

APRIL 2009 WINES

A SPECIAL TASTING "RECESSION REDS!" – Part 1 WINES \$12 OR LESS

LITTLE DID I KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN I DECIDED THE TASTING PANEL WOULD REVIEW "RECESSION WINES" FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL – WINES COSTING NO MORE THAN \$12.

YOU GUESSED IT. IT BECAME A CHALLENGE TO SEE HOW MANY "GOOD" WINES WE COULD FIND TO RECOMMEND IN A PRICE RANGE THAT WOULD MAKE YOU SMILE WHEN YOU BOUGHT AND TASTED THAT WINE.

OUR GOAL WAS TO FIND WINES THAT WE OURSELVES WOULD ENJOY DRINKING – AND BETTER YET – WINES WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SERVE TO GUESTS. WE WANTED TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH THE MAZE OF WINES YOU SEE ON WINE SHELVES AND FIND SOME GOOD ONES THAT YOU'D ACTUALLY ENJOY.

THE CHALLENGE FOR THE PANEL WAS TO BE CRITICAL, BUT NOT OVERLY SO. I MEAN WE CERTAINLY COULDN'T EXPECT A \$10 WINE TO BE A "GREAT" WINE – BUT IT COULD BE A DARN GOOD ONE.

NATURALLY, THAT LED THE PANEL MEMBERS TO THEIR LOCAL DISCOUNT STORES – SEARCHING OUT THE BEST PRICES. NO PROBLEM WITH THAT, BUT IN THE CASE OF CALIFORNIA WINES, THE PRICES THEY PAID, WERE OFTEN BELOW THE PRICE THE WINERY CHARGES FOR ITS WINES.

I DECIDED I WAS LEFT WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE WINE PANEL TASTING, AND LEAVE THE "SHOPPING" FOR THE BARGAINS UP TO YOU. AS IT TURNED OUT, OF THE SIX WINES WE TASTED AND REVIEWED, YOU'LL NOTICE THERE WERE NO WINES ABOVE \$10 – AND HALF WERE \$8 OR UNDER.

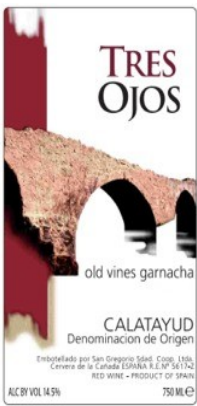
SO READ THE COMMENTS ON THE FOLLOWING WINES AND TRY SOME. WE THINK YOU'LL BE QUITE PLEASED WITH MANY OF THEM, AND, DEPENDING ON THE STYLE OF WINE YOU LIKE, YOU MIGHT EVEN FIND YOURSELF DELIGHTED WITH YOUR NEW "FIND" – YOUR NEW "TREASURE".

AND NOW – SIX "RECESSION WINES" OF MERIT

LISTED IN THE ORDER TASTED – TASTING REVIEWS FOLLOW

Wine A	☐	2005	MADRIGAL	Napa Valley	Napa Valley	\$35
Wine B	☐	2006	CHRISTOPHER CREEK	Reserve	Russian River Valley	\$32
Wine C	☐	2006	EOS	Reserve	Paso Robles	\$25
Wine D	☐	2003	FOPPIANO	Estate Reserve	Russian River Valley	\$45
Wine E	☐	2006	MIRO		Dry Creek Valley	\$30
Wine F	☐	2006	MIRO		Dry Creek Valley	\$30

ENJOY THE REVIEWS – ENJOY THE JOURNEY!



WINE "A"

2006 TRES OJOS
Ribota River Valley

Old Vine Garnacha
D.O. Calatayud – Aragon

\$7.50

Tres Ojos means "Three Eyes" in Spanish and is named after a local bridge with three arches in the Calatayud region of Spain. The wine is made at the Bodega San Gregorio, a cave co-op founded in 1965. The co-op cultivates 2,200 acres of primarily Garnacha (Grenache) and some Tempranillo. Most of the vines are at least 40 years old and some are 50 or more. The vines, planted "en vaso" (head-trained) are not irrigated, offering very low production levels.

Donna

A little high on acid and tannin and maybe just a little "hot". Dark, dried fruit, along with raisins and a touch of tobacco.//

Cory

A nose of dark red fruit and pepper. To me this is an over-fruity wine, a bit unbalanced and a bit too hot.

Jim H

Quite fruity and light on tannin. Lots of bright, red fruit aromas. A simple wine, with a little heat.

Mary

Wine has nice dark tones in the nose. Not too fruity, but flavorful. An enjoyable, light wine.

Ingrid

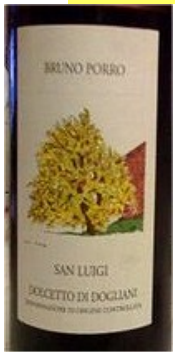
Aromas of cherry and blackberry. Smoky and tart with a long finish, though a little hot. Good with grilled chicken, steak or barbecued veggies.

Rob

It's a pretty decent wine – dark fruit and an earthy quality. Good for a party and pasta.

Von

A nice wine. Aromas of red and black berries, plus some earthiness and spice. Light tannins, good acidity and fruit, made this a good food wine. Just a little hot though.



WINE "B"

2007 BRUNO PORRO
Piedmont

Dolcetto
Italy

\$10

In 1980 Bruno Porro and his wife Irma started a small 24 acre winery, called Ribote after an old beloved tree in front of an ancient stone farmhouse on the property. The estate lies in Piedmont just east of the city of Alba in the heart of the Langhe region with its gently rolling hills. All the vineyards face south and are located at an altitude of 1100 to 1300 feet. Ribote focuses almost entirely on Dolcetto, and all wines carry the Dogliani appellation (one of seven officially designated DOC zones). Bruno Porro makes about 4,200 cases of wine per year

Donna

A well-balanced wine with some spiciness and pepper on the finish. A good pizza and pasta wine.

Cory

Aromas of wet earth, tobacco and a hint of cherry. A well balanced and very "friendly" wine. Nice red fruit consistent throughout. Good with or without food.

Jim H

A beautiful nose – complex, of blackberry and dusty / smoky. Very slightly hot, but it had good balance and acidity. A food friendly wine with a long finish, and aging potential.

Bill

Good, balanced wine with some fruit and spice in the nose. Medium body and a long finish. Lively acidity makes it a good wine with food.

Von

Complex aromas of dark berries, spice, pepper and sweet oak. Quite a nice wine with lots of fruit that lingers through the long finish. Good for sipping alone or with food.

WINE “C”



2007 CLINE CELLARS Cool Climate Syrah
Sonoma County

\$8

Completely family-owned, for 27 years the Cline family has been producing wine – mostly Rhone style wines and Zinfandels. The grapes for this wine come from a vineyard located in the Petaluma Gap at the southern end of the Sonoma Coast AVA where the cool coastal fog greatly influences the unique style of wine made from the grapes grown here.

Donna *A very flavorful wine with dark fruit and maybe a little cedar. I like this wine.*

Cory *Spice-box aromas. A well balanced wine. Not particularly complex, but enjoyable.*

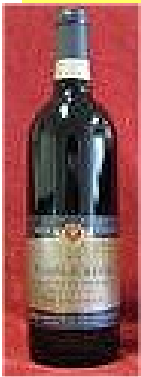
Ingrid *A satisfying wine with a nice blackberry nose and long finish. Nice with lasagne.*

Jim H *A generally pleasant wine, with smoky, jammy aromas and flavors. I detect just a little sweetness from residual sugar, though it's still pleasant.*

Mary *I like this wine. Fruity and balanced with a fairly long finish – and it isn't hot! A good every day wine. Meat dishes to pizza and pasta. I would enjoy this with or without food.*

Von *Bright red, tart berry aromas with a floral note. Lots of fruit. A nice quaffable sipping wine. Not complicated, but pleasant.*

WINE “D”



2005 NAPA CREEK Petite Sirah
Stag's Leap District Napa Valley

\$10

If you've ever had a bottle of Charles Shaw, you've probably heard of Bronco Wines and Fred Franzia, the owner and producer of “\$2-buck Chuck”. Bronco markets other labels as well and one of them is Napa Creek. If you question the reality of any wine from Napa Valley selling for so little – well, it's true. Lately, driven in part by changed California regulations, the wines in the Napa Creek do, in fact, come from the Napa region. No cellar info on this wine – you'll just have to read the tasting comments that follow.

Donna *Nose of violets and roses, red fruit, strawberry and cherry. A pleasant, balanced wine. Very quaffable. Young, easy, could drink without food.*

Rob *Not a bad wine, but a little sweet for me. It might work if served with cheeses at a cocktail party.*

Ingrid *Floral and fruity. High acidity. Needs food to balance it – perhaps a blue cheese or Brie.*

Jim H *Dusty leather aroma. A pleasant wine. Not complex, but good dark fruit flavors. Very slight residual sugar. Nice clean finish.*

Mary *Enjoyable wine, not too complex. The more I drank it the more I liked it. Not overly fruity or hot. I would recommend this.*

Bill *Some fruit, spice and citrus in the nose. Medium bodied, balanced wine with a pleasant finish.*

Von *Bright red fruit aromas, with red currants and hints of floral. Delightful first impression. Balanced and uncomplicated. Nice fruit. A good sipping and light food wine.*

WINE "E"



2006 ROSENBLUM
Contra Costa

Paso Robles Zinfandel

\$10

Like nearly every wine varietal, Zinfandels are grown everywhere in the state and they take on the character of where they're grown. Wines from "Contra Costa" tend to be jammy, with plum and stone fruit, and a specific earthy, dusty and leathery quality. Spicy earth tones make Paso Robles Zinfandel unique. Rosenblum Appellation Series Paso Robles Zinfandel 2004 is a blend of 86% Zinfandel, 7% Carignane, 5% Petite Sirah, and 2% Syrah.

Donna *Floral nose with red fruit. First taste was one of dark fruit, with raisins and prunes on the finish. Lots of fruit throughout – and some residual sugar.*

Cory *Everything about this wine is big and in your face. Big fruit, big sugar, big alcohol. A little too big for my taste.*

Ingrid *A hearty wine with spicy, peppery aromas. Needs food – substantial dishes like grilled salmon, steak, or chicken cacciatore.*

Jim H *Aromas of very ripe fruit – and a little medicinal. The wine was smoky, and very hot. It had surprisingly simple flavors, but the residual sugar made it seem sweet.*

Rob *Dark plum and spice aromas. Spicy and somewhat tart (almost like an orange peel) – also hot. This really has a whole lot of flavor.*

Jim A *Very nice wine. A little fruity, but very drinkable, even by itself.*

Mary *Nice nose of plums, peaches and cherries. I love the flavor of the wine. It's very fruity and hot, but still an enjoyable wine that would be great with barbecue.*

Bill *Excellent, mouth-watering wine. Intense, pleasing spice in the nose. Balanced, full-bodied wine with a long pleasant finish.*

Von *Aromas of red and dark berries, some earth, mint – and alcohol. A mouthful of plum jam. Big, over the top fruit, with residual sugar that makes it almost sweet. Not my style, but flavorful.*

WINE "F"

2006 RAVENSWOOD
California

Zinfandel

\$8

Wine for everyday drinking. Not every meal or day of the week is worthy of an expensive wine, so Ravenswood winemaker, Joel Peterson, wanted something modest but delicious to satisfy the palate for everyday drinking. The Vintner's Blend series is made with less barrel or bottle age than higher-end releases. They offer something for ten dollars that tastes like it's worth fifteen or more.

Cory *Dark cherry and plum aromas. Good fruit, and very flavorful, though a bit hot.*

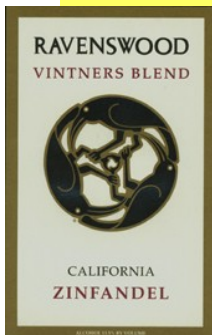
Rob *Berry and plum aromas. This is a pretty good wine, with quite a bit of fruit. A nice wine for pasta night and good for a party.*

Ingrid *A light, floral wine with some pepper. Good picnic wine.*

Jim H *Smoky, jammy aromas. Very ripe fruit but good flavors. Very spicy, not jammy or sweet. It's a little hot but other than that, it's a good sipping wine.*

Mary *A nice wine – I like this. The wine is well-balanced and there are some nice flavors. I would recommend this.*

Von *A lovely nose with red berries and floral notes. It's a balanced, delicate, lighter style wine with nice fruit. Good with hors d'oeuvres or light fare. Nice sipping wine.*



AND FINALLY...

A VERY SPECIAL, AND ONGOING THANK YOU TO...

Linda and *Donna*, the delightful owners of **PELICAN ART GALLERY** in Petaluma who continue to so graciously offer their beautiful gallery for our tastings. We're surrounded by beautiful art while tasting exciting wines. Life is good.

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

