

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

Volume 7 Issue 8 --- March 20, 2022

Introduction

Thank you all for your best wishes regarding our various mishaps last month. The Covid infections were mild and are now behind us. Despite what I may have implied, Leslie did not take a two month sabbatical, merely a break from writing duties. She has regained her composure this month.

Bliss in the Balance

Last month Richard talked about his recent skiing experience, and it got me thinking about balance. As a yoga practitioner, I focus on mental and physical balance. Each pose is a set of building blocks leading to a unification from head to toe, even in the easiest of poses. It is often in the smallest details and the most minor changes that balance can be found. The same can be said for wine.

Balance in wine is far more subjective than, say, yoga or skiing. To me, it is a harmonious interplay among fruit extraction or concentration, sweetness, acidity, alcohol, texture and oak, if it is used. What may be a balanced wine to me may not be to another.

Before wine even hits a glass, the quest for equilibrium begins in the vineyard. Certain varietals and clones are known to perform better in particular areas. Soil types and climate first dictate what should be planted and where. Vine management is another important factor in the balance of a wine. Too much fruit, too little or too much foliage can have an uneven effect on the vine production, giving fruit that is unbalanced.

Like a viticulturist (grape grower), the winemaker has a toolbox and spice cabinet along with their own set of philosophies on wine making to guide their decisions toward balance. Things like oak usage or yeast selection allow them to make a wine taste a certain way. Wine can be made solely on how the fruit tastes, using little intervention so as to not coax it in a direction it isn't already going. Balance can be achieved in many ways.

When all parts are working together in harmony it is bliss, whether it is a song, a glass of wine, a yoga pose or bombing a hill on skis. In all these things the quest for balance is continuous and rewarding.

Cheers to finding balance and ease in all of your endeavors.

The Rambler

It is now officially spring. We just passed the vernal equinox, one of two times a year when the hours of daylight are in balance with those of darkness. For those who wish to adjust their wine cellar temperatures up by a couple of degrees to approximate what happens in underground cellars, now is the time.

With COVID-19 diminishing for now as an influence on our lives, we have a fresh set of challenges. I am thinking principally of inflation. A faceless challenge that forces us to make more choices about our reduced disposable income. No matter who you are, the money in your wallet will buy less food, less petrol and (gasp!) less wine.

Spring is here and summer is not far behind (I'm guessing about 3 months). Temperatures in Arizona will once again challenge the record books. All the more reason to expand your horizons with any number of up and coming wines. Albariño and Txakolina from Spain, Picpoul from France, Vinho Verde from Portugal and Gruner Veltliner from Austria are all white wines from Europe that I had not heard of a few years ago. You can explore Europe without buying an airplane ticket! All the more reason to recruit the wine experts at your favorite restaurants and wine stores as your tour guides.

The rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie
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