

# Amherst Wines & Spirits

October 2011

## SATURDAY WINE TASTINGS

Please join us when you can and we'll taste interesting wines together on Saturdays from 2:00 – 5:00. You'll munch fresh baguettes, sip wines, take home a tasting sheet, and generally enjoy. Compliments of the house.

### October 8: Austrian Whites

*Gruner Veltliner is Austria's #1 white, one of the really good grapes no one knows. This will be an eye-opening tasting for many.*

### October 15: The Syrah Grape in the U.S.

*In Australia it is called Shiraz, in France it is the only grape in the majestic reds from the northern Rhône Valley, yet California Syrah has lagged behind. Dramatic, richly flavored, worth knowing about.*

### October 22: Reds from South Africa

*We've been quietly expanding our selection of reds from South Africa – Cabernets, Syrahs, blends. Quality has never been better. If you don't make some discoveries here, you're not paying attention.*

### October 29: "Other" U.S. Whites – Undiscovered Gems

*A look at the current crop of non-Chardonnay & Sauvignon Blanc grapes from California, Oregon, Washington, & Long Island – Gewurztraminer, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Riesling.*

## MIDMONTH NEWSLETTER ONLINE

We publish an online newsletter around the middle of each month. Shorter than this, often previewing special offers which sometimes get sold out. Pictures, colors, a veritable feast for the eyes. If you'd like to receive it, you can sign up at our website, [www.amherstwines.com](http://www.amherstwines.com), or phone the shop and we'll sign you up. It's pretty good, if we can brag a bit.

## VINTAGE ARMAGNAC

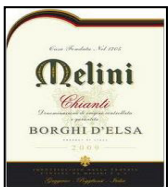
We have uncovered a small stash of vintage Armagnac, the product of a single year. The producer is Chateau de Laubade ([www.vignobles-lesgourgues.com](http://www.vignobles-lesgourgues.com)), a family owned distiller making superb brandies since 1870 from the favored Bas-Armagnac terroir. We tasted their 1981 and flipped out. Bottled in 2011, it has spent 30 years in barrel and offers a thrilling taste experience to the lovers of fine brandies. Each bottle comes in a wooden box and would be a unique and wonderful gift. The holidays are coming. Quantity limited. Do not delay on this.



**CHATEAU DE LAUBADE 1981 . . \$152.99**

Arrival mid/end October. Reserve now by phone or email, no upfront \$\$.

## BARGAIN DU JOUR



It's the kind of red you'd find in many trattorias in Tuscany. A perfect "everyday" table wine for only **\$7.99**. Our recommendation - grab a case (\$7.19/b), have it on hand for "emergencies". Tuscan-o-philes rest easy - this is the real stuff.

**Melini Chianti**  
**Borgi d'Elsa 2010**

## SMOKED SALMON FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Tracklements is the artisanal smoked salmon guy, T.R. Durham, who used to live in Amherst. Now T.R. is in Ann Arbor and, after multiple write-ups from the NY Times which stoked national demand for his salmon, he still has a warm spot for the Valley and keeps us supplied from time to time. He will be shipping us a limited quantity of his "Highland" salmon, akin to a fine Scottish salmon this Fall. TR gets his salmon from the Faroe Islands (between Norway and Iceland). He is a quality nut, using only center cut pieces hand-rubbed with a dry cure of sea salt, brown sugar, and spices known only to T.R. and then gently cold smoked over a blend of oak, apple, and alder. The silky texture and light smoke make for an unforgettable experience. For most of us it's the best we've ever tasted.

### STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Reserve your salmon now by phone (413-549-0900) or email ([steve@amherstwinest.com](mailto:steve@amherstwinest.com)). The salmon should arrive in early December. We will have none to sell except what has been reserved in advance.
- The salmon will be hand cut into ½ pound pieces. These are approximate, and you will be charged for the actual weight. If you need an extra large piece, let us know. We can do this.
- Price is \$36/pound, pay when you pick up.
- All salmon is shipped unsliced to preserve freshness and flavor. It freezes well.
- Orders must be received by October 30.
- The quantity we can get is limited, so please do not delay if interested.

### And to go with . . .

Tracklements smoked salmon makes an exciting pre-meal palate teaser. Also, it can be a dramatic first course to an elegant meal served by itself with chopped onion and lemon wedges. The flavors are delicate and so the choice of wine should consider this. We love a dry bubbly such as the **Crémant de Bourgogne** from Lucien Bouillot (\$18.99) or a crisp white like the **Verdicchio** from Garofoli (\$11.99), a wonderful producer from Italy's Adriatic coast. One of our favorites is to pair it pre-meal with a fine single-malt scotch, such as **Glenmorangie 10yr** (\$41.99) or **Glenfarclas 12 yr** (\$53.99). If you're a malt lover, this is magic.

## ROSÉ SALE

Needing to make room for some new whites we're putting our entire stock of rosés on sale. These make terrific food companions throughout the year and always find a place on our Thanksgiving table. While inventories last, we're offering **10% off on 1 – 5 bottles** and **15% on 6+ bottles**, all from the excellent 2010 vintage.

|                           | Shelf   | @-10%   | @-15%   |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Casal Garcia (P'tgl)      | \$6.99  | \$6.29  | \$5.05  |
| Domaine Père Caboché (FR) | \$7.99  | \$7.19  | \$6.79  |
| Le Mazet (FR)             | \$8.99  | \$8.09  | \$7.64  |
| Cuvée de Pena (FR)        | \$8.99  | \$8.09  | \$7.64  |
| Bieler (FR)               | \$10.99 | \$9.89  | \$9.34  |
| Tavel "Les Lauziers" (FR) | \$12.99 | \$11.69 | \$11.04 |
| Muga (SP)                 | \$13.99 | \$12.59 | \$11.89 |
| Lageder (IT)              | \$16.99 | \$15.29 | \$14.44 |
| Ch. de Lancyre (FR)       | \$17.99 | \$16.19 | \$15.29 |

## CIDER

Ciders are happening. France and England have traditionally been the focus of cider production and consumption, but within the past several years we have seen impressive ciders being made closer to home. These are not the sweet ciders most of us are familiar with, but range in style from mostly dry to very dry. The alcohol levels are lower than wine, typically around 7%. The light sparkle adds fun.



**Crispin "Natural" . . . \$7.49** (4-12oz. bottles)

*This oh-so-lightly sweet California cider has a crisp edge. Truly delicious stuff from fresh apples, no concentrate used. Clean and refreshing. 5.0% alcohol.*

**Crispin "The Saint" . . . \$5.95** (22oz)

*A bit more serious, fermented from fresh pressed juice using Belgian Trappist beer yeast and "smoothed off" a bit with organic maple syrup. Elegant and full, dry without any bitterness. 6.9% alcohol.*

**Farnum Hill Semi-Dry . . . \$15.99** (750ml)

*This local orchard from Lebanon, NH, has been growing traditional New England apples since 1960 and special cider apples since 1980. Although it's called "semi-dry", it's fairly dry, balancing a very light sweetness against the sharper, slightly bitter cider apple flavors. Comparable to the classic English ciders, elegant and complex. 7.4% alcohol.*

## SPAIN – WHAT’S NEW?

Every time we look up there are 15 new reds from Spain begging to come into the store. Here’s the thing about this – many are quite good, way better than their prices would suggest, and only limited shelf space prevents us from stocking more. Here are a few of our current faves. There are lots more. Come see. We’ll talk.

### “M” 2009 . . \$8.99

*The small winery of Monastir (thus the “M”) located in the northern wine region of Cariñena makes a sensational Grenache-based wine – ripe red fruits flavors balanced by natural acidity and with impressive purity of style.*

### Xiloca 2009 . . \$10.99

*“Taste this”, said the importer guy with a certain look in his eye. One sip and we understood. Here is an almost perfect old vines Garnacha from the Basque country in northern Spain. What gets us is not just the concentration of red fruits flavors, but the precision and overall balance. Hard to describe, but you’ll know it when you taste it.*

### Albet I Noya “Petit Albet” 2010 . . \$11.99

*An organically farmed Tempranillo-Garnacha blend, about 50-50, from northern Spain. The flavors are ripe, fresh, and forward with notes of ripe red cherry, coffee, a hint of earth. The really impressive thing here is the perfect balance between the ripe fruit flavors and the acidity which keeps it fresh, never palate-tiring.*

### Carchello 2009 . . \$12.99

*A blend of Monastrell, Tempranillo, & Cabernet Sauvignon from the Jumilla region in southern Spain. The grapes were fermented separately and then blended to yield a red with impressive concentration and depth. The flavors of black plum are accented by hints of coffee.*

### Viña Rufina Crianza 2006 . . \$15.99

*If there’s a single grape which sets Spain apart from other wine producing countries, it’s Tempranillo, the basis for the country’s best reds. This one is from Cigales in north central Spain. Aged for 14 months in French and American oak it displays a soft texture and the notes of spice and earth which identify this unique and wonderful grape.*

## AUSTRIA’S GRUNER VELTLINER

It’s pronounced *groo’-ner velt’-linner* and it is the principal white wine grape in Austria. A more interesting hidden gem is hard to imagine. These wines are powerful and richly flavored while still quite dry. Unoaked, for the most part and wonderful food companions. Take a walk on the wild side and, just possibly, make a discovery.

### Aichenberg 2010 . . \$9.99

*A bit rounder than others, lower acidity, a touch of earth. Great “starter” Gruner.*

### Huber “Hugo” 2010 . . \$11.99

*Medium-bodied, crisp acidity, delicate flavors of chamomile. Hint of spice, white pepper, & grapefruit*

### Heidler “Loess” 2009 . . \$14.99

*Big flavors of white peach & lemon zest. Great depth of flavor. Acidity a touch lower here. Long finish.*

### Hermann Moser “Karmeliterberg” 2010 . . \$15.99

*A more full-bodied, showing power and depth while remaining crisp. Flavors of apple and pear with a mineral undertone.*

## RED BLENDS FROM CALIFORNIA & WASHINGTON

The art of winemaking is in the blend. Increasingly, winemakers are aiming higher not by pushing alcohol and fruit, but by blending various grapes to achieve style and complexity not easily reached with single varietals. Many are amazingly good values, offering full-flavored reds to suit a variety of occasions and offering an interesting slant on the usual.

### R Collection “lot 7”, Raymond 2009 . . \$11.99

*Really pretty red, showing ripe fruit flavors in a medium-bodied, supple style. Flavors of strawberry & red cherry with a light touch of spice. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Petite Syrah, & Zinfandel.*

### The Other, Peirano Estates 2009 . . \$11.99

*From the warmer inland growing region of Lodi. Blends 45% each Cabernet Sauvignon & Merlot with 10% Syrah to show a silky textured red with flavors of dark fruits and cacao.*

### Corvidae “Rook” 2009 . . \$13.99

*This hi-octane red from Washington’s Columbia Valley is introduced with an intense mouthful of ripe fruit with an herbal slant, supported by crisp acidity. Not a wallflower, beautifully done. 45% each Syrah & Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon.*

### CMS, Hedges 2009 . . \$13.99

*Always a favorite with our customers, this blend of 39% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot, & 16% Syrah is full without being “heavy”. The style here is firm and concentrated showing flavors of blackberry & dark plum.*

### Claret, Coppola 2009 . . \$19.99

*Film director Francis Ford Coppola has turned serious winemaker. Here’s a great example showing elegance and complexity, rather than power. “Claret” is the British term for red Bordeaux and Coppola blends all 5 Bordeaux grapes into a gorgeous red to achieve a balanced, distinctive wine in the style of Bordeaux. Bravo.*

## NEW ARRIVALS

### WHITE

**Castillo de Jumilla 2010 (SP) . . . \$8.99**

*The bouquet is like sticking your face into a basket of Spring flowers. A good way to start. In the mouth the wine is crisp and quite dry, making it a perfect aperitif or matching well with delicate fare.*

**Les Trois Chemins 2009 (FR) . . . \$8.99**

*Most Côtes-du-Rhône is red, but not this one. The flavors of peach and apple are dry but not mouth-puckering, giving the wine a round, creamy texture with a nice mineral touch of the finish.*

**Chardonnay, Linen 2009 (WA) . . . \$10.99**

*We thought this was from France when first tasting it. The dry, crisp, lemon-tinged flavors have that firm, clean style we expect from Burgundy. But no – Washington state it is. Top value for you Euro-centric Chard people.*

**Gavi "La Rocca", Coppo 2009 (IT) . . . \$16.99**

*It's the Cortese grape from northern Italy's Piedmont region, Crisp and full, offering well delineated flavors of citrus and lemon peel. Quite dry and with a long finish. This is a beauty.*

**Poggio al Tessoro "Solosole" 2010 (IT) . . . \$19.99**

*This is the white served with bruschetta at our Tuscan dinner last week (very well received). The bouquet explodes from the glass with spice and flowers, followed by flavors of grapefruit and apple. It's the Vermentino grape. Terrific.*

**Piesporter Goldtropfchen, Spater-Veit 2010 (GERM) . . . \$19.99**

*One of the prime vineyards from Germany's Mosel Valley. A new producer for us and we were absolutely knocked out by the crystal clear purity of this Riesling. A tiny bit sweet, supported by a slatey, mineral undertone which finishes dry.*

**Chenin Blanc, Botanica 2009 (S. AF) . . . \$21.99**

*This delicate white opens like a flower. Made from non-irrigated 50-year old vines in Stellenbosch, the bouquet reveals delicate tropical fruits and pear. The palate presents a subtle and elegant style with a sense of orange rind. Nothing is too obvious. This is a young wine which is evolving. We were smitten.*

### RED

**Immortal Zin 2010 (CA) . . . \$11.99**

*Made by Pierano Estates, a small-ish producer in Lodi. Zins can often be a bit out of control, but we found this one well-balanced, showing the spicy, sweet flavors of the grape with a sense of purity.*

**Nebbiolo, Guidobono 2009 (IT) . . . \$12.99**

*Nebbiolo is the grape of Italy's majestic (and pricey) Barolos. Here's a peek at this wonderful grape in its non-Barolo role, but showing its class nonetheless. Lovely bouquet of roses with natural acidity playing off the ripe fruit flavors in the mouth. Ok, it's not quite on a par with the super expensive Barolos, but at this price who cares? It's terrific.*

**Côtes-du-Rhône, St. Cosme 2010 (FR) . . . \$16.99**

*Most CDR's are blends of several grapes, but this is 100% cool climate Syrah, deeply colored and flavored. The flavors of smoky, dark fruits are lush and gripping. Notes of pepper and black tea. Still a bit young, will improve but pretty fine now.*

**Campi Nuovi 2008 (IT) . . . \$21.99**

*A blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon from Tuscany's sub-zone of Montecucco. We love the elegance here as the earthy Sangiovese flavors are supported by the more meaty Cabernet. A real Tuscan treat. We also have the 2007 Reserva from this estate (\$29.99) . . . outstanding!*

**Chocolate Block, Boekenhoutskloof 2009 (S. AF) . . . \$26.99**

*A Rhône style blend - 67% Syrah, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cinsault, & 2% Viognier. It's a beauty, showing a lush, earthy, lightly herbal style with impressive depth. The acidity supports the full fruit and keeps the wine fresh and together. Just a hint of French oak on the finish. This is classy stuff, well made and dramatic.*

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