

Playing Monopoly...

The great social experiment known as Prohibition died on December 5, 1933, with the ratification of the 21st Amendment to the Constitution. In addition to repealing the 18th Amendment, which banned the sale of alcohol, the 21st gives the states the right to restrict or ban the purchase and sale of alcohol; this has led to a patchwork of laws, in which alcohol may be legally sold in some but not all towns or counties within a particular state. In addition, states and counties have used the language of the 21st as a tool to limit who can legally dispense alcohol. Thus, we have, in some markets, a limited number of bars, restaurants and retail stores that can sell alcoholic products to the general public, and those 'licensees' must purchase those products from a licensed 'distributor' or from the state or county itself. This arrangement is usually referred to as the 'three-tier' system; the producer sells to a distributor, who in turn sells to a retailer, who then can sell to the consumer. Most states defend this practice on the basis of 'we're looking out for you.' Although this arrangement certainly increases the cost of the product to the consumer, the effect (according to the states) is to limit consumption and protect the public from themselves.



In practice, this system works fairly well. Retailers have a valuable asset (their license to sell) that is overseen by counties or states. Sales to underage or obviously intoxicated patrons can result in fines or loss of license, which is a powerful incentive to obey the law. Limiting the number of licensees is usually considered good civic policy as well; no one really wants a liquor store next door to an elementary school. The problem is with the distributors.

Under the guise of good civic policy, state legislatures have awarded monopoly licenses to their in-state wine, liquor and spirit distributors. In Maryland, for example, a wholesale distributor has the sole right to sell a particular product in the state. If you want to buy, say, Kendall Jackson Chardonnay, you can buy it from one distributor only, at the price they set, no negotiation, no competition. Now that's a great deal, if you're the distributor. Less so if you're the consumer. The idea of creating an arbitrary system of distribution (the aforementioned three-tier) as a means to keep prices unnaturally high, thereby driving down demand, is a questionable practice in and of itself. What possible benefit flows to the consumer as a result of granting a handful of distributors a monopoly right? For that matter, what benefit flows to the state itself? The idea that monopoly rights protect underage drinkers is absurd. Likewise, it doesn't stop liquor stores from opening across from schools. Restrictions on retail licenses accomplishes those goals. We clearly understand the concept that limited (or no) competition provides no incentive to improve efficiency or lower prices. The current practice of awarding monopoly rights to alcoholic beverage distributors merely allows those same distributors to earn larger profits on the backs of the consumer. Again, aside from the distributors, who benefits? That, perhaps is a question that should be put to our state legislators.

Hugh Hamilton Wines

Hugh Hamilton is the fifth generation of the family that planted the first vineyards at Glenelg in 1837, less than one year after European settlement in South Australia. The self-proclaimed 'black sheep' of the family, he and his family produce outstanding wines in a completely non-officious style, meaning that one need not worry about when or with what to drink them. Rather, since production is quite low, the only problem with these wines is keeping them in stock.



2005 Jim Jim Barkers White

McLaren Vale, Australia

Regular Price \$12.99

TWS Price \$9.99

This blend of Viognier and Verdelho is simply, fresh and delicious. A little peach, a little citrus, a little pear...enjoy it with Asian, Thai, sushi, oysters...just enjoy it.

2004 'The Scallywag' Chardonnay

McLaren Vale, Australia

Regular Price \$16.99

TWS Price \$12.99

Unoaked Chardonnays are no longer thought of as rare, but they can be drab, uninteresting little wines. Not this one, though! Bright melon and pink grapefruit roll around in your mouth vying with pineapple and Asian pear. Or something like that. Whatever, it tastes great!

2004 'The Loose Cannon' Viognier

McLaren Vale, Australia

Regular Price \$19.99

TWS Price \$15.99

Yes, Yes, Yes...we're still mad for Viognier. This is a rich and ripe example with characteristic peach and floral aromatics. Viscous and full, it's a big mouthful of wine!

2004 Jim Jim Shiraz

McLaren Vale, Australia

Regular Price \$12.99

TWS Price \$9.99

This is your basic soft and friendly Shiraz. It's as good as anything in the price range and, frankly, better than most.

2004 'The Mongrol' Sangiovese Blend

McLaren Vale, Australia

Regular Price \$16.99

TWS Price \$12.99

Sangiovese, Merlot and Tempranillo. That's right. Sangiovese, Merlot and Tempranillo. This wine is just...delicious. Sangiovese, Merlot and Tempranillo. Who would of thunk it?

2004 'Jekyll & Hyde' Shiraz-Viognier

McLaren Vale, Australia

Regular Price \$24.99

TWS Price \$19.99

If big, gutsy Aussie reds are your thing, then this is the wine for you. Don't let the addition of Viognier make you think that this wine is "watered down" or anything. The Viognier adds aromatics and "lifts" it, but at its core, this is big, bold, Aussie Shiraz with 7% Viognier to dress it up a bit.

Swings & Roundabouts

I'm not exactly sure, but I think the 'Swings and Roundabouts' refers to playground equipment and the wines are meant to be fun and easy and fresh, rather than serious. If my guess is correct, they DO accurately reflect the style of the wines. But the name doesn't really tell the whole story...these wines are outstanding! Fun and fresh and easy, for sure, but balanced and nuanced and most of all delicious! A new project from western Australia's Margaret River, these wines will make a splash!

2005 Viognier

Margaret River,
Australia

Regular Price \$18.99

TWS Price \$14.99

Bright and rich, yet
balanced and subtle.

Not the mouthful that the
'Loose Cannon' is,
rather it's more graceful
and understated. A gentle, pretty, delightful wine.



2004 Shiraz

Margaret River, Australia

Regular Price \$18.99

TWS Price \$14.99

This wine is stylish rather than overwhelming, and it illustrates the differences in Australian wines that the wine critics seldom care to notice. Sweet black cherry fruit, spice, roasted meats, toasted oak, vanilla bean, firm tannins and a succulent texture.

2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

Margaret River, Australia

Regular Price \$18.99

TWS Price \$14.99

Mostly Cab (85%) with some Merlot, this is a firm and well-made red that chooses not to be monstrous, thank you very much. An outstanding summer wine to pair with meats off the grill.

2005 Chardonnay

Margaret River, Australia

Regular Price \$18.99

TWS Price \$14.99

A well-rounded style with a lovely honeyed fresh fruit character ... more on the tropical than citrus side for refreshment. It's seasoned by just a touch of French Oak to complement the creamy weight.

Summer Beers

We hope that you have had a chance to taste through the spring brews because summer is now fully upon us, and with it comes the transition from the sticky semi-sweet vernal beers to the light and airy (but in a good way) summer ones. Lighter does not always mean less complex, however, and regardless of whether your preference leans towards lagers or ales, you'll be able to find a beer to quench your thirst this summer. Here is a sample of our selection:



Troegs Pils – \$6.99 6pk.

Victory Witbier – \$7.99 6pk.

Victory Sunrise Weiss – \$7.99 6pk.

Smuttynose Weizen – \$7.49 6pk.

Pyramid Kolsch – \$6.99 6pk.

Brooklyn Weiss – \$7.99 6pk.

Sierra Summerfest – \$7.99 6pk.

Anderson Valley Solstice – \$9.99 6pk.

Anchor Summer – \$9.99 6pk.

Shiner Kolsch – \$5.99 6pk.

Otter Creek Summer – \$6.99 6pk.

Wolavers Wit – \$7.99 6pk.

Mark Your Calendar!

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



FREE WINE TASTING

Hugh Hamilton Wines

Thursday, June 1, 4:30 - 7:30 pm

The Wine Source, 3601 Elm Ave.

For more information, call 410.467.7777

FREE WINE TASTING

All Sonoma County

Friday, June 2, 4:30 - 7:30 pm

Saturday, June 3, 1:30 - 5:30 pm

The Wine Source, 3601 Elm Ave.

For more information, call 410.467.7777

\$10 TASTING AT IGGIES

Taste Summer Reds and a selection of Iggies gourmet Neapolitan-style pizza.

Tuesday, June 6, 5 - 7 pm

Iggies, 818 N. Calvert St.

FREE WINE TASTING

Steve Rued of Ruther Ranch

Monday, June 12, 5 - 7 pm

The Wine Source, 3601 Elm Ave.

For more information, call 410.467.7777

For a complete up-to-date listing of our events, check our website at www.the-wine-source.com

THE WINE SOURCE

3601 Elm Avenue

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Comments from the Cheese Cave

Bella Salumi! The delicious world of cured meats!

I am absolutely wild about really good cured meats and salami. So much so that I would turn down the thickest Rib Eye in town for just a small taste of well made Sopressata or a whisper-thin slice of Prosciutto di San Daniele. Prime Rib? No thanks. I'll have the fatty Mortadella instead, please. With a history that stretches back thousands of years, cured meats have filled a very important role in the diets of our European ancestors. Still today, a lunch in Tuscany or Piedmont is likely to include bread, butter, cheese, a few slices of Prosciutto and a hunk of salami. Here in America, we've relegated salami to a supporting role, burying it deep in the confines of a soggy roll filled with bland iceberg lettuce and under-ripe tomatoes. That treatment is fine for supermarket grade salami, but it's about time we 'mericans give these delicious, artisan-made, pig-borne treats their due.



Principe Foods

Trieste, Italy

Prosciutto di Parma, DOP; \$18 lb.

Prosciutto di San Daniele, DOP; \$17 lb.

Italy's most famous cured hams have set the standard for all others! Prosciutto di Parma comes from Emilia-Romagna in north-central Italy while Prosciutto di San Daniele is made near the town of Trieste in extreme northeastern Italy. Both hams have a nutty, sweet flavor and soft, tender texture. We know how to slice it *really* thin!

Redondo Iglesias

Jamon Serrano; \$17 lb.

Cured ham is a bit of a national obsession in Spain and after you taste Serrano for the first time you'll understand why! Serrano has a bolder, less refined taste than Italian Prosciutto thanks to a different aging technique that yields drier, more concentrated flavor. Great in a salad or an omelet!

La Quercia

Norwalk, Iowa

Prosciutto Americano; \$20 lb.

This organic, cured ham is made with the *Culatello* or heart of the Prosciutto. Using organic pork from Niman Ranch, Herb Eckhouse, owner of La Quercia, ages his hams for 7 months. Prosciutto Americano is the youngest and mildest of our family of cured hams and a little less salty to boot. This stuff just melts in your mouth!

Salumeria Biellese

New York City

Salumeria Biellese makes the finest salami's I've ever tasted! They make traditional, mold-ripened salami's using certified Berkshire pork and all natural ingredients. Experience the flavor that proper aging and highest-quality ingredients make!

Sweet Sopressata \$16.50 lb.

Hot Sopressata \$16.50 lb.

Petit Jesu \$15.75 lb.