

# Swirl on Castro Tasting Notes

## Thanksgiving Wines November 16, 2007

### 1) Richard Grant 'Wrotham Pinot' Blanc de Noir Napa Valley '01 \$150.00 btl

**100% Pinot Noir.** *The new vintage of Wrotham Sparkling is in.* California wine pioneer Dr. Richard (Dick) Peterson, (former winemaker at Beaulieu Vineyard from 1968 through 1973), father of famed winemaker Hiedi Barrett Peterson (Screaming Eagle, La Sirena, Paradigm Winery, Showket Vineyards) is producing a very unique wine - Richard Grant 'Wrotham Pinot'. The wine is produced from descendents of ancient Pinot Noir grapevines the early Romans brought to England 2000 years ago. Four years aging on Prise de Mousse yeast 'en tirage', helped develop the delicate, fruity taste and exceptional balance of this wine. A beautiful pink color with thousands of delicate bubbles to delight the eye, Wrotham Pinot is surely evidence of nature's best. (100% organically grown grapes.) It's almost as if the vine survived generation after generation against all odds, waiting for the right person to discover its virtues for the world to enjoy. *Versatile, perfect for starters, all the way through Turkey dinner. 500 cases produced. 12% alcohol.*

### 2) Ventana Gewurztraminer, Monterey '06 \$11.00 btl

**100% Gewurztraminer.** "Gewurtz" (GAH-VERTZ) in German means "spiced" and that spiced quality is what makes this grape varietal special. Gewurztraminer grows best in cool growing regions like Monterey in California and Alsace in France. Ventana models its Gewurztraminer in the off-dry Alsatian Style. *With flavor characteristics of lychee, orange blossoms, cinnamon and nutmeg spices, it exudes a lively bouquet. The wine is medium bodied with a lingering crisp spicy finish. The off-dry style matches beautifully with food, a perfect match for ham. A really delicious value priced wine, a must for holiday meals when offering a white and red wine. 13.3% alcohol.*

### 3) Pierre-Marie Chermette 'Cuvee Traditionnelle' Beaujolais "Vieilles Vignes" '06 \$18.75 btl

**100% Gamay.** Old vine gamay, a perfect match for Thanksgiving. Not to be confused with Beaujolais *Nouveau*, the grapy, fresh wine released right after fermentation (traditionally released the third Thursday in November), this is a serious approach to the "other" red grape from Burgundy. Pierre-Marie and Martine Chermette were among the pioneers of sustainable viticulture in this region; this includes severe pruning, hand-picking and grape thinning. The grapes are fermented using only the yeast that comes in on the grapes ('Traditionnelle') and little or no filtering is used to insure that the real "terrior" comes through. *"Vieilles vignes" is a term commonly used on French wine labels to indicate that a wine is the product of grape vines that are notably old. Freshness meets concentration and shows in ripe red fruit aromas and flavors. A pure, pretty wine perfect for holiday occasions. 12.5% alcohol.*

### 4) Rusack Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara '06 \$32.00 btl

**100% Pinot Noir.** Of course we have to feature a Pinot Noir - medium-bodied, silky wines are versatile with turkey, and the wide assortment of side dishes. We are big fans of Rusack wines, always balanced, complex, and full of dimension. Rusack is a boutique winery in Santa Barbara County dedicated to handcrafted wines of distinction and elegance. Winemaking couples John and Helen Falcone produce small lot wines that are distinctly Santa Barbara in origin. The Garey and Soloman Hills vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley contributed just over one-half of the blend, with the Fiddlestix, Huber and Rancho Santa Rosa vineyards adding characteristics of the Santa Rita Hills. *This wine is packed with bright spicy flavors of strawberries, coffee, and caramel. A plush wine, very approachable young, with great structure, and very food friendly. 1300 cases produced. 14.2% alcohol.*

### 5) Betts & Scholl Grenache 'The O.G.' Barossa Valley, Australia '05 \$32.50 btl

**100% Grenache.** A partnership between Master Sommelier Richard Betts (The Little Nell in Aspen) and modern art collector Dennis Scholl. Richard canvassed the top regions of Australia for old vine Grenache, and found just what he was looking for in Barossa. Australia is dotted with tremendous old vineyards, many of them planted over a century ago by the original German-Lutheran settlers. The label for the Barossa Grenache "OG" (Original Grenache) is by Anna Gaskell, an internationally renowned artist who lives and works in New York. The inspired label is her interpretation of someone head over heels for the Barossa Valley Grenache. *Perfect accompaniment to Thanksgiving - Great with Turkey and the trimmings; balanced, elegant and supple, with low oak overtones. (No new oak, only old barrels are used) 1,000 cases produced. 14.9% alcohol.*

### 6) Chiarito Zinfandel Mendocino '04 \$24.00 btl

**100% Zinfandel.** A Gargagiste Zinfandel? (Garageiste is defined as a passionate winemaker who creates fine limited production wines - occasionally in his or her garage ) and that is exactly the case with this gem from John Chiarito - the wine is produced at his winery, which is also his garage. And who better to make a great Zin than a Southern Italian? John grew up drinking homemade wine with his Italian family, and became inspired to make his own - Chiarito now grows his fruit on the benchlands of eastern Ukiah Valley, which locals refer to as "the bathtub ring" above the valley floor. That basin is filled with Chardonnay that goes into bargain brands for KJ and Napa names. The ring is where the action is for reds, and Chiarito has found a good spot. *This Zinfandel brings the grape's black-fruit profile, adding licorice and dark toast to blackberry and cherry flavors. In your mouth the wine delivers the natural brambly complexity and aliveness we love in Zin, while remaining balanced and restrained. A good match for Thanksgiving dinner, this wine can stand up to the sweet potatoes, cranberry salads, and deep fried Turkey. 380 cases produced. 15.1% alcohol.*