

Wine Sense

Wrap your lips and mind around this

I just wanted to make a bit of sense about wine. Silly, because so often wine involves feelings, not reason.

When I first launched this column, back in the waning days of the last millennium, I felt honor-bound to tell our editors that I might have a teensy problem, namely that I just couldn't see myself as merely another marketer, thinly masked as a "wine educator." I also felt compelled to admit that wine, measured on the scale of Truly Important Matters, didn't seem to nudge the meter very far. And I could not then — and cannot now — in any way rationalize or justify pretentiousness about wine, who's number one, the best, that kinda mopery.

Look, I groused at the eds, wine is only fermented grape juice; when it comes to choosing drink with dinner, wine's way better than water and not nearly as filling as beer. And some of it tastes *really* good. But I just can't abide wine snootery: wars rage, famines waste whole populations, disease and disorder ravage the land while some wine-boob frets about paying a couple thousand bux for a single bottle of that juice? Absurd, borderline nutso. Heck, I'd rather score drinkable vino at cheapo prices.

And obsessing about wine strikes me as more than irrational, plainly bonkers. But some folks' actions have almost nothing to do with logic: Passions rule, in politics, in

relationships, in wine.

Oddly, the eds agreed to let me create a wine column that could roam nearly anywhere, but included bits about wine. Sounds right, so here we are, down to the baseline: Wine is about passions and taste; personal preferences of almost any sort have nearly nothing to do with reason. We like what we like 'cause we like it. Of course, we can argue about our differences, and often do, sometimes ramping up our emotions to ultimate horror show. We're willing to kill for our passions. Tired of living? Walk into the Longbranch in Monroe and grumble, "Harley sucks." Take comfort that "Obamacare" will be there when you need it.

Let's recap: Wine is merely wine and, please, let's not fight about our differences in taste. You like your chardonnays oaky and buttery. OK. Don't like pink wines? Fine. Can't stand pinot noir? What're you, some kinda moron? What? What!

Now: What we have here is a pink wine that crosses borders. Ordinarily, we'd devote the July column to rosés, hot-month wines, but we haven't come close to hot, so check us in August. Meanwhile, wrap your lips around this weird thing concocted by Mark Vlossak:

St. Innocent 2011 Oeil de perdrix (Eye of the partridge) (\$19), a pinot noir from the highly regarded Momtazi



Vineyard (McMinnville) but almost utterly white — but packed with flavor, a jazzy Meyer-lemon tartness that demands grilled salmon — rare, electric.

Valley View Vineyards in the Applegate Valley, south and west of Medford, is one of Oregon's pioneer wine-sites. The Wisnovsky family has been making tasty wines since 1976, and they've broken through a regional marketing barrier with their **Anna Maria 2010 Viognier** (\$18). This is a floral white made famous in the Rhone Valley of France, but it's really found a home in southern Oregon. The VV version has the floral qualities but also displays pear notes, a splash of citrus and zippy acidity, suitable for summer picnic fare, and that's no demotion.

Lorelle NV Saignée Rosé (\$12) is fun, a simple rosie pleasure from John Albin, a serious maker of fine wines. The term "saignée" means that the rosé was "bled" from the label's pinot noir, concentrating the colors and complexity of flavors, but also yielding a rosé that is bright with pinot's simpler charms. Shouldn't nobody fight about this: just savor the fresh strawberry flavors, have another sip, fuggedaboutit.

Good wines, nice flavors, fair prices, no fighting: that's a formula — vaguely logical — for fun, if, say, we actually get some summer and can stop making sense, just get down to chuckles. **EW**

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