

Bridge Street Social

March '24 WINE FAM

Happy March fam!

Wow. What a start to the year. It has gone by extremely fast for us here @ BSS. We all hope your 2024 is off to a fantastic start!

Spring is right around the corner but one last grouping of wines for the colder weather this time around. We have a big Shiraz from Australia that harkens some memories of Côte Rôtie, unique Spanish 'garage wine', and a bold, organic South America wine, and a very clean, stark chenin blanc from the Loire Valley.

There are some real stand-out wines planned for the 2024 releases, with some fun wine dinners on the horizon as well. Being in the fam, you'll always get first dibs on wine dinner tickets.

Cheers!

Mike Luther
executive chef/owner
level one somm - cms

Bridge Street Social

March '24 WINE FAM

Mother Rock 'Holocene' Red Blend – Swartland, South Africa
(2021)

The 'Holocene' is the current geological epoch in which the world finds itself. It is characterized by rapid proliferation and the evolution of humankind. The winemaker aptly named this wine 'Holocene' as it is man's (his) interpretation of showcasing planted grapes from much older geological epochs, blending across three different varieties. The grapes come from three vineyards in the Paardeberg region, between Paarl and Malmesbury and one further west of Malmesbury towards Darling. The vineyards were planted between 1973 and 1984, in very wide rows and organically, dryland farmed.

The blend is 50% Carignan, 43% Mourvèdre, 7% Cinsaut. The grapes were harvested in the early morning during cooler weather from the middle to the end of February. They were placed into lug boxes and transported back to the cellar for processing. The Cinsaut juice was pressed onto dry Carignan skins and to achieve better acid and color concentration. The wine fermented whole-cluster at 30 degrees for about 10 days and then spent another 22 days post-ferment on the skins for tannin integration. Aging was done for 11 months on the gross lees in old French oak, after which the wine was blended and bottled. No filtering or fining.

The wine is almost feral—distinctly wild at first, even as its complexity shines through. A black peppery tinge amps up the juicy red berries in the wine (think raspberry and black currant) followed by the scent and flavor of za'atar, calling up a memory of my first time gone strawberry picking, sat down in the field, hands and lips covered in juice. The acidity is bright, the fruit is pure, and the tannins are powdery and fine. This is easy-drinking yet contemplative wine. It leads towards

Bridge Street Social

the “geeky” side of things for wine but, hey, that’s what we are...wine geeks.

March ‘24 WINE FAM

Henschke Henry’s Seven Shiraz – Barossa, Australia (2021)

This shiraz, grenache, mataro and viognier blend (very reminiscent of Côte Rôtie blend) is a tribute to Henry Evans who planted the first vineyard of seven acres at Keyneton in 1853. He quickly developed a reputation for producing the best wines in the southern colony. Following Henry’s death in 1868, his widow Sarah exercised her temperance convictions by closing the winery and uprooting all of the wine grapes. This blend highlights the historical introduction of southern French and Spanish varieties to South Australia in those early days of viticulture and reflects the history, religion and culture of the Barossa.

The viognier is co-fermented with shiraz; grenache and mataro fermented separately. Matured in 95% seasoned and 5% new French hogsheads for 10 months prior to blending and bottling.

From an excellent vintage, this 20th anniversary bottling is a beauty. It offers layers of winter-warming aromas, from cherry and raspberry compote to savory, ground-pepper spice and toasted vanilla bean. The palate shows lovely mouth-watering freshness and red berry tang amidst chiseled, textural tannins. A finessed and complete wine for drinking now, this should also evolve beautifully over the next several years.

Bridge Street Social

March '24 WINE FAM

Alemanya i Corrió 'El Microscopi' Red Blend - Penedes, Catalonia, Spain (2019)

Irene Alemany and Laurent Corrio have been making wines in the Penedès since 1999. Since then, their name has been a benchmark in the Penedès thanks to a very personal way of understanding viticulture. They work their vineyards and produce wines with character under one non-negotiable criterion: maximum fidelity to the terroir. "El Microscopi" (the microscope) was so-named because the proceeds from sales go to raise funds for the oncology department at the hospital in which Irene was treated for breast cancer. She and Laurent asked how they could give back, and were told that there was a lack of microscopes...so the name was born.

This wine falls into the category of 'vin de garage' (garage wine). The term was created in the 1990s, particularly in Saint-Émilion (Bordeaux), France, for special wines produced in very small quantities, often only a few hundred cases or a few thousand bottles. These wineries are also referred to here as "garagiste" or "micro-château", although not all are necessarily small. The term garage wine is not to be understood literally. It derives from the computer industry, where from the 1970s onwards small companies (such as Apple) produced high-quality, innovative products in simply equipped premises and also actually in garages. Garage wines are characterized by the lowest yields from often very old vineyards, the strictest manual selection of the highly ripe grapes, barrique ageing in 100% new barrique barrels and no or only gentle filtration. As a rule, these are full-bodied and high-alcohol red wines of the highest quality. And these styles exist not only in some of the classic wine regions of France, but garage wines are also appearing in Spain and Italy. Where these vins de garage score for wine collectors and investors is their scarcity due to low production and, frequently, the wines' high tannin content

Bridge Street Social

which makes them ideal for a long aging process, along with a pleasing accrument in value with the passing years.

Our 'El Microscopi' only saw 160 cases produced for this vintage making it fairly rare. The 80% Carinyena and the 20% Merlot for El Microscopi undergoes a 10 day pre-fermentation cold soak maceration; the Carinyena ferments entirely in stainless steel, while the Merlot spends time in some oak. The wine is then bottled without clarification or filtration after more or less one year in tanks.

Aromas of black fruits showing flavors of blackberries, plus cherries, fresh herbs, and citrus-driven acidity. A round mouth full of freshness, slightly marked tannins and a beautiful persistence in the mouth. Overall, it's aromatic and heady as well as serious, with a marked balsamic and herbal profile. A lot more serious wine than the price tag might suggest.

Bridge Street Social

March '24 WINE FAM

Arnaud Lambert 'Clos du Midi' Saumur Blanc - Brézé, Loire, France (2022)

Domaine Arnaud Lambert, a relatively new name, was established through the merger of two labels in 2017: Domaine de Saint-Just, his family domaine within the Saumur-Champigny appellation, started by his father Yves Lambert in 1996, and Château de Brézé, a historic Saumur estate whose enviable collection of vineyards (all of which are individual walled clos) for which the Lamberts signed a twenty-five year contract starting with the 2009 vintage. At the time, the quietly legendary history of Brézé was only a whisper and its storied glory nearly lost. This stroke of luck would forever change the Lambert family's fortune and their place in the world of wine. The restoration of one of France's greatest forgotten treasures would come full circle. This wine comes from one of the colder sites on the Brézé hill and has nearly four hectares in production. The upper section of the vineyard, on the mid-slope of the hill, is primarily made of sand and at the bottom it's richer in clay. These elements combine with the sandy limestone mother rock, tuffeau, and its vinification and aging in stainless steel to generate a broad range of complexities.

Aromatically discrete, this wine is marked with honey, dried exotic fruits, herbal tea and sweet lemon. Although this wine is 100% Chenin Blanc, it bears the freshness of a young Sancerre, the soft richness of Chablis, but with the unmistakable charm of Chenin Blanc from Brézé.