

FROGGY NEWS



June 2010

In This Issue:

Wine Tasting
Italian Red wines

Introducing Mount Gay
Rum's Cask 1703

Wine Estate
Castello Banfi

Breaking the Rules
Five Red Wines to Pair
with Fish and Seafood

Sulphites in Wines - The
Myths, The Facts and the
Truth

Shrimp & Squid Civiché
paired with
Evolution, Sokol Blosser



WINE TASTING ITALIAN RED WINES

As we conclude our Italian tasting tour with red wines we were filled with enthusiastic reviews about all the wines tasted.

Valpolicella 2006, Bolla **\$26.30 / \$30.00**

Light, simple, very drinkable. Lovely nose of almonds, raisins/dates and spice. Soft, dry and spicy. Nice to have around. Matched well with melon and prosciutto.

Secco Ripasso Bertani 2005 **\$54.18 / \$61.84**

Ripasso is one of those wines that creates lots of confusion. The palate is all about dried cherries, spices and nuts. The color is between a deep ruby red and garnet. The finish is intense and persistent and the tannins are firm. You can safely state that this is a baby Amarone. Perfect with aged cheeses, sausages, wild mushrooms dishes. One of the best Ripasso in the market. garnet with nice dried cherry aromas; palate--nice pie cherry front, well made but needs to breathe... After some air: Aromas of grapefruit and earthy notes.

La Segreta Rosse 2008, Planeta (Sicily) **\$30.80 / \$35.16**

Ruby red with purple hue. Marked, with intense aromas of redcurrant, mulberry and raspberry mingled with cyclamen and

mossy notes. Hints of chocolates and mint can also be found. Supple, rounded and dry, the medium to full body is characterised by ripe berry fruits with a crunchy texture, supported with good acidity and structure that add balance and help keep the finish lengthy and clean.

Zisola, 2007 Mazzie (Sicily) **\$62.79 / \$71.67**

Very nice wine from Italy. Paired extremely well with lasagne and Italian sausage. Great full palate complexity with dark fruit and French oak coming through on the nose. Good silky mouth feel to increase the pairing impact.

Centine Rosso di Toscana 2006 Banfi **\$32.35 / \$40.43**

Centine is a bright ruby-red youthful wine, intensely fruity with a lingering finish - a testament to its overall balance. It is an ideal companion to pasta, grilled or roasted red and white meats.

Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG 2004, Capannelle **\$81.02 / \$92.47**

Chianti Classico Riserva is dark ruby-garnet in color. On the nose, it has pronounced cherry and violet notes with nuances of tobacco. The wine is full-bodied with remarkable depth and

Bookings & Sales Contact: Amber Roos, Sales Supervisor, Best Cellars Wines & Spirits.

Tel: 268-480-5180 Cell: 268-464-9971

Email: amber@bestcellars.biz

Join our facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=2327449301&ref=search&sid=804010044.514406661..1>

structure. On the palate, it shows flavors of blackberry, raspberry, chocolate and spice. Aged for 14 months in 225-liter French oak barrels (Alliers & Tronçais) for added richness and complexity, it spends another full year in bottle before release. Beautifully balanced to enjoy now, this red has the potential to reward cellaring for another 8-10 years. It is long and silky smooth on the finish.

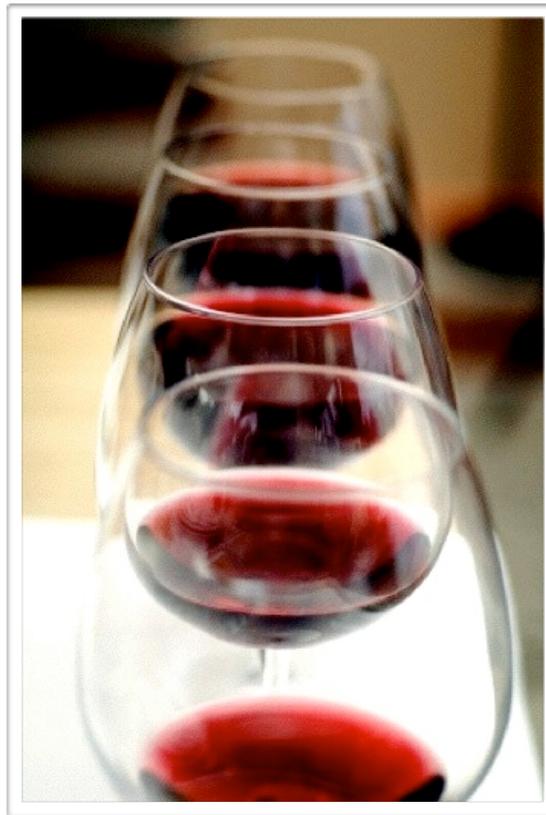
Enjoy with osso bucco, lasagna, veal Milanese, grilled vegetables, and aged cheeses.

Brunello di Montalcino DOCG 2004 Casanova di Neri
\$169.58 / \$193.53

The 2004s seem to have all the trappings of a great vintage: most have great fruit, weight, depth, balance, extract, richness, and a long finish. They have plenty of sustaining tannin and acidity; in many cases, the tannins are rather soft (a nod to modern technology), suggesting that the wines will not need a decade or so before we can enjoy many of them. Brunello classically is one of the world's longest-lived red wines. 2004 Brunello is a "five star" vintage. 'Initial opinion is that this may just be the best ever.'

"2004 Brunello is truly outstanding, both powerful and elegant" winemaker Patrizio Cencioni, head of consortium of Brunello producers. 2004 Brunello di Montalcino – Vintage Report

The 2004 vintage has been described by many as being one of the best vintages in a long time, and may even turn out to be the best ever.



INTRODUCING MOUNT GAY RUM'S CASK 1703



Tasting the Mount Gay 1703 Rum

by [Deidre Woollard](#)

I tend not to think too much about rum. While other spirits are often showcased through martinis or meant to be sipped straight, rum is often swimming with fruit juice. It would be sacrilege to do that with the [1703 Old Cask Selection rum from Mount Gay](#). This latest treat from the world's oldest distillery deserves respect and earns its place with the growing coterie of fine aged rums. The 1703 Old Cask Selection comes in an elegant oval bottle with the Mount Gay seal embossed on it and could sit nicely behind the bar with cognacs, bourbons, brandies and other slow sippers.

The rum itself, made of golden sugar cane and the clean water of Barbados, is aged in former bourbon casks. Master blender Allen Smith has used rums aged for 10 to 30 years and his own experience of nearly 20 years to create a rum that has a cognac-like appeal. It is rich but also soft with a hint of something tropical, just a touch of sugary white flower and banana on the nose. The rum has a silken flavor with notes of dried mango and caramel grounded in the spiced earthiness of wood. It calls out for a late evening sunset, a fine cigar and the sort of lazy, meandering conversation that arises when no one needs to wake up early for work the next day. The 1703 will be rolled out next month for around \$100 in major markets.

A little less expensive but also worthy of standing alone in a glass is the Extra Old which is made of rums that are aged for 17 years in charred oak barrels. It has a rich bourbon-like flavor with a subtle sweetness and hints of vanilla. It sells for around half the price of the 1703 and could change the minds of those whisky drinkers who turn up their noses at the thought of rum's sweetness.

And for mixing there is the Mount Gay Eclipse. While I've had more than my share of gin and tonic and vodka and tonic drinks over the years it hadn't occurred to me to combine rum and tonic until I tried it. If a gin and tonic is a crisp white cotton shirt, crisp and clean, a rum and tonic is a pair of linen pants, still sharp but with a more laidback appeal. It makes a nice twist to a summer classic.

Mount Gay 1703 Rum is now available at Best Cellars Wines & Spirits.



WINE ESTATES

Castello Banfi

Castello Banfi is a rarity among Italian wine estates, not just because of its size (some 7,100 acres, of which around 2,400 are planted with vines), its composition of single vineyards, or its state-of-the-art winery, but because it was started from scratch less than 20 years ago.

Most of the land was covered with forest and brush when the Mariani family found it; nevertheless, they recognized that the site was exactly what they had been searching for. John and Harry Mariani, successful American importers, joined forces with Italy's leading enologist, Ezio Rivella; their objective was to produce top-quality wine on a scale never before attempted in Italy. The first step was to find suitable land. The criteria was direct: the climate and soil had to be ideal for the cultivation of many of the world's noble grape varieties, and it had to be within a region of Italy that already had a tradition of quality winemaking.

The 4,500 acres that they first found were near Montalcino, and eligible for the DOCG of Brunello di Montalcino, one of the most prestigious of all Italian wines. By great good luck the adjacent estate, of 2,600 acres, became available shortly afterwards. The 11th century castle was the final purchase, and was acquired in 1984. The estate was renamed Castello Banfi. The land was planted to vines in only a few places; elsewhere the only crops were corn and olives. But there are abundant south-facing slopes overlooking a valley bottom that, 40 million years ago, was under the sea.

Even today, the calcium-rich soil is scattered with seashells. To the south of the estate is the massive Monte Amiata, at 5,700 feet the highest mountain in southern Tuscany. The shelter this offers from storms moving in from the south means that the Montalcino hills are the driest in Tuscany; on summer nights lightning can often be seen dancing around the mountain.

Federico Forquet of Cetona; one of Italy's most renowned designers, worked with the Mariani family to create the elegant and comfortable interiors of the rooms and suites as well as the surrounding gardens.

“Castello Banfi – il Borgo” offers 14 rooms and suites, varying in size, location and décor, all with carefully selected furnishings and fabrics, classic fixtures and luxuriant amenities. Each offers a King-sized bed, while the five designated suites are additionally furnished with a Queen-size sofa bed in a separate room. The beds in three of the rooms and one of the suites can be separated to Twin beds.

Each room is equipped with flat screen television featuring international satellite programming and radio with a selection of jazz, classical and contemporary music; high-speed internet connection, direct telephone lines, valuables safe, and a selection of complementary estate wines as well as a well-stocked mini bar with water, beverages, and light snacks. Well-equipped bathrooms feature professional hair driers, towel warmers, large showers with oversized rainfall heads; several have an additional bathtub, and bath amenities include bath foam, shampoo, conditioner and body lotion made from Sangiovese grapes grown on the estate. Each spacious room is painted and furnished in a different color scheme and appointed with eclectic themed artwork; several include a separate dressing area, writing desk and breakfast table.

<http://www.castellobanfiilborgo.com/>



BREAKING NEWS

FIVE RED WINES TO PAIR WITH FISH & SEAFOOD



You've heard the inherited wisdom: "Drink only white wine with seafood." As with most of the basic guidelines for wine pairing, it's well-intentioned, a useful way to break down the options for what to drink with dinner. But once you understand the reasoning behind it, you can move beyond it with confidence, and reap the rewards.

Why you should break it: The field of available, delicious red wine is so large and diverse now that very few blanket rules can effectively apply. If you're looking to match your seafood with something fruity or light-bodied, higher-acid or even sparkling, well -- there's a red for that.

There's plenty of useful wisdom built into this particular rule. For one, it's meant to stop the pairing of lighter-bodied wines with heavy, over-powering foods. It's also born of the idea that the high tannins and low acidity of some red wines make a very poor (and often grossly metallic) match for the oils found in plenty of seafood dishes. The rule even picked up a bit of scientific evidence last year, when a team of Japanese researchers discovered that the high iron content of red wine exacerbates the 'fishy' aftertaste of scallops.

Knowing the background to the rule, however, just gives you all the more ammo to break through it. Here are some reds to test out at your next seafood supper:

1.) Pinot Noir

An elegant, lighter-bodied Pinot Noir is a great call for simple grilled or baked salmon. This is a perfect

opportunity to go with another pairing guideline -- matching the wine's region to the food's origin -- and open an Oregon Pinot with something fresh-caught in the Pacific Northwest.

Try: Pinot Noir 'Dundee Hills, Sokol Blosser Cote de Beaune, Louis Jadot

2.) Barbera

With refreshing acidity, complex fruit-and-earth notes, and very soft tannins, Barbera is an excellent match for tuna's rich, meaty flesh. Throw it on the grill alongside well-oiled veggies.

Try: Barbera, Pio Cesare

3.) Syrah

Serve it up with skate -- the relatively meaty, mild-flavored flesh comes alive with a medium-bodied, slightly black pepper-inflected Syrah.

Try: Shiraz, Rosemount Estate

4.) Rioja

Here's another good opportunity to consider the wine's region, and then eat like a local (or vice versa). The next time you try your hand at paella, go straight for a lighter-bodied Rioja.

Two to try: [Faustino VII](#), & [Allende](#)

5.) Beaujolais

Light-bodied and full of sprightly fruit, Beaujolais is typically a very food-friendly selection, and a great way to entice white wine loyalists to cross to the dark (er) side. Give it a chill and serve it outdoors with rich, well-peppered tuna or wild salmon.

Two to try:

[Beaujolais](#), Louis Jadot & [Brouilly](#) Ferraud et Fils

SULFITES IN WINE - THE TRUTH AND MYTHS



“Contains Sulfites.” Just two little words — yet so frequently misunderstood! Words you see on almost every bottle of wine. What are sulfites? Are they really bad? Do they cause wine headaches or other related ills?

The term ‘sulfites’ is an inclusive term for sulfur dioxide (SO₂). SO₂ is a preservative and widely used in winemaking (and indeed most food industries), because of its antioxidant and antibacterial properties. SO₂ plays a very important role in maintaining a wine’s freshness.

Consumption of sulfites is generally harmless, unless you suffer from severe asthma or do not have the particular enzymes necessary to break down sulfites in your body. The amount of sulfites that a wine can contain is highly regulated around the world. Any wine containing more than 10 parts per million (ppm) of sulfur dioxide must affix to the label ‘contains sulfites’.

Myth #1: Red wine has extra sulfites, and therefore causes headaches

In the EU the maximum levels of sulfur dioxide that a wine can contain are 160 ppm for red wine, 210 ppm for white wine and 400 ppm for sweet wines. Quite similar levels apply in the US, Australia and around the world.

The fact that red wines typically contain less sulfites may seem surprising to people who blame sulfites for their red wine headaches!

Red wines contain tannin, which is a stabilizing agent. Additionally, almost all red wines go through malolactic fermentation. Therefore, less sulfur dioxide is needed to protect the wine during winemaking and maturation. So there goes myth #1.

Myth #2: Sulfites in wine cause headaches

Medical research is not definitive on the relationship between sulfites and headaches. There are many other compounds in

wine such as histamines and tannins that are more likely connected to the headache effect (not to mention alcohol!).

Myth #3: Wine should be avoided, because of the sulfites it contains

Another surprising fact is that wine contains about ten times less sulfites than most dried fruits, which can have levels up to 1000 ppm. So if you regularly eat dried fruit and do not have any adverse reaction you are probably not allergic to sulfites.

While the figures I have stated are maximum SO₂ levels, discussions with many winemakers over the years would lead me to believe that in practice, sulfite levels are generally well below the maximum permitted limits.

Myth #4: Sulfites are inherently unnatural

Apart from the potential allergic reaction, many people are against sulfites, because they feel they are an unnatural addition when making wine. While that view is valid, it is important to remember that sulfites are also a natural by-product of the yeast metabolism during fermentation. So even if you do not add any additional SO₂, your wine will still contain sulfites.

A better understanding of how sulfur dioxide breaks down and binds during winemaking, better winery hygiene, and more careful viticultural practices to ensure healthy grapes (i.e no rot) have all greatly helped to reduce the need for SO₂ additions during winemaking. Today, there are many winemakers who refrain from adding any SO₂ until after the fermentation is complete.

Why sulfites are necessary

There are really very few wines that are made without some use of SO₂. This is because wine is perishable, prone to oxidation and the development of aldehyde off-odors. SO₂, particularly for white wines, is important for freshness. Wines without any SO₂ generally have a shorter shelf life – about six months, and need to be kept in perfect storage conditions. Given that a winemaker has very little control over the wine’s storage conditions from the time the wine leaves the winery until it is consumed, it is little wonder that SO₂ is so widely used to help guarantee that the bottle of wine you open will be fresh and clean, and taste as the winemaker intended.

Additionally, one of the reasons that you see more wines labeled ‘made from organically grown grapes’ than labeled ‘organic wine’ is because in the US organic wine must not have any added SO₂.

Sulfur-Free Wines

All that said, we are beginning to see a number of ‘natural’ wines on the market, where little or no SO₂ is added. As indicated earlier, this is easier with red wines, because the tannin acts as a natural anti-oxidant. It also helps if natural wines are sold locally.

SHRIMP & SQUID CIVICHÉ



- 1 cup fresh Seville orange juice (or 1/2 cup regular fresh orange juice plus 1/2 cup fresh lime juice)
- 1 tablespoon bottled ají amarillo chile purée (often labeled "crema")
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
- 1/2 pound cleaned squid
- 1/2 pound sea scallops, tough ligament removed and scallops halved horizontally
- 1/2 pound large shrimp in shell (21 to 25 per pound), peeled and deveined
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro

Whisk together juice, chile purée, onion, and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt in a large bowl for marinade.

Halve squid tentacles lengthwise and cut bodies (including flaps, if attached) crosswise into 1/4-inch rings. Poach scallops and shrimp in a medium pot of barely simmering water, stirring occasionally, until barely cooked through, about 1 minute. Stir in squid and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 40 seconds.

Drain seafood well in a colander and add to marinade. Marinate, uncovered and chilled, at least 3 hours (for flavors to develop).

Just before serving, stir in cilantro. Spoon seafood into shallow bowls with a slotted spoon, then spoon marinade over it.

Cooks' note: Ceviche can be chilled up to 8 hours (cover once cooled).

<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Scallop-Shrimp-and-Squid-Ceviche-240002>

Wine Pairing: Evolution, Sokol Blosser:

A blend of 9 varieties from Chardonnay and Pinot Gris to Muller-Thurgau and Sylvaner from Oregon. The wine is off-dry and floral, with aromas and flavors of lime, lime blossom and nectarine. A great companion to ceviche! <http://www.evolutionwine.com/>

Read More <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Scallop-Shrimp-and-Squid-Ceviche-240002#ixzz0njI8gHoB>



Wine Quote of the Month: "Age is just a number. It's totally irrelevant unless, of course, you happen to be a bottle of wine."

[Joan Collins](#)