



# RED & WHITE FEBRUARY WINE CLUB



## Margerum Pinot Gris

“American” (Washington St.) 2010 \$19.99

Doug Margerum is one of the pioneers of wine in Santa Barbara, not initially by being a winemaker or vintner but by creating the Wine Cask Restaurant (one of the best restaurants in the whole town, if not THE best), The Wine Cask Wine Shop, and the Wine Cask Wine Bar. When I was trying to open another Wine Garage in Santa Barbara several years ago – which of course never came to fruition – on many of my trips down south I would always have dinner in the Bar or Restaurant and visit the shop as well. At that same time, Doug was in the process of selling the entire enchilada to a dude from Los Angeles, Bernard Rosenson. Doug was more interested in developing his own label and needed to chill a bit from the hectic 3 businesses that ruled his life. Rosenson was a big shot restaurateur who thought he knew everything, and of course proceeded to DESTROY the entire cool trilogy of Restaurant, Bar, and Shop.

He was kicked out on his ear less than 2 years later, not paying being able to pay the rent, bankrupt. So Doug came back and bought it all back and re-opened everything again with other partners. Coincidentally, I was having lunch at the Cask one day back in 2007 and struck up a conversation with this dude at a table next to me who turned out to be Rosenson. I must say, what a condescending pig he was. Another recent coincidence concerning the Margerum Empire.....my loving sister Kate from Brooklyn, the very first Wine Garage Club Member by the way, was in Mendoza, Argentina over this past holiday season on “holiday”.

They have these restaurants that pop up in peoples’ homes, very intimate settings I’m sure. She was having a cocktail with some other diners before the meal and was talking with this woman who turned out to be Laurel Margerum, Doug’s ex-wife, who had of course heard of the famous Wine Garage. Small world. Anyway, that all said, this wine is yummy! From a vineyard he owns in Washington State – this is the only wine I have ever seen as being from the “American” AVA. Ha, funny! This wine is light and refreshing with amazing aromatics. Very pale in the glass, slightly sweet and spritzzy on the palate, with a great acidic back bone. Green apple, tropical fruit, hint of thyme and dill, crisp and pleasant finish with minerals and hints of lemon. Perfect with spicy Indian food like Chicken curry.

## Anaba Chardonnay

Sonoma Coast 2009 \$24.99

Named for the winds that blow up the hillsides on sunny days. Wind is important to these folks because this is the first winery to ever be completely powered by windmills. How cool! This wine comes from 5 different vineyard sites on the Sonoma Coast. 40% was barrel fermented in 22% new French oak and pushed through malolactic. 60% was tank fermented and not allowed to hit the secondary malolactic fermentation.

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The results became a wine that is full bodied and rich, yet pleasantly crisp and un-flabby. Lemon custard, pineapple upside down cake, limestone, and vanilla hit the palate after the aromas of buttered toast, cinnamon, and Asian pears. Nice mineral and acid on the long, lush finish. This is juice to be drunk eating all sorts of Crab cooked all sorts of ways....

## L’Oliveto Chardonnay

Russian River Valley 2010 \$20.99

From one of the oldest Chardonnay vineyards off of Oliveto Road in the Russian River Valley. These old vines produce grapes with almost identical acidities found in White Burgundy in France. The 2010 vintage was one of the coolest growing seasons in 20 years, producing puny quantities of fruit in the vineyards, yet that fruit was amazing in quality. Super long hang time on the vine results in very flavorful fruit and wine that has great structure if the acid is right. This wine does, and it can be one of those rare white wines that will age very well. Buy a case and pop a bottle every year for the next twelve years and see for yourself. The wine took 4 months to ferment to dry on wild yeast. The lees were stirred every 2 weeks in French oak barrels that was 40% new. 100% malolactic fermentation. Pale straw in color, citrusy nose with hint of baked apples, the palate is bright and uplifting, then complex and rich on the finish. Buttered toast, quince, pear, and nectarine are all evident in the mouth. Great acidity to match with the richness, I love this wine. I had this wine with a yummy Bouillabaisse – French Seafood stew – and it was divine.

## Sonoma Mission Winery Merlot

Napa Valley 2004 \$13.99

Don’t be alarmed at the price of this wine, it is really, really delicious and will be, perhaps, the best \$14 Merlot you EVER drink (actually with your club discount, \$12.60). I won’t tell you the REAL name of the winery that made this wine because there were mistakes made in the marketing ideas for it and I don’t want to embarrass anyone. Nobody is perfect, especially not me, but there is some commonsense needed when selling wine. Like, why name a wine from Napa Valley, a brand unsurpassed in California for quality Bordeaux style wine – “SONOMA” MISSION? Mission? Mission grapes were one of the first varieties planted in California and produce HORRIFIC wine. Bad label, screw cap, yada yada. The dude responsible HAD to be fired for this thing. Wine is really good though. A Cabernet lover’s Merlot, big and full bodied, a monster in fact. This wine is nearly 10 years old and still fresh as a daisy. A bit hot on the nose at first, then it opens up to aromas of black fruits and roasted herbs. Some coffee and black pepper on the front palate, followed by blackberry, earth, baking spices, white pepper, and a hit of blueberry on the finish. Soft tannin. Come on, this wine would make ANY hamburger taste mighty good. Buy a case at 20% off, but hurry.

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## **Miller Wine Works Pinot Noir**

Kendric Vineyard Marin County 2007 \$19.99

No, we are not related. There are plenty of Miller's out there. Yes, this wine was priced at \$40. Yes, it is damn good wine too. Gary Miller is from Back East (like me). He started out as a chef (like me). Became a vintner (like me). Feels that winemaking and cooking are very similar (like me). Is pretty handsome (like me). Now if he was a Fly Fisherman....that would be pretty freaky. This wine comes from a vineyard in West Marin County, trellised on a hillside, and composed of 7 different clones of Pinot. This wine is a big'un, for sure (like me). Although grown in the cool Petaluma Gap, this vineyard site is relatively protected from the cool winds and fog that dominate the AVA. Warm vineyard in a cool growing region? Kinda crazy (like me). Big fruit bomb, this wine is. Cherry pie, orange marmalade, toasty oak on the nose. More cherry preserves, raspberry, nutmeg, loam, and leather fill the senses on the palate. The finish is rich and lush and doesn't seem to end. Have with Osso Bucco, braised lamb shanks in a rich tomato based sauce.

## **Roudon-Smith Cabernet Sauvignon**

Paso Robles 2006 \$15.99

Started in the 70's by two computer engineers working in Silicon Valley, these 2 self taught winemakers built a winery in the Santa Cruz mountains after being successful making wine in their "garage". They both took the leap to full time winemaking in the late 70's and quit their day jobs. Today, semi-retired they make limited amounts of wine, and what a deal I got on this Cab. Selling for \$25 on the website, this is a fine Cab at that price, but for \$16, this is a GREAT Cab at THAT price. Interesting nose of cassis, strawberry, and orange peel. Perfume qualities. The wine is big and bold on the palate with currant, black pepper, espresso, and chocolate components. The finish shows a bit of vegetal, jalapeno pepper, but overall I am drawn to this wine for another glass. Tonight it's being served with Pasta and Sausages with a Bolognese sauce.