



We all know that Senator Bob over the years has proved himself to be a lecherous bastard of quite astonishing proportions. That he attempted the things with women that he did I do not find quite surprising. What I do find surprising is what a tightwad Sen. Bob seems to be. I mean, the guy is a Republican (no offense Reverend, but I am speaking in generalizations here), a long standing Senator and he is a cheap SOB. Of all things to have as a vice, boxed wine has got to be one of the cheapest and the worst. I happened to try boxed wine for the first time in years last election day (how oddly appropriate) just for the "thrill". It was unbearable. It had no flavor, no element to it that reminded me of even the worst bottled wine I had ever tasted. Think about it. The guy has a 6 figure salary, unbelievable perks, free parking, no compulsion to follow the laws of the land and receives gifts and meals from lobbyists almost daily. Yet, this is Sen. Bob's beverage of choice.

Since the Republican takeover of Congress, Washington D.C.'s swankiest watering holes have reported substantial increases in the purchase of vintage wines, premium liquor, imported beer and bottled water. But Bob refuses to budge on boxed wine.

While wine is still a predominantly European drink, boxed wine is the quintessential American alcoholic beverage (after Bud that is). Where else in the world would people have thought to put wine in a plastic bag inside a waxed box fitted with a spigot. The idea is so craftily U.S.A. it is almost mind bending. You see it is not the beverage, it is the concept, the package, the ability to sell. The art of the Exterior as Substance was rarely painted as well as by our beloved senator. He is one of the most uniquely cagey guys in American political history. Perhaps boxed wine is part of the image, both images really. Boxed wine is certainly not hoity-toity and in the Senator's recent ideological flip flop his perceived base of voters was by and large blue collar. Being able to slug down a few glasses of the pink stuff at a fund raising BBQ undoubtedly added to the persona of the "One Of The Boys" Senator. On the other hand, the image of a man out of control, searching for the cheap, long lasting drunk while making lewd passes at almost all the women who came into his office also comes to mind. While the two images may be incompatible they were the two sides to Mr. Packwood's coin. But is one image the correct one? The man had (and still does, mind you) access to the resources with which one could enjoy the finest. While developing a palate for wine may take some time, once you have tasted premier Burgundy, Mondavi Cabernet and the like, scaling back even a little bit is difficult.

There are millions of examples of politicians giving up luxury items for the sake of appearance. Senator Bob is the consummate politician and I think that played a role in the creation of a psyche which ultimately took him over. Prowess with women, holding your booze and drinking the "people's drink" -- be it Bud, boxed wine, or rotgut -- are all attributes that in times past were seen as characteristics of a true sure man. This is the America Bob Packwood thought he was in touch with, and perhaps was for a period of time. Times change.



**Recommended Wines for the Month:** The heat is finally here and new wines are popping up all over the place. You may have to search a bit for these three but the reward of the find will be worthy of the pursuit.

**La Garza Cellars 1993 Dry Riesling:** Ordinarily I avoid Rieslings, except when turned into silky sweet dessert wines; however this Dry Riesling got my attention. It is almost completely dry so the tart fruit flavors can come through without a moderate sweetness to mask them. The wine is quite light, but substantial enough to stand up to pungent cheeses and hardy breads.

**Acme Wineworks Non-Vintage Pinot Noir:** You may think that Wile E. Coyote orders this to aid in his quest of catching the Roadrunner. If he's the genius he claims to be, he would. Acme is the second label of John Thomas who makes some of the most exquisite Pinot in Oregon. His non-vintage Pinot, for only \$11, is rich, full of dark fruits and in possession of a fine set of finishing tannins. It comes uniquely packaged so you can't miss it on the shelves. Go asking for this one.

**Ashland Vinyards 1992 Cabernet Sauvignon:** Rarely does an Oregon winery produce a Cabernet worth going into detail about. This is one of them. Despite being young it is big and quite full already with a load of tannins which give the wine the promise of a long cellar life. This one can be drunk up now or saved for savoring down the line.

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