

2005 Sonoma County Syrah Olson Ogden Wines Sonoma County, California

General Information

Swirl on Castro was first introduced to Olson Ogden Wines one year and a half ago when John Ogden, a neighbor of ours in the Castro, stopped by the store to taste us on their wines (at the time they only produced two wines – Sonoma County Syrah and Unti Vineyard Dry Creek Valley Syrah). We were blown away by both wines. Wine Spectator released an article in their March 31, 2007 magazine titled, “California Syrah Comes on Strong.” The article included a full-page picture of John and his winemaker partner Tim Olson, noting Olson Ogden Wines as an exceptional new Syrah producer. Their 2004 Unti Vineyard Syrah received a 93 point rating and was described as the “best wine in years from this Sonoma County winegrowing district.” John came by the store a couple weeks after the release and wiped us out of our entire Wine Spectator stock.

Both John and Tim started making wine as a hobby as home winemakers. Tim eventually landed his first industry job in 1991, and he proceeded to make wine at wineries such as Caymus, Girard, St. Supery and Acacia, and was a founding partner of Tarius Wines. John started as a wine enthusiast, turned home winemaker in the late 90’s. He and Tim partnered together in 2002 to form Olson Ogden Wines. The 2005 vintage marks their fourth vintage together as a team. They now have a total of four wines – two Syrahs and two just-released Pinot Noirs.

The fruit for both Olson Ogden Syrah wines are sourced from the Unti Vineyard in Dry Creek Valley. Tim and John conduct a careful barrel selection process to determine what barrels will make it into their Unti Vineyard Syrah designate wine versus the Sonoma County designate wine. After tasting through all the barrels individually they begin to have a sense for where the wine should go. They then begin blending trials to determine exactly which barrels will end up in which blend; the goal for the Sonoma County Syrah is an approachable, “drink now” wine.

Retail Price = \$28.50 btl

Wine Club Re-Order Price = \$25.65 btl

Wine Profile

What we love most about Olson Ogden’s wines are the finesse, elegance and beauty the wines display. They’re not powerful, knock-your-socks-off wines. It’s all about showcasing the fruit, but with balance and structure. The 2005 Sonoma County Syrah reveals this character perfectly. Notes of cherry, pepper spice, leather and earth scents arise from the glass. Layers of plum, dark fruit and exotic spice flavors stay fresh and long on the finish. Medium body.

Suggested Recipe: Toasted Fennel Crusted Tuna with Saffron-Red Pepper Sauce and Spring Vegetable Couscous

Other Food Pairing Ideas: Olson Ogden wines are made to be enjoyed with food. This wine would also partner well with grilled meat and vegetables, pizza, lamb, mushrooms, peppered steak, and cheese, especially aged and/or hard.

Technical Data

Varietal Composition: 98% Syrah, 2% Grenache

Vineyard: Unti Vineyard in Dry Creek Valley

Oak Treatment: 16 months in French oak barrels, 17% new barrels

Bottled: February 2007

Alcohol: 14.3%

Production: 148 cases produced

Toasted Fennel Crusted Tuna with Saffron-Red Pepper Sauce and Spring Vegetable Couscous

Wine Pairing: Sonoma County Syrah

Ingredients

Tuna:

_ cup whole fennel seeds, toasted
4 (6-ounce) tuna steaks
Olive oil
Salt and pepper

Saffron-Roasted Red Pepper Sauce:

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 Spanish onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 red peppers, roasted, peeled, seeded and coarsely
chopped
_ cup sherry vinegar
1 cup water
Pinch saffron
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Vegetable Couscous:

6 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound Israeli couscous
Water
Salt and freshly ground pepper
12 spears asparagus, blanched and cut into 1-inch pieces
on the bias
2 red peppers, julienned
2 yellow peppers, julienned
1 zucchini, julienned
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon harissa

Preparation

Tuna:

Place fennel seeds in a coffee grinder and coarsely grind and place on a large plate. Brush tuna with olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Preheat sauté pan or grill pan over high heat until smoking. Dredge one side of the tuna in the fennel seeds. Sauté, fennel-side down for 2 to 3 minutes until golden brown, turn over and continue cooking for 1 to 2 minutes for rare doneness.

Saffron-Roasted Red Pepper Sauce:

Heat oil in a medium sauté pan over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook until soft. Add the red peppers, vinegar, water and saffron and bring to a simmer. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes. Place in a blender and blend until smooth, season with salt and pepper to taste.

Vegetable Couscous:

Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the couscous and cook until lightly golden brown. Cover with water and 2 tablespoons of salt. Cook until al dente, drain and place into a large bowl. Heat remaining 3 tablespoons of oil in a large sauté pan and sauté the vegetables until just cooked through. Add the vegetables and oil to the couscous. Whisk together the soy sauce and harissa and pour over the couscous and mix to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serves 4

Bobby Flay