Orangewood Wines
Small Wineries, Great Wines

Introduction

We are in the doldrums of summer. July is the nadir of a wine distributor's year in Arizona. We have our sales staff traveling around the world: Lisa in Hawaii, Jimmy in Michigan, Laura in Tuscany and Al touring around Italy. The rest of us are minimizing the time spent between air conditioning units. Leslie gives us some thoughts about what to drink and to dream about.

Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer
Cava by Jané Ventura

Here at Orangewood Wines we are quite fond of sparkling wines. We like them from all over and of all varietals. This past June we had the opportunity to meet Cava producer, Gerard Jané, of Jané Ventura wines. He is the fourth generation in his family to produce Champagne-style Cava in El Vendrell, a Catalonian town in the Spanish wine growing region of Penedès. Gerard's commitment to sustainable agriculture and dedication to native grape varieties, along with his preservation and promotion of his neighborhood's history and culture, are what set him apart from many Cava producers. For instance, two Cavas produced by him are a dedication to world renowned Cellist Pau (Pablo) Casals also from El Vendrell, calling them Reserva de la Musica. The labels pay homage to his hometown hero. We happen to feature both in our portfolio.

Jané Ventura Reserva de la Musica Brut Nature
This Cava is made from regional grapes Xarello (Sha-ray-lo), Macabeo (Ma-ca-bay-o) and Parellada (Par-ey-yada). Its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea imparts a freshness and purity, leading to flavors of apple/pear along with citrus, herb and floral notes. Due to its light body and high acidity it will pair well with light seafood dishes, cheeses and ham.

Jané Ventura Reserva de la Musica Brut Rosé

Made from 100% Garnacha (Grenache) grown on 80+ year old vines, this wine is pale pink/orange and tastes of oranges and strawberries. With nicely elevated acid levels, this wine is a food pairing dream. It goes well with meats, cheeses, seafood, chicken, spicy food and pretty much anything. I have a love for rosé (sparkling and still) paired with light, salty prosciutto.

Rambling
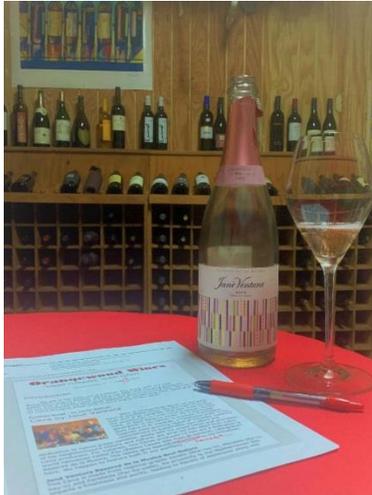
When Laurie and I were designing a house back in 1995, we had no clue that it would be a factor in our career change. We had been experimenting with wine and had a small wine fridge to keep our purchases in. Laurie suggested that we should include an actual wine cellar at the new house. We did. It was downstairs with a dedicated air conditioning unit. At the top of the stairs we had a glass door with the Folie à Deux (a delusion shared by two people) logo etched on it and a brass door knob from Laurie's grandfather's cellar, engraved with grape leaves. The house was built at the corner of Central and Orangewood Avenues in Phoenix. The cellar was great - our two cases of wine fitted nicely in this 200 square foot room. Our friends quite reasonably asked why we needed such a big cellar. Because we are going to be wine distributors, we joked. We really did not expect to become wine distributors - why would a winery want to work with people who knew nothing about wine or distribution? Little did we realise that in 2001 we would be selling our first bottles of wine to a restaurant. We have since moved to Cave Creek. The wine cellar had become a necessity, including the door-knob, though not the etched glass. We have a lot more than two cases of wine these days. We buy wine to clean up our distributorship wines - like the last 5 bottles of a vintage or something that has been discontinued. We have also inherited Iggy's Vino Noceto Club Membership. There are a lot of samples. We try to avoid wineries sending us samples unless there is a serious interest on both sides, but, even so, they accumulate.

With a temperature of 60° Fahrenheit, it's a great place to enjoy a glass of wine and write a ramble for a Newsletter.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie
Orangewood Wines