

WINE News

Going on 40 Years, We're Still
the Life of the Party.



DECEMBER 7, 2015 FEATURES

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December 31, 1976: A New Business Begins

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

To put it in perspective: It is the last day of the United States Bicentennial celebration of 1976. Bill Gates has just started a small company in Seattle called Microsoft. In Northern California, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak are working out of their garage and introducing Apple to the world. Down the road, Larry Ellison and Dave Miner et al. are working hard to get their new company Oracle off the ground. It was a very good year—and K&L and these, er, less-known companies are still around. To celebrate that, and our upcoming fortieth year in business, here are some great wines and spirits for you to enjoy in 2016 and beyond!



Clyde, mid-1970s.

Bordeaux Wines

2009 Grand Corbin Manuel, St-Emilion (Super Special 40 Year Price: 1.5L \$39.99)

What a delicious wine. Rich and fruity, with blackberry aromas and flavor. Fine texture. A great value now with one hour decanting. Clyde scores it 92+ and has it in his cellar.

2012 Tour St-Christophe, St-Emilion (750ml \$27.99; 1.5L \$49.99) A new star in Bordeaux.

92 points Mr. Parker and 93 points Clyde. Semi "new wave" but tons of ripe fruit with plenty of balancing acid. Perfect for your California-palate friends.

2000 Labegorce Margaux (\$39.99) Great old school claret from a fabulous vintage. Plenty of ripe fruit and some oak nuances. We also have magnums (1.5L \$79.99) coming in mid-December. And, just between you and me, we have the last 30 cases of **1991 Labegorce (\$29.99)** in existence arriving mid-December, just in time for your Christmas goose.

2009 Poujeaux, Moulis (\$39.99) and 2009 Meyney, St-Estèphe (\$39.99) Two of our favorite "value" properties in Bordeaux. They both made exceptional wines in 2009. The Meyney is a bit more structured, while the Poujeaux is sweet and sexy.

2001 du Tertre, Margaux (\$54.99) 90 points RP: "Broad and sexy, with supple tannin..." Delicious right now.

2010 Croix de Beaucaillou, St-Julien (\$59.99) A fabulous second wine from one of our favorite properties. Dark, rich and full-bodied, hints of cola and spice. We also just received six different vintages of Ducru-Beaucaillou: small quantities of **1985 (\$199.99)** and **1986 (\$199.99)** as well as **1995, 2003, 2008, 2009,** and **2010.**

2006 Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac (750ml \$149.99; 1.5L Inquire) This wine is better than their 2005, and to me, one of the best 2006 Bordeaux wines. Tons of cedar and cassis with some blackberry undertones.

2005—Very Limited Availability

2005 Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe (\$249.99) 97 points Robert Parker.

2005 Larcis Ducasse, St-Emilion (\$279.99) A perfect 100 points RP. Very few cases available.

2005 Cheval Blanc, St-Emilion (\$799.99) Another perfect 100 points RP. Enough said—makes a very nice gift.

To Arrive Just Before Christmas...

2009 Tronquoy de St-Anne, St-Estèphe (\$16.99) One of our biggest sellers in 2015. So smooth and sweet, this second wine of Tronquoy Lalande is a 94 in my book. It goes down like silk now—no need for cellaring.



Brick's Picks for Year 40: Washington State Classics

By Bryan Brick

I wasn't here 39 years ago when Clyde, Todd and a few other brave pioneers were brazen enough to open the first K&L. In fact, full disclosure, I wasn't even born. But these merry men set the bar high, even back when we were more of a liquor store, also selling cigarettes and magazines. And today, I can—without second thoughts—tell people I work for one of the best wine shops in the country. Congratulations to all who have made K&L what it is. I know how much work it has been and look forward to our next step.

2013 Columbia Crest "H3" Horse Heaven Hills Cabernet Sauvignon (\$10.99) Lifted and vibrant throughout, but never feeling acidic or sharp, this wine is a heavyweight with middleweight feet. Bold and rich with a luscious, creamy mid-palate full of wild blackberry, vanilla bean, black olive and Oolong tea, this is sure to please anyone looking

for value in the world of Cabernet. I'd happily drink this on any midweek day over the next 2-4 years.

2013 Chateau Ste. Michelle Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$10.99) This comes off a bit more feminine and layered than the H3. Pretty on the nose with forward aromas of violet, cassis, bay leaf and sandalwood, this complexity is rarely seen in wines of this cost. Soft and pliable on entry, this is friendly and open, wanting you to like it from the moment you meet it. With plum, boysenberry, touches of lavender and cigar tobacco, all encapsulated in a sweet tinged oak note, this is also going to be a great wine to drink on any occasion for the next few years.



Back to 1976 Pricing with These Great Buys

2013 Mt. Hector Pinot Noir Wairarapa (\$9.99) One of the best value reds we have in the store. Given that it's Pinot Noir (a notoriously difficult and expensive variety to cultivate), the quality for price ratio is even more astounding! Master of Wine Bob Campbell (New Zealand's most prominent wine writer) gave it 92 points and notes that this wine represents "excellent value" even at its suggested retail price of \$17.99! Huh! —Ryan Woodhouse



2014 Les Vignerons de Fontès "Prieuré Saint-Hippolyte" Languedoc Rosé (750ml \$9.99; 1.5L \$19.99) One of our most popular rosés, this fresh and balanced wine is a blend of Syrah and Grenache. With aromas and flavors of ripe strawberries and raspberries, this crisp, medium-bodied rosé is ideal for light cheeses or enjoy as an evening aperitif—cheese optional. The beautiful magnum bottles are stunning on the holiday table. —Clyde Beffa Jr.



40 Years have Nothing on This Whisky

By David Driscoll

My, has our whisky department changed over the last four decades. Back in 1976, you had two guys by the names of Todd and Clyde peddling 1.75 liters of Buchanan's and Cutty Sark like it was gasoline, busting their humps to be 10 cents cheaper than the other guy down the street. Today we're still busting our humps, but we're working smarter, smaller, and more effectively—traveling to Scotland multiple times each year to search out interesting and value-driven alternatives to some of the more mainstream choices. It hasn't been easy, but it's been well worth our effort. We've had to essentially convince people that our non-branded, oddball cask selections with hard-to-pronounce and unfamiliar distillery names are better options than the labels they've spent the better part of their adult life enjoying. But we always put our money where our mouth is—that's something that hasn't changed at K&L over the years. We're willing to stake our reputation on some of the craziest deals you'll find outside of Glasgow that other retailers seem to have somehow overlooked. In celebration of 40 years of whisky business, let's look at the two selections, available only at K&L:



1973 Teaninich 41 Year Old Hunter Laing's "Old & Rare" Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$449.99) Most 40 year old single malts these days fall into the four-figure price point, especially sherry-matured selections like Macallan and Balvenie. This old Teaninich (a Highland distillery that helps to make Johnnie Walker) gives you that same level of quality, while adding the decadent concentration that's only possible from a single barrel selection. It's oozing with toffee, Christmas cake and dark cocoa, and glides over the palate. It's expensive, but about a quarter of what it would cost if it said anything other than Teaninich on the label. It's luxury whisky for people who care more about the whisky than the name—our specialty!

1967 Speyside's Finest (Glenfarclas) 47 Year Old Hunter Laing's "Old & Rare" Single Sherry Butt Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$999.99) While we couldn't legally put the name on the label, we can tell you where the whisky came from. This is a first-fill sherry butt of the Speyside's finest whisky. It's a dark, coffee-colored mouthful of opulence that delivers one of the most incredible flavor profiles you'll find this year. Again, it's expensive, but you're actually paying for the whisky, not the box or the reputation.



Left to right: Gary Westby with Sophie Baron in one of her vineyards; Antoine Billecart, Gary Westby and cellarmaster Francois Domi; Paul-Vincent and Remy Ariston of Champagne Aspasie.

A Toast to Special Relationships in Champagne—with Champagne!

By Gary Westby

Thinking of the nearly 40 years that K&L has been in business, the two Champagne houses that come to mind first are Billecart-Salmon and Champagne Aspasie. Billecart has been the most important grand marque here at K&L since 1978—we even used to have them make a special K&L cuvée for us. Aspasie was our first direct import, and this year will be the 16th anniversary of us representing their excellent Champagne. Thinking back over the many great years I have been here, I also can't imagine how they could have been so good without Bonville, Baron Fuente and Champagne Louis Roederer. We are so lucky to have great customers like you—people who appreciate the good stuff. A toast to you, too!

When I visited Antoine Billecart this past October, he was starting to plan his house's 200th anniversary. They have been making Champagne since 1818, and are the oldest continually family-run house in Champagne. While their elegant, dry and fine **Billecart-Salmon Brut Rosé Champagne (\$74.99)** is by far the most famous wine in their line, I can't get enough of their **1999 Billecart-Salmon "Cuvée Nicolas François Billecart" NFB Brut Champagne (\$99.00)**. This creamy, nutty, exquisitely well-balanced Champagne leaves me wanting for nothing except another glass.

I have visited Champagne Aspasie 26 times since we first started working together in 2000, and they have come to every single tent event that we have put on. Their old house in the picturesque, sleepy town of Brouillet on the northwestern edge of the region is my favorite destination in Champagne. Every Champagne lover who has asked me for advice on visiting the region, I have sent there—it is a little slice of paradise. Paul Vincent Ariston makes incredible wines here, from the deep, toasty, yet always refreshing and moreish **Ariston Aspasie "Carte Blanche" Brut Champagne (\$27.99)** to the exotic, all ancient variety **Ariston Aspasie "Cepages**



d'Antan" Brut Champagne (\$99.00), I don't know a better producer in the whole region. These are wines not to miss.

When I first met Olivier Bonville a dozen years ago, he had just taken over the family house from his father Gilles. His first new project was the **Franck Bonville "Belles Voyes" Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$69.99)**, and I immediately bought every bottle he would let us have. This single vineyard masterpiece is the product of one press load from a tiny plot of ancient vines that were planted in the early thirties or late twenties in the mid-slope of the Grand Cru Oger. The vinification is done in Burgundy barrels and the wine is aged for more than five years on the lees. This creamy, layered Champagne has impossibly tiny bubbles and a swelling finish that lasts forever. If you like dry, mineral-driven Champagne with body as well as cut, this is as good as they get!



We also have just received the ultimate party Champagne: **Baron Fuente "Grande Réserve" Brut Champagne (\$23.99)**. Don't be afraid of the low tariff—the strong dollar and a direct buy have allowed us to deliver this great quality Champagne at a very fair price! This Champagne is aged for three years on the lees and has real toasty character from the patient aging, as well as great refreshment. You have to taste this one to believe it!

While most of the attention for Champagne Louis Roederer is focused on Cristal and the non-vintage Brut Premier, my favorite wine in their lineup is the **2008 Louis Roederer Brut Champagne (\$64.99)**. This comes from the original vineyards of the house, mostly in the Grand Cru of Verzenay on the mountain of Reims. It is composed of 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay and has the richness and nutty intrigue that makes Verzenay so special. It also has the incredible, fresh, mineral drive and length of the fantastic 2008 vintage. What a bottle!



Upcoming Events for Our 40th Year in 2016

Sunday, January 17, 6pm: Annual Fête du Bordeaux at One Market in San Francisco Taste the 2013 vintage. Featured châteaux include Langoa-Barton, Léoville-Barton, Petit-Figeac, Figeac, Ormes de Pez, Lynch-Bages and La Conseillante. With dinner, we will feature the fabulous 2005, 2000, and 1995 vintages. Price per person, \$200.

Saturday, January 30, 2-5pm: Union des Grand Crus de Bordeaux Tasting at the Bently Reserve in San Francisco Featuring over 90 Bordeaux properties pouring the 2013 vintage. Do not miss the fabulous dry whites and Sauternes from 2013. Price per person, \$60.

Tuesday, February 9, 5-7pm: Consumer Burgundy Event at Clift Hotel in San Francisco Pouring 2014 Burgundies from Domaine Faiveley, Christian Moreau, Olivier Leflaive and Château Fuisse. Price TBD.

Thursday, February 25: Great Wines of Italy with James Suckling in Los Angeles Location to be determined. Purchase tickets at jamesuckling.com.

Sunday, February 28: Great Wines of Italy with James Suckling at Fort Mason in San Francisco Purchase tickets at jamesuckling.com.

Monday, April 25: MMD Tasting and Dinner with Six Famous Châteaux Mouton Rothschild, Ducru-Beaucaillou, Palmer, Pichon-Lalande, Haut-Bailly, and Hosanna. Two events with a tasting and a dinner. Time, price and place TBD.

Saturday, May 14: Bordeaux Confidential with James Suckling at Fort Mason in San Francisco Purchase tickets at jamesuckling.com.

Celebrate Italian Style with Bubbly, Barolo and Brunello

By Greg St. Clair

Nothing makes the holidays go better than bubbles, and even more so with Italy's favorite—Prosecco! Our own direct import, **San Venanzio Prosecco Valdobbiadene Superiore Brut (\$12.99)** is a mouthful to say, but if you try one out it will be the delicious mouthful you want! I first tasted this last April and was stunned by the superlative quality in this DOCG Prosecco. The wine has so much minerality. It's clean, focused and still retains that Prosecco elegance and balance. This brut is the best wine this estate has ever made, and it just recently received a 90 point rating from *Wine Enthusiast*. Sensational finish, and for just \$12.99! (By the way, we just say San Venanzio!)

What holiday dinner would be complete without a **2010 Terre da Vino "Essenze" Barolo (19.99)**? Terre da Vino is a co-op of co-ops, and because of their economy of scale, plus a farsighted importer, we are able to bring you this incredible wine—rated 91 points by *Wine Enthusiast*—for only \$19.99! From the exceptional 2010 vintage, the wine's nose is



full of a complex blend of plum, smoke and leather. But it is on the palate that the wine is sensational. Most 2010s will be headed to your cellar, but this wine can go right to the table. The palate has a supple, powerful, luxurious feel that shows lots of rich fruit along with spice and earth, and the tannins are well integrated. A long, vibrant finish makes this wine sensational to drink now, and for quite a few years to come. Did I mention it was only \$19.99?

I would be remiss to not include any Brunello from 2010, the greatest vintage ever for this highly sought-after zone. The **2010 Il Valentiano "Campo di Marzo" Brunello di Montalcino (\$29.99)**, which was scored 92 points by James Suckling, is a steal. Classic on the palate, the wine really shows the savory characteristics of this vintage. Then, slowly, the fruit escapes from its tightly wound core. Hints of wild cherry, plum and cocoa powder mix with fine-grained tannin to give a really focused palate presence. Decant and drink now, or age another decade-plus.



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K&L EVENTS & TASTINGS

We host regular evening and Saturday tastings at each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to KLWines.com/Local-Events.

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