like a Porsche 911 of the same period. Less power, but equal to the task of taking on the road, but just in a different way. Some prefer full throttle, straight away acceleration, and some prefer to wind up a smaller set of pistons and head for the turns. Different ways of getting to the finish line, but both methods have their benefits.

This is the Porsche side of the equation.



Eloquente Colheita Seleccionada 2015 was \$13.99, now \$9.99

C'mon. Naming a wine 'Eloquente'? I will put it down as a translation issue this time. However, the wine is pretty much a jaw dropper of a value, no matter what it is called. Portugal is famous for stunning price to quality ratio wines, but that being said, this is one of the better ones we have seen in quite a while. Basically just a 'red wine', this is that typical Portuguese blend of a bunch of unpronounceable grapes, many of which hail from Port country. Red vine fruit with a crazy cinnamon and clove note, moderate acid and tannin with a bright and snappy finish. A delicious wine with everyday foods. A bit bigger and more bold and aggressive than the Tempranillo described above, but still no Hemi 'Cuda. Remember the Porsche 911 from the analogy above? This is the Turbo version with the whale tail and fender flares. We tried a different wine from these folks about a year ago and people went nuts. This one is even better and thankfully, we have enough to put it in the newsletter, unlike the last one.



Pescador Blanco Penedes NV \$9.99

If you can read Spanish, you will probably pick up the fact that this is a wine designed to be served with fish. From the name, to the label, to the delightfully crisp and tangy nature of it, this wine is just screaming for a slab of grilled halibut, steamed clams or an icy platter of oysters. Produced from basically the same grapes as Cava, it has lovely notes of lemon curd, honeydew melon, mango and papaya, with a tangy finish of slightly green pineapple. Yes, it is a 'non-vintage' wine, but that is OK by us. In this case, as it is not a varietal wine, but rather a wine designed with a specific flavor profile in mind, blending from different vintages to make the absolute perfect wine for the purpose is actually the preferred method. This is why so many Champagnes are non-vintage, as are Sherry, Vermouth and most Ports and Madeiras as well. The proof of the pudding is in the glass, not what it says on the front of the bottle, so we all need to get over the 'vintage' and 'varietal' stigmas which often hold us back and just enjoy the glass in front of us for what it is. If I had my way, we would take all varietal and vintage labels off of wine and just mark them by who made them and where they came from. This is really what is most important after all, at least to me. Anyone who would rather drink a crappy Cab, just because it is Cab, than a great Merlot, simply because it is Merlot, really needs to catch a clue.



Compass Wines Holiday Open House and Storewide Sale • Saturday, December 7 all day

This is just an 'early warning' details to follow, but mark this down on your calendar now. Normally, this would show up on the back page with all the other 'upcoming events', but we know folks loose interest sometimes after a few pages, so we thought we would throw it at you a page early. This is shaping up to be a real humdinger, so start your holiday planning now.



L'Antica Cantina San Severo Portale 2017 \$8.99

Italy has no shortage of fantastic values in reds, whites and pinks. We are lucky in that we know lots of importers and wineries and thus get to taste literally hundreds of these each year. Sometimes, we are tasting upwards of 50 wines per day! Thus, being a value driven Italian red, this wine had lots of competition to beat to gain a spot in this newsletter. Typically, value priced Italian reds fall into two categories; fruit driven and full boded wines from the south, or lively and leaner wines from the north. Rarely, do we see a complex and multi layered wine of the caliber of this wine from either spot. This wine comes from way down south, but It has an elegance and style which we normally associate with Tuscany or Piedmont, way up north. San Severo is the oldest DOC in Puglia, dating back to the 1960's. Not the most famous wines in Italy, but a spectacular value. This one is all Montepulciano and more on the medium bodied side of things, it has notes of dried strawberries and raspberries, lavender, rose hips and oddly enough, the scent of fresh flowers, not unlike some whites. If you are not familiar with this grape, it has some similarities to Sangiovese and Tempranillo, with the structure and backbone which more approximates Barbera. Pretty classic Italian red table wine, like 'Lady and the Tramp' would have enjoyed al fresco with their pasta. This would even take a slight chill with abandon.

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.

Washington 'Hot List' Wine Club

Two bottles of wine per month of the newest, hottest and tiniest production wines in the state. 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, Owen Roe Red Willow Red, Betz Syrahs, Corliss and 21 Grams. **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

We will set aside any amount you would like of each of the following wines upon release. You will get the following wines: **Cadence, Fidelitas** Optu, **Sheridan** L'Orange, **Mark Ryan** Dead Horse, **Two Vintners** Syrah, **Gorman** Evil Twin, **JM** Tre Fancuili, **Sightglass** Cabernet, **Lobo Hills** Left Bank, Lonesome Springs, **Hightower** Red Mountain Reserve, **Lawrelin** Cabernet, **Avennia** Justine. **Mkt/month**

The Burgundy of the Month Club

In this club, you can pick either red or white, or let us mix it up for you (this is how I would do it). Every month, we will pick a fantastic wine for you to try. As is true of all of our clubs, there is no fee to join and the discount you get on the club wine applies to that same wine every time you come back for more, until we are sold out. **The price per month on this one will vary, but typically it will be in the \$30-\$50 range per month. Pre-pay for a year and pay an even \$450.**

Bubbly of the Month Club!

Welcome to all that sparkles! Each month, you will receive a new bottle of fascinating sparkling wine from around the globe. Sometimes it will be true Champagne, sometimes a Cava or Prosecco and sometimes a cool discovery from elsewhere. As with all our clubs, there is no fee to be a member; the wine is always discounted and reorders of the same wine will always get the 'club' price. **No set dollar amount on this one, but it will average in the \$30-\$40 each month, with some months being less and some a little more.**

The Rare World Wine Club

Our 'Rare Washington Wine Club' is without question, the most popular of all of our wine clubs and it basically all sold out all the time. However, we do get to taste some ridiculously cool, high scoring, hyper rare wines from around the world, so we have decided to add a similar club for these wines. In many cases, we get to taste wines which are so limited, that we cannot even send out an email on them. If this sort of thing appeals to you, then this is the club for you. We will do one selection per month, from around the world with an average price of \$100 per bottle. You just let us know how many bottles you want to sign up for, and we will do the rest. If you want one bottle per month, great. If you want more, no problem there either. Just let us know and we will set aside the same amount for you of each selection. Most of these wines will be red, but if we find some really cool white or bubbly, it may show up here occasionally as well. As with all our clubs, there is no fee to join, the wines are discounted and as long as we have the club wines in stock, your discount will apply to them. However, as rare as these wines are, don't count on there being many extras! As an introductory offer, pre pay for a year of one bottle per month at a 20%+ discount, for \$1000 per year. If you want multiple bottles, the same discount will apply there too. We will just multiply it out.

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1405 Commercial Ave
Anacortes WA 98221

Store Hours

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

Contact us 360.293.6500
compasswines.com

Send your e-mail address to:
doug@compasswines.com
or

Sign up at compasswines.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Mullineux Family Wines

Saturday, October 5 1:00-5:00 free tasting

Come taste the incredible wines of one of our favorite Swartland producers, Mullineux. You have seen me bang the drum over and over again about these amazing and rare wines, and now is your turn to taste them in person. This is a free event. If you want to experience these wines, plus some others and how they pair with our regional foods, there is a scrumptious dinner to follow at The Upcountry in Mt Vernon.

Mullineux Wine Dinner

Saturday, October 5 7:00

at The Upcountry in Mt Vernon

The Mullineux wines will be paired with the stunning foods of this incredible, and tiny, restaurant in Mt Vernon. I will be there, as well as the winery to answer all of your questions. The entire restaurant only seats 11 diners and we are taking the entire space. If you have not experienced Hiroki's Northwest/Asian inspired cuisine, you are in for a treat. Space is obviously extremely limited \$150 per person, inclusive.

Il Conventino with Alberto Brini

Saturday, November 2 1:00-5:00

This has become an annual event that you do not want to miss. Alberto Brini will be here from his winery in Tuscany, Il Conventino with all of his amazing wines from Montepulciano, plus our buddy Neal Garone will be bringing a bunch of fantastic foods. This is a free event.

Champagne for the Holidays

Friday, November 15, 4:00-7:00

Come taste a fabulous selection of REAL Champagne, just in time for the holidays. This is a rare, Friday evening event, so we are giving you lots of early warning on this one. How often you get the opportunity to taste a bunch of fabulous Champagne for free?

All wines subject to prior sale.