

SEPTEMBER WINES, 2008

► All wines we taste and review are current releases and can be found and purchased locally, at the winery or on the web ◀

PART 2 – STILL MORE EXCITING, UNUSUAL WHITES!

Sometimes you get nudged down the “Yellow Brick Road” to some great wine discoveries...
and just look where this led us! The Land of OZ was never this much fun.

So here are seven more seldom heard of little secrets of the wine world.

GOT FOOD?

Like last month, conjuring up food pairings became a wonderful adventure. Not surprisingly, these wines were delightful for sipping on their own, or with seasonal fruits, shellfish and sautéed or grilled white fish, vegetables, poultry and light cheeses. Of course Chenin Blanc and oysters...oh my! Sheer heaven!

THE WINES – ALL DRY!

LISTED IN THE ORDER TASTED – TASTING REVIEWS FOLLOW

Wine A	■	2007	LONGORIA	Albariño	Santa Ynez Valley	\$26
Wine B	■	2007	DRY CREEK VINEYARD	Chenin Blanc	Clarksburg	\$11.50
Wine C	■	2006	RALLO (Carta d'Oro)	Catarratto	Italy – Sicily	\$8
Wine D	■	2007	ARGIOLAS (Costamolino)	Vermentino	Italy – Sardinia	\$16
Wine E	■	2007	BARETTO CELLARS	Verdelho	Lodi	\$16
Wine F	■	2007	PRESTON (Madame Preston)	Rhone Blend	Dry Creek Valley	\$31
Wine G	■	2005	ROSHAMBO	Rhone Blend	North Coast	\$25

➤ The prices listed are winery suggested retail ◀

No **Favorite** or **Value** picks this month – these wines all stood on their own uniqueness.

“Breaking the code” ♦ Terms used in the reviews that follow

- 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”.
- Hot** ➤ Refers to percentage of alcohol. If the alcohol is noticeable, it's not in “balance” and makes the wine unpleasant or “hot”.

Every wine will have the following self-explanatory terms to describe the **FRUIT, ACID** and **TANNIN**

Ideal (or “just right”)

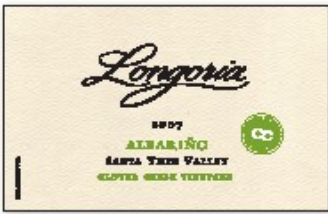
'Slightly' excessive or 'Slightly' lacking,

Excessive or Lacking (more than 'slightly')

'Very' excessive or 'Very' lacking (definitely too much or too little)

Over The Top (“OTT”) (self-explanatory)

ENJOY THE REVIEWS – ENJOY THE JOURNEY!



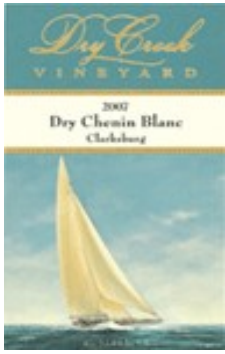
WINE "A"

2007 LONGORIA **Albariño** \$20
Santa Ynez Valley **Clover Creek Vineyard** 12.6 % alcohol

Longoria Wines, established in 1982, is a family operated wine business owned by Rick and Diana Longoria. They are one of only a handful of wineries in California to produce wine from this rare Spanish grape varietal, and they style the wine to come close to the Albariños from Rias Baixas in the Galicia region of northwestern Spain. Albariño is the primary grape used to make dry white wine and is considered to be Spain's premier quality white wine. This wine fermented for ten weeks, then was aged in a combination of neutral French oak barrels and stainless steel tanks. Only 124 cases produced.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Floral, aromatic nose. Very fresh, crisp, lemony, tart green apple flavors. Should age 1 – 3 years.
- Cory** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
Aromas of pear and butterscotch – gentle and welcoming. Lots of tart, Granny Smith apple flavors.
- Debra** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
Stone fruit, anise aromas. Juicy acidity and light on fruit. Would be good with seared scallops and tropical fruit salsa. Arugula salad.
- James H** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Medium finish
Pineapple and tropical fruit. Acidity is a little sharp but some nice apricot surfaces.
- Mary** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Ideal / Med-light body, Med-short finish
This wine reminds me of Sauvignon Blanc, but softer and with more pear. Nice all-around wine. Great alone or with fruit and cheeses. Maybe a pasta dish with a light sauce.
- Mark** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Med-short finish
Aromas of light citrus. A bright and lively, yet subtle wine with a silky mouthfeel. Would go well with lightly grilled prawns.
- Rob** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light bodied, Medium finish
Green apple aromas. Nice wine – I liked it. Acidity comes across like a red-delicious apple. Would be good with a nice fruit salad.
- Linda** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
Clean, fruity aromas. I was surprised at how tart the first sip was after the nose suggested a sweeter wine. It's a nice, grape-y wine with a lingering finish.
- Bill** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish
Spice and fruit in the nose. A well-balanced, appreciated acid note. The fruit balances the acidity. Balance continues through to the finish.
- Von** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-slong finish
Great nose – fresh, floral, citrus, melon. My style wine – refreshing, with lots of citrus and pink grapefruit. Great for a hot day. I'd have it with a summer barbecue. Love it!



WINE "B"

2007 DRY CREEK VINEYARD
Clarksburg

Chenin Blanc

\$11.50

12.5% alcohol

Dry Creek Vineyard was founded in 1972 by winery pioneer Dave Stare, one of the most important names in Dry Creek Valley wine history, the winery continues to be family owned, and is now managed by Dave's daughter Kim and her husband Don. Chenin Blanc is the Loire Valley's most famous white wine and has become one of Dry Creek Vineyard's most well-known and loved wines. The grapes come from Clarksburg, in the cooler Delta region of Sacramento. It was cold fermented to dryness in stainless steel for 35 days and continues to win awards as the perfect wine with oysters.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

Donna

Fruit and Acid: Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish

Lightly floral, leading to peach aromas. Nice complexity – lemon, honey, melon, caramel and yeasty cream. Silky mouthfeel. Pineapple and grapefruit, on the finish. Try it with grilled shrimp.

Cory

Fruit: Ideal **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish

On the nose you get stone fruits, pear, apricot, apple and a hint of pineapple. Nice fruit on the palate with enough acidity to stand up to grilled fish.

Debra

Fruit: Ideal **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish

Great nose – pineapple, melon. The nose makes my outh water – I can't wait to taste it! The acid hits mid-palate with a bit of "spritz". I'd like it with a bit of manchego cheese with quince paste.

James H

Fruit: Ideal **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Medium finish

Very nice, soft wine, with apples, pineapple and nutmeg. Good sipping – slight bitter in finish.

Mary

Fruit Slightly lacking **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-short finish

Aromas of vanilla and tropical fruit. A nice wine – light and easy to drink. Good with food.

Mark

Fruit and Acid: Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish

Fresh, grassy, oaky aromas. This is a crisp, dry, light wine with a lingering hint of lavender. Pair with medium-strong cheese or paté.

Rob

Fruit and Acid: Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Medium finish

Subtle aromas – ripe Bartlett pear and a bit of chamomile. I like this wine. Perfect for a nice, early-autumn day, with some appetizers and cheese. It lingers and keeps me wanting more.

Linda

Fruit: Slightly lacking **Acid:** Ideal / Med-light body, Med-short finish

Aroma of smooth pears. A nice wine with a very smooth and silky outhfeel. It would be nice with a sesame-tofu dish.

Bill

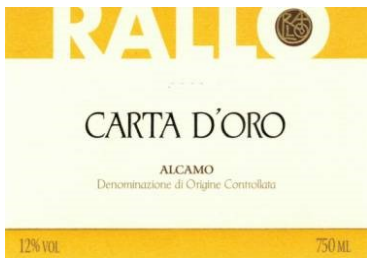
Fruit and Acid: Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish

A nice, complex, integrated nose with some oak. A soft, silky moughfeel with a well-balanced finish. Overall an interesting, wine.

Von

Fruit and Acid: Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Medium finish

Soft aromas – some lime. A dry wine with fruit up front and just the slightest residual sugar. Great with oysters, other shellfish and lemon sauces.



WINE “C”

2006 RALLO – CARTA D'ORO
Alcamo, Sicily

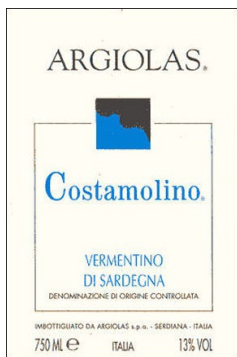
Cataratto \$8
13.0% alcohol

In 1860 don Diego Rallo founded the wine-producing firm that produces many fine Italian varietals. The vineyards are located in the DOC zone of Alcamo, in the western part of Sicily. Although now only grown in Sicily, Cataratto was once Italy's most cultivated white wine variety, second only to Sangiovese. Made from 100% Cataratto, the grapes for this wine are pressed and held for 12 hours on their skins prior to fermentation, then aged in Stainless Steel tanks..

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish
Some apple, peach and melon aromas. Lemon and grapefruit acidity. Pair with grilled pineapple, seafood, mild smoked ham with Spanish paprika.
- Cory** **Fruit and Acid,** mouthfeel and finish not commented on.
The aromas had a ripe apple character. Very unusual, and I have a difficult time describing it.
- Debra** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
This is a surprise. The nose is earthy, ripe and spicy with a hint of asparagus. Very dry mouthfeel and the sharp acidity balances out and softens. A curious wine that calls for food.
- James H** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Medium finish
Aromas of green melon and sage. Nicely balanced wine with very slight bitterness in the finish.
- Mary** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
A constantly changing nose-- from fruit cocktail to licorice. Tart apple flavors kept changing, too.
- Mark** **Fruit:** Lacking **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Spicy, earthy, medicinal nose. A strong, bold flavor that lingers mid-palate. Hints of melon and earth. Dynamic complexity. Pair it with a strong cheese like Stilton or blue.
- Rob** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly lacking / Medium bodied, Medlong finish
Strange aromas but some baked apples with sage – warm and toasty. Would work well with sage dressing in a stuffed turkey. Good with strawberries? Spinach salad? Not easy to pin down.
- Linda** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Long finish.
After the odd nose, I really liked this wine. Fresh and savory, smooth and with a nice finish. Just have to get past the strange nose.
- Bill** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
Difficult to identify, unappetizing nose. The balance on this wine was off, too.
- Von** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish
An unusual nose of ripe, baked apple. A “big” wine for a white – almost a Chardonnay. Would work with shellfish, artichoke, pasta salads, asparagus. A mouth-filling, pleasant wine.

- Judging from the above comments, this may have been a flawed bottle of wine. Once the odd aromas blew off however, many of the panel found the wine to be quite pleasant.



WINE "D"

2007 ARGIOLAS – COSTAMOLINO Vermentino
Sardinia

\$16
13.5% alcohol

The history of Vermentino dates back at least 700 years and it's debated whether it originally came from Italy, Sardinia or Spain. It is grown in several countries around the Mediterranean and is also the most widely planted white grape on the island of Corsica. In France it's called *Rolle* and grown in Provence and the Languedoc. This wine came from grapes grown in the 625 foot elevation Costamolino vineyard in Sardinia. It went through partial Malolactic Fermentation before being aged in stainless steel tanks.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Medium finish
Delicate, sweet-floral nose, with hints of almond. Nice soft mouthfeel, toast, honey and tropical fruit flavors. Pair with broiled figs.
- Cory** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
Hints of almonds, acacia and orange blossoms on the nose. The wine grew on me. Lemony, and floral. This would go well with appetizers and almost any kind of shellfish or grilled white fish.
- Debra** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
A spice basket! Grandma's pantry (smells inviting). Fruity but well-balanced and a bit spritzy with a juicy finish. Good with truffles, corn and baked chicken.
- James H** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish
Pineapple, green apple and slightly toasty. Fairly long finish turning smoky toward the finish.
- Mary** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive **Acid:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Soft, light aromas of dried fruit and melon. A light, crisp, refreshing wine. Balanced, with grapefruit and melon flavors. I think it would be nice with a piccata dish.
- Mark** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Lemon grass and saffron aromas. A floral, light wine with a silky mouthfeel and velvety finish. Hints of lemon, pear and lavender. Would pair well with a light fish like sea bass or seared Ahi. a.
- Rob** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
Subtle aromas with a bit of lychee. I like this wine. Good with fish – or pork with a spicy marinade like lime chipotle. This could age 3 – 5 years
- Linda** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-short finish
To me the acidity was a bit harsh. Would probably be good with spicy foods like Thai or Indian.
- Bill** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish
A wonderful wine experience, Complex, appetizing nose with citrus, melon and other fruit. Well-balanced, full-flavored wine – nice long finish. Good for food and friends. I would buy this wine.
- Von** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Lemon and green apple aromas. Wine is rich, round, and full. Great acid balance with no rough edges. Very pleasant finish. Good complement to richer sauces.



WINE "E"

2007 BARETTO CELLARS
Lodi

Verdelho

\$16
14.7% alcohol

Founded by Michael and Joey Barreto, Barreto Cellars was established with the idea of producing high quality wines featuring grape varieties native to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal). Many of these varieties are unheard of in California except for a few elite growers and select winemakers. Verdelho traces its Portuguese history for 500 years and is now planted all over the world. This wine came from the Silvaspoons Vineyard in Lodi and was fermented and aged in stainless steel tanks for 6 months.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish
Delicate fruit aromas with lemon and pineapple. Toasty flavors with lightly smoked almonds. Pleasant finish – warm and floral. Pair with white fish, and couscous with mint.
- Cory** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Medium finish
Lychee nut, spice and banana aromas. A round mouthfeel and enough acidity to be a good food wine. It cries for shrimp or crab salad. I little bitter in the finish.
- Debra** **Fruit:** Excessive **Acid:** Ideal / Med-light body, Medium finish
Melon and spice aromas. A bit hot, flabby and unbalanced. Some bitter in the finish. Cheese might help.
- James H** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish
Gooseberry and melon with a hint of Riesling-like 'petrol' in the nose. Hot – with a smoky finish.
- Mary** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Medium finish
Light aromas of pear and starfruit. Nice, creamy mouthfeel – pleasing, but a little hot.
- Mark** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Citrus and peach aromas. A crisp, straight forward higher alcohol wine with hints of peach and citrus. Wine is balanced, with a medium-long finish. Pair with oysters or calamari.
- Rob** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-light bodied, Med-short finish
Very subtle honeysuckle nose. I can see some nice things in it, but it has a tartness that I don't care for. It would benefit fro a food pairing that would balance the tartness.
- Linda** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Ideal / Med-light body, Med-long finish
This wine starts out fine, but the finish is vegetative and a little bitter. Not a favorite.
- Bill** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Long finish
Very subtle violet and citrus aromas. Balanced, but flavors were lacking and the finish was long, but uninteresting.
- Von** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Aromas of light tropical fruit, kiwi, tangerine – and heat. Fruit and acid come through nicely but are muted by the alcohol. Finish is hot as well. Sausage and salami might work with this – or some hard cheese. With a lower alcohol, this would be a nice wine.

Madam Preston

WINE "F"

2007 PRESTON "Madame Preston"

\$31

"Grape Wine" (Rhône Blend of Roussane, Viognier, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne)

Dry Creek Valley

14.2% alcohol

Preston is a family operated, organically farmed winery in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley and specializes in Rhone and Italian varietals. This Rhône Blend contains 55% Roussane, 26% Viognier, 12% Grenache Blanc and 7% Marsanne. All four of these white wine varieties came originally from the northern Rhône and are often blended together. Viognier is an ancient grape thought to have originated in Dalmatia and brought to the Rhône by the Romans. Grenache Blanc is the fifth most widely planted white wine grape in France.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Apple, banana and tropical fruit aromas. Flavors of honey, and soft apple with a hint of caramel – peppery and a bit puckery. Pair with Brie, aged Gouda and salty cheeses.
- Cory** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Medium finish
Flowers and a hint of orange peel on the nose. Light citrus, flowers and some oak. You could sit on your porch and sip this on a Sunday afternoon. Citrus flavors abound, but they're still subtle.
- Debra** **Fruit and Acid:** Excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
Peach, dates and ripe, dried fruit. Honeysuckle, orange zest and butterscotch were a surprise. A great quaffing wine but a tad hot.
- James H** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish
Very toasty nose. Crisp pineapple and apple with a buttery, smoky finish. Hot.
- Mary** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
I like this wine. Nice nose – apple and apricot, with a little heat. Citrus, apples, apricot and crème brûlée. I think it would pair well with food – stuffed peppers, olives and Brie.
- Mark** **Fruit:** Lacking **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish
Grass and spice aromas – a little heat. An easy to drink, medium-light wine. Light on acid and fruit. Pleasant but a little high on alcohol for the fruit and acid balance. Warm afternoon delight.
- Rob** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
Spicy aromas. Round, some apple cider and spice. This could go with some bigger foods.
- Linda** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Long finish
Yummy nose. A very chardonnay-like wine. Balanced, dry and savory with a bit of oak. I'd buy this wine.
- Bill** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Intense, appetizing nose of citrus, fruit and mint. Well integrated flavors with a welcome acid note. Complex, with a long well-balanced finish. I'd buy this wine for food and friends.
- Von** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish
Lovely, complex nose – floral, fresh fruit, almonds, vanilla and sweet oak. A pleasant wine – round full mouthfeel, though a little hot.



WINE “G”

2005 ROSHAMBO “Scissors” White Wine \$25
(Rhone Blend made from Roussane, Marsanne and Muscat
Russian River Valley , Lake County, Dry Creek Valley 14.1% alcohol

Founded on the philosophy that wine was too stuffy, Roshambo created their image based on the old “Rock Paper and Scissors” game. This wine is the Scissors part of the game and combines 61% Marsanne, 29% Roussane and 10% Muscat from three different growing regions. Marsanne and Roussane are both well-known white wine grape varieties from the Rhône wine region in France and are often blended together. Muscat is one of the oldest known varieties and it brings wonderful aromas of peaches, apricots, pears and orange blossoms.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Lemon and floral notes on the nose. A very pleasant, easy drinker with some tropical fruit on the finish. I could drink this without food but it would pair nicely with a delicate ham.
- Cory** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Medium finish
Melon, pear and wildflower aromas. A tiny bit bitter at the end but the positives outweigh the negatives and it would be good with a variety of cheeses, appetizers and fish.
- Debra** **Fruit and Acid:** Excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
Aromas of spearmint, juicy fruit and honeysuckle. Fruit bomb on the palate – tastes like an orange soda. Will pair with a dessert like Asian semi-sweet cake, apricot / almond crème.
- James H** **Fruit:** Ideal **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Medium finish
Pineapple candy vanilla and caramel aromas. Acidity too soft. Nutty and dry sherry character – and quite hot!
- Mary** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Bright aromas – crème brûlée and butter. A bit hot, not much acidity, but otherwise a nice wine. Pleasing, with just a hint of sweetness. Good alone or with food.
- Mark** **Fruit:** Lacking **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish
Floral aroma. A crisp and delightful afternoon wine. Hints of jasmine and minerals. Very pleasant but a little hot. A medium rich fish with a flavorful sauce would pair nicely.
- Rob** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med -Light bodied, Med-short finish
A more mild wine than the sweet, candy-like nose would suggest. There's a hint of grassiness and some tartness. This would go well with some cheese.
- Linda** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Pineapple aroma. Refreshing first sip. Tropical and full flavored. I'd probably buy it.
- Bill** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Excellent, intense intriguing nose. Well balanced flavors and a long, balanced finish. I would buy this wine for food and friends.
- Von** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Smoky, ripe fruit and pineapple aromas. A lovely wine – pleasantly fruity, but the hotness is distracting.

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.

Incidentally, it turns out that Linda has an impressive palate for evaluating wines and has become an indispensable member of the panel!

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

