



**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



RED & WHITE SUMMER WINE CLUB



Happy Canyon Vineyards “Chukker”

Red Blend

Santa Ynez Valley 2009 \$20.99

Made by winemaker Doug Margerum, formally the wine merchant at the Wine Cask in Santa Barbara, Happy Canyon is getting a lot of run these days in the wine press. This is a very unique red blend of Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Syrah that is produced without ANY oak fermentation what so ever. Inspired by the Chinon wines from the Loire Valley in France – made in a style reminiscent of Nouveau Beaujolais (no oak and very young), this wine is perfect for Summertime evening pool parties. Named for the Polo Team owned by the vineyard dude.

This wine is young and fruity and totally delicious. Pretty dark in the glass with aromas of fresh blackberry, blueberries, and plums. The flavor of fresh dark fruits predominate with berry, grapey, and smooth tannins. The Cab Franc adds nice richness with a cola/chocolate profile, and the Syrah gives of nice balance and structure. The finish is long and smooth. Have with Leg of Lamb.

Phoenix Ranch Cinsault

Lodi 2010 \$21.99

Made by Richard Phoenix and sourced in Lodi from the Bechtold Vineyard, this is a delightful summer wine with medium body and soft tannin. Not often made as a single varietal, Cinsault comes from the Rhone in Southern France, and this vineyard was planted 130 years ago. Normally it is used as a blending grape and has a lighter and softer profile. Due to the vineyards old vines producing extremely flavorful grapes, this wine has some grip. The head trained, dry farmed vines are also sourced by Ehren Jordon from Turley and made into a single varietal under that label as well. This wine has a nose of lavender, plums, and smoke. Pretty dark and made completely in tank, there is no oak to get in the way of the fruit bomb style Richard crafted. Berry, raspberry, tobacco, and blueberry compose on the palate with a long rich and a slightly spiced finish. Perfect with grilled steak, burgers or a summer inspired roasted chicken on a late afternoon with neighbors by the pool.

Angeline Pinot Noir

California 2009

Sourced from vineyards in Mendocino, Santa Barbara, and Sonoma counties, this is truly a California Cuvee from some of the best Pinot growing areas in the state. All three regions offer cooler growing conditions and long hang-times producing wines with intense fruit and great structure. Cold soaked and fermented with moderate temperatures, this Pinot is a fruit bomb. This is rich and velvety on the palate with a yummy nose of strawberry and currant. Dark garnet in color, the palate offers up toasty oak intermingled with berry, white pepper, vanilla, black tea, and plum pudding with a hint of earthy tobacco on the finish. Try this with grilled Salmon or a Pork Tenderloin.

Bokisch Grenacha Blanca

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, actually is originally from Spain – as is Grenache Noir, the red version. It migrated to 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 of Southern Fried Chicken.

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 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 sour kraut and mustard.

Muir-Hanna Chardonnay

Napa Valley 2007 \$14.99

Muir-Hanna Vineyards has called it quits with the winemaking facet of their business. From now on they will sell all the fruit – which had been the mainstay of their business for over 40 years anyway. They learned the age-old lesson that making wine is fun, sure, but then someone has to sell it – not so fun. Direct descendants of John Muir (yes, the naturalist who helped start the National Park system), the winemaker, Michael is the great, great grandson.

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RED & WHITE SUMMERWINE CLUB



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Raised in Napa, he married into another famous family here in St Helena, the daughter (Leonora) of the Particelli clan, proprietors of Napa Valley Olive Oil Manufactory, the quaint little shop selling Italian delicacies and awesome olive oil since 1931. And if that isn't enough history for you.....the grapes that this Chardonnay is made from comes from the same vineyard that Mike Grgich used (while making wine for Chateau Montelena) for the famous Chardonnay that won the "Paris Tasting" in 1976 – when Napa Valley kicked the French in the ass and put us on the map. This Chard is so similar to French White Burgundies that I have tasted, I am so shocked that we can give it to you for only \$15. Toasty oak and vanilla on the nose, butter and mineral on the palate with some granny smith apple and gooseberry rounding out the rich finish. Compared to the 2008 Muir-Hanna Chardonnay that we offered in an e-mail; the 2007 Chardonnay is higher in acid yet displays a beautiful creaminess on both the nose and palette. Perfect pairing to a cheese plate or smoked salmon canapé.

