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Mon-Sat December 14,
to December 19, 2009

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KEY SPECIAL OF THE WEEK!

EL Portillo Rose 2008 \$7.36 w/key

Classes

The Wine School at l'Alliance Française
WINE 101: A Four-Week Course
on Wine Basics
for more details see page 8

Bottle Signing with
Charles Thomas of Quintessa Winery
At Houston Superstore on Smith St.
Thursday December 17, 5p.m -8p.m

Now Open!

San Antonio
146231 I-35 NORTH, LIVE OAK

Rosenberg
4102 FM 762 Rosenberg

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WESLEYAN, HOUSTON

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WINE OF THE MONTH!



Elyssia Gran Cuvee Brut Cava NV - \$19.99 cash

Elyssia Gran Cuvee Brut brings the idea of symmetry to life with the combination of traditional Macabeo and Parellada Cava grapes blended with international favorites Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. This wine offers a sophisticated bouquet of roasted nuts, citrus fruit and honey with layers of complexity through the palate. Flavors of lemon and melon are followed by a spicy finish.

If you enjoyed this selection, try others of the same style:

Elyssia Pinot Noir Brut Cava NV - \$19.99
Castellblanch Brut Zero NV - \$9.99
Castellblanch Cristal Semi Seco NV - \$7.94
Castellblanch Sparkling Rosado - \$8.51
Castellblanch Extra Brut NV - \$7.94

The Marsannay Message

by Charles M. Bear Dalton

Sometimes I don't do a good enough job of getting the message across. Maybe I think something is obvious or maybe I think I am getting through but I'm not. I think Marsannay is one of those times where, for whatever reason, I'm not getting the message out.

So what is the Marsannay message? In a word - VALUE. Wines from Marsannay offer some of the best value, not only in all of Burgundy but in Pinot Noir from anywhere in the world. Allow me to elaborate.

MARSANNAY is the northernmost appellation in Burgundy's Cote de Nuits - which also makes it the northern-most appellation in the Cote d'Or, since the Cote de Nuits is the northern half of the Cote d'Or. Immediately to the south is Fixin and then Gevrey Chambertin. You could walk from Marsannay to Gevrey Chambertin in less than an hour. Immediately to the north of the Marsannay appellation is the city of Dijon. The Marsannay appellation is made up of three villages; from north to south, they are Chenove, Marsannay, and Couchey. Chenove has the least vineyards and is in eminent danger of being completely absorbed into the urban sprawl on the south side of Dijon, Marsannay the village, while still home to many wine domaines, is becoming something of a bedroom community for Dijon and little Couchey is not far behind.

As they are at the north end of the famed Cote d'Or ridge, these vineyards are a bit cooler than those further south but they still have the highly prized limestone-based terroir and desirable east-southeastern exposure. What the Marsannay appellation lacks is a famous Grand Cru or even premier cru (1er cru) vineyard to carry its appellation name to greater fame. Where Vosne Romanee has Romanee Conti, where Gevrey Chambertin has Le Chambertin, where Meursault has Genevrieres, Marsannay has ... well, nothing. Marsannay has little flash so it consequently has little fame. With little fame comes lower prices so Marsannay gives value.



Continues on page 3

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

Wine & Cheese of the Week

Monday, December 14, Saturday, December 19, 2009

Vigilance Cabernet Sauvignon, Lake County, 2007 \$12.44 bottle \$140.10 case 12x750ml

Tech: 14.5% Alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon aged 18 months in French and American oak barrel. Purple-red-black in color, with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and medium plus phenolics. Offers juicy, cherry, berry fruit with dusty, earthy, subtle oak, and accents of cedar, tobacco, black pepper, and a hint of cocoa; very long finish. Lively, fresh, and focused. *Quite tasty; alive-in-the-mouth. Fine. Spec's Score: 89+.*

Rogue River Blue \$34.38lb.

Winner of this year's "Best of Show" at the American Cheese Society competition, this hand-crafted raw cow's milk blue-veined cheese develops a beautiful natural rind as a result of hand turning the cheese several times a week. The wheels are aged for up to a year in special rooms which were constructed to simulate the ancient caves in Roquefort, France. This aging process imparts into the cheese naturally occurring molds that are considered to be signature Rogue River Valley Terroir. The terroir flavors include hints of sweet woody pine, wild ripened berries, hazelnuts, morels and pears.

Prices include 5% Cash Discount, and are subject to change without notice. Not all items available at all locations. Shop online at www.specsonline.com



Produce Feature of the WEEK (Houston Superstore)

Week of December 14, 2009

Pineapple

\$1.99 ea.

How To Grill Pineapple

Large ripe pineapple
3 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



Trim, core, and peel pineapple. Cut into quarters from top to bottom. Slice out the core from each quarter. Cut each quarter slice into four pieces (two pieces lengthwise and two crosswise). You should now have 12 wedges of pineapple (about 3-inch by 1-inch each).

In a small bowl, combine honey, lemon or lime juice, and black pepper. Brush the glaze onto each slice of pineapple, coating completely.

Preheat barbecue grill. Either oil or spray the grill rack with non-stick cooking spray. Place pineapple wedges on the grill and cook approximately 4 minutes on each side (turning so that grill marks are on all sides) until the pineapple becomes fragrant and starts to dry out on the surface.

NOTE: Don't overcook, or they'll turn mushy.

Remove from the grill and brush with any additional glaze one more time. Serve and enjoy!

Makes 6 servings.

<http://whatscookingamerica.net/Fruit/GrilledPineapple.htm>

December

The month of **December** we are featuring **Espresso** coffee. The darkest of all coffees with a full body and no aftertaste. It is full of flavor, roasted nice and dark to envelop your taste buds in a hearty, slightly smoky flavor.

ONLY \$5.99 LB. WITH KEY

COFFEE
OF THE MONTH

SANDWICH of the WEEK

Monday, December 14-Saturday December 19, 2009

Scottish Kilt

Scottish Salmon and cream cheese served on dark pumpernickel with sliced onion, lettuce and tomato....this will have you dancin' a jig.

\$6.99 w/key



The Marsannay Message *from page 1*



Rather than a famous single site that has official recognition as a great terroir, Marsannay has lots of neat single sites officially known as lieux dits at the village level. Like a 1er cru, a lieu dit name can appear on the label with the village name. Some famous lieux dits include Meursault-Limozin and Puligny- Montrachet les Enseigneres. These lieux dits are sites that are recognized for quality but are just below the 1er cru level. In some cases they are very close but they are still village (pronounced vee-lahj like "vee

lodge" without the "d") wines (the third level in the Burgundy hierarchy). Nevertheless, as single vineyard wines, the wines labeled with the name of the village and the name of a single site they are usually more focused and cleaner tasting than a producer's village (say it with me - vee-lahj) blend.

While there are simple village level, non-site-specific blends labeled Marsannay, the best wines from the appellation come from the single site lieu dit vineyards. One producer we began to follow back in the mid 1990s - Domaine St. Martin - makes several wines labeled Marsannay. Maybe it is Marsannay Champs Salomon or Marsannay Finottes or Marsannay Grand Vignes or Marsannay Longerot. The most fun may be Marsannay Echezeaux which had to change its name to Marsannay Echezots (which is pronounced the same) in order to placate the growers in the Grand Cru vineyard called simply Echezeaux - even though there is at least a \$100 per bottle price difference between the two.

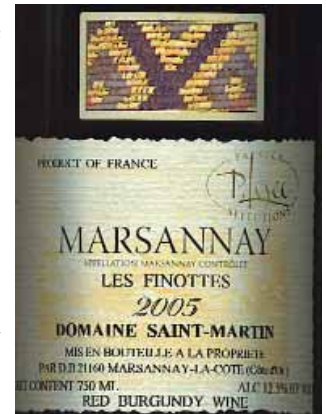
DOMAINE St. MARTIN is a sort of virtual domaine that is a joint venture between vigneron Martin Bart and elevage expert and artesinal wine broker Patrick Lesec. Bart owns Domaine Bart, a successor estate to the former Domaine Clair Dau (much of which is now owned by Louis Jadot). Located on Rue St. Martin in Marsannay, the domaine has 15 hectares (38 acres) of vineyards with vines ranging in age from 18 to over 60 years old in multiple lieux dits in Marsannay as well as Santenay, Fixin, Gevrey Chambertin, and Chambolle Musigny. Patrick Lesec is a broker who works with such Burgundy domaines as Jean Louis Trapet and Henri & Giles Remoriquet. He is an expert at elevage - the art and science of taking a wine from just after fermentation through the cellaring process into the bottle - who advocates a non-interventionist approach where wines are racked no more than once or twice while they're developing in the barrel, left unfiltered and unfinned, and are often hand-bottled directly from the barrel with no assemblage. Why? Because racking, fining, filtering, blending, and processing through a pressurized bottling line all take away some of the flavor and aroma of the wines. Some of that flavor comes back but some is lost forever.

Bart tends the vineyards, farming to keep the yields low (but in balance) and harvests the grapes at maximum ripeness. Bart typically ferments the wine with a five day "cold soak" (pre-fermentation maceration) and fermentation that lasts 15 days. The Bart/Lesec cuvees are released not as "Domaine Bart" but as "Domaine St. Martin" to differentiate them from Domaine Bart's regular bottlings (which he still makes and which we don't buy).

THIS IS WHERE I HAVE SLIPPED UP in getting the message out. Domaine St. Martin makes Fixin Hervelets 1er cru and Bonnes Mares and Chambertin Clos de Beze (both Grand Crus) and the attention seems to go to these fancier bottlings even though it is the single site Marsannays that are the screaming good deal here. I could give you my tasting notes on these wines but they really don't matter. They are only snapshots of what the wines tasted like at a particular moment in time. The wines are all close in quality and frankly, some weeks one will show a bit better than the other and other weeks it won't. They each age and develop on their own curves. A few years ago, I served four of the St. Martin Marsannay lieux dits at Thanksgiving dinner and, although they all showed well, there was a consensus favorite. At Christmas dinner that same year, I served the same four wines again. Again they all showed well but this time there was a different consensus favorite. The point is that they are all good and all great values and it is virtually impossible to pick which will show best on a given day - which of course is part of both the fun and the frustration of Burgundy.

We have examples from five vintages - 2003 through 2007 - in stock. We only have a bit of 2003 left. It was the warmest vintage and is now the most developed and softest tasting. If you like richer California Pinots, this may be the vintage to start with. The classic 2004 is my favorite for drinking now but it has the acid structure to keep for a few more years. The 2005 is from the most famous vintage; they are delicious wines that are less developed than the 2004s but may be the best bet for those unable to find any 2003s. 2006 is more like the 2004 vintage only a bit younger. It has the potential to keep for five more years. The 2007s which have just arrived need at least a few months to settle down; nevertheless they are packed with bright cherry fruit flavors.

Here is a list of the St. Martin Marsannays we have in stock. Some stores have some, some stores have others, no one store has all of them. Try a few. They are super versatile with food. They are great with chicken or turkey dishes, super with roast or braised beef and fine with salads topped with



cheeses and/or sliced meats. In the warmer months, I serve them with grilled salmon. While visiting Burgundy, I've even had them with pizza - and they went surprisingly well.

Saint Martin Marsannay Champs Salomon 2004	\$23.99
Saint Martin Marsannay Echezeaux 2003	\$23.25
Saint Martin Marsannay Echezeaux 2004	\$19.58
Saint Martin Marsannay Echezots 2005	\$23.87
Saint Martin Marsannay Echezots 2006	\$24.93
Saint Martin Marsannay Finottes 2004	\$19.33
Saint Martin Marsannay Finottes 2006	\$25.68
Saint Martin Marsannay Grand Vignes 2006	\$24.93
Saint Martin Marsannay Grand Vignes 2004	\$19.58
Saint Martin Marsannay Grand Vignes 2005	\$23.87
Saint Martin Marsannay Longerot 2003	\$24.56

All are 750mls packed 12 to a case. ■

