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SPEC'S Update!

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Fun Things, Read on...

Oktoberfest Travels

WurstFest (New Braunfels, TX)
October 30th through November 8th.
www.wurstfest.com/

Classes

The State of Zinfandel

Tuesday, November 3rd at 7:00pm

SAVE THE DATE

November 17 - Pinot Places:
New Zealand and Australia



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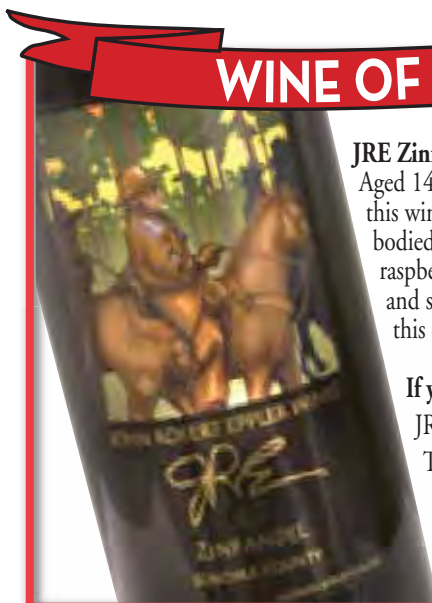
Join us for our
GRAND OPENING PARTY
November 14 10am to 7pm.
We're open and doing great in
Rosenberg's Town Square Plaza, we just
want to have a party to celebrate!

Coming Soon!

WESLAYAN, HOUSTON
Early December

SPEC'S UPDATE is a publication of Spec's Wines, Spirits & Finer Foods. All prices listed are subject to change without notice. **ALL PRICES LISTED ARE FOR SPEC'S SMITH STREET SUPERSTORE AND INCLUDE A FIVE PERCENT DISCOUNT FOR CASH.** (Many items are available at Spec's Neighborhood Stores at different prices.) All items are offered "first come, first served" and are subject to availability; some quantities may be limited. Spec's reserves the right to restrict quantities. Spec's is not responsible for errors in printing. Typographical errors will not be honored. "Spec's" and the rabbit logo are service marks of Spec's Family Partners and are registered with the State of Texas.

WINE OF THE MONTH!



JRE Zinfandel Sonoma County 2007 - \$14.99 cash

Aged 14 months in a mix of French and American Oak barrels, this wine stains the glass with its deep purple color. Dry, full bodied with balanced acidity highlighting the chunky black raspberry, blueberry, and red cherry flavors. Cedar, tobacco, and savory spice & bacon fat with a very long finish wrap up this delicious wine.

If you enjoyed this selection try some other tasty Zinfandels!

JRE Zinfandel PasoRobles 2006 - \$18.99 cash

Talty Estate Zinfandel 2005 - \$32.99 cash

Bramblewood Old Vine Zinfandel 2006 - \$14.99 cash

Canyon Oaks Zinfandel 2006 - \$4.99 cash

Winery Profile: Ch. Pontac Lynch

by Charles M. Bear Dalton



Sometimes you get lucky.

A long while back, I read a quote wherein Thomas Jefferson noted a Margaux chateau called Pontac Lynch as one of his favorite wines. A look at the "Bordeaux Bible" (Cocks et Feret's Bordeaux and its Wines) showed that the property still existed. The Bordeaux Bible also explained the most likely reason the wine appealed to Jefferson: location. Ch. Pontac Lynch is located in what can only be described as a fancy neighborhood. Its three immediate neighbors

are Ch. Margaux, Ch. Rauzan Segla, and Ch. Palmer.

A search around the US wine scene showed little or no Pontac Lynch for sale. I asked most of my Bordeaux suppliers about it and got a bunch of blank looks in return. Whenever I was in France, I'd look for Pontac Lynch on wine lists and whenever I saw it I'd order it. It never disappointed. When Spec's President John Rydman and I were at Vin Expo in Bordeaux in 2007, we saw it at the booth of negociant Borie Manoux from whom we buy a number of other wines. I asked export director Noel Richard about it and he allowed that Borie Manoux had Pontac Lynch as an exclusive agency. "Do you want to taste it?" he asked. I answered "Yes - but what I really want to do is buy some."

On tasting several vintages of the wine, we decided it was a no-brainer. With that, Spec's started following Ch. Pontac Lynch. The first order, some 2000 and some 2003, came in during the late summer of 2008. By mid-summer of 2009, we were sold out of both vintages but earlier this month, we got a new shipment which included the 2005 and 2004 as well as more of the 2003. In the last year, Ch. Pontac Lynch has earned a nice following in Houston and Austin with both our retail and restaurant customers. Lots of folks will be happy to learn that the excellent 2003 is back in stock - and many will be eager to try the new vintages.

Continues on page 3

Inside This Issue: *Collin's Column, Spec's Selects, Deli Specials, Delicious Mischief, Wine and Cheese of the Week & more!*

Winery Profile: Ch. Pontac Lynch from page 1

Ch Pontac Lynch was founded in 1720 by the Pontac family who then owned Ch. Haut Brion. The chateau is located astride the border between the communes of Margaux and Cantenac - both of which are part of the Margaux AOC - in the sweet spot "between the road and the river" (the D2 and the Gironde estuary). As to the fancy neighborhood, if you can imagine a truncated triangle with the southern border of Ch. Margaux, the northern border of Ch. Palmer, and the eastern border of Ch. Rauzan-Segla making up the sides, Ch. Pontac Lynch is located on much of the land inside the triangle. The shared micro-climate and terroir (mostly gravel and sand) is evident in its obvious quality. By the 19th century, this Margaux estate's wine was established among the very best in Bordeaux, with Thomas Jefferson ranking it highly in his carefully-studied personal classification. What I don't understand is why this lovely classic, already famous wine was left out of the famous Classification of 1855. I guess their loss is our gain as, had it been included, the prices would surely be much higher.

As noted above, "Pontac" references the Pontac family who once owned Ch. Haut Brion. Lynch references the Lynch family who established Ch. Lynch Bages. Currently, the vineyard is planted to a very Graves-like blend of 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petite Verdot. This blend in conjunction with the deep sand and gravel terroir gives the wine a unique perfume. The fermentation is the typical pump-over fermentation with an extended post-fermentation maceration as is typical at most left-bank chateaux. One third of the barrels are new each year.

Over the years since I first tasted it, Ch. Pontac Lynch has become a personal favorite as it offers an elegant structure, classic Margaux flavors, and a lovely perfume at a great price. Here are my notes on the Ch. Pontac Lynch Margaux wines now in stock at Spec's.

Ch. PONTAC LYNCH, Margaux, 2003

12x750ml \$31.24 \$349.59

Tech: 13% Alcohol. 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petite Verdot. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels (1/3 new). Sensory: Deep purple-red-black in color with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and moderately chewy phenolics. This lovely, balanced, elegant, dusty Margaux offers black and red fruit with gravelly-sandy terroir, dusty oak, and accents of pencil shavings, dusty oak, and classic Margaux perfume. It is at the same time rich and elegant and quite satisfying. *Excellent. BS: 92+.*

Ch. PONTAC LYNCH, Margaux, 2004

12x750ml \$29.56 \$332.91

Tech: 12.5% Alcohol. A blend of 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petite Verdot aged 14 months in French oak barrels (1/3 new). Sensory: Purple-red-black in color with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and lightly chewy phenolics. Dusty, juicy, lively, black & red cherry berry fruit perfumed with kirsch and cassis. Offers dusty, gravelly-sandy terroir along with spicy-dusty French oak and accents of tobacco and subtle pencil shavings with notes of dark spice, attic dust, & black flowers. Very long finish. Elegant and almost ethereal but still complete and quite satisfying; delicious and lovely-in-the-mouth. *Excellent. BS: 92.*

**Ch. PONTAC LYNCH, Margaux, 2005**

12x750ml \$37.60 \$419.44

Tech: 13% Alcohol. A blend of 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petite Verdot aged 14 months in French oak barrels (1/3 new). Sensory: Red-black in color with good legs; dry, medium-to-full-bodied with balanced acidity and slightly chewy phenolics. Dusty ripe fresh red & black fruit perfumed with subtle mure, cassis, and kirsch. Offers dusty-sandy-gravelly terroir and spicy-dusty French oak with accents of black pepper, tobacco, and Asian spice. Really long finish. Delicious, elegant, lively, focused and pure. Lovely-in-the-mouth. *Excellent. BS: 93+.* 🍷

SPEC'S Events & Classes

The State of Zinfandel

The State of Zinfandel will be on Tuesday, November 3rd at 7:00pm, with the Wine School at L'Alliance Francaise and SPEC's Fine Wine Buyer Bear Dalton. We'll look at the best Zins and Zin blends at a variety of price ranges available in the market today. We'll talk about how and when Zinfandel got to the US and the changes in winemaking that have brought us to the styles we drink today; the emergence of terroir as a factor in Zinfandel; the current alcohol/ripeness controversy, and where Zin is headed in the future. We will taste ten wines from the 2005 through 2008 vintages. The State of Zinfandel will cost \$65.00 per person cash (\$68.42 regular). For directions, reservations, or more information on this class, please call SPEC's at 713-526-8787. Please See Wine School Cancellation Policy Below.

SAVE THE DATE

November 17 - Pinot Places: New Zealand and Australia

WINE SCHOOL CANCELLATION POLICY

To cancel a reservation, please call Jessica Toner at 832-660-0250 as soon as possible. Reservations canceled before 4pm on the last business day before the event will not be charged. Late cancellations may be charged. No-shows will be charged.

L'Alliance Francaise is located at 427 Lovett Blvd. (on the Southeast corner of Lovett and Whitney, one block south of Westheimer, three blocks east of Montrose).

