



I have to make this column painfully short by my longwinded standards. Already one of my columns has been digested by a computer with an attitude and it is now December 22nd and I am certain the good Reverend has more than lost his patience with me. I will attempt to summarize my thoughts on wine into a concisely worded bit. This being said.

No winery review again this month. I thought it might be time, seeing as this is the one year anniversary of this column, to go over its growth. One year ago I wrote about the Sunday Brunch at **Eola Hills Winery** (which is still top notch according to my sources). In that introduction I hardly mentioned the wine at all. In the last edition of the Edge I reviewed 24 of my favorite Oregon wines. Times change and people grow.

Actually, I have found that along with my increased palate for wine many of my friends and relations have increased their appreciation and consumption of wine. We are blessed to live in a state that affords us the opportunity to live near a growing wine region. Heck, Oregon is practically the sophisticated beverage capital of the States. I'm not being snotty or anything, just simply stating what seem to be the facts. Great microbrews, superb wine and (from what I understand, as I don't drink the brew) good coffee. If rainy days that require lots of indoor time are the price we must pay for our particular distinction I am willing to pay.

Back to the wine though. We certainly aren't California in terms of the wine we produce, although, for the first time, 3 Oregon wines made The Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wines of the Year List. In fact, the 1992 **Ponzi Pinot noir Reserve**, ranked at number 51, was the highest rated red Burgundy in the world. Not bad. While California wines and Bordeaux dominated the list from the one periodical which may be more provincial than this one Oregon's best showing is worth noting. The fact that winemakers from France and California are scrambling to snap up acreage all over the western part of the state shows that this is a place to be.

The drawback to all of this is that increased popularity combined with a limited supply creates all sorts of nasty problems for us not so wealthy wine drinkers. Supply and demand hurts when you are on the purchasing end. Sure, even now it is difficult to find really good Pinot noir for less than \$10. This is a big change from even a few years ago. A friend of mine noted that I spend a goodly amount of money on wine. I agreed, but noted that it is really no more expensive than a good coffee or microbrew habit. It's just that it costs more at one shot. It can be difficult to pull the string on the bottle of \$25-\$30 wine. If you know what you are buying, though, it can be well worth the price.

In keeping with the spirit of knowing what you are buying I would like to change my column around for the upcoming year. I will still go and visit the wineries. I dragged myself and various companions to over 50 wineries in in 1994 and sampled in the vicinity of 250 different wines. I intend to keep those type of numbers up in the coming year. I want to explore some options and give you a broader picture and a more up to date sense of what is available.

I would also like a little feedback from you, the reader, on what you think of this column. I know at least someone out there reads it because the Reverend told me he ran into a woman on the streets of Cannon Beach who blamed him, as the publisher of The Edge, for causing her to purchase all the wine she was encumbered by. If you read this column and find it all useful and/or interesting I would sure be glad to hear from you. I am not much into what you think about the way I write, as I am quite attached to my rambling, non-Hemingwayesque (thank you, Ms. Duggan) form of prose, but I am interested in almost anyone's thoughts on wine. So pass along any comments to: c/o The Upper Left Edge, 3118 SE Alder, Portland, OR 97214.

In the spirit of change I am unveiling one of mine. In my last column I was distressed to have to eliminate many excellent wines due to early releases and limited supplies. For instance, the 1992 Benton Lane Pinot noir at only \$12 was a great wine but was pretty much gone by the end of the year. I will now feature 1 or 2 wines each month that I think are worth exploring and may not be around for long. So, here are the initial recommendations:

First, the **Cameron** 1992 Clos Electique

Pinot noir. This is what Pinot noir should be. Perhaps the finest example of this sort I have tasted. The wine is a smooth river loaded with black cherries, currants and blackberries. The wine has a rich, full body and nice spice to it. The finish is surprising. The tannins, earthiness and extract sneak up on you as you drink, but they are definitely a prominent feature to the wine. This wine is the jewel of this small, super premium winery. At \$22-\$26 this will not last long. If you can't find it try any of their other wines (aside from Pinot noir they make beautiful Chardonnay and a very interesting Pinot blanc).

Secondly, I will go out on a limb and recommend a wine I have not tasted. Crass? Perhaps, but I think this is a deal worth taking a chance on. I have only found this at the West Hollywood Fred Meyer but the deal probably exists elsewhere too. It is magnums (1.5 litres) of **Van Duzer** 1990 Reserve Pinot noir, \$16! I have had the 1991 Van Duzer and it is very good. Most wineries made better Pinot in 1990 than they did in '91 so this could be very good wine and for essentially \$8/bottle! The 750ml bottles sell for the same price. Van Duzer bottled too many magnums and they have to unload them at nearly half price. If you're quick you might beat me down to the store and get a bottle or two, but you'd better run because I have my eye on those.

Happy 1995 and happy wine drinking!

is in a warm sunset a cooling breeze a propinquity stroll at the surf's edge...and a lovely bottle of wine from that dinky little shop on the main drag in Cannon Beach operated by Laurel Hood.

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