

OCTOBER WINES, 2007

LISTED IN THE ORDER TASTED – TASTING DETAILS FOLLOW

All wines we taste and review are current releases and can be found and purchased locally.

➤ *Stated Prices...* ◀

The prices listed are both “suggested retail” prices, as well as prices (found in parentheses) that have come from various local sources.

For **October**, the panel tasted through two terrific Italian varietals –

BARBERA and **SANGIOVESE**

Wines of Italian ancestry – so you can gesture enthusiastically while you sip!

Both **BARBERA** and **SANGIOVESE** cry out for **ITALIAN FOOD** of almost any kind, and with their healthy acidity and low tannins, they're heaven with almost *anything tomato*.

Also think *barbecued ribs or chicken*.

So here's what to expect in these wines, and what makes them unique and such fun to drink:

- ✧ Both grapes are naturally higher in acid than many other varietals, making them wonderful with most foods – especially the Italian foods they were originally made to complement.
- ✧ With **BARBERA**, you can expect a full range of styles – from the lighter in color, texture and alcohol style – found in most Italian imports – to a darker, richer, higher alcohol style.
- ✧ **SANGIOVESE** styles can range from light and juicy to big and complex, depending on where the grapes are grown and the winemaking style.

Bottom line:

Either style, barring runaway alcohol levels, is great with food, and also fun for sipping while you're creating some culinary masterpiece.

THE WINES!

				Suggested Retail
Wine A	☐	2005 CAMELLIA CELLARS	Dry Creek Valley, CA	(\$19.99) \$26
Wine B	☐	2006 BARBERA D'ALBA.	Piedmont, Italy	(\$5.99) \$5.99
Wine C	☐	2005 LUNA VINEYARDS	Napa Valley, CA	(\$18.69) \$25
Wine D	☐	2005 JACUZZI VINEYARDS	Carneros, CA	(\$15.49) \$28
Wine E	☐	Unfortunately, Wine E was “corked” so wasn't tasted or reviewed		
Wine F	☐	2005 PRESTON VINEYARDS	Dry Creek Valley, CA	(\$18.79) \$26

And WOW! A major “*Hung Jury*” for the “**PANEL FAVORITE**” and “**BEST VALUE**” wines!

Here's the way it breaks down:

“FAVORITE”
3 for Wine A ✧ 2 for Wine B ✧ 3 for Wine C ✧ 2 for Wine D
“VALUE” (based on the lower prices above)
3 for Wine A ✧ 3 for Wine B ✧ 2 for Wine C ✧ 2 for Wine D

Once again, you can see why trying to “rate” wines is so subjective, and can be so misleading!

With the **Tasting Panel** however, since discussing the wines happens only *after* the evaluations have been collected, every Tasting Panelist's actual preferences and reviews are uninfluenced by anyone else's.

Editorial comment: “Reading Wine – 'Terms' ” – understanding what you're about to read.

Balance ➤ Refers to Fruit, Acid and Tannin. When they are all perceivable in equal amounts and one doesn't appear to be excessive or lacking, the wine is in “balance”. This is very desirable, but will differ from person to person based on their likes, dislikes and taste sensitivities.

Hot ➤ refers to percentage of alcohol. If the alcohol is noticeable, it's not in “balance” and makes the wine unpleasant or “hot”. This can be perceived in both aroma (think Vodka), and taste – a bitter, peppery and very fruity, often 'sweet', sensation – even in a 'dry' wine. It can also be more viscous – or 'full' bodied.

According to each individual taster's perception, each wine will have self-explanatory terms to describe the Fruit, Acid and Tannin, perceived as:

Ideal (or “just right”),

'Slightly' excessive or **'Slightly' lacking**,

Excessive or **Lacking** (more than 'slightly'), or

'Very' excessive or **'Very' lacking** (for really 'over-the-top' characteristics).

To make the Tasting Panel results more helpful and useful to you,
You'll find an (**F**) for **Favorite**, and a (**V**) for **Value pick** at the end of each Tasting Panelist's summary notes.

NOW, ENJOY THE REVIEWS THAT FOLLOW!



WINE "A"

2003 CAMELLIA CELLARS *Sangiovese* (\$19.99) \$26
Dry Creek Valley CA 13.5% alcohol

Single vineyard, 100% Sangiovese from vines grown at ~1000 foot elevation, aged 11 months in 80% neutral oak and 20% new oak – American, French and Romanian. This wine was very popular with the panel and other wine critics. A great example of a lower alcohol food wine.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Long finish
"Tastes light initially – dry, smoky. Has a long finish. Nice with grilled foods." (F, V)
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Med-long finish.
"A friendly, very drinkable wine with hints of dried cherry and a nice finish that "calls you" to take another sip. Good with tomato-based pasta."
- Donna** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-long finish
"Flavorful. A pretty easy drinker; not too complicated. Good for burgers and BBQ"
- André** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med- full body, Med -long finish.
"Has personality; a bit young, strong taste, above average tannin. could lay down for awhile."
- Debra** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish
"Ripe fruit, mixed with mushrooms. Fruit and oak build to a nice crisp, lingering and chewy finish. Great pasta and sausage wine." (F, V)
- Jim** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Med-long finish
"Very pleasant, good balance, nice sipping wine. Maybe not powerful enough for pairing with meat, but cheese – yes!" (F, V)
- Mary** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Med-light body, Med-long finish.
"Loved the nose. The acidity should make it drink well with food. A nice wine with pasta and depending on price, I would probably buy it."
- Bill** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Full-bodied, Long finish
"Good wine, excellent balance. Nice long finish – good with food."
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish
"Balance is perfect. Great food wine – Italian, with a light marinara sauce. Only flaw was slight bitterness in finish."

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid and Tannin:** Both ideal / Med-light body, Med-short finish
"Light wine that has a bitter edge to it. I probably wouldn't buy it."



WINE “B”

2006 BARBERA D'ALBA *Barbera* (\$5.99) \$5.99
Piedmont, Italy 13.0% alcohol

Imported from Italy, there was no cellar or winemaking information available, but it's an amazingly well-made wine – especially for the price. I would say it has minimal oak aging that has probably taken place in mostly neutral oak. That, plus the low alcohol is a typical Italian winemaking style that lets more acidity come through to pair with foods.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All three are lacking / Medium body, Short finish
“First impression was tart and dry. Nice with a creamy cheese such as Brie or Camembert.”
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Medium finish.
“A wine you can drink right now! Pasta, risotto, appetizers or crisp green salad all would go well. A good “sipper” -- good with or without a meal.” (F, V)
- Donna** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish.
“Lighter wine that seemed quite dry. Following Wine A, this one wasn't as flavorful.”
- André** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid and Tannin:** Excessive / Med- full body, Long finish.
“First impression was an 'average' wine. A good \$9 wine. Slightly bitter aftertaste.”
- Debra** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
“First impression of light oak and tart fruit. High acidity overpowered the fruit.”
- Jim** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly lacking; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-short finish
“Smelled of cherry popsicle. A little dry and lacking in acidity. Not huge flavor.”
- Mary** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Lacking / Med-light body, Med-long finish.
“Aroma of various fruits. It was taking a bite out of a big, sour green apple. Very dry.”
- Bill** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Light body, Short finish
“Spicy aroma, light taste and finish. Not a very interesting wine.”
- Von** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Light body, Short finish
“Nose of rich fruit and berries. A basic Italian-style wine, nothing grandiose, but a decent sipping wine and good with pasta and fresh tomato sauce. Nice fruit in finish too.” (F, V)

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Ideal / Med-light body, Med-long finish
“Very pleasing and fresh nose. Nice drinking wine. Light and could be paired with lighter foods – salads or light pastas.”



WINE “C”

2005 LUNA VINEYARDS *Sangiovese* (\$18.69) \$25
Napa Valley CA 15.2% alcohol

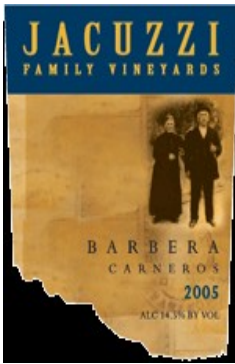
The grapes for this wine come mostly from Oakville, with some fruit from the base of Howell Mountain. The wine has some Merlot and Petite Sirah blended in for color and softness. Fermentation is long and takes place naturally with native yeasts. The wine then spends 15 months in French oak barrels and the wine is bottled unfinned and unfiltered..

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Lacking / Medium body, Medium finish
“A peppery, smoky, flavorful wine. Serve with barbecue chicken.”
- Cory** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish.
“Smoky, raisin quality. Pass on this wine! Too hot, tart on the finish and the negatives outweigh the positives.”
- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Both ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
“Big first impression – not much on aromas, but a real wallop of flavor – dark fruits, plums, spices and leather. Serve with smoky roast chicken or very flavorful meats.” (F, V)
- André** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Excessive / Med-full body, Medium finish.
“Skip it. Flavors didn't deliver what the aromas promised, and the wine is hot. I would guess this to be a \$10 bottle of wine.”
- Debra** **Fruit and acid:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
“Notes of light smoke and jammy, cooked fruit. Very ripe, mouth-filling fruit, acid hits in a burst of berries. Hot on finish. Try this with grilled swordfish with a tomato relish.”
- Jim** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Long finish.
“Promising aromas, but a kind of raisiny, unstructured filler-wine. Vacant and flat.”
- Mary** **Fruit and Tannin:** Both Ideal; **Acid:** very slightly excessive / Full body, Long finish.
“The wine was flavorful, but the alcohol stayed with me, overpowered the wine and changed how I first felt about it. It might be good with spicy food to balance it out.”
- Bill** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Med-long finish
“Wine has qualities that engage interest. Nose not up to the good balance and finish. Good for a friend and food.” (F, V)
- Von** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
“Jammy and too fruity for me – almost sweet. Hot, smoky slightly bitter finish. Not a balanced wine, but might go with a sweet-ish, not too spicy barbecue sauce.”

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit and Acid:** Both ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
“Gave me a feel of autumn and warmth. Could see this with a full holiday meal. I'd buy it.”



WINE "D"

2005 JACUZZI VINEYARDS *Barbera* \$15.49 \$28
Carneros CA 14.5% alcohol

Yes, this is the same Jacuzzi family that invented and developed and manufactured the Jacuzzi Whirlpool bath. In the 1920's the family made aircraft and later planted grapes. This particular wine has been aged for 12 months in French oak barrels and 540 cases were produced..

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Excessive / Full body, Long finish
"A bit overwhelming – too woody and hot."
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Med-short finish
"Huckleberry and cinnamon nose, decent balance but not terribly exciting. A decent 'sipper'. It grew on me. Pour some in the dish you're cooking and drink it while you're cooking."
- Donna** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
"What stood out was the textur on the tongue – a soft, lovely Merlot-like texture. Good with chicken, pasta with light to medium sauces, and butternut squash."
- André** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All slightly excessive but in balances / Medium body, Long finish.
"Good color, well balanced. Initial light taste became stronger in the finish." (F, V)
- Debra** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
"Sorry, didn't like this one. It was hot."
- Jim** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Med-long finish
"Aroma of cherry popsicle. A good barbecue wine, spicy, a little hot, but good fruitiness."
- Mary** **Fruit and Tannin:** Both ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish.
"I liked this wine and I'd recommend it. I think it would be good with a light pasta, or chicken with a flavorful white cream sauce." (F, V)
- Bill** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Long finish.
" Good balance, finish and chewy tannins. Good for friends, good for food."
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Med-long finish
"Slightly hot, but overall a good sipping wine with a nice fresh, clean finish. Good balance – good with and without food."

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Med-short finish
"Nice drinkable wine, but the finish is gone quickly. I'd probably buy it."

WINE 'E' WAS CORKED AND NOT REVIEWED

WINE “F”



2006 PRESTON VINEYARDS *Barbera* \$18.79 \$26
Dry Creek Valley CA 14.2% alcohol

Preston Vineyards is one of the few 100% organic vineyards in Northern CA, and its owner, Lou Preston, has become famous in Dry Creek Valley for being outspoken and innovative. The 100% estate grown grapes for this Barbera were planted in 1978 and the wine spent 12 months in mostly neutral French and Hungarian oak.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All three are excessive / Full body, Long finish
“Jammy, full-flavored wine. Serve with chocolate truffles.”
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-short finish.
“Good fruit, balance and mouthfeel but a bit bitter on the finish.”
- Donna** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Medium finish
“Lots of flavor and good texture but there’s an off-taste, especially at the end.”
- André** **Fruit and tannin:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish.
“Consistent throughout, a pleasant wine – I’d recommend it. Good finish – not hot, but discernible alcohol.”
- Debra** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-long finish
“Sweet cherry sensation, but it had a tart harsh acidic aftertaste. Food with a cream sauce might help soften the finish.”
- Jim** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish
“Not very interesting, but drinkable. A little low on fruit.”
- Mary** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Light body, Med-short finish.
“I wouldn’t recommend it. It was very hot. I don’t think it would pair well with food – too heavy and bitter.”
- Bill** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Very long finish.
“Very interesting aromas of fruit and spice but acidity is high, and out of balance with the fruit and tannins.”
- Von** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
“Too much heat from the alcohol – really comes out in the finish. Otherwise not bad on balance. Keep away from hot spicy foods! A rich marinara sauce should be good with this.”

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** not reviewed / Long finish
“Lacking fruit – some bitterness, but long even finish. I’d probably buy this.”

AND FINALLY...

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...

THE SUPPORTERS / ENABLERS, WHO HAVE GIVEN THE PANEL THE NECESSARY BOOST TO HELP IT FLY.

- Jolie Wiggins of **SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS** for providing two of the wines tasted.
- Linda and Donna, owners of **PELICAN GALLERY**, Petaluma who continue to so graciously offer their beautiful gallery for our tastings. Linda is our much appreciated, ongoing guest panel member.

**SEE YOU NEXT MONTH FOR MORE
WINES TO EXPLORE,
MORE WINES TO ENJOY!**

