



UH Hilton College Interns Make Their Mark at Spec's/Wine Industry

by Collin Williams, Valerie Jansky and Huy Nguyen



A few years back, we created an internship with the students of the University of Houston Conrad Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management. As one of the leading donors to the college, Spec's has always had special interests in the endorsement of education for continued beverage management as well as the development of the future generations of beverage retailers.

During this internship, the students will traverse through each department within Spec's while learning about the daily operations, market strategy, internal communications and structures, as well as experience insight from

some of the industry's leading professionals.

Recently, our latest group of interns was able to receive a lesson in retail marketing and the importance of the push/pull strategy of communicating information to your customers. Within this curriculum, we explained about the diversity of information generation with today's technology. However, we reemphasized that special emphasis needed to be placed on "good ol' fashioned customer service" and listening to the customer.

Valerie and Huy were asked to evaluate any two wines of their choosing, develop an article that could convey why the wines were significant, and compile all of the information so that it was relatable to the reader. Following is the product of their hard work.

Valerie Jansky

Major: Hotel and Restaurant Management

Minor: Beverage Marketing and Management

Graduation Date: Spring 2011

How many people are lucky enough to get an internship through their university to work for SPEC's? My name is Valerie Jansky and I was just so fortunate. I have been in the hospitality industry for at least twelve years due to my parents owning Karaoke Concepts, in which they host parties and have weekly shows at local restaurants and bars. I started working in the beverage industry at the age of eighteen. There was no going back once I was exposed to this business. I transferred to the University of Houston to study Hotel and Restaurant Management and will graduate in May with HRM as my major and Beverage Management and Marketing as my minor. Through SPEC's I have been introduced to many influential people who I wish to remain in contact with in the future and have gathered very useful real life experience from a retail standpoint.

During my week with the wine buyers I have been working hands on to learn as much as possible about the business. Today I was allowed to taste and analyze two wines. Both wines that I chose are from the Lockwood estate in the Central Coast of California. The wines were first released in 1989. The climate is described as a warm Region 2 with temperatures varying from 50 degrees F in the morning to over 100 degrees F in the afternoon. The climate is largely influenced by the Santa Lucia mountain range. All of these features play key roles in the development of flavors for their wines. They also produce these other wines all estate made and estate bottled; Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot noir, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, and Partners Reserve Red. Here are my notes for you all to read and hopefully find useful in the future when you are looking for a wine to purchase. I chose the Lockwood Chardonnay 2009 and the Lockwood Merlot 2008 to analyze.

Lockwood Chardonnay 2009

\$12.99 cash

It has a nice clarity with a medium golden coloration. I got a nice melon and citrus mixture of smells and more French oak and granny smith apple in the taste. This wine has a clean crisp flavor with a wonderful balance of acidity and fruit. It has a medium length finish and is very enjoyable. Overall there is not much complexity but I would really enjoy this on a hot summer day at the beach grilling some chicken with my family.



Lockwood Merlot 2008

\$12.99 cash

The Merlot has a beautiful deep maroon and purple color. It smells like ripe plum and raisins with a strong earthy spice scent following. There are medium to high tannins with a good mixture of acidity to balance everything out. This wine needs to be paired with foods like chicken and pork cooked over a grill.



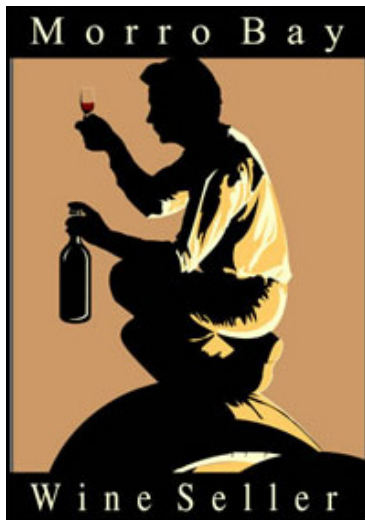
Huy Nguyen

Major: Hotel and Restaurant Management

Minor: Beverage Management and Marketing

Graduation Date: Spring 2011

Greetings to readers of all kind. My name is Huy (Wee) Nguyen, and I am one of the interns for Spec's this year. To give you a better idea of my personal background, I am a Senior at the University of Houston. I am majoring in Hotel and Restaurant Management with a minor in Beverage Management and Marketing. I have about five years of experience in restaurants and volunteering events. What brought me into the beverage industry was a strong passion to learn about beer, wines and spirits and being able to have fun passing my knowledge about the products to other people and enjoy it myself as well. Special thanks to the Conrad N. Hilton College and Spec's. They were able to give me a one of the greatest opportunities in welcoming me into the industry.



I was able to work with Collin Williams this week analyzing some wines using the proper techniques. I chose two wines that were from California to taste, both from the Morro Bay Vineyard.

Morro Bay is sourced from several vineyards within the Lange Family estate and currently controls 7,600 acres in California spanning three appellations and four counties. The location of the vineyard is in the Delta region of Lodi. It provides for dramatic temperature shifts from day to night due to the influence of the delta breeze from San Francisco Bay.

Morro Bay Chardonnay Split Oak 2008 \$8.99 cash

What makes this chardonnay different from the others that it went through the "Sur lie" aging. This chardonnay has aromas of vanilla soda mixed with fresh pineapples. The wine is full body, with a blend of citrus and tropical fruits. Great balance in sugar and acidity. You can tell that it has vanilla oak notes, but just a hint of wood. The blend of tropical and citrus fruits gives me the impression that it was blended with grapes from southern parts of California. The "Sur lie" gives this wine complexity and creaminess. This wine is a great stand alone wine to be drunk on many occasions.

Morro Bay Merlot 2004 \$8.99 cash

This is a great wine to be paired with a nice juicy steak or smoky, fatty foods. It has Soft tannins that have been oxidized with blends of dark and stone fruits. After tasting, I can see that the grapes came from a rocky soil because of the mineral taste. It has a nice dry tannic grip and an oxidized flavor. You could have this wine as a standalone but I would totally recommend it with a nice heavy meal.

These wines are great to try if you're on a budget. They are not highly priced and are affordable on all incomes. I have not been able to try Morro Bay's other wines. However, I will be looking for them after tasting these two. Try some of their selections during your next visit to one of our Spec's stores.



Please email me at
collinwilliams@specsonline.com
with feedback.