

Wine

continued from page 7B

a sharp eye out for signs pointing the way. Take note that the vineyard's driveway is gravelly and strewn with potholes.

Those looking for wines other than Pinot will be a bit disappointed, for that is all that is in stock right now. Chardonnay is available in very limited quantities, which are sold out at the moment. But those who relish in the great Oregon tradition of Pinot are in for a treat. There are several different Gris and Noirs of various vintages, tastes and prices that are sure to hit home with even the most discriminating of college wine snobs.

Starting with the Gris: LaVelle is currently offering two years of Gris, a '97 and a '98. The '97 is the deal of the week. For only \$5 a bottle, it can't be beat. For those who like Gris, this is a real treat. Because of its age, the wine is a bit mellow, but retains a dry acidic taste with citrus overtones. It is not too bold, making it perfect for drinking on its own. I found it a lovely wine that is made even more attractive with its low price.

The '98 is for those looking for a bit more "zang" in the wine. This one leaves its impression on the tongue after the first sip. I found it zestier than the '97. This would make a great companion to seafood and other light-tasting dishes. The '98 is a bit more expensive but by no means out of reach.

I found the Noirs to be in step with the current trend of great Pinot Noir being produced in Oregon right now.

On the cheaper end of the scale is the '96 Susan's vineyard "estate" Pinot Noir. Because of its age, this wine is mellowing and losing some of its zest, yet has a nice spice note and would be a good apéritif wine. This wine is also being discounted at \$7 a bottle. This makes it an attractive wine for those on a budget, as Noir can be expensive, especially for estate wines.

Moving up on the age scale is the '97 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, composed of Noir grapes from the central Willamette Valley. This is a younger wine with a punchier and more complex taste than the '96. Also at \$13 a bottle, it makes a good special occasion wine, possibly for Valentine's Day.

Finally, on the upper end of the scale, the '98 Vintage Select Pinot Noir is a great way to end the tasting experience. The tastings are \$1 apiece, yet those who truly enjoy great Pinot wines will want to pay the premium. Giving flavors of blackberry and spice, this wine is a real treat. I highly recommend this wine, but at \$24, it may be a bit prohibitive to some of us. It may be a good idea to hold this one for mom and dad for when grades come out.

Keep in mind that LaVelle is a little out of the way and that drinking fine wine and driving is never a good idea. If need be, take time to enjoy some of the art on

Continued from page 7B

Pinot Gris — Grown in Alsace, Germany, Italy and Oregon, this grape can produce round, flavorful, dry white wines.

Riesling — The great white wine grape of Germany. Its good acidity level provides flavorful, crisp wines.

Sauvignon Blanc — A white grape grown in the Bordeaux and Loire regions of France as well as California, South America and New Zealand. The style of wine made from this grape is herbaceous, with lively acidity.

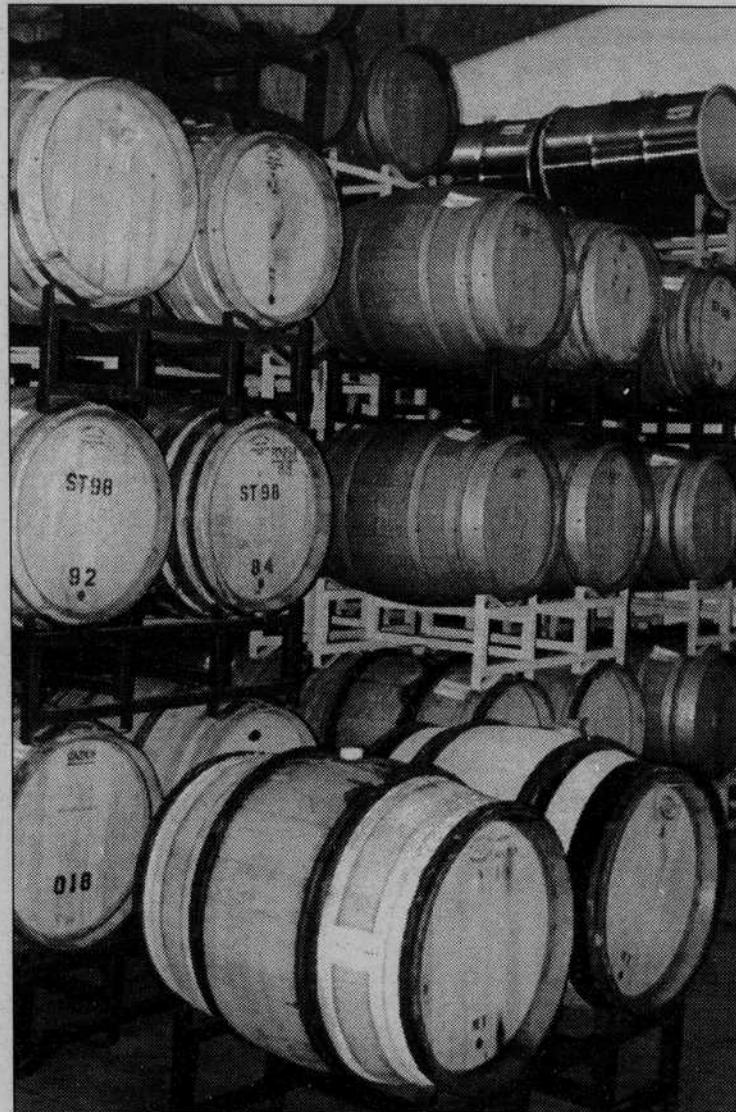
Sémillon — This white wine grape is very often used in blending with the Sauvignon Blanc grape to give the wine more character and richness.

Source: www.seattleinsider.com

display in the art gallery just upstairs from the tasting room. If you can't make it out to LaVelle, you can always visit the tasting room in the 5th Street Market. It offers all the wines available at the vineyard as well as some other international selections.

Currently, the 5th Street tasting room is offering Wines of the World, featuring a new region every month.

I would like to give special thanks to LaVelle employee Mike Peterson for his excellent tour and samplings of "raw" wine. If you catch him on one of his "zany" days, it is possible to get this same crazy tour through the nostalgic world of craft wine making.



Travis Geny Emerald

Veneta's LaVelle Vineyards offer excellent Pinot variety wines for a comfortable price.

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