

## Sonoma Says...

I'm going out on a limb here to make a few assumptions.

No. 1. If you're reading this, you drink wine fairly often.

No. 2. Since you drink wine fairly often, you've had the opportunity to try wines from different places on the planet.

No. 3. Since you've tried wines from different places on the planet, you have an appreciation for geographic differences.

No. 4. Since you have an appreciation for geographic differences, you enjoy wines from places that exhibit a diversity of styles and flavors.

No.5, since you enjoy wines from places that exhibit a diversity of styles and flavors, you prefer wines from Sonoma to wines from Napa.

Right?

Or maybe the wines that you enjoy, that you thought were from Napa are really from Sonoma. Like St. Francis, Matanzas Creek, Kistler, Arrowood, Moon Mountain, Ravenswood, Jordan, Silver Oak, Chateau Souverain, Seghesio, and Martinelli; All in Sonoma.

Or maybe the famous vineyards, the ones that have been the backbone of world-class wines for the last hundred years that you thought were in Napa are really in Sonoma. Like Pagani Ranch, Monte Rosso, Dutton Ranch, Old Hill, Sangiacomo, Durrell, and Leveroni; All in Sonoma.

Or maybe, the old families that settled northern California, that cleared the land, planted the grapes and whose families continue to...well, anyway, I think you get my drift. In the world of California wines, Sonoma is arguably where it all started. The last of the Spanish missionaries ended up there in the 1820s and planted grapes. By the time of the "Bear Flag Revolt" (which started in Sonoma) and the subsequent annexation of California by the United States in 1854, the Sonoma vineyards of General Mariano Vallejo, the military Governor of Mexican California, were producing an annual income of \$20,000. Other areas in the county were developing at the same time; Senora Maria de Carrillo carried 2,000 cuttings to Santa Rosa in the 1840s and became, perhaps, California's first woman winemaker. Rocky Mountain trapper Cyrus Alexander first planted grapes in northern Sonoma in what would become

Alexander Valley. Captain Nicholas Carriger, probably the first American settler, had vineyards in the Valley of the Moon (Sonoma Valley). His neighbor William Hill planted the first non-mission grapes in the county near Glen Ellen in 1852. About the same time, Davenport Cozzens cut into the rich earth in Dry Creek Valley and planted vines. Between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Prohibition, European immigrants brought winemaking knowledge and techniques to the fertile soils of Sonoma. Bundschu, Foppiano, Korbel, Simi, Gundlach, Quitzow and Sebastiani established wineries that exist and flourish a century later. Today, there are more than 55,000 acres in Sonoma County planted to at least 30 different grape varieties, and over 200 wineries producing \$2.1 billion in wine sales. Growers in Sonoma Valley are also wine industry leaders in sustainable, organic and biodynamic agriculture, willingly trading explosive growth for healthy vines.

But of course it's possible that my assumptions are not correct. Perhaps the reasons that you prefer wines from Sonoma have nothing to do with the history or geography or diversity. Maybe you just like the way they taste. Silly me.(PW)



## 2001 St. Francis Merlot

Sonoma, California

Regular Price: \$19.99

**The Wine Source Price: \$15.99**

A young winery by Sonoma standards, St. Francis Winery has only been around since the early 70s. They've built their reputation on 100% handpicked Sonoma County fruit and a winemaking philosophy of "maximum extraction, minimal intervention." A testament to that is the 2001 Merlot. Contrary to the false marketing message of a wine lighter and fruitier than Cabernet, this is a big, round, structured wine with blackberry and chocolate flavors and plenty density and grip.(PW)

## 2005 Fleur Pinot Noir

Carneros, California

Regular Price: \$17.99

**The Wine Source Price: \$13.99**

Carneros is the cool, windswept growing area at the southern end of Sonoma Valley, on the San Pablo Bay. Long known for its unassailable Chardonnays and sparkling wines, it produces some of California's more elegant Pinot Noirs. This is a bright and charming Pinot Noir that is asking to be consumed, not cellared. Pomegranate and cherry dominate with hints of herbs and white pepper. Just drink it.(PW)

## 2005 Kenwood Sauvignon Blanc

Glen Ellen, California

Regular Price: \$9.99

**The Wine Source Price: \$7.99**

The fruit sourced for this wine comes from growers in five different appellations in Sonoma County. Grapes from the cooler regions of Carneros and the Russian River Valley bring grassy characteristics to the wine, while the warmer Dry Creek, Sonoma Valley and Alexander Valley regions create melony, fruity flavors. The end result is a fresh, well-balanced and enjoyable wine that matches well with shellfish, sushi and light foods.(PW)

## 2004 Ridge Three Valleys

Cupertino California

Regular Price: \$21.99

**The Wine Source Price: \$16.99**

OK, so Ridge is not in Sonoma, but they've been a champion of Sonoma Zin since their inception. Younger vines on the Lytton Springs Vineyards in Dry Creek Valley provided roughly half the fruit; a third came from Geyserville, Mazzoni, and Stone Ranch Vineyards in Alexander Valley; the balance is from Pagani Ranch in the cool Sonoma Valley. A blend of 68% Zinfandel, 11% Carignane, 10% Syrah, 7% Petite Sirah, and 4% Grenache, the Zinfandel fruit determines the wine's varietal character; old-vine Carignane contributes its own bright fruit and acidity; Petite Sirah and Syrah add peppery spice, depth of color, and firm structure; grenache brings briar fruit and lively tannins.(PW)

## 2003 Sebastiani Cabernet Sauvignon

Sonoma, California

Regular Price: \$18.99

**The Wine Source Price: \$14.99**

The history of Sebastiani Vineyards dates back to 1825. In that year, the Franciscan fathers of nearby mission San Francisco Solano, assisted by local native Americans, first cleared and planted land for their vineyards. These vineyards are among the oldest vineyard sites in northern California. Samuele Sebastiani, who emigrated from Tuscany in 1895, acquired them in 1904. Samuele's son August increased the winery's production one hundred fold and created a hugely popular wine brand. His three children, Sam (Viansa), Don (Don & Sons) and Mary (Sebastiani Family Wines) have split the family holdings, with Mary and her husband Richard Cuneo and their children scaling back production and focusing on quality rather than mass-market wines. This is an extremely 'drinkable' Cab with soft and opulent cherry and blackberry fruit coated with coconut and vanilla. Not a monster of a wine, rather its flavors seduce and delight rather than overpower.(PW)

"Electricity is actually made up of extremely tiny particles called electrons, that you cannot see with the naked eye unless you have been drinking." - Dave Barry

## 2004 Hartford Chardonnay

Forestville, California

Regular Price: \$17.99

**The Wine Source Price: \$13.99**

Hartford Family Winery is located in western Sonoma County, in the Russian River Valley, about 15 miles from the Pacific coast. They make small lots of Pinot Noir, Zinfandel and Chardonnay from outstanding vineyard sources throughout the western county. This cool climate Chardonnay is a blend of those sources and each vineyard in the blend contributes unique and exotic characteristics to the wine. For example, the Durrell Vineyard introduces lush flavors of apricot and peach, the Seascape Vineyard provides toasted bread and fresh lime, and the Dutton Ranch Vineyards add aromas of orange blossom and flavors of candied lemon and baked apple. This is quite simply, a terrific wine!(PW)

## 2002 Matanzas Creek Syrah

Bennett Valley, California

Regular Price: \$17.99

**The Wine Source Price: \$13.99**

Matanzas Creek has long been one of the jewels of Sonoma County, renowned for both their wines and fabulous lavender gardens. For 25 years, they've been producing stellar wines, and now under the stewardship of Jess Jackson, the wines are getting better and better. This Syrah is a big wine at a not-so-big price; it has aromas and flavors of blackberry, plum, cherry, toast, licorice and spice, with a pleasant earthiness and velvety tannins. Bold enough to handle a big steak, supple enough to excel with tuna, and inexpensive enough to gulp with a burger, it's the wine for all seasons.(PW)



## New Spirits

### Bernheim Wheat Whiskey

If you are curious about what constitutes a "Wheat Whiskey", don't worry, so were we. As it turns out, 51% of the grain used must be wheat. What, you might ask differentiates this whiskey from bourbons that also use wheat? All Bourbons must use 51% corn, and add a smaller amount of wheat later in the process. According to the Alcohol Tax and Trade Bureau, this is the first wheat whiskey to emerge from the U.S. market since Prohibition. Originally distilled in 2000, this whiskey has been aged for five years and shows remarkable maturity for not spending an extended amount of time in the barrel. With a sweet nose and approachable palate of wood, wheat and slight honey sweetness, this whiskey is worth a try for those who are often turned off by the sour rye bourbons. It is complex, warm enough, and something new for those who have a little more experience with whisky.



### Yazi Ginger Flavored Vodka

Oregon's Hood River Distillers has launched Yazi Ginger Flavored Vodka in a perfume-shaped bottle and corked top. It's slightly spicy, thanks to natural ginger as well as the addition of orange, lemon, cayenne and red pepper extracts infused in the vodka, which is made



using grain spirits and glacier-fed Mt. Hood spring water. According to the company, for centuries ginger has been considered an aphrodisiac and is believed to have mystical powers that bring harmony to life and love. Try it in a Gingertini: 2 parts Yazi Vodka, 1 part triple sec, 1 part cranberry juice, 1 part lime juice. *Shake with ice and serve up in cocktail glass*

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## Mark Your Calendar!

### WINE DINNER

Talisman Pinot Noir Dinner  
Wednesday, May 17, 6:30 pm  
Abacrombie, 58 W. Biddle St.  
\$85 per person, including tax and gratuity.  
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777

### WINE DINNER

Drink Pink Wine Dinner  
Monday, May 22, 6:30 pm  
b Bistro, 1501 Bolton St.  
For reservations, call b Bistro at 410.383.8600

### WINE DINNER

Grateful Palate Wine Dinner  
Tuesday, May 23, 6:30 pm  
Oceanaire, 801 Aliceanna St.  
\$85 per person, including tax and gratuity.  
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777

### \$10 WINE TASTING

Featuring the wines of Librandi and wine  
maker Poalo Librandi  
Wednesday, May 24, 5 - 7 pm  
Iggies 818 N Calvert St.  
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777

### WINE DINNER

Long Shadows Dinner  
Monday, June 5, 6:00 pm  
The Capital Grille, 500 E. Pratt St.  
\$125 per person, including tax, gratuity  
and valet parking.  
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777



For a complete up-to-date  
listing of our events, check our website  
at [www.the-wine-source.com](http://www.the-wine-source.com)

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## Comments from the Cheese Cave

A few weeks ago you may have read about the cheese tasting we were co-hosting with SlowFood Baltimore and Grand Cru wine bar. Well, you might have thought it was a Bruce Springsteen concert because of how quickly it sold out! For those of you who didn't get the chance to attend, we'll be featuring all of the cheeses offered at the tasting! Stop by soon because some of these cheeses won't be available until the next batches are ready sometime around July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**FireFly Farms Allegheny Chevre** - Creamy fresh chevre from Maryland's award-winning goat dairy

**Hendricks Farms and Dairy Cow Pie**- Camembert-style, raw milk cheese. Hendrick's Farm makes this cheese in two sizes, 8 oz and 3lb. This time we got the bigger ones and they have a more assertive flavor. Great Stuff!

**Cato Corner Farm Bridgid's Abbey**- Made by ex-Hampden teacher, Mark Gillman in Clochester, CT. Creamy and mild.

**Grafton Village Cheese Co. Two-Year-Old Cheddar**- This little hockey puck of wax-coated cheddar should be in everyone's picnic basket.

**Meadow Creek Dairy Grayson** - A washed-rind stinker from Galax, VA. We have only 3lb. of this cheese left so hurry in for your piece. It'll go quick.

**Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co. Original Blue** - our newest staple in the blue cheese department. We'll have this peppery, crumbly blue all summer.

Also new this week-

**Hendricks's Farms Blue Beard** - Many of you may remember a little paper-wrapped goat's milk cheese we carried back in April called Baby Blue. This is the larger version of that same cheese. Made with raw goat's milk with a rind of blue mold. Really flavorful!

**Hendrick's Farms Telford Tomme**- Tasty raw cow's milk cheese that Trent ages for about 4 months. This cheese took 2<sup>nd</sup>. Place in its category at the American Cheese Society's Annual Conference last July.

**Principe Oven Roasted Ham with Rosemary**- We have had dozens of requests for the San Gimignano Ham we featured over the holidays and while we haven't been able to get our hands on another one quite yet; we thought this might be an ok substitute to get you through. Made in Italy by the same producer who make our Prosciutto di Parma and Prosciutto di San Daniele.

## 10th Annual Evening of Traditional Beverages

**Friday, May 19, 6 - 8 pm**

We are a proud sponsor of this annual event, which always seems to strike the perfect balance between learning and libations. This year, wine historian and award-winning author Jim Gabler highlights the historical context of wine through an imagined conversation between Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, and leads a comparative tasting of French and Virginia Chardonnay under Homewood's shade trees. An hors d'oeuvre reception follows. Jazz guru Andy Bienstock of WYPR will serve as the evening's emcee. Proceeds of the event benefit the educational programs of this historic house, museum, and National Historic Landmark. Reservations recommended.



For reservations call 410.516.5589

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