



Everett's Wines, Spirits & Beer

Monthly Newsletter

January 2008 Issue #3

Hello everyone and happy New Year! I hope it was fun and safe for all!

Looking back on the year, it's staggering to see just how much happened personally, in business, and in the rest of the world. All in all it didn't turn out too bad, and I'm excited to see what 2008 will bring. Especially in the liquor world!

First thing's first: a note about the Spring wine tasting that's rapidly approaching. Traditionally we have always held our Spring tasting about 2 weeks before Easter. However, since Easter comes early this year, we would need to hold it in the first week of March. Our last tasting was on November 7th, so an early March tasting would put only about 17 weeks between the two. To make the two tastings a little more balanced (ideally one every 26 weeks would be perfect), we will be pushing the Spring tasting back to mid/late April. This will also afford us the ability to attend some trade wine tastings that are being held in March and Early April and include some new and exciting wines for you in the tasting! We are sorry if this is an inconvenience to any of you, but spreading out the tastings more evenly will allow us to give you a more enjoyable tasting experience.

In this issue:

Wine: Reader Requested-Inexpensive and Cellar-able Wines

Spirits: Spotlight on SOHO Lychee

Beer: Two New Arrivals and Two That Will Improve with Age

Extra: I Use the Wine Spectator Top 100 List to Answer a Common Question: Do You Really Get What You Pay For?

Cheers!

Wine

Last month, a reader made a request for a newsletter piece relating to wines of value that are also worthy of aging. Typically, inexpensive wines are meant to be drunk young. Actually, many pricey wines are too. I see plenty of wines for \$50+ whose labels specify the need to be consumed within just a few years of the vintage date. Deciding whether or not a wine is age-able is a tricky thing. A wine from a great vintage can be predicted to last several years but doesn't, and vice versa.

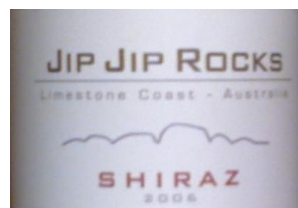
There are several things that affect the longevity of a wine. Tannin and acid/sugar balance being two of the most important. Wines that have very firm and plentiful tannins and bracing but balanced acidity will age better than those without. As will wines with balanced acidity and higher sugar levels, like Riesling. The other important factor is the way the wine is cellared. A cool (50-55°F), dark place will help wines stand the test of time. It used to be thought that lying the wine down helped by keeping the cork moist, but recent studies have shown that a cork will stay just as moist if a bottle is upright because the humidity inside the bottle, whether up or down, is always 100%. Screw caps are still being researched with respect to aging, but so far the consensus is that a wine can age just as gracefully with a screw cap as it will with a cork (perhaps even better considering the screw cap is more air tight and prevents oxidation).

I think I was able to find a few affordable gems (\$25 or less) that can last (according to their wine makers), and maybe benefit from, at least 5 years of proper cellaring from the vintage date.

Mettler Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 (\$25, Now-2012): Mettler Cabernet Sauvignon is a terrific cabernet with a deep nose of cedar and chocolate, and a palate of very plush dark fruits. The texture is velvety with a lot of tannin, albeit very fine grain tannin.



In the \$20-\$25 price range, this is easily one of my favorites.



Jip Jip Rocks Shiraz 2006 (\$14, Now-2013): Jip Jip shiraz is a very complex wine. A nose of cedar, blackberry and a little coffee followed by a palate of fine tannin and slightly sweet blackberry. The wine was aged in 35%-40% new American Oak barrels. This, coupled with an abv of

15%, gives the wine the back bone it needs to last in a cellar.

Scarpantoni School Block 2003 (\$14, Now-2013): This wine was a favorite at our fall wine tasting, and for good reason! The Scarpantoni is a blend of shiraz, cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Ripe blackcurrant flavors on the palate, and a slightly minty nose (from the cab). Soft and fine tannins.



These are just a few value wines that can last with proper cellaring, and I'm certain there are many more. Given then buzz of the holidays I did not have as much time as I'd hoped to find some more for this issue. However, look for a continuation of this topic in February. I already have a few in mind...

Spirits

SOHO is a liqueur made from the lychee fruit. We ordered this liqueur at the request of a customer who gave it a rave review. I'm happy to say they were correct! This is a very tasty and mixable liqueur!



The following info can be found at SOHO.com:

"The exotic mystique of the East meets the vibrant, high-energy West in this new, trendsetting liqueur.

SOHO captures the luscious flavor of the Asian lychee (pronounced "lee' - chee").

Indigenous to southern China, the lychee is an icon of Asian culture and has been enjoyed in the Orient for more than 2,000 years.

The brittle, red outer shell of the lychee opens to reveal the firm, opalescent fruit with a texture similar to a grape, but a taste far more exotic."

Smell

Fragrant and forward, with powerful aromas of sweet, ripened lychee and white citrus flowers.

Taste

Refreshing and refined, the ripened lychee flavor is tropical and bright with a hint of rose petal.

Red Lotus



• 1 1/2 oz. SOHO Lychee Liqueur

• 1 oz. premium vodka

• 2 oz. cranberry juice

-Mix all ingredients with ice in a shaker. Strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a lemon twist.

Forbidden Fruit



• 1 oz. SOHO Lychee Liqueur

• 2 oz. ruby red grapefruit juice

-Pour over ice in a tall glass.

Crouching Tiger



• 1/2 oz. SOHO Lychee Liqueur

• 1/2 oz. 100% blue agave silver tequila

-Shake vigorously with ice in a shaker, pour into a shooter glass, and serve immediately.

Beer

This month I thought I'd take a look at a couple of new arrivals to our beer selection, as well as a couple that can be held on to and will age gracefully.



Lagunitas Brewing: Lumpy Gravy: I know, I know. I didn't want to spend money on something called "lumpy gravy" either. But I was glad I did. The beer is obviously very Belgian in style. Amber in color, aromas of roasted malts and caramel, and smooth malty flavors. The only thing I can really criticize is that the alcohol seems a hair out of sync with the rest of the beer. The beer has 7% abv, and it does stand out a little more than I'd like, but overall it's a decent beer and worth a try. And hey, its got Frank Zappa on the label!

Bonus!

Altenmünster Doppelbock (Germany): This was one pleasant surprise. The bottle may not look too exciting but the beer inside is very tasty! The beer is dark and smells chocolaty. The taste is smooth and creamy with a noticeable cola and chocolate note. Very balanced. One of the best beers I tried in '07.



I think it is easier to describe these next two beers using wine terminology. You can think of these two as "Ports" of the beer world. Both are very well crafted, and both can be cellared and will continue to improve with age.

Allagash Dubbel Reserve: Allagash's ales are all very Belgian in style. The Dubbel reserve is made with seven different malts, and you can tell. Very aromatic, the nose jumps out of the glass with scents of caramel and a subtle nuttiness. A creamy texture and a slightly dry finish that leaves your palate clean and ready for the next sip.



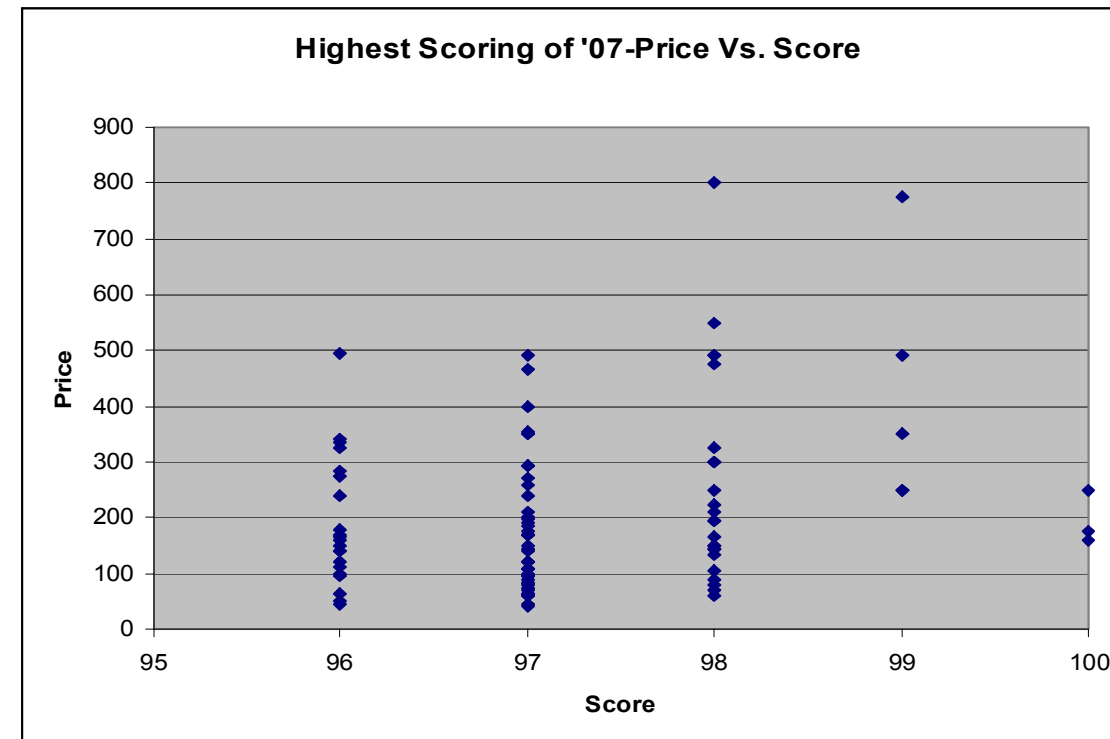
Allagash Musette: Musette is one of three beers in the Allagash portfolio that is barrel aged prior to bottling. Possesses a somewhat raisin and licorice aroma, and has tastes of caramel, malt and a bit of oak. Tasty and well balanced.

Extra

(Part 1 of a 3 part series on comparing cost, quality, quantity, and Spectator ratings)

When helping someone select a wine, my first question is usually, "What price range are you looking at?" Sometimes I think people get offended because they think I am immediately trying to up-sell them, but the reason I ask is because you can find good, sometimes even great wines in just about every price range. Then I usually get asked, "Well if this is good, wouldn't the one that's \$10 more be better?" And the answer is not necessarily. (I would usually say a higher price means they used lower yielding vines, or simply produced less so needed to charge more. We'll look at that for part 2 next month)

Every year the Wine Spectator comes out with a "Top 100" list. If you graph out the 50 highest scoring wines of 2007 with their scores relative to their price you see a chart that looks like this:



This chart demonstrates what I mean when I say you can find something good or great in just about every price range. All of these wines are scored between 96 and 100, and the prices range anywhere from \$40 to \$800.

In the Top 100 issue they also list about 50 wines between 90 and 94 points that all cost less than \$15! I don't know about you, but I'd rather put my cash behind a \$15/94 point bottle than a \$500/96 point bottle! What's 2 points when you're saving \$485?

So when you're shopping for a gift or looking for a nice wine to impress a dinner party, just remember it's not always necessary to spend that extra \$10, \$20, or even \$100. There are diamonds in the rough to be uncovered everywhere!

In the next issue we'll see how production size and vine yields can impact wine price (you might be surprised by the result!).