

Sent: Monday, November 05, 2001 6:23 PM

Subject: Wine at Orangewood Consulting - 7

To our Wine Aficionados,

I hope that you like the notion of being an aficionado better than a cohort. It was the only suggestion that I received - but a good one. Thanks Audrey.

How was October for Orangewood Consulting? Did we have a breakthrough? Read on...

The big event was the tasting of the Rust Ridge wines. If you were not there, you missed it! There were seven of us who tasted 6 anonymous Cabernet Sauvignons in a not very random order. Four of the wines were Rust Ridge 95 - 98, the other two were similarly priced Cab. Sauv.s from 95 and 98. Also included were "munchies". My idea of preparing a munchie is to unwrap a slab of Brie and put a bread knife beside a couple of baguettes. However I made the mistake of asking Rust Ridge what would complement their wines. They suggested a mixture of Maytag and cream cheeses together with black pepper and roasted pine nuts on slices of Fuji apple. So I spent the afternoon trying to warm up some Maytag and Cream cheese enough to mix them, putting pine nuts under the broiler, crushing black pepper and washing apples. Well not all afternoon. I also unwrapped a slab of brie... As for the tasting, some of us did not look at what the wines really were until the end. Everyone took notes and we came up with a consensus preference. Top two places were taken by the Rust Ridge 96 and 98. As a result I will be talking to them next Friday and trying to arrange for their wines to be here in December.

Otherwise, October was a month with some perforations - but no breakthroughs.

Retail outlets:

AJ's at Central. The 1999 Noceto Sangiovese is still available at AJ's on Central at Camelback and they tell me it is "moving a little". I am trying to provide some encouragement to the staff (I gave them each a half bottle) so they should be able to make first hand recommendations. They will probably remember Orangewood Consulting and Vino Noceto even more because when I showed up at the back of AJ's with my handy-dandy wine bag full of half bottles of wine, I put it on a chair where it slowly tipped over and fell on the floor. Only one broken bottle, but enough wine and glass to be dangerous and to add an admirable nose to their receiving area.

Moon Valley AJ's. One of you kind people went into the Moon Valley AJ's (7th Street and Thunderbird) and asked for some Noceto Sangiovese. This must have been some time ago. Anyway I went along to Archie the Cellar Master today with the wine to fulfill the order and a half bottle sample. So awareness improves - you can ask Archie, but maybe next week he will stock it.

Wine Supply. Tom Hamilton at www.winesupply.net will supply cases of wine at a small markup but has not done so yet, he did get an inquiry, but that resulted in no purchase so far.

Restaurants:

Restaurants are slowly coming around from the 9/11 impact. Now they are suffering from World Series watching. Orangewood Consulting target market is not the average sports bar - so the restaurants I have been talking to have taken a serious hit as a result of the Diamondbacks success. Rosti is the big news. Rosti is at 1044 East Camelback and is now carrying the 1999 Noceto Sangiovese and has it available by the glass. The new menu should have come back from the printers last Friday. Rosti is a basic "red check table cloth" Italian restaurant run by Alberto Liani. We recommend the risotto. Territorial Bar and Grill continues to carry the 1998 Noceto Riserva - but their focus has not yet come to the wine list. I continue with the campaigns at other restaurants. In one case it's "You need to talk to the boss" subtext "if you can find him", in others (when I'm talking to the boss) it continues to be "When things pick up come by again in 4 weeks". According to a news article that I read, restaurants are not back to normal yet and they are dealing with the lowered revenue by reducing their wine inventories. Wine wholesalers are responding by reducing prices and delaying their purchases from wineries and importers. It's tough to say "get out go eat, drink and be merry". Instead I will be parochial and say "drink and be merry" you can skip the eating!

Wine Bars:

I did get more serious about wine stores/wine bars this last month.

Duck and Decanter. As you know from WOC-6 "The Flash", the Duck and Decanter now carries Il Poggolino wines. After I sent Michael a copy of WOC-6 that suggested that you should ask for Noceto, he decided to carry the half bottles of 1999 Vino Noceto Sangiovese.

Epicurean Wines on Thunderbird at Scottsdale Rd have a variety of wine events each week. One of them is an informal tasting on Friday evenings. They start at 5:30 and go until 7:00 but people come and go during that time. John charges \$10 to taste the 4 - 6 wines he has open. Brief backgrounds to the wines are given and often

the distributor is present for support and amusing anecdotes. I will be supporting him on November 23 - the day after Thanksgiving. This could be a good antidote to any shopping action you may have been involved in. Better yet, skip the shopping and give wine this Christmas! He also has a neat concept on Saturdays - it's called adult day care. Your significant other drops you off while they go shopping. I am also being encouraged by 2 other wine bars - maybe in November.

New territories:

No further activity there.

Portfolio:

As I described above, Rust Ridge may become our third winery. Other possibilities are in the offing, however, until we get the sales side of this business a little healthier we are reluctant to take on more commitments than we can personally drink.

Other:

Based on the notion of getting key people familiar with the Orangewood Consulting wines, I gave a bottle to my dentist today. We discussed whether we should drink it before he did any drilling...it seemed like a good idea for me to drink it, but that would have defeated the purpose of giving it to him.

In the meantime enjoy your wine drinking.

Richard (newsletter writer) and Laurie Corles