

Wine column April 2007

The wine of Oregon, Washington Estate and Columbia.....an American alternative.....

Oregon has long been labelled as the perfect place to grow Pinot Noir for its similar climate to Burgundy, but as we know they are very much in the hand of the weather, which is always a struggle in Oregon.

Oregon is a world class wine State with over 300 wineries producing high quality Artisan wines, in fact, most Oregon wineries are relatively small, producing an average of 5000 cases a year. There are 6 main region in Oregon producing wine.

Back in 1988 The famous winemaker Joseph Drouhin (from the Burgundy Vineyard) bought some vineyard in Oregon and helped a great deal in the winemaking and success of Oregon wines.

Oregon is particularly strong in Pinot Noir and Merlot and some god Pinot Gris and Riesling.

The top wineries from are Domaine Drouhin, Beaux Freres, Benton Lane Winery and duck pond.

Washington State is often thought as the other American wine and are producing exiting Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Chardonnays, some say that the wine they produce will soon escape from the shadow of the Californian wines.

The vineyards of Washington are on high plateau next to the Columbia river and get an average of 17 hours of sunshine per day, that is 2 more hours than in California, this means that the grape as a long ripening and high acid level due to some chilly nights, but making well balanced wine with good fruit aroma, complexity and elegance.

The top wineries are Chateau Ste Michelle, Canoe ridge Vineyard and Andrew will.

Canada has two main winemaking region, British Columbia and Ontario, while few wines from Canada are readily available, some do creep through, the best wines are made of chardonnays and Pinot Blanc and their ice wines (Meaning that the harvest take place at minus 10 degree Celcius) and is a special favourite of mine made from Riesling, ice wine only happen in certain vintages.

As for the red wine from Canada, keep away as they tend to be green and lack of fruit.

The top wineries are Jackson Triggs Winery, Mission Hill and Inniskillin Winery (they produce intensely aromatic Icewine Vintage and for those who are lucky to find it they also produce one the only Sparkling dessert wine in the world, A real Gem....)

My wine selection:

Benton Lane Pinot Noir 2003, Oregon £12.50

contact@tw-wines.com

Chateau Ste Michelle Merlot 2002, Washington Estate £9.95

Chateau Ste Michelle Chardonnay 2004, Washington Estate £10.50

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Inniskillin Ice Wine Riesling, Ontario 2002 £30.00

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