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NEW ARRIVALS

Exceptional 2012 whites and rosés are now on shelves

Poet T. S. Eliot famously called April “the cruelest month.” And of course he was right, in many respects, forgetting for a moment just how mean May might be. April here just bursts with life, “breeding lilacs out of the dead land, mixing Memory with desire.” Nobody should die in April; that would be too cruel, “fear in a handful of dust.” Winter has perished, taking snow- and ice-melt down to the rivers, and our world erupts in flowers. The colors can be painfully bright, but the air is sweet and clean, a bit soggy, sure, but here in our little slice of the south Willamette Valley, we welcome the sog, even fret when it’s delayed.

It’s sweet time for wine; April is still cool enough for big reds, warm enough for bright young whites and early grilling on the patio and alfresco dining with, maybe, a vibrant rosé, even (choke) a “blush.” This April is especially promising for wines because our markets’ shelves sag, laden with wines from the 2012 vintage, called by wine-mage Craig Broadley (Broadley Vineyards, Monroe) “our best vintage ever.”

They’re going fast, rumors and reputation driving demand, ’cause the wines are, pretty much across the board, quite delicious — ripe and round, mouth-filling but not flabby. Many of the reds, including pinot noirs, haven’t yet been released, but the whites and rosés have arrived — for a moment.

Snatch it while you can: **Lumos 2012 Pinot Gris** (\$16) is quickly disappearing, in part because folks have discovered just how good it really is. The fruit flavors comprise a lavish mélange of ripe pears and stone fruit, but the acids are in acute balance, making the wine stylishly suited for fresh salmon or, heck, any fresh fish.

Actually, this wine is its own reason to drink it; call it an aperitif if you feel the need. Lumos and its makers, Dai Crisp and PK McCoy, use sustainable methods and have the good sense to, as the back label notes, “dedicate this vintage to our fantastic vineyard crew who watch over the grapes with such detail and caring attention.” I’ll add this: Whatever the vintage, whatever the varietal, this label deserves loyalty — they only bottle good wines, at fair prices.

Wanna big red? Try **Symbion Willamette Valley Syrah** (\$19, on sale for \$10). This is a non-vintage blend, unfiltered for full flavors (but stand it up for a while before opening, letting sediments settle, then decant or use an aerator to catch the particles). Flavors range across dark fruits, with a nice dusting of pepper. It’s lambing time in the valley, and lamb loves syrah: Word.

Few people seem to care much, but over the years we’ve supported local producers, almost to the exclusion of all others, which is silly, of course, because so much good wine comes to us from other places, sometimes at prices and quality we just can’t ignore. Here’s a cruel case: Italy’s Corsini wines are just superb. **Podere Ruggeri Corsini 2011 Langhe Bianco** (\$12) is crisp, clean, dry blended white (chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, arneis, nascetta) ready for spring’s first veggies, crab, whattayagot? Their **2012 Rosin Langhe Rosato** (\$11) is a dry rosé, pale-salmon color, flavors a delicate brew of rose petals and red berries, again ready for food. The Italians have been studying wine for a while, almost have it down, and Corsini’s owners sit at the front of the class. Corsini’s people also visit Eugene periodically, so show some hospitality.

The proof’s apparent: With the right attitude, good food and a glass of good wine, we can suck the sting clean out of those nasty blooms and morph this cruel month into time as sweet and cuddly as an NRA lobbyist. Savor the nectar; it helps us look tulips right in their pistils and not hurt too badly. ■

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hear ye, hear ye !!



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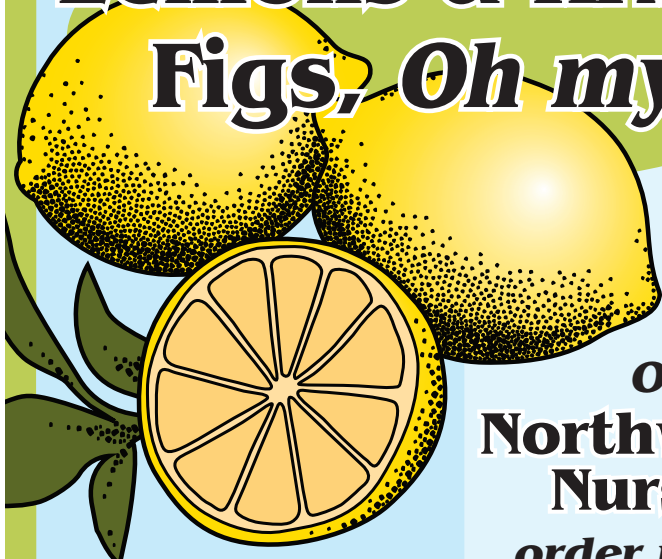
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