



Monthly Wine Club

December 2009

As December comes to an end, it seems customary for me to reflect upon the past year and all the organoleptic wonders I have experienced, thanks to the world of wine. It continues to amaze me that a finished product, stemming from the simple process of picking grapes, crushing them, and letting that juice ferment, has evolved over centuries into an integral part of cultures near and far. The variety of grapes grown throughout the world is unbelievable,

and the number of wines produced--too many to count. Our wine club gives us an opportunity to explore both the less familiar and the recognizable. Wines are chosen to reflect personalities of the grape, the soil, the winemaking, and the people. Pour a glass of these wines and hopefully the beauty of their vineyards and the history of their regions will be revealed as the wine travels from your nose, to your tongue, and to your mind. Happy New Year!



*2008 WillaKenzie Estate
Pinot Blanc*

Yamhill, Oregon



2005 Château Trois Moulins

Haut-Médoc

Macau, France

Natural boundaries and the Willamette River create the 100-mile long, 60-mile wide Willamette Valley, home to over 300 Oregon wineries. The coolest of Oregon's wine regions, this elongated V-shaped Valley is bordered to the north by the Columbia River, to the south by the Calapooya Mountains (south of Eugene), to the east by the Cascade Mountain foothills, and to the west by Oregon's Coast Range. Modern winemaking in the Willamette Valley dates back only about 40 years, when three UC Davis graduates left California believing that Oregon was an ideal place to grow cool-climate varieties. Between 1965 and 1968, David Lett, Charles Coury, and Dick Erath separately forged their way to the north Willamette Valley despite their Davis cohorts telling them it was impossible to grow wine grapes in Oregon. They were the first in Oregon to plant Pinot Noir, as well as small amounts of related varieties, including Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, and Riesling. Within the next decade, David and Ginny Adelsheim, Ronald and Marjorie Vuylsteke, Richard and Nancy Ponzi, Joe and Pat Campbell, Susan and Bill Sokol Blosser and Myron Redford all planted vineyards in the Willamette Valley. These families worked in a collaborative spirit, sharing advice, humor and encouragement. When the Willamette Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA) was first authorized in 1984, its geographic description included 3.3 million acres. Twenty years later, grape growers and winemakers succeeded in submitting applications for approval of six sub-regions within the Willamette Valley, to better describe the diversity and distinctiveness of its microclimates. McMinnville Foothills, Dundee Hills, Ribbon Ridge, the Yamhill-Carlton District, Eola-Amity Hills District and the Chehalem Mountains were all authorized as official AVAs in 2005 and 2006. After a successful career in high tech, Bernard Lacroute decided that growing Pinot Noir in Oregon would be a satisfying way to return to his Burgundian roots. A [Wine Spectator](#) ad for land led Bernard and his wife Ronni to purchase a 420-acre cattle ranch in Yamhill, Oregon in January 1991. In 1992 they started planting vineyards on south-facing slopes to replace pasture, blackberries and poison oak. They built a brand new multi-level gravity-fed winery in 1995. Today over 100 acres of mostly Pinot Noir vineyards are planted on the Willakenzie soil, after which the winery is named. WillaKenzie Estate is located within the Yamhill-Carlton District AVA. The Yamhill-Carlton District, located 35 miles southwest of Portland, and 40 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, sits at the north end of the Willamette Valley, and includes the hamlets of Carlton and Yamhill. It is protected by high elevation areas to the west (Coast Range), north (Chehalem Mountains) and east (Dundee Hills), which results in less rain than surrounding areas. Yamhill-Carlton is comprised of coarse-grained, ancient marine sedimentary soils, over sandstone and siltstone that drain quickly, making it ideal for viticulture. With the motto "Quality without Compromise," WillaKenzie Estate uses sustainable farming practices, and in the winery, a

combination of innovative technology with time-tested Burgundian winemaking techniques. WillaKenzie Estate has seven acres of Pinot Blanc, planted in 1992, 1993, and 1995. The vines are planted at 1200 vines/acre, running north to south to allow for maximum sun exposure. All the vineyards are planted on Willakenzie soil, known for its excellent drainage. The clones used are true Pinot Blanc clones from the Alsace region of France. The 2008 Pinot Blanc was made in a rich and complex Alsatian style. The grapes were pressed whole clusters, and after cold settling of the juice, inoculated with yeast from the Alsace region, chosen to enhance the fruit's aromatics. Fermentation took place in stainless-steel tanks slowly at low temperatures to retain the freshness and subtlety of the fruit. The 2008 Pinot Blanc displays aromas of stone fruits followed by hints of lime, lemongrass, and clover honey. The flavors follow the aromas with highlights of grapefruit and gooseberry, plus a pleasing minerality. Crisp acidity balances the fruit, resulting in a clean and refreshing palate. The finish offers a silky texture and unexpected length. Enjoy this wine by itself as an aperitif, or pair it with shellfish, sushi, risotto with scallops and corn, and Asian dishes from Thailand or Viet Nam. The 2008 Pinot Blanc is ready to drink now, but will certainly benefit from 1 or 2 years in the cellar.

The 2009 WillaKenzie Pinot Blanc is \$19.99/bottle, \$215.90/case.



Bordeaux is a vast wine region of 54 appellations and an amazing 13,000 wineries making 700 million bottles annually. The vineyards stretch North, South and East of the city itself and are split by the huge Gironde Estuary. This then further splits into two famous rivers: the Dordogne and the Garonne. Being the world's largest wine region, there are approximately 120,000 hectares (1 hectare equals 2.47 acres) of vines in Bordeaux. Assuming a planting density of 6,000 vines per hectare (some properties plant 8,000 or even 10,000 vines per hectare,) that makes for at least 720 million vines in Bordeaux alone, all pruned annually, each one by hand. The Medoc is a name that refers to the entire region that stretches north of the city of Bordeaux, on the left side of the Gironde Estuary. Margaux, Pauillac, and St. Julien, are all communes of the Medoc region, but Medoc also exists as an AC itself for all the Bordeaux wines in the area that don't fall under the separate commune banner. It therefore covers a vast area of land producing nearly 40 million bottles annually. The Haut Medoc is also a large AC in its own right but still part of the Medoc region as a whole. In 1855, under Napoleon III, the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce was ordered to produce a ranking of the wines of Bordeaux for the Universal Exposition in Paris. This ranking has remained largely unchanged since then, although additional regions were classified under similar systems at later times. Not all of Bordeaux was classified. Only the Medoc, Sauternes-Barsac, Saint-Emilion, and Graves regions are classified. In the Medoc, châteaux in the classified districts are ranked from First to Fifth growth based on quality, historical achievement, and market value. Some of the Left Bank wines outside the 1855 classification system (1st-5th growths, Grand cru Classe, etc) are classified under the *Cru Bourgeois* system. Château Trois Moulins (a *Cru Bourgeois*) is the twin of the famous Château Cambon La Pelouse in the Haut-Medoc. The two estates are owned by Annick and Jean-Pierre Marie, and their winemaking facilities, as well as their vineyards, are adjacent to each other. Château Trois Moulins, which dates to the 19th century, is set between Châteaux Cantemerle and Giscours, at one of the highest points in the commune of Macau. The estate borders the Margaux appellation, and its outstanding terroir of gravel with large pebbles is similar to that of many top Margaux. Although Château Trois Moulins is not as well known as its sister Cambon La Pelouse, it receives the same meticulous care in grape growing, winemaking and aging. The principal difference is that Trois Moulins is made to be consumed earlier. The estate consists of 25 hectares of vines, and the average age of the vines is 25 years. The vineyards are planted with a density of 5,000 to 7,000 vines per hectare. The 2005 Châteaux Trois Moulins is a blend of 50% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. The grapes were harvested both mechanically and manually, and 27 different plots were vinified separately in temperature-controlled, stainless-steel vats. The grapes underwent cold pre-fermentation maceration for 6 days, followed by fermentation for up to 4 weeks. Ageing took place in French oak barrels (20% new, 40% 1-year old and 40% 2-years old) for 15 months. The nose of the 2005 Châteaux Trois Moulins is extremely complex. I recommend decanting, for as it opens, aromas of cassis, leather, and vanilla, combine with floral and vegetal components. This complexity of the nose carries through to the taste, and the wine finishes with sweet but firm tannins. Enjoy this wine with hearty winter dishes such as lamb stew, venison, and cassoulet.

The 2005 Chateau Trois Moulins is \$23.99/bottle, \$259.10/case.