

Herb's Choices March 2010

Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250

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WHITES

2008 Hook & Ladder Chardonnay

This Chardonnay has an enjoyable aroma – fresh fruit cocktail (and not that syrupy stuff with the unnaturally colored cherries from the can). It has a round mouthfeel with an excellent texture, that's rich, but not at all flabby (thanks acidity!). On the palate you'll find ripe pear and nutmeg flavors that are perfectly ripe and not overdone. It has all the bells and whistles of a higher end Chardonnay sans the price. Well done!

2009 Mohua Sauvignon Blanc

I'm enjoying this trend of subdued Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc (as well as my tooth enamel!). This example has light herbaceous and mineral aromas that lead to medium bright flavors of gooseberry and grapefruit on the palate. The mid-palate shows lovely passion fruit flavors as well as wet stone notes. The finish is dry with citrus flavors. Stylistically New Zealand, but with toned down acids and better fruit – well done.

2008 Fools Bay Chardonnay

This is a fabulous unoaked Chardonnay. Bright, fresh, tropical, and peachy aromas fill the glass. You'll find juicy flavors of tangerine and peach with a hint of almond on the palate. This is a very well-balanced wine with great fruit and tempered acidity. Well done!

2008 Gilia Pinot Grigio/Garganega

This is an interesting twist on Pinot Grigio. By adding 30% Garganega they've increased the flavor and body. Crisp aromas lead to pleasantly ripe melon flavors on the palate. This PG is fuller-bodied (untypical for this varietal) due to the Garganega. The acidity is well balanced, too. The finish has lime & mineral notes with good length. Nice flavors and good body equals a PG that stands out from the crowd.

2008 Greffiere Sous Le Bois

This has always been a favorite of mine. This Chardonnay is from the limestone hills of La Roche Vineuse region within the Maconnais. It sees little oak and has ripe apple and almond flavors on the palate. This wine has a TON of flavor, exceptional body, and great balance between fruit and acid. Add a lengthy, crisp, lemon/lime finish and you have a terrific white.

2008 Acrobat Pinot Gris

Acrobat is the second label from King Estates and offers excellent value with a slightly riper style than their flagship Pinot Gris. It has aromas of ripe melon and almonds. On the palate you'll find crisp and dry apple flavors with hints of minerals and well-balanced acidity. The mid-palate is a bit riper with slight apricot notes and a bright and juicy mouthfeel. The finish is dry with pleasant Alsatian mineral notes and crisp apple fruit. Well done.

REDS

2008 Rocca Macie Rubizzo

If you searched Wikipedia for "good, everyday Italian red," this is the answer you would find. Fresh and juicy red fruit aromas lead to smooth flavors on the palate with clean, lively berry fruit and balanced acidity. The fruit is enjoyably fresh and perfectly ripe with just enough acidity for balance. The finish is dry with medium tannins and cherry fruit flavors. A perfect everyday quaffer!

2008 Lucky Star Pinot Noir

The standard for under-\$10 Pinot Noir has been set at; "Will I feel guilty serving this to my in-laws?" In other words, not very high. This example shatters the standard and is a **TREMENDOUS** value! Light earth and cranberry aromas lead to smooth flavors of juicy, berry fruit, light spice, and hints of earth on the palate. This wine has complexity, structure, and balance! It even gets better with aeration. Trust me, try one then come back for a case.

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2008 Vignerons Saumur

Saumur Appellation Red? "What is Loire Valley Cabernet Franc, Alex." With so much emphasis on Loire Valley Chenin, we forget they produce reds, too. This example has a bright, berry fruit aroma with just a hint of earth. It's smooth on the palate with tart, berry fruit and hints of mineral and graphite. There's balanced acidity and good grip, so it's not too wimpy. The finish is dry with pleasantly bright & juicy fruit. It's a great food wine.

2007 Guenoc Petite Sirah

This is an excellent example of the varietal at an extremely affordable price. It has a lovely aroma with violets and "black" fruits. It's quite elegant up-front with bright brambly fruits as well as blueberries and violet flavors that emerge on the mid-palate. This red is pleasantly dry throughout with good structure. The finish is dry with bigger tannins and tons of black raspberry and huckleberry flavors.

2005 Casillero Diablo Reserve Cabernet/Syrah

This is a perfect example of an "Old World" wine from Chile. Great Bordeaux nose – dark berry fruit with hints of bell pepper – with well-balanced flavors on the palate. You'll find dark berry fruit that's slightly roasted comingled with earthy, pepper notes. This red has a pleasantly dry backbone and good ripeness. The finish shows earth, cedar, and more berry fruit with well integrated tannins. Nice wine!

ADVENTUROUS FINDS

BV Muscat de Beaulieu

This dessert Muscat from BV has aromas of honeysuckle and orange blossom that lead to ripe apricot and orange marmalade flavors on the palate. This dessert wine has very good viscosity in that it's not too thick. It even has enough acid to temper the sweetness. The finish has a hint of roasted nut flavors as well as more apricot notes.

Ferrari Brut NV

One of my resolutions was to drink sparkling wine or Champagne, an underutilized choice for food (don't believe me – try it with fried chicken), at least once a month. This was my first selection – made in Italy, but tastes like Champagne. Nutty and crisp apple aromas lead to yeast, dough, and truffle flavors on the palate. This is a wonder-fully dry sparkler with all the characteristics of French Champagne at half the price.

The Wine Advocate - 92 Points

2007 Mourgues du Gres les Galets Rouges

"The Galets Rouge, 78% Syrah and the rest Grenache, Mourvedre, and Carignan, is another extraordinary value from the 2007 vintage. A deep ruby/ purple color is followed by gorgeous aromas of blackberries, white flowers, and charcoal. Full-bodied, and oozing with fruit and glycerin, good acidity, freshness, and focus, this is a lovely red to consume over the next 2-4 years."

Wine Enthusiast - 97 Points

2005 Trefethen Estate Cabernet

"A monumental Cabernet that succeeds on every level. It's deep, dark & ultra rich, showing massive blackberries, black currants, dark chocolate, violets, minerals & a touch of sweet, smoky oak. Beyond the flavors is the dramatic structure, with fabulously ripe, dense tannins & a bone-dry, long finish. Surely a tremendous wine capable of long-term aging. Try 2012-18, at least."

Cellar Selection

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Wine Enthusiast - 94 Points

2007 Newton Napa Cabernet

"Refined & beautiful. Made with a splash of Cabernet Franc that gives it a cherry pie filling richness, it's dry & full-bodied, with thick but sweetly ripe tannins framing a Sauvignon-esque core of cassis. Finishes with a wonderful, grounding tug of herbs & coffee. A major achievement at this price."

Editor's Choice

Wine Enthusiast - 93 Points

2007 Newton Claret

"This is a very fine wine, Merlot-based with a splash of Syrah, & it proves you don't have to spend a lot to get a great Napa red. It shows rich, complex flavors of black & red currants, licorice, cola & sandalwood, in an elegantly silky texture that's light & refined."

Editor's Choice

Wine Enthusiast - 91 Points

2007 Penfolds Bin 51 Riesling

"Penfolds has turned out a lovely Bin 51 Riesling. An alluring nose of orange sherbet & petrol leads into a medium-weight wine that manages to be both broad & mouthcoating & yet long & racy on the finish. May not be a long-lived Riesling by Aussie standards, but it should still drink well over the next 7-10 years."

Wine Enthusiast - 90 Points

2005 Ravenswood Pickberry

"This is a Merlot & Cabernet blend grown in the little appellation of Sonoma Mountain. It shows firm tannins and deeply concentrated flavors of currants and cherries, accented with smoky new oak. Despite the tannins, it has a softness that makes it drinkable now."

Wine Enthusiast - 92 Points

2006 Ravenswood Zinfandel Big River

"A gorgeous wine, the best Big River that Ravenswood has ever produced. Has everything you want in a Zinfandel. It displays rich, peppery blackberry and currant fruit, splendid tannins, crisp acidity, fine dryness and a long, impressive finish."

Wine Enthusiast - 91 Points

2005 Geyser Peak Walking Tree Cabernet

"Youthful tannins and ageability always characterize this Cabernet which contains a splash of Syrah. Like its predecessors, it's very dry, with herb-infused cherry and currant flavors, and new oak plays only a supporting role. It's really an elegant wine and a great value at this price."

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