

The Wine Corner

Pierre's Top Ten – the best of the best

By Pierre DuMont

Most wine tastings I go to have some parameters – all Italian Wines or all Zinfandels or Rhone varietals. So it was fun to go to a wine tasting with no parameters. Any grape from any place all over the world.

Every year Wine and Spirits magazine publishes an issue with their top 100 wines from around the world. It is always an amazing collection of some of the world's greatest wines. Also annually the producers of the winning wines are invited to pour them at a gala tasting in San Francisco. It was a great privilege to attend the tasting and sample many wines I have never tried and some I could never afford. After trying all 100 wines (and a lot of spitting) I tried to compile a list of the most memorable wines of the evening – wines that really stood out. It was a hard task as so many of the wines were outstanding, but I forced myself to choose my 10 top wines.

In no particular order here are the winners from Wine and Spirits Top Ten tasting.

• **2014 Diamond Creek Cabernet Sauvignon "Gravelly Meadow"**

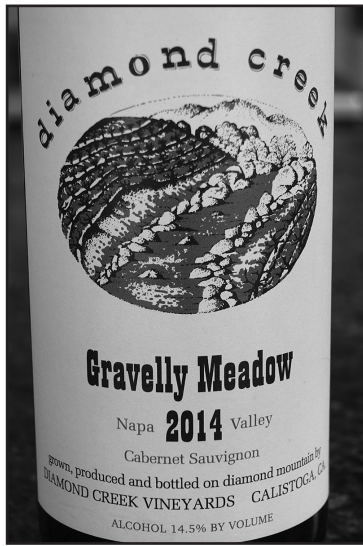
ow"

I was not surprised to see this wine selected as one of the top 100 in the world by Wine and Spirits magazine. I have long thought that Boots Brounstein's three Cabernets are the finest in California. Plump, ripe and juicy, with complex blackberry, plum and licorice flavors. Full-bodied, fresh and lively, ending with tannins that have an earthy edge and a measure of structure. This wine is delicious to drink now but has the structure to last for decades.

• **2015 Corison Cabernet Sauvignon**

Cathy Corison is one of the pioneer women of California winemaking. Her small winery consistently puts out restrained, well-proportioned Cabernets that are decidedly old-school in style. This bottle is well-mannered, with a complex mix of ripe berry, currant, earth and cedar flavors. It finishes with a dusty, mineral edge and good length. It should improve for a couple of decades in the cellar. www.corison.com

• **2013 Luciano Sandrone Barolo "Le Vigne"**



Diamond Creek is Pierre DuMont's vote for best California Cabernet.

The amazing Nebbiolo grape, which seems to only grow well in the Piemonte region of Italy, is a marvel of complexity. This intense red weaves cherry, pomegranate, tea, chocolate and dried herbs, backed by light tannins and good acidity. It is well balanced and refreshing but not nearly ready to drink. Put this in your cellar for five years and forget you have it. You will be mighty happy when you rediscover it.

• **2014 Big Basin Syrah Rattlesnake Rock**

With all the press that goes to Napa and Sonoma, we sometimes forget that some of California's best wines come from other places. In particular I love the wines from Santa Cruz Mountains. This year the talented Bradley Brown has crafted one of the best California Syrah's I have ever tasted. It has a huge nose of blackberry and cracked pepper followed by mouthfuls of dark, teeth-staining fruit with a touch of tobacco and earth. It is complex and layered and the finish goes on forever. While this is delicious now, it will improve in the bottle for at least a decade. bigbasinvineyards.com

• **2016 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese**

Yeah, I know this is some name! (No wonder the Germans are having trouble selling their wines.) Whether you can pronounce it or not, everyone should try this wine. This Mosel Valley Riesling is utterly charming. It has a refreshing nose of lemon peel and peaches and on the palate it is citrus and green apples with a beautiful touch of crisp acid and a hint of sweetness

on the finish. At 7.5% alcohol you can slam a couple of glasses on a hot afternoon and be none the worse for wear. I had the opportunity to meet Fritz Haag 30 years ago and it is great to know the grand old man is still at the top of his game.

• **2015 Delas Freres Cornas Chante-Perdrix**

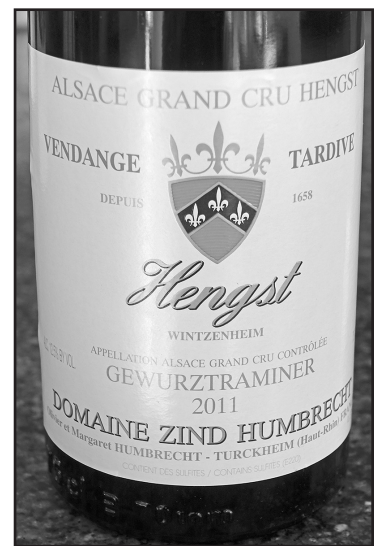
Cornas is a very small appellation in the northern Rhone River Valley in France. It is an area known for producing some of the world's greatest Syrah wines. This is deliciously ripe and focused, with mouthwatering cassis, blackberry and anise notes and a long, spice and floral filled finish. It is huge and structured with firm tannins on the finish. This wine will benefit greatly from some time in the cellar and will last for over two decades.

• **2016 Donkey and Goat "Eliza"**

This enchanting white wine is a blend of several Rhone varieties along with some Vermentino, so it is well off the beaten path. The wine was left on the skins for some time and developed a golden hue. This shows great character and layers of flavor. It is huge and round in the mouth with orange peel and peach flavors, and would be a great partner for your Thanksgiving turkey. donkeyandgoat.com

• **2012 Elvio Cagno Barolo Ravera Bracco Pernice**

The most charming thing about a great Barolo or Barbaresco is the nose. It is amazingly complex with lots going on. A dense, tightly wound style, marked by a hint of oak, roses, cigar box and earth with plenty of stiff tannins. There's also bright acidity driving the sweet cherry, raspberry and mineral flavors to a long finish. It just needs time – lots of it. But your patience will be rewarded.



Alsace's Gewurztraminer grape makes an outstanding dessert wine.

• **2011 Zind Humbrecht Gewurztraminer "Hengst" Vendage Tardive**

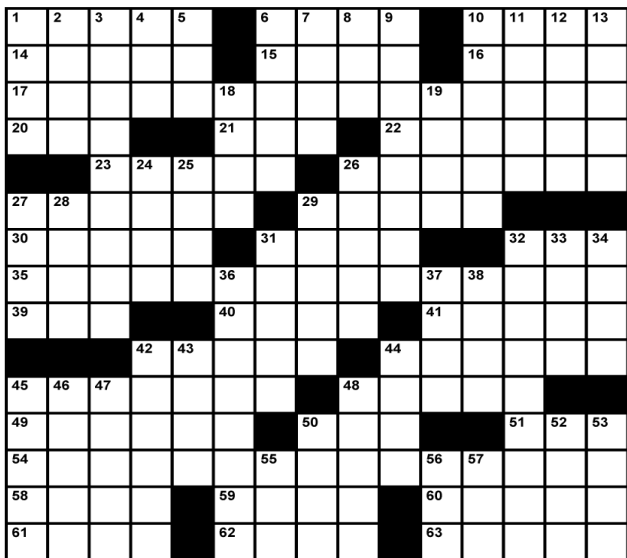
I saved the dessert wines for the end of the tasting and was delighted to find this beauty. Zind Humbrecht is one of the leading producers of the Alsace region in France and is the home to the exotic Gewurztraminer grape. The opulent nose has hints of gardenias and in the mouth it is packed with peach, apricot and lychee flavors. The sweetness is balanced with great acidity for a refreshing finish.

• **2000 Blandy's Verdelho Madeira**

While Madeira was one of the world's most famous wines in Thomas Jefferson's day, today it is unjustly ignored. Produced on an island 400 miles off the coast of Africa it is an enchanting way to end a meal. This Verdelho is on the drier end of the spectrum but is still voluptuous and sweet. It has flavors of toffee, caramel and coffee with a long, lingering finish. Try with a bowl of nuts and some Stilton cheese. www.blandys.com

Crossword Puzzle

Chanteuses
by Sally York and Myles Mellor



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Across | 51. TV doc | 26. Romance, e.g. |
| 1. Certain bird | 54. She beat Bo Bice | 27. Cake with a kick |
| 6. Keats, for one | 58. And others, for short | 28. "zoic" things |
| 10. "The Sound of Music" backdrop | 59. '80s rock band | 29. Deed |
| 14. Antipasto morsel | 60. As such | 31. Line to the audience |
| 15. Biblical preposition | 61. Gym set | 32. Needlepoint, e.g. |
| 16. Gloss | 62. 1987 Costner role | 33. Ancient Andean |
| 17. George's aunt | 63. Myers and Douglas | 34. "Our Time in ____" (10,000 Maniacs album) |
| 20. Calendar abbr. | Down | 36. Speech of old Syria |
| 21. Puzzle | 1. Microsoft product | 37. Matinee ____ |
| 22. Put something on | 2. African plant | 38. Handel oratorio |
| 23. Blast from the past | 3. Stains | 42. "St. Elsewhere" singer, ____ Barkley |
| 26. Reduces friction | 4. Holiday lead-in | 43. Eastern royal rock group |
| 27. Contradicted | 5. "Losing My Religion" rock group | 44. Tip for the dealer |
| 29. Arouse desire | 6. Blender button | 45. Court officer |
| 30. Bouquet | 7. Black stone | 46. Fit to be tied |
| 31. "____ No Sunshine" | 8. "Yadda, yadda, yadda" | 47. Deep-six |
| 32. "A pox on you!" | 9. Bear | 48. Disloyal one |
| 35. "Stony End" singer | 10. Ancient meeting places | 50. Cuckoos |
| 39. Numbskull | 11. Floor coverings | 52. Cheat, slangily |
| 40. Irritate | 12. Newbie, of sorts | 53. Lofty lines |
| 41. Salsa, for one | 13. Eye sores | 55. Fair ____ doctrine |
| 42. Mark | 18. All fired up | 56. Engine speed, for short |
| 44. Colorful bird | 19. Aces, sometimes | 57. Chinese dynasty |
| 45. Call a koala an elk, e.g. | 24. Arm or leg | |
| 48. Chipper | 25. Abby address? | |
| 49. Secrets | | |
| 50. Arctic bird | | |

Battery recycling available at Fire Department

California law requires that all household batteries must be recycled and can no longer be thrown in the trash.

To assist residents, the Piedmont Fire Department in conjunction with Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste, has a battery recycling program. Batteries can be brought to the Piedmont Fire Station, 120 Vista Avenue, during normal business hours, or call 420-3030 for after-hours drop off.

Mountain View docent tour this Saturday

Historic Mountain View Cemetery, located at the end of Piedmont Avenue, will conduct a free tour for public this Saturday, November 10, starting at 10 a.m.

The popular tours at historic Mountain View, which dates to the 1860s, are conducted twice a month, on the second and fourth Saturday. The tours provide an opportunity for a

closer look at the fascinating people and aspects of the cemetery that the docent tour leaders have researched and developed into new tours.

Meet in front of the administrative office and wear comfortable shoes. No reservation is needed. To arrange a private group tour at another time, or for more information, call the office at 658-2588.

Sudoku Puzzle

Sudoku by Myles Mellor
Medium

