

Desert HILLS Wines - PERFECTLY Paired

Lee McNish

meal pair

Braised Endive and Sautéed Dill Prawns

Belgian endive sliced in 1/2
12 lg. cleaned & deveined prawns
1 cup whipping cream
3 tsp chopped dill
1 tsp chopped shallots
1 lemon juiced
1/2 cup white wine
2 tsp olive oil
2 tsp honey
Salt and pepper

Combine shallots, cream, wine, honey and a pinch of salt and pepper in a sauce pan then reduce by half on medium heat. Now place endive in and place in a 350 oven for 35 minutes.

When the endive is almost ready sauté the prawns in a hot pan for 2 minutes on each side or until done. The endive can be served on a slice of baguette then topped with the prawns.

Beef Carpaccio w/ Roasted Red Pepper & Garlic Aioli

1 center cut beef tenderloin
1 tsp chopped rosemary
1 tsp chopped garlic
1 tsp chopped parsley
2 tsp olive oil
Fresh cracked pepper

Rub all ingredients onto the tenderloin then tightly wrap with saran wrap and place into freezer for 2 hours.

1/2 cup roasted red peppers
6 cloves garlic
1/4 cup olive oil
2 tsp grated parmesan
1 egg yolk
1 tsp chopped parsley
1 hard boiled egg
2 tsp lemon juice
2 tsp sherry vinegar
1 tsp fresh basil
Coarse Sea Salt & Fresh Pepper

In a blender place all ingredients except salt and blend until smooth.

Now remove tenderloin from freezer and let sit for 10 minutes then slice with a very sharp knife as thin as possible and lay out onto a large dinner plate as a single layer.

Caramelized Duck Breast w/ Pecan Gorgonzola Soft Polenta

4 duck breast trimmed and scored
3 tsp brown sugar
1 cup red wine
3 tsp marmalade
Salt and pepper
2 tsp butter
Preheat oven to 375

Lightly season duck on both sides with salt and pepper and place fat side down into a hot frying pan until the fat is crispy which should be about 8 minutes then turn over and place into oven for 12 minutes depending on size. Remove from oven and place the duck aside to rest. In the pan add on high heat place sugar marmalade and wines until slightly reduced, then whisk in butter then remove. Slice duck into 6 pieces each and place on top of polenta and finish with sauce.

1 cup yellow corn meal
3 cups chicken stock
1/4 cup Gorgonzola cheese
1/2 cup toasted pecans
2 tsp chopped chives
3 tsp butter
Salt and pepper

In a sauce pan bring stock to a simmer and slowly add cornmeal and continue to stir for 10 minutes until thick then add butter and cheese until creamy finish with pecans and chives.
Season to taste.

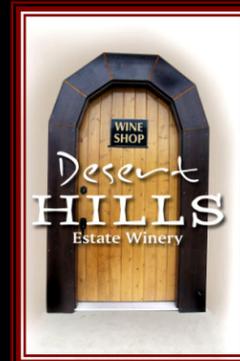
Fresh Raspberries with Zabaglione

2 pints fresh raspberries
4 egg yolks
8 tbsp Marsala
4 tsp sugar
Zest of 1/2 lemon

Combine all ingredients, except raspberries and place over a water bath on medium heat. Whip mixture continuously until foam is stiff and serve at once over raspberries

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Issue 3

This Month's Feature Winery



Desert HILLS

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The BC Wine Club Journal for March 2009

evaluation

Budding oenophiles take note - an extraordinary tasting session is just around the corner! Heralding the coming of age of BC wine, The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival is, for the very first time, putting the wines of our beloved region centre stage. To prepare for the event we thought now would be the perfect time to offer a refresher course on the fine art of wine evaluation.

To start, we thought a little deconstruction of our tasting notes would be appropriate. Their style, ease of use, and informative qualities have been complimented by both members and featured wineries alike. To thank for this we point to the Club's founder, **Richard Finn**. When creating the BC Wine Club, Richard felt it was important for the club to be both social and educational. The tasting notes proved an excellent way to connect these two main tenets.

Richard has a formal background in wine, having studied the crafting and summation of it through university courses in Australia. But he was also immersed in it from the social side of things, growing up in a household where the patriarch was a serious wine collector. So, when devising the structure for the tasting notes of his new club, he tried to incorporate things he learned in both settings, putting them in a format that would be accessible to everyday wine enthusiasts.

This month we'll look at some of the categories covered in our notes and why they are important in evaluating wine. Next month, we'll speak with Richard and delve a little deeper, taking you slightly beyond a Sommelier 101 course.



About This Wine: Learning more about the origins of a particular wine's grapes, in terms of genealogy, vineyard terroir, and processing, are essential to appreciating it's true character. Though certain traits are idiosyncratic to the varietal, other factors such as vineyard soil composition, seasonal temperature variations in a particular year, and winemaker style give insight into what you can expect from a wine. For instance, knowing that the '06 Pinot Noir from Stoneboat Vineyards was created with grapes raised in stone-laden Black Sage Bench soil, and crafted by a California trained winemaker, may have you looking for a more fruit forward wine with certain minerality complimenting the grapes traditional dark cherry flavour and aroma. Conversely, a light cherry flavoured Cowichan Valley Pinot Noir can read very differently, taking on that regions terroir's signature earthy notes on both nose and palate. Knowing more about the conditions experienced in the vineyard in any given year can also point you towards a better wine choice. The optimum conditions experienced in the Bordeaux in '05 produced extraordinary wines. Dire ones, such as the drought conditions currently gripping Australia, could make great wines from the region fewer and farther apart.



*The Vancouver International Wine Festival
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Wine Evaluation - The finer points

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White wines have such a range in terms of colour from near clear to deep gold in tone. Whites darken with age, but the paler colours usually indicate a cooler region and darker colours a warm one. Exceptions to this rule can be some sweet wines which have been oak aged.

Reds have even greater range straddling from lightest rosé to near ink purple. The colours are usually a direct resultant of the type of grape used in the wine, but is also effected by the amount of aging and region of origin. Reds will actually lighten with age. The browner and paler the rim appears the longer the wine has been aged. A darker colour could mean a warmer climate of origin and a lighter climate would produce a paler red.

Different parts of the mouth will indicate certain characteristics of the wine. Sweetness is indicated by a reaction felt at the tip of the tongue. This is often confused with the fruity character, which does not produce this reaction. If nothing is felt at the tip of the tongue the wine is considered dry. Acidity is indicated by a reaction or feeling on the sides of the tongue toward the back of the mouth. Strong acidity will make your mouth actually water. If salty, which is very rare, the sides toward the front of the tongue will react. If bitter the middle of the tongue will elicit a reaction. Tannin is indicated by the drying effect it has on the gums and tongue. It is very high in young reds before aging. Body is distinguished by the impression of the weight of the wine in your mouth. Light wines are referred to as light bodied and heavy wines are call full-bodied. Length of the wine is judged by how long the flavor remains on the palate after the wine has been spit out of the mouth.

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On the Side with Chef Lee McNish



Pairing in the Shade

Sometimes the guidelines for wine and food pairings can change because of the sauces that are served with the protein. For example, Dover sole generally would be paired with a Chardonnay. But, if the sole was accented by a spicy Putanesca sauce, you could pair it with a slightly chilled Pinot Noir. When thinking of how best to pair a meal, I think about a paint palette and shading. If a wine choice is not obvious, I view the colour of the meal and match the wine a shade lighter. This will work for most meals but there are, of course, a few exceptions. For instance, wines with oaky or smoky earth tones are tough to match because they shouldn't be paired with anything too delicate. Here, the wine would simply overpower the meal and neither would be palatable. Save these types of wines for like-minded meals where, for example, something like a smoked cheese incorporated into the mix will allow all the players of the meal to shine.

See Page 4 for Lee's Desert Hills Pairings

This Month's
Feature Wines
From Desert Hills

Feature Red - 2007 Gamay Noir
Feature White - 2006 Un-oaked Chardonnay
Companion Red - 2005 Mirage
Premium Selection - 2005 Syrah Select
Gold Medalist, West Coast Wine Competition (California)



A Growing Friendship

Over the past several years, we here at the BC Wine Club have developed a special relationship with the folks at Desert Hills Estate Winery. This winery, based in Oliver, BC and located in the heart of the premier Black Sage Bench, has certainly earned our respect, admiration and friendship. Since their first release back in 2003, we've found Desert Hills wines to be consistently superior and respect their dedication to excellence. Our admiration has been earned, year after year, as owner Randy Toor, along with assisting brothers Jessie & Dave, claim awards in some of this continent's most prestigious wine competitions. And our friendship was won the moment we first set foot in the tasting room and were greeted with a genuine smile, a firm handshake, and an invitation to sample wines that were flat out fantastic!

Much of the good character of these wines can be attributed to the fact Desert Hills uses only the finest grapes. These guys know a thing about grapes, too, having grown some of the finest in all of BC on their 24 acres of prime Black Sage soil since 1995.

In the grape trade, they also developed solid relationships with some of the industries most celebrated craftsmen, including Dr. Elias Phinotis. 'Celebrated' is certainly how one who knows the wine industry in Canada would characterize Dr. Elias Phinotis. Dr. Phinotis is one of the founders of British Columbia's VQA program and is the genius winemaker behind the scenes at Desert Hills. His consummate attention to detail, and the Toors stellar fruit, have given rise to a winning tradition of massive proportion.



But don't think for one moment that all that success has gone to their heads. Desert Hills is one of the most inviting wineries in all of the Okanagan. Despite his success, Randy Toor is also one of the most upbeat, friendly and entertaining people you're likely to meet. Not just at a winery, but anywhere. His pleasant demeanor will put you at ease instantly, and his genuine excitement to show off his latest award winners is completely refreshing. Seeing someone enjoying the fruit of their labour gives Mr. Toor an obvious high. To him, sharing is what its all about and he honestly enjoys meeting each and every customer. In fact, if you tell Randy you're a BC Wine Club member, you better have a few moments to spare so that he can get to know you better. A moment to share a Desert Hills treasure with a new found friend.