



**SUMMERTIME FUN ...
WINE FOR YOU FAVORITE SUMMER EVENT**

WINE CLUB NOTES

Todd's Summer Wine Club Notes!!

"Wow, what CRAZY weather"....that statement has been uttered by so many people from coast to coast this spring, and believe me, we have been saying the same thing to ourselves out here in the Napa Valley along with the rest of you folks. Two weeks ago, and I swear this is the complete truth, I had a roaring fire going in my fireplace with Emma and 3 of her girlfriends roasting marshmallows and making "smares", while a raucous storm was practically ruining the Napa Valley Auction – this is the first time, by the way, it rained on the Auction in 30 plus years. We broke a record for rainfall for June that stood since 1884. I have been living in California for 34 years and have never remembered it raining in June. We had lows in the 40's at night and it barely made it above 50 during the day for much of May. Yesterday, in St. Helena, the mercury topped out at 106. Winter to Summer, and QUICKLY. What does this mean for the grapes? Well, mold, powdery mildew, bunch rot, low bunch yield because the flowers were knocked off by rain drops..... all you see in the vineyards are dudes with HAZMAT suits driving tractors spraying thick white clouds of sulfur over the vines – trying, praying, that the evil grape diseases that are caused by wetness are held at bay. Now that the heat has been turned on, all that rain, plus lots of sunshine and HEAT, equals huge vigor (growth), which if not kept in check by aggressive pruning, will lead to very "green" (vegetal, green pepper flavors) wine coming down the pipe to a bottle near you. The vineyard managers have their job cut out for them this year, and that is putting it extremely mildly at best.

...Well now that I am in my 50's, I had the lovely news dropped on me this week that I have a colonoscopy to experience in my very near future. I went in to the doctor office to find out why my feet have been feeling numb. A full panel work-up and complete physical revealed that no, I am not diabetic – I drink too much wine, but my cholesterol sure is good..... In denial as usual, I went to an acupuncturist to fix my feet, only to leave feeling like a freaking porcupine toting a bottle of Chinese herbs to drink that taste like the most vile elixir ever known to Mankind, practically ruining the palate of your favorite wine monger. Alas, the taste was dispatched by a yummy glass of Chukkar Red Blend, found in this club shipment, numb feet be damned.

Thanks for your consideration and don't forget....drink up.
There's more where this is coming from!

Todd & the Garagistas



ALL WHITE SUMMER WINE CLUB



Zocker Gruner Veltliner

Edna Valley 2010 \$24.99

This is the first “Gruener” I have ever purchased for a Club selection. GV, as it’s known in the wine industry is extremely popular on the East Coast – mostly from people getting bored with Pinot Grigio I imagine. It has very similar characteristics to Pinot Gris and the other Alsatian whites.

Grown best in Austria, and a cousin of Riesling, it does well on terraced vineyard near big bodies of water. Very little GV is grown in California, but this wine, grown in the coolest growing region of California in Edna Valley just outside of San Louis Obispo, really impressed me with its old world character. All tank fermented and zero malolactic fermentation, this wine is clean, crisp, and has great acidity – yet full bodied. The nose produces orange blossom, anise, and hints of the salty seashore breeze lifting off the sand dunes of Pismo Beach. Crisp Granny Smith apple, lemon chiffon, and anise seed dominate the palate; with a weightiness in the mouthfeel. The finish is crisp, tart, and lively, with a distinct saltiness – some would call it mineral, but knowing the area this wine comes from, I can’t get away from the sea.

A perfect food wine, this will pair well with grilled Halibut, steamed clams, or a delicious hot dog with sauerkraut and mustard.

Phoenix Ranch Cinsault

Lodi 2010 \$17.99

Markus Bokisch is a pioneer of sorts in the California wine world, growing primarily Spanish (or Iberian) grape varieties in Lodi, 50 miles east of Napa Valley near the Sacramento River Delta. Markus has one of the few Albarino plantings in Northern California, the other being the Babcock Vineyard where I source the fruit for the WG Joy Ride.

Grenache Blanc, the most common name for this relatively new variety of grape grown in California, is originally from Spain – as is Grenache Noir, the red version. It migrated into southern France - to the Rhone, where it became synonymous with all Rhone wines, just like Carignane, and Mourvedre, both originating in Spain as well.

This all steel tank fermented wine has a nice nose of honeysuckle and apricots, a rich mouthfeel on the palate due to tirelessly stirring the lees while in tank to add richness. Orange peel, peach, nectarine, and pineapple on the tongue with a pleasant balance of round richness and crisp acidity. Perfect with a picnic or Southern Fried Chicken.

Tangent Ecclestone White Blend

Edna Valley 2007 \$17.99

Tangent Pinot Gris

Edna Valley 2010 \$17.99

A second label of Baileyana Winery, Tangent winery focuses exclusively on “alternative” white wines. Alternative....meaning no Chardonnay. Christian Rogeunant is the winemaker – from France obviously – and boy, does he know how to make yummy “alternatives”. The Ecclestone is a blend of Pinot Gris, Viognier, Reisling, Pinot Blanc, Albarino, and Muscat. I LOVE this wine. It is completely fermented in stainless steel, no malolactic, and whole cluster pressed. Exotic and intoxicating, extremely floral and crisp, this wine screams for spicy food whether it is Thai, Indian, or Mexican. Peaches, tangerine, and kumquat on the nose with a hint of jasmine in bloom. Graphite, tropical fruit, peach, papaya, and lemon/lime Kool-Aid. Pair with anything spicy, especially a sushi roll with “dynamite”.

The Pinot Gris is made in a classic Alsatian style, once again completely fermented without oak. Super clean and crisp, I get pine resin and tropical fruit on the nose, more pineapple, quince, herbs, and meyer lemon on the palate. Very nice acidity will help pair this wine to rich soft shell crab tempura, crab cakes, or grilled jumbo shrimp.

Dry Creek Vineyard Chenin Blanc

Clarksburg 2010

Mostly known for the amazing Zin these folks produce in Dry Creek Valley in Sonoma County, this dry Chenin Blanc is perhaps one of the best expressions of this grape grown in the entire state of California. Clarksburg sits on the Sacramento River Delta just outside of the State Capitol and is the one of the best sites for this varietal due to the sandy soil and cool breezes coming off the river after a scorching hot day. One of my favorite summer white wines that pair with many different foods, this wine has the aroma of white peach, honeydew melon, and pear. On the palate we see more peach, cantaloupe, pineapple, all intermingling with a chalky minerality and a jolt of lemon on the finish. Nothing could taste better with BBQ’d chicken from the Weber accompanied with a cob of sweet corn slathered in butter and a sprinkle of salt.

Stepping Stone Rose

Napa Valley 2010 \$17.99

Not a by-product of some Syrah that needed to boost its color by “bleeding” off some of the free run juice to increase the skin to juice ratio – this rose was intended to be a real rose. A second label of Cornerstone Cellars here in Napa, this wine is my go-to Napa Valley picnic beverage served ice cold on a hot summer day.

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ALL WHITE SUMMER WINE CLUB



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Tank fermented then transferred to neutral barrels to add complexity and richness, this wine has the perfect light salmon color of a quality dry rose. Perhaps the trendiest summer wine amongst the wine industry, don't think this is some sickly sweet white Zinfandel to turn your nose up at..... be a trendsetter, and at your next summer pool party and bring this amazing crisp and delicious wine tucked under your arm. Such a balance between the crispness and richness, this wine has a gorgeous nose of fresh picked strawberries drizzled with rich clotted cream, dried flowers, and white pepper. Strawberry, currant, melon, and nectarine on the palate with a hint of spice on the crisp finish. What a refreshing wine to serve after a long hot day of work, sitting on your porch with your honey nibbling on a piece of cheese....