

A Toast to Pipelandistan

A Pinot Gris survival guide for GW's next three years.

On a beautiful Eugene spring day, I was strolling the back paths of LCC on my way home, fuming about the latest Bush-mania: The proposal to close 33 homeland military bases. I happened to connect with a colleague, Laurie, and vented some frustration: "Protecting America? Closing bases that protect American cities while building dozens of new bases in the Middle East and Central Asia? Huge new base in Biskek, Kyrgyzstan? And Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan...?"

Laurie piped in, "Bisquikistan." I almost rolled on the ground, then came back with "Spamivania." Laurie busted up, but we knew it wasn't funny. Where's next? Such strategic spots as Petrolandia, Pipelandistan, Velveetia, Hodgepodgistan?

We're gonna need a LOT of wine to get through the next three years of the Reign of Bush. Luckily, in wine at least, we still have choices.

I rarely rave about Oregon's "second" wine, the dry white pinot gris. In fact, not too many years ago I was no fan at all. But lately we're seeing super gris at gimme prices. And whereas the gris of yesteryear was often tart and austere metallic, the new gris is grand.

Case in point comes thanks to our pal Dale Duvall. He's chums with the Stuarts, owners of tiny Lumos Wine Company in McMinnville. Dale laid on me a bottle each of **Lumos 2002 and 2003 Pinot Gris** (\$12.50 at Broadway Market). Both these wines were lip-smackin', with pure character, round, ripe flavors of pears and Fuji apple, so balanced you coulda stood 'em on a razor blade. Production is teeny, and the folks do their own marketing. So you might have to place your order and hold your water. But do not miss this beauty, especially if you're grillin' some salmon or might wok a stir-fry.

Another pretty gris comes in the guise of **High Pass 2002 Pinot Gris** (\$9), maybe not quite as bold as Lumos but clean and crisp and found in the right place, at a right price. High Pass is another small producer

doing its own sales and distribution, so the label doesn't show up in superstores. The only place we've tracked it down so far is at Fisherman's Market on Seventh — serendipitous because for a mere ten bux they'll grill a fillet of fresh wild salmon with white beans and rice and pull the cork for you and even provide some swell plastic "crystal" for the best bargain seafood dining in the South Willamette Valley.

'Course another option might be to snag some lively Dungeness crab, dash home and pop the top on **Cougar Crest 2003 Viognier** (\$18). This little beauty hails from the Walla Walla Valley in that weird state north of us, but it delivers charming peach, tropical fruit and white flower aromas and flavors on a finely structured framework, just intelligently designed to hook up with fresh crab any style you chef it.

Want mo' power? Abacela Vineyards (Umpqua Valley) is rapidly emerging as one of our state's premier producers, and **Abacela 2002 Viognier** (\$20), while pricey, can compete for flavors and textures with anybody's viognier from anywhere. It's worth every cent, rich and complex as white wine gets.

Gotta be a picnic in your future, right? And there's sun and heat and the Republicans are in the Bahamas and all's better in the world? Time for nibble noshing and a friendly, unpretentious rosé: Trader Ho's stocks **La Tour du Prévot 2004 Costieres de Nimes** (\$6), just a typically simple French rosé: bright and fresh with strawberry and cherry notes with a sprinkling of pepper spiciness, tasty with 'Q, cold meats and cheeses and best served cooled down but not frosty.

Th-th-that's all, folks. All we can do for now is hang on to our hats and hopes, post copies of the Bill of Rights in our yards and prepare to defend the Constitution against madcap Reich-wingers and the outraged peoples of Goofistan or whatever other place Bush has offended. Keep your corkscrews handy. **EW**

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