

NOW! FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK & TWITTER!

WINE, SPIRITS & FINER FOODS SPEC'S Update!



Mon-Sat November
16 to 21, 2009

DEFINING VALUE

CALL TOLL-FREE AT 1-888-526-8787

www.specsonline.com

Houston family owned since 1962!

Classes

November 17 - Pinot Places:
New Zealand and Australia

Chocolate Specialty Dinner at
Charivari Restaurant
Wednesday, November 18th, 7pm

The Italian Cultural and Community
Center presents Vini d'Italia
Tuscany Part 2:
The Majesty of Chianti
Thursday, Dec 10, 2009 6:30pm



Relax...with Spec's Radio
featuring Spec's Jazz Brunch
every Sunday, 9 to noon.
www.specsonline.com

Now Open!

Bee Cave
13015 SHOPS PARKWAY

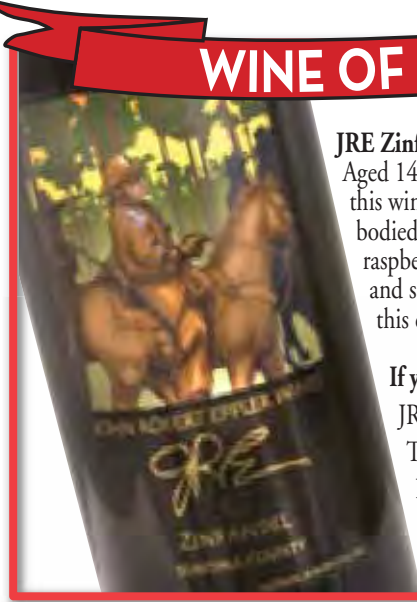
San Antonio
146231 I-35 NORTH, LIVE OAK
Join us for our
GRAND OPENING PARTY
November 21, 10am to 7pm.

Rosenberg
4102 FM 762 Rosenberg

Coming Soon!

WESLEYAN, HOUSTON
Early December

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 Paso Robles 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:

AMPELOS Cellars & Vineyard

by Charles M. Bear Dalton

"Ampelos is a Greek word meaning "vine". We believe that all great wines are made in the vineyard, we also have strong ties to Greece, so "ampelos" truly represents our focus." - from www.ampeloscellars.com

The above of course begs several questions, the most obvious of which is "Who is "we"? The "we" of Ampelos is Rebecca and Peter Work. During careers in consulting and information technology, the Works decided they had enough of corporate life. They wanted to make something. They say that Peter had a vision of owning property on the beach where he could plant grapes and enjoy the ocean. After realizing that the beach and grapevines are incompatible, they decided to buy land in Santa Barbara County. In 1999, the Works bought 82 acres in what would soon become the Santa Rita Hills (noted on labels as Sta. Rita Hills) AVA. As Peter and Rebecca were still entrenched in careers in corporate America, their son Don moved to California to get things started. He supervised the planting of the first 15 acres of vines in 2001.

Continues on page 3



Ampelos vineyard - the vineyard blocks planted in 2001 are to the left.

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.

Inside This Issue: Collin's Column, Deli Specials, Delicious Mischief, The 12, Wine and Cheese of the Week & more!

AMPELOS Cellars & Vineyard *from page 1*

Rebecca and Peter with the first grape harvest from ampelos vineyard, September 2004

To quote Rebecca "A few months later, we landed in Newark on the morning of September 11, 2001 where Peter was to take Path 1 (New York Subway) that morning. That would have put him under the World Trade Center at 8:45am. The good news was his meeting was cancelled at the last minute and he never got on the train." After many days trying to get back to

California we finally found a route home. Instead of heading to Los Angeles, we came straight to the ranch and made the life-changing decision to leave the corporate world and pursue our dreams of viticulture full time. We made the move to the property in January 2002 and have since then fallen in love with country life. Now we both have more time to spend with family and friends and enjoy life to the fullest."

The Works spent the next years learning how to farm, pruning the vines, coaxing them onto the trellis, nurturing the soil, and preparing for the first harvest. In 2002, they bought a ton of Pinot Noir and two tons of Syrah and started to make their own wine, under the direction of their son Don (who incidentally is now the winemaker at Sea Smoke and has his own Chien label). In 2003, they bumped up the volume a bit and added a Rosé of Syrah. They bottled the first wines in the Spring of 2005.

They first harvested their own grapes in 2004 getting 15 tons of Pinot Noir and 6 tons of Syrah. They continued purchasing grapes from warmer regions to add to the spice cabinet of potential flavors.

As the Works believe that "the wine is made in the vineyard", their Ampelos estate is planted to those varieties that can best express the terroir of their site: Pinot Noir, Syrah, Grenache and Viognier, with a broad a clonal mix, again to provide as much potential for flavor as possible.

To the end of having the best quality fruit possible along with a healthy environment, the Ampelos estate vineyard is the first (and so far only) vineyard in California to be triple certified as Sustainable, Organic, AND Biodynamic.

In addition to grapes from the estate vineyard, the Works purchase grapes from some of their favorite neighbors in Sta. Rita Hills, FiddleStix for Pinot Noir, Alisos for Syrah, Cuatro Vientos in Santa Ynez Valley for Viognier and the Syrah for rosé, and from Byron in Santa Maria Valley for Grenache and Syrah. From their mix of estate grapes and sourced fruit, the Works currently make nine Ampelos wines although some are made in such small quantities that they are only sold at the winery.

I first noticed the Ampelos wines when they were entered in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo International Wine Competition a couple of years back. I enjoyed tasting them but didn't know much about them. In October of 2008, chance brought me to the Ampelos winery in Lompoc on a sunny Saturday afternoon. The place was a warehouse in an industrial park on the edge of Lompoc, far removed from the vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills. Though an industrial sort of space, it was well equipped and thoughtfully set-up to do the job. It was functional and efficient but far from fancy. I was impressed that they had invested most heavily in the vineyards and were getting by without a showplace winery. Their ethic was evident and the wines were good enough to do the talking.



That day, they had several visitors for tours and tastings even as they were finishing up their 2008 ferments and pressing off some completed fermentations. Nevertheless, Rebecca took the time to patiently taste through the line with me. At that point, she did not have a wholesaler in Texas but was interviewing three companies. We stayed in sporadic contact and eventually I placed an order for Spec's to buy five of the Ampelos wines on a clearance basis.

From a tasting in my office at Spec's with Rebecca Work in November of 2009, here are my current notes on the five wines Spec's carries and sells.

AMPELOS "Syrache", Santa Barbara County, 2005

12x750ml \$29.32 \$330.13

Tech: 14.8% Alcohol. A blend of 73% Syrah and 27% Grenache (co-fermented) given a 4-day cold soak, fermented in open-tops with punch-downs, and aged 18 months in French and American oak barrels (33% new). Deep red-purple in color with well formed legs; dry, medium-full-bodied with balanced acidity and medium plus phenolics. Offers juicy red fruit, an earthy rich terroir note, subtle oak, and accents of spice and black and white pepper. Sweet with rich fruit, it has a fine focus and feel and a lovely texture. Complete and beautifully integrated. *Elegant. Excellent. BS: 94. (Very Limited Quantities)*

AMPELOS "Syrache", Santa Barbara County, 2006

12x750ml \$23.99 \$270.11

Tech: 14.9% Alcohol. A blend of 73% Syrah and 27% Grenache given a 3-day cold soak, fermented using open-tops with punch-downs, and aged 17 months in all French and American oak Barrels (one third new oak). Sensory: Medium purple-deep red in color with well formed legs; dry, full-bodied with balanced acidity and moderately chewy phenolics. Developed dusty lively juicy spicy red & black cherry berry fruit offering raspberry, strawberry, & red cherry, dusty earth with a hint of coffee grounds; and accents of red flowers, black & white pepper, and a bit of potpourri; very long finish. Complete, delicious; alive-in-the-mouth. *Excellent. BS: 92+*

Note: *The 2006 Syrahe is lower in price as we are clearing these wines rather than using a full service wholesaler. The limited amount of remaining 2005 was bought through an earlier wholesaler.*

AMPELOS "Lambda" Pinot Noir, Santa Rita Hills, 2005

12x750ml \$27.99 \$315.20

Tech: 14.5% Alcohol. 100% Pinot Noir given a 4-day cold soak, fermented using open-tops with punch downs, and aged 17 months in all French oak barrels (35% new). Medium purple-red in color with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with fresh acidity and slightly chewy phenolics. Offers developed dusty ripe red & black cherry fruit (black cherry, red cherry, red berry), dusty dark earthy terroir, integrated French oak, and accents of cola, black pepper, and subtle cocoa. Very long, lively finish. *Elegant, delicious, complete; alive-in-the-mouth. Lovely wine. Great food Pinot. Excellent. BS: 94.*

Continues on page 4



AMPELOS Cellars & Vineyard from page 3



AMPELOS "Rho" Pinot Noir, Santa Rita Hills, 2005
 12x750ml
 \$39.99 \$450.33
 Tech: 14.5% Alcohol. 100% Pinot Noir given a 3-day cold soak, fermented using open-tops with punch-downs, and aged 24

months in all French oak (56% new un-toasted barrels). Deep red-violet-medium purple in color with well formed legs; dry, medium-bodied with balanced acidity and lightly chewy phenolics. Developed dusty sweet spicy juicy lively red & black cherry fruit, subtle mineral earth, dusty spicy oak, and accents of cola, black pepper, violets, and tea. Very long finish. Delicious, integrated, supple, complete; lovely-in-the-mouth. *Excellent. BS: 94+*.

AMPELOS "Gamma" Syrah, Santa Maria, 2006
 12x750ml \$29.99 \$337.74

Tech: 14.3% Alcohol. 100% Syrah given a 3-day cold soak, fermented using open-tops with punch downs, and aged 18 months in French and American oak Barrels (one third new). Deep purple in color with well formed legs; dry, full-bodied with balanced acidity and lightly chewy phenolics. Juicy lively fresh spicy black & red fruit black (raspberry, black cherry, a bit of blueberry) but with kirsh & framboise perfume, liquid mineral earth, integrated mixed oak, and accents of cocoa, coffee grounds, black pepper, Asian spice. Really very long; lively finish. Delicious, elegant, ethereal, integrated, complete; lovely-in-the-mouth. *Really Excellent. BS: 95+*.

AMPELOS "Epsilon" Syrah, Santa Rita Hills, 2006
 12x750ml \$29.99 \$337.74

Tech: 14.3% Alcohol. 100% Syrah (all clone 470, first harvest for these vines) given a 3-day cold soak, fermented using open-tops with punch-downs. and aged 18 months in only four French and American oak barrels (25% new). Sensory: Inky purple in color with well formed legs - stains the glass. Dry, full-bodied with balanced acidity and very chewy phenolics. Is dense and developed with dusty ripe rich spicy sweet mostly black with some red fruit, mineral-gravelly earth, spicy oak, and accents of coffee grounds, cocoa, black flowers, savory spice, and black & white pepper. Very long finish. Rich, robust, integrated; alive-in-the-mouth. *Excellent. BS: 94.*



San Antonio

Join us for our
GRAND OPENING PARTY
Saturday, November 21, 10am to 7pm.

146231 I-35 NORTH, LIVE OAK
FORMER CIRCUIT CITY LOCATION

SPEC'S Events & Classes

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).

