



1515 NE Broadway, Portland, OR 97232 • 503-287-2897 • www.greatwinebuys.com

Hours: Monday - Saturday: 10:30 am - 7 pm, Sunday: Noon - 5 pm

Newsletter: December 2015

**Annual Champagne &
Sparkling Sale
Thur Dec 3 - Sun Dec. 6**

**20%-35% off featured sparklers!
Best deals of the year!**

**We'll have piles of beautiful bubbles priced to fly!
Try our favorites at our
Holiday Champagne Sale Tasting
December 4, 5-7:30. \$13**

Newsletter Features

Champagne & Sparkling

Doyard Cuvée Vendémiare Blanc de Blancs 1er Cru NV

Retail: \$55 December price: \$43.99 Sale: \$34.99*

With an opulent orange dreamsicle creaminess balanced by mouthwatering lemon notes, this exhilarating new arrival electrifies the taste buds and satisfies them at the same time. Tasted three times over the last month, it showed better each time. Fresh off the boat we thought, hmm, who is this? It was impressive enough on second pass to get to the blind tasting where it quickly outshined the others with its mix of adjective-inducing complexity and seductive charm. A blend of 2007, 2008 and 2009, this was bottled in May 2010; with the base wines being that old plus over five years in bottle, no wonder it is so complex and integrated. Aromas reminiscent of morning calm and comfort are a lovely way to start as buttery toast with marmalade and pie crust give way to light fennel and a fresh spring garden. On the palate the richness is cut with a beam of crystalline lemon acidity before melting into a creamy gentle finish. Like many top-flight sparklers, the longer it sits in the glass the better it gets, although we found that since it tastes so good, no one can let it sit for very long.

Delamotte Brut NV

Retail: \$52 December price: \$43.99 Sale: \$34.99*

This unassuming sleeper was our other favorite; slightly surprised at first, we realized pretty quickly that we shouldn't have been. (Which is why we like to taste blind). Delamotte is made and managed by the same winemaking/viticultural team as its sister Champagne house, the exclusive and near-peerless Salon. (Think Cristal, Krug and Dom Perignon are expensive? How about a bottle of Salon 2002 for a mere \$500 a bottle? Whoa!) Clearly that team knows how to create beautiful Champagne and while Delamotte is not Salon, the ambition for quality is the same. With holdings in some of the most prized Grand Cru vineyards, they start with incredible fruit and deep pockets allows them to be uncompromising in the cellar. That said, this current NV batch is even

more sexy, developed and expressive than usual. We noticed the cork was older than the other wines in our tasting indicating more time in bottle, and when it comes to wine, time often equals magic. Like the Doyard, the texture is silky and creamy, awash in white tropical fruit and succulent pear while accents of toasted nuts, hard lemon candy and a leesy yeasty spiciness weave in and out. 55% Chardonnay sets the base while 35% Pinot Noir and 10% Pinot Meunier add red fruit notes, a hint of caramel and delicate floral spice.

Domaine Carneros Brut 2011

Retail: \$31 Dec. price: \$26.99 Sale: \$20.99*

What do you get when you transport decades of Champagne-making experience and the quest for elegance to the sunny climes of California? A richly flavored happy-go-lucky bubbly that still offers balance and nuance to complement the ripe fruit; in other words, this. The French Champagne house Taittinger created Domaine Carneros in 1987, and these days it's considered a benchmark for California sparkling. This 2011 drinks like a benchmark and jumped out in the blind tasting as a charming crowd-pleaser. A 50/50 blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, its generosity of fruit (apple, pear, musk melon) is tamed by citrusy tangerine highlights and vanilla cookie aromas while its tiny bubbles keep it tight and vibrant. The quality of the fruit is obvious, but thoughtful winemaking also plays its part: three years aging on the lees adds a gingery toasty spiciness, while a low dosage allows the purity of that tasty Carneros fruit to shine.

Cave de Bissy Cremant de Bourgogne Brut NV

Dec. price: \$18.99 Sale: \$14.99*

Plucked by consensus from its field of eight competitors, this newbie offered that little something extra special in comparison to the others' more one-note personalities. A quick glance at the label explains part of it: harvested from a variety of Burgundian terroirs, this unusual blend offers the vivaciousness of Aligote (60%), the red-fruited richness of Pinot Noir (30%) and the creamy elegance that Chardonnay can bring (10%). Compact yet flavorful, the aromatics of strawberry and lemon roll into a broader array of flavors on the palate including red apple, orange

zest, and a brown baking spice zestiness, flavors that linger gently on the long finish. Maybe the best compliment came from Daniel: "this is the wine you want in your hand when you're dancing!"

Pinord + Natura Cava Brut Nature NV

Dec. price: \$10.99 Sale: \$8.80*

A "no dosage" organic cuvée from the makers of +&+ Cava, this stood out in our blind tasting as having the focus and precision of a more expensive bottle. Most inexpensive sparklers are fairly fruity; producers would say that fruitiness is appealing to a wider range of palates but it also helps mask any inconsistencies or off-flavors. The result is typically lots of soft fruit with little complexity or interest. In contrast this bottling offers more detailed complex flavors since there is no added sugar syrup. Aromas of baking bread are joined by fresh green herb, lime zest and wet stone. Crunchy crisp apple races across the palate with echoes of baked caramel on the dry snappy finish.

***Sale prices valid Dec. 3 -Dec. 6 only**

Holiday Blasts from the Past

Côte Bonneville DuBrul Vineyard Carriage House Red 2007

Normally \$50, holiday deal \$38.99/\$31.20 by the case

Luscious, opulent, complex, smooth...the accolades quickly pile up for this exciting northwest deal. The Shiels family that owns and manages DuBrul Vineyard like their wines aged to perfection and aren't afraid to hold on to them until they are just that. DuBrul Vineyard is probably best known via Owen Roe's majestic Cabernet Sauvignon but the Côte Bonneville wines are mighty impressive in their own right, but since they are released at a snail's pace, they don't attract as much attention. A 93 point Wine Advocate review from 2011 sums the wine up nicely: "... a blend of 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, and 14% Cabernet

Franc. Aromas of toasty oak, Asian spices, earthy minerals, tobacco, violets, and black fruits lead to a still tightly wound but well-balanced, lengthy wine that will benefit from another 4-5 years of cellaring. It will provide optimum drinking from 2015 to 2027." Let's see, 4 years from August 2011 is right about now!

Château Bernadotte Haut-Médoc

2005 \$33.99/\$27.20 by the case

A ten-year-old Bordeaux from a highly regarded chateau and vintage for under \$35? Sign me up! Recent access to older Bordeaux shipped straight from the source has brought us several interesting wines and this has been among the most popular. Showing signs of cellar age yet still plenty powerful, this sits in the proverbial sweet spot for Bordeaux. The tannins have melted away revealing a wealth of secondary flavors yet there's still a mouthful of dark red fruit and minerally structure that makes it taste much younger. Overall supple and elegant in texture, the red currant and black cherry fruit is encircled by a halo of autumn/winter aromas, descriptors that may sound heavy but are just lightly filtered in: a wet leaf underbrush earthiness, faint woodsmoke and Christmastime mulling spices.

Castelgiocondo Brunello di Montalcino 2009

Normally \$75, holiday deal \$36.99/\$29.60 by the case

Deal Alert! Although not much available we couldn't pass on this as a potential stocking stuffer for the Italian lover on your list. While the 2010 vintage has received all the excitement lately, there's plenty of good 2009s and if they cut the price in half, even better! This bottling is open-knit, aromatic and appealingly drinkable for a young Brunello. Clearly well-crafted, the sandalwood and blond tobacco spice notes are nicely integrated into the fruit, which leans toward vibrantly pure, almost racy, red cherry. Elegantly textured, supple and even pretty, I shared a bottle with visiting family; that bottle didn't last long but while it did, everyone loved it.

Horsetail Pinot Noir Willamette Valley

2014 \$28.99/\$23.20 by the case

This may not be from the past but it is for sure a blast - of ripe jolly fruit that is. Welcome to 2014 Oregon Pinot Noir! A small production project

by the sons of Beaux Frères owner/winemaker Mike Etzel, this is bold and hedonistic, delivering waves of mixed berry and black cherry fruit that roll across the palate with an almost taffy-like texture. Despite the richness, it's plenty bright with pomegranate cranberry highlights and cinnamon-flecked oak accents. It's young, yes, but already so tasty. Only 150 cases produced.

JL Chave Saint-Joseph Offerus 2009

\$26.99/\$21.60 by the case

Ahh, when the mood strikes it's hard to beat the satisfyingly soulful flavors of northern Rhône Syrah, especially when produced by Jean-Louis Chave, a master of the genre. Despite being six years old this is just hitting its stride. The nose is agreeably funky (yes!), a mix of damp lavender, tar and just-ripe blackberry. The palate offers a rolling slideshow of colors and flavors: tangy red highs turn jazzy and blue mid-palate before melting into deeper blacks, all dusted with finely cracked pepper and licorice. Mostly silky in texture thanks to its age but flashes of grippiness and shades of wild flavor place it clearly in the northern Rhône.

Let Us Make Your Holidays Easier

Great Wine Buys can assist with all your holiday wine needs. We're available to:

- * Track down and order special wine requests
- * Put together a custom case for your drinking pleasure
- * Expertly pair a variety of wines with your holiday menu
- * Select the perfect bottles for personal and corporate gifts
- * Ship your purchases throughout the U.S.
- * Arrange delivery in the Portland area

Easy Park & Pick-Up: Simply call ahead and we'll pull your order. Then park at the Plaid Pantry and we'll bring your wine to your car.

December Tastings

Friday Evening Tastings:

Flights From 5-7:30pm - just come on by!

December 4 - Holiday Champagne Sale Tasting

Always a festive way to kick off the holiday season.

20-35% off all featured bubbly means the best prices of the year. Come revel in the raciness of Doyard Blanc de Blancs and the richness of Delamotte. Explore Aligoté from Burgundy, "no dosage" Cava and an easy-going Californian. \$13 (+ Pierre Gimmonnet Blanc de Blancs Gastronomer 2009 bonus pour for \$7)

December 11 - High End Champagne Tasting

One of the best tastings of the year. \$135, 7:30pm. Reservations and pre-payment required. Check our website for the list of wines and more details.

No Friday night tastings the rest of the month

Saturday Afternoon Tastings:

FREE Tastings From 2-5pm - Drop on in!

Come by and try new arrivals and old favorites from visiting winemakers, local distributors or our favorites off the shelves.

December 5 - Come for the Champagne sale, stay for the Small Vineyards Italian tasting! (or vice versa)

The charming Kristin Kluvers joins us for a holiday round of new Direct Import wines, perfect for sipping while you load up on bubbly that's 20-35% off regular prices. FREE

December 12 - Andrew and Jim's Holiday Extravaganza

It's the 16th annual version as vintner Andrew Rich pours new releases

(Pinot Noir, Coup d'Etat, etc.) while fine foods impresario Jim Dixon shares Italian olive oils, sea salt and good cheer, plus great gift packs for the holidays. FREE

December 19 - Great wines for your holiday table

Wine consigliere Theresa Hannam will be here to guide you through dinner and gift possibilities and...some bottles to help you survive the relatives. She'll pour red, white and sparkling to keep the holidays cheery. FREE

December

Case of the Month - \$110

Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Merlot Apalta Vineyard 2010

A serious close-out deal, this robust South American red drinks more like Cabernet Sauvignon than Merlot, helped in part by 15% Carmenère. Dark in color and flavor, its muscular texture is coated with deep flavors of black currant and cherry, tobacco and brambly herbal spice while the finish is rumbling and powerful. Give it some air then serve with grilled meat. Made from 60-year-old vines in the high-elevation Apalta vineyard. Normally \$25, here just **\$9.99**.

Palama Archangelo Negroamaro 2014

A wintertime direct import favorite from Small Vineyards, it was hard not to like this new vintage. It's fleshy and generous thanks to that southern Italian sun but also possesses enough balancing acidity, making it taut and lively on the palate. The rounded black fruit is studded with spiced raisins and warm aromas of Italian herb. **\$11.50**

Casa Benasal Tinto 2013

This beefy Spanish red comes from Valencia, not far from Priorat and tastes similar to many wines of that region. A blend of 40% Grenache, 40% Mourvedre and 20% Syrah, it is full-bodied and smooth with a

wash of dark marionberry fruit, but the cured olive mineral edge on the finish lets you know there's more there than initially meets the eye. Throw in notes of wet earth, cracked pepper and dark unsweetened chocolate and we have a winner. **\$9.99**

Coralto Inzolia Sicily 2012

A richer style winter white from Sicily, this starts with a flinty spicy nose before diving into ripe honeydew, Asian pear and dried peach on the palate. Creamy in texture, it goes down gently with vanilla nutty shortbread accents on the finish. Inzolia is a varietal native to Sicily; not too common in Portland, this is a nice detour into something new. **\$8.99**

Pinord + Natura Cava Brut Nature NV

(See Champagne & Sparkling section for description) **\$10.99**

Joseph Drouhin Mâcon-Villages 2014

A lovely white Burgundy from a longtime favorite, this captures the essence of French Chardonnay in effortless style. Appealing aromatics of lemon drop and fresh hay lead to lively nectarine and light white peach on the palate before finishing with white pepper and a kiss of flinty minerality. Its texture is stretched like a tightrope, across which the flavors dance. **\$11.99**

Tresa Cerasuolo di Vittoria 2012

An exciting well-timed closeout deal, the wines from this small Sicilian appellation are rarely if ever priced this low. Comprised of 60% Nero d'Avola and 40% Frappato, this is a textbook example of blending opposites to achieve a balanced whole. I wonder how long it took the Sicilians to recognize that Frappato's airy perfumed elegance was the perfect foil to Nero d'Avola's denser brooding profile. The nose here is elegant and floral, touched by notes of caramelized fennel and light briar wood. On the palate it is medium-bodied and supple with sweet raspberry highs balancing the darker plum bass notes below. **\$9.99**

La Jara Pinot Grigio 2014

Zesty and citrusy to start, this fleshes out with some air, delivering creamy peach flavors dotted with lime highlights with roasted salted

almonds on the finish. **\$9.99**

Macedon Cabernet Sauvignon 2013

The label looks new world, the flavors taste of a hearty Bordeaux...surprise, it's from Macedonia! (okay, maybe the Macedon name was a clue). Also a surprise was how good it is. The fruit comes from old vines in a vineyard that receives very little rainfall, giving this a concentrated intensity and layers of unraveling flavors. Although smooth and polished on top, there's a deep well of a more primal influence: wild blackberry, mixed savory herbs and nuggets of red currant, finishing with gently cascading tannins. **\$11.99**

Foris Fly-Over Red 2012

This reliable southern Oregon blend shows classic red fruits of Merlot, cedary spice from Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon's muscle. Soft enough in texture but with a definite nod to the old world, the red cherry and plum fruit stays buoyant and fresh, backed by warm wood and light tannin.

\$11.50

Abbaye Sainte Eugenié Corbières 2013

Veteran local importer Phil Smith shows that he still has the touch with this charming little country wine from France's Languedoc region. 70% Carignan, 15% each Mourvedre and Syrah, this offers a vivid display of prettied-up red fruits and floral aromatics in front, while backstage a mix of grippy tannins, crackling acidity and dusty peppery spice keep things rumbling along. **\$9.99**

Tilia Bonarda 2014

It's been a while since we tasted this and were just reminded of its charms. Straightforward, peppery and appealing in a let's-not-think-about-this-too-much sort of way, the marionberry fruit is juicy and pillow-soft with just enough going on in the background to prevent it from being one-dimensional. There's dried herb and nutmeg on the nose with cracked pepper on the finish, and an overall intriguing citrus component that reminded us of kumquat or the pith of blood orange. Oh wait, I'm not supposed to think about this too much...**\$9.99**

PLEASE NOTE: Great Wine Buys will be closed Jan. 1 - Jan. 5 and will re-open on Wed. Jan. 6

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Thanks!



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