



PLUMPJACK
WINES

PlumpJack Wine Club

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I recently came upon an article titled "A Theory on the Balance between Flavor and Mouthfeel in Wine" by Ken Eckersley, enologist at Nicholson River Winery. It stated, "When a wine is sniffed in the glass one can concentrate on just this sensory experience. Whereas in the mouth there is competition for our conscious attention between the palate and nasal experiences. Wine is a mixture and when it hits the tongue etc., the sensors send their messages to the cortex to be organized and interpreted. In particular, the awareness of balance. This introduces the First Principle of the Senses - "first in, best dressed,"

or, where the wine first touches in the mouth wins the race. So, a wine will feel softer if it first touches the front rather than the middle of the tongue. As well the front of the tongue, used to being primed by food, can send a message to the nasal sense to get ready. Hence the best way to experience the palate of a wine is to place it at the front of the mouth. The flavor journey is different and takes a few seconds longer. In the 98.6-degree environment the volatiles move out of the wine to the back off the mouth where they are sucked up through the nasal passage in the breathe out part of the cycle. The data from the nasal sensors goes to the fore brain (olfactory lobe) specializing in detecting and processing smells, where there can be words, likes/dislikes and memories attached. THEN it sends a message to the cortex for integration with the already arrived mouthfeel signals." Fascinating! All that being said, why not pour a glass of this month's wines and let your organoleptic sensors go crazy?



Cambiata is a small independently owned winery in Monterey County, California. It is owned by Eric Laumann, former winemaker and general manager of Edna Valley Vineyards, and formerly with Bonny Doon and Zaca Mesa. He is also head winemaker for the Monterey Wine Company, an ultra high-tech custom winemaking facility in King City, where he is involved in the making of wines by Caymus, Sanford and other wineries. In 2002, after 25 years of making wine and growing grapes for quality California wineries, Eric decided to produce wines under his own label following the acquisition of a long-term Monterey vineyard lease. Eric's intention is to create world-class expressions of under-appreciated and historically valued varietals from around the world, which are generally rare in California. Cambiata's vineyard is located in the Santa Lucia Mountain Range, a few miles south of the Pisoni Vineyard and along the same bench-land as the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation. It lies on a well-drained eastern slope with rocky soils, is refreshed daily with cool ocean winds, bright sunshine and morning fog. The grapes benefit from long hang-time and late-season harvesting, which is necessary to achieve the desired levels of ripeness. Eric personally surveys every row in the vineyard and tops every barrel. He focuses on the meticulous winemaking and farming practices that give rise to wines with distinct character, varietal expression, and a clear sense of place. Cambiata produces only two wines, Tannat and Albariño. Eric says: "Why Tannat and Albariño? I didn't set out to plant unfamiliar varietals but when the opportunity arose to plant this small vineyard I found myself drawn to working with varietals that I thought were intriguing and that were relatively unexplored in the U.S. I also wanted to bring some new flavors to the wine enthusiast's table. We need a few new wine flavors and textures to keep up with

2007 Cambiata

Albariño

Laumann Family Estate Wines

King City, California



2005 Giuseppe Campagnola

Valpolicella Classico Superiore

"Caterina Zardini"

Marano di Valpolicella, Italy

today's eclectic culinary explosion. My goal for Cambiata wines is to better compliment certain complex recipes. Many white wines go great with seafood pasta but start adding poblano peppers, mangos and cilantro, or paprika, ginger and red pepper, and now you're in the realm where Albariño really shines." Albariño is the classic white grape of Galicia, Spain and is used in Portugal to make Vinho Verde. To preserve its complex fruit aromas, the 2007 Cambiata Albariño was fermented at a cold temperature and without the presence of oxygen (anaerobic fermentation). Post fermentation, the lees were stirred to build a richness and soften the acidity. In the nose, the citrus and spice aromas are complex but not overpowering. Cambiata Albariño has forward aromas like Viognier, richness similar to Chardonnay and the crispness of Pinot Gris. The mouth shows flavor intensity of citrus, stone fruit and exotic tropical fruits with a mouth-feel both crisp and creamy, finishing with an incredibly long, flavorful and concentrated aftertaste. As expected, this wine pairs beautifully with a variety of seafood and spicy dishes. I recently had it at PlumpJack Café, where it was matched with an heirloom tomato salad with onion compote and tarragon aioli.

The 2007 Cambiata Albariño is \$19.99/bottle, \$215.90/case.

The Veneto is among the foremost wine-producing regions in Italy, both for quality and quantity. The importance of winemaking in this region is underscored by the creation in 1885 of the very first Italian school of oenology. In addition, Veneto was the first region to create a *strada del vino* or "wine road" for wine touring. The region contains over 20 DOC zones and a variety of sub-categories. Three of the most well known DOCs are Bardolino, from the town with the same name and the surrounding shores of Lake Garda, Valpolicella, and Soave. Valpolicella is produced from three grape varieties. The blend is dominated by Corvina, with Corvinone and Rondinella usually lending support. Molinara, Negrara and Dindarella are also allowed, but have diminished in importance. A superb grape variety, Corvina forms the backbone of the blend with its silky tannins and delicious fruity, sour cherry flavors and aromas. When yields are well managed, it creates bold, age-worthy wines. Corvinone is remarkably similar to Corvina. The deeply colored Rondinella grape brings red currant and citrus components, plus color intensity to the blend. Common to all three is their thick skin, which preserves the integrity of the grapes during the drying process used to create Ripasso, Amarone or Recioto wines. Just north of Verona, in the hills of Valpolicella, is the Giuseppe Campagnola Winery. The winery was founded in 1907 by Giuseppe Campagnola, and his wife Caterina Zardini, who was a driving force. The winery is now run by their son Luigi Campagnola and his son Giuseppe Campagnola. The winemaker is Gaetano Pasqua. Here is a passage from Italy's leading wine publication, the Gambero Rosso. "Giuseppe Campagnola never misses the mark. The leading wines in his substantial range are always among the best to be found in Valpolicella. This is due to the technical ability of his winery staff as well as long-standing close relationship with the land and with his neighbors. Almost all the grapes come from the Marano valley... perhaps the area of Valpolicella that expresses best the grape's subtle, vibrant aromas with a slim, never intrusive structure, even when the grapes are partially dried..." The Gambero Rosso rated the 2005 Caterina Zardini Valpolicella *Tre Bicchieri*, or "three glasses," which is awarded to only the top wines in a given year. This wine is made from 70% Corvina and Corvinone and 30% Rondinella. Grapes were selected from 90 acres of hillside vineyards planted in limestone-based soils at 985 ft. elevation with southeast exposure, in some of the best viticultural areas in the commune of Marano. The handpicked grapes were allowed to air dry for 20 days prior to crushing. The wine underwent fermentation at a cool temperature (22°C), followed by a 15-day maceration on the skins in large oak barrels. It was then aged for 12 months in 50hl Slavonian oak barrels and 6 months in bottle. This wine has intense aromas with dark cherry, black licorice, tar and burnt almonds. The color is dark garnet red, nearly opaque. There is an explosion of activity in the mouth with smooth, but gripping tannins and crisp acidity. This is a medium to full-bodied wine with a delicious mix of tart black cherries, tar, licorice and tobacco. The wine is balanced and elegant with an extremely long and satisfying finish. It is a wonderful wine to have with grilled beef or lamb, or game birds, such as duck or guinea fowl. It works well with strong flavored cheeses, especially Gorgonzola. I had it with a three-cheese pizza that was topped with prosciutto, and the bottle was empty before I knew it! Thankfully, I had one in reserve.

The 2005 Giuseppe Campagnola Caterina Zardini Valpolicella is \$20.99/bottle, \$226.70/case.