



RED & WHITE WINE CLUB



Turley Cellars Cinsault

Lodi 2009 \$19.99

As a special treat, you charter members of the first ever Summer Wine Club are getting some more Turley. I sent this wine out in all three clubs last October to rave reviews. What little I had left for reorders went extremely fast and unfortunately there are no extra cases available from this vintage. I had to beg to get this wine to send to you folks in the summer club. As a reminder, Turley is extremely hard to secure since this wine was intended for restaurant use only. In fact, it is a very few wine shops across the country and if you want to buy Turley must be on the waiting list for years and years just to get a chance to buy it during their two release periods per year. The farther up on the list, the more wine you are allowed to order. Turley, is perhaps the biggest "cult" producer of Zinfandel and Petite Sirah in Napa Valley. This wine was intended for restaurants only because it is intended to be a food wine since it is lighter bodied than their normal monster fruit bomb Zinfandel that they had built their reputation on. Made by my friend, Ehren Jordan, Cinsault (pronounced san-so) has been historically used as a blending grape most commonly asked in addition to Grenache and Mourvedre. Ehren found a 120-year-old vineyard in Lodi which was the source of this delicious medium to light bodied wine. It is very young and only saw four months of oak. This is a perfect summer red that pairs with many lighter foods. Aromas of strawberries and blueberries on the nose, with more strawberry, cherry, and red licorice on the palate. The finish is accentuated with delicious mineral, very light tannin and more strawberry flavors. I just had this wine with some delicious barbecued ribs and the wine was a perfect addition to the smoky and spicy barbecue sauce. For info on Turley and a Ehren, refer to Oct 09 Intense notes (and how I almost burned his ranch down in Cazadero.....)

Andrew Lane Gamay Noir

Napa Valley NV \$16.99

Perhaps the quintessential summer red, Gamay Noir was at one time the most widely planted varietal found in Napa Valley. Gamay was the first wine ever made by Robert Mondavi. The folks at Andrew Lane winery discovered several small blocks of old Vine Gamay a few years back and started making this delicious offering for the public. Gamay is most widely associated as the grape that produces Beaujolais in France. The grapes that went into this wine came from four Legacy Vineyards found near the base of Mt. St. Helena in Calistoga. It is registered as non-vintage because both 2006 and 2007 vintages were blended together. Closely resembling Pinot Noir in both mouthfeel, structure, and flavor profile, this wine trades the dried cherry of Pinot Noir for ripe Bing cherry but they still share delicate strawberry on the nose with a hint of earthiness. I actually like to serve this wine chilled. Try serving this wine with some grilled wild King Salmon. You'd be amazed how well red wine and fish taste together.

Lonen Chardonnay

California 2009 \$13.99

Lonen Cabernet Sauvignon

California 2008 \$19.99

These wines are second labels from the Jocelyn Lonen winery. As most high-end wineries these days are experiencing difficulties in selling their high-end, expensive wines, they are turning to producing second labels with value oriented prices. The Chardonnay at \$14 and Cabernet at \$20, display amazing price to quality ratios. My buddy Jeff Popick turned me onto both of these wines while he was working as the vineyard manager for the winery. The Chardonnay, is actually from the Russian River AVA blended with 25% Viognier from Lodi. The wine is fermented in both American and French oak barrels, 30% which was new. Allison Doren is the winemaker. She got her start in the wine business when her father purchased a Simi winery in 1969. She had the luck and pleasure of working side-by-side at Simi with the famous Andre Tchelistcheff, perhaps the one man you could point to when speaking about California's wine resurgence. Allison went on to work for a Firestone winery in Santa Barbara County in the early 70s becoming head winemaker in 1981. The Chardonnay has a gorgeous nose of white peach and toasty oak. More stone fruit comes out on the front palate with a hint of melon and fig, and the finish is long and rich with bright acidity with a touch of spicy ginger lingering on the palate. The Cabernet is an amazing example of what you can purchase these days for 20 bucks. Napa Valley Cabernet this good for this price is scary. The wine is dark in the glass with a voluptuous nose of cassis, blackberry, and leather. A complex and masculine wine, medium to full-bodied, I get black cherry and strawberry's on the opening interspersed with waves of fruit, saddle leather, tobacco, and cocoa. The finish is long with hints of espresso bean and chocolate covered cherries with mild and integrated tannins. I would serve the Chardonnay as an aperitif paired with grilled shrimp or cheese. Keep the barbecue hot, throw on a fat steak and open up the Cabernet for delicious summer BBQ.

Bandwagon Chardonnay

Monterey County 2009 \$19.99

This is a new wine and label from Tony Leonardini, the volunteer fireman from St. Helena in the winemaker from several previous wines chosen for the club under the label "Volunteer" and "Two-Faced".

This is what Tony has to say about his new brand:

Know where you're going. The Bandwagon is a phenomenon of instinct and probability. Distinct wines created from a crush of nature and skill. The Bandwagon Chardonnay grape hails from lofty origins high above Monterey County. We challenged ordinary wine making practices to retain this vineyard's unique characteristics with a crisp, clean horizon in sight. Jumping on the Bandwagon is instinctual.

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Extraordinary wines highly probable. 'Nough said....The man has a way with words, no? You folks are the first to taste this delicious Chardonnay which was sourced from the Santa Lucia Highlands in Monterey County. The wine was made without any oak fermentation and was not permitted to go through malolactic. This is a crisp, clean representation of pure cold climate Chardonnay grapes. The nose reminds me of jasmine flowers right after a rainstorm. On the palate I get honeysuckle, papaya, and Meyer lemons. The wine is rich you may detect some butter, but believe me, those flavors are just from the pure Chardonnay fruit characteristics. The finish is crisp with bright acidity which would cut through the richness of tempura battered soft shell crab.

Vino con Brio “Brillante”

White Rhone Blend

Lodi 2009 \$15.99

This winery is a member of the “Lodi Rules of Sustainable Winegrowing” Association. This is a very unique and precedent setting set of guidelines that has never been done to an entire grape growing region before. This is California’s first sustainable winegrowing standard, that have been peer reviewed by scientists, academics, and environmentalists which is being implemented on a region-wide basis.

The “Lodi Winegrowers Workbook”, is a set of rules that are designed to lead to measurable improvements in environmental health of the surrounding ecosystem, inhabitants, and overall wine quality. Participating growers can get their Vineyards certified as producing sustainably grown wine grapes.

The program is third-party certified which means the standards have been reviewed and endorsed by an organization not connected to the Lodi Woodbridge Winegrape Commission. These wineries are certified by Protected Harvest, an environmental nonprofit organization that endorses farmers’ use of stringent environmental farming standards. The majority of the standards set in the guideline concerns natural buffer areas surrounding the Vineyards, and the use of pesticides. Don’t confuse “sustainable” with “organic” because they are completely different.

I love the idea of this entire region wide program because here Napa Valley, you could have a completely organic vineyard surrounded by other vineyards that flood their ground with “Round-up”, the ubiquitous weed-killer used in most farming practices in California. It leeches onto the sustainable organic vineyard anyway and into the soil which eventually finds its way into the water table.

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A few years ago they did a test of the water which flows in the Napa River and stated that it was perhaps the most polluted water in Northern California due to all of the chemicals being used in the Vineyards. When Emma was a newborn I asked the vineyard down below our house to notify me when they were spraying sulfur on the vines so we could close her windows in her room. Growing wine grapes can have a nasty effect on the environment.

This wine is a blend of 70% Viognier, 20% Roussanne, 7% Pinot Grigio, and 3% Sauvignon Blanc. It is a delicious, yet unique Rhône blend. The Viognier provides rich mouth feel, medium body, the floral nose, and a plethora of stone fruit characteristics most importantly, white peach and apricot. The Roussanne brings to the party a mineral component and bright acidity along with tropical fruit flavors. The Pinot Grigio adds a touch of Alsatian edelweiss flowers, and the SB gives a touch of grassiness. The sum of all of these parts produced a delicious summer white wine that will pair well with any seafood dishes that you serve, but perhaps the most perfect pairing would be sushi.