



# tom's top ten for mar/apr '10

Tom Caufield, New Pi Wine Buyer

## 1 SINEANN WINERY

If you've been paying attention you might have noticed that we are really freaking ga-ga over the wines that Peter Rosback makes at Sineann. They are all full throttle, pedal to the metal maximum expressions of fruit, spice, and flavor. They source the very best fruit (often from organic and/or biodynamic vineyards) and manage to coax the purest expression of the varietal out of each and every bottling. And boy, do they make a lot of wines! We will be featuring several of them in honor of his first-ever visit to Iowa. Mark your calendars: Thursday, April 2nd is the date. From 5:30 - 7:30PM we will be sampling a wide variety of Peter's magical elixirs on the mezzanine in Coralville.

## 2 OWEN ROE WINERY

Sometimes I have to take a step back and remind myself how cool it is that we get to sell David O'Reilly's wines. It wasn't really all that long ago that I made the trek out to his winery in the hopes of convincing him to sell us some wine. Now we have wines from him on our shelves year-round. How cool is that? David made his first-ever visit to Iowa last year and will be returning later this spring. Watch for information on his visit on the New Pi website and the wineforbrains yahoo group. We're thrilled to have on hand a full brace of his latest releases. Also check out David's latest project—Corvidae—in our #8 spot this month.

## 3 BON ANNO NAPA CABERNET 2007

If you read the press you might have heard a little bit about the '07 vintage in Napa for Cabernet ... "vintage of the decade" is being tossed around. Now I've only had a few of the "lesser" or "second" wines and precious few of the big guns, but I can say that what I have had is uniformly superb. Ripe without being overdone, generously fruited without being jammy, tannins present but not overwhelming—in short, every piece of the puzzle is being laid for a truly great vintage. Matt Bon Anno (owner and winemaker) poured a sample of this wine for me a couple of months back and my response was, verbatim: "I can't imagine anyone not liking this wine." Let's just leave it at that, shall we? Oh, the price? \$19.99/bottle. Not a misprint. Let's add to that the fact that Matt is a nice guy and mindful of our pocketbooks. One serious deal in a delicious Napa Cabernet.



Buy 6 wines, get a  
**5% discount.**

Buy 12 wines, get a  
**10% discount.**



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The next three wines are all represented in the United States by Jean-Marc Espinasse, the multi-talented winemaker behind the lovely Cotes du Rhone property Rouge-Bleu. We are fortunate to have someone as passionate and talented as Jean-Marc searching out these properties in France and offering us the opportunity to sell them here.

#### 4 DOMAINE DU CHARDONNAY CHABLIS

Ah, Chablis ... flint, mineral, and fruit to burn. Lovely spine-tingling acidity on the finish that cries out for raw oysters or anything briny for that matter. Then the oak-mongers got in the act and Chablis kind of forgot what made us love her so much in the first place—the wines got mucked up and became unlovely. What a treat to taste these old school samples from Domaine du Chardonnay. The Petit Chablis isn't "petite" at all, rather a brawny, large scale, ripe and full Chablis that flirts with sass. Quite sexy without being overdone. A steal at \$19.99/bottle. The regular Chablis bottling is bliss in its refinement, slinky and elegant, just a whisper of the sea in its fruit, riding on a wave of citrus, melon, and pear bringing up the rear and finishing with cleansing acidity. Simply lovely and another steal at just \$21.99/bottle.

#### 5 DOMAINE DE CORIANCON VINSOBRES

One of the Cotes du Rhone villages that suffers from not being very well known. If they make more wine like this, we're going to see that change, and change in a hurry. This is the northernmost village in the Southern Rhone and the Syrah that they grow there almost seems to know it—leaning towards the lovely violet and tar notes that we get from the north but still maintaining the warmth and weight that the southern-grown Grenache bring to the blend. Over the course of a couple of days, the wine put on more weight and seemed to expand in its palate of flavors—really a lovely wine that will appeal both to the intellectual and the hedonist in all of us. A treat at just \$16.99/bottle.

#### 6 DOMAINE D'AIGUILLETTE MUSCADET

When we meet with any importer who has sold us Muscadet, the first thing they say is "Who the hell are you selling all that Muscadet to?" You see, Muscadet is just not a wine that is in "fashion." Well, except with the whip-smart clientele at New Pi, who recognize the sheer perfection that is Muscadet—a melange of minerals, stone fruit, acid, and breathtaking freshness that pairs with cheese and shellfish swimmingly. This example damn near brought Robert and me to our knees with its chiseled perfection. Just \$15.99/bottle.

#### 7 STELTZNER CLARET

We sold a TON of this wine a few vintages back but had let it go by the wayside because of price increases and subsequent vintages not quite striking our fancy. Well, the 2007 that the sales rep showed us awhile back managed to make us believers again. First of all, the wine is a delight—it manages to have both the sheer presence of fruit and also sufficient tannin to keep it interesting on the finish and auger well for short-term cellaring. Secondly, Steltzner has reacted to the economy and taken the price back to where it was a couple of vintages back. This little gem will set you back just \$15.99/bottle. If you can find a better foil to your meat-based dishes, please alert me so I can stock it here!

#### 8 CORVIDAE WINERY

Good grief, I am about to bust out in a fit of giggles here. When David O'Reilly visited last spring he told us a bit about his new project in Washington State. At long last, the wines are here, and I have to say that they were worth the wait. We'll have four or five of them on hand but are featuring the following two.

**"Mirth" Chardonnay:** 100% stainless steel—no oak to muck up the Meyer lemon and tropical fruits that soar from the glass. I've not had a Chardonnay this good at this price point in recent memory. David suggests pairing it with a chanterelle herb frittata or a mango and avocado smoked salmon salad. (I did the latter and can report it is a stunning match). \$9.99/bottle. Yep, you read that right.

**"Rook" Red Blend:** Smelled and tasted. Big grin. Said to my rep that I could sell a TON of this wine, and that I couldn't imagine anyone not liking it. My partner in crime across the river called it a "mini-Abbot's Table" and I liked that enough to steal the words right out of his mouth. It really does have that O'Reilly's magic feel—it's lush and full in the mouth, downright decadent and sexy without edging over into jamminess. Imagine a bowl of cherries. Now smother the cherries in chocolate sauce. Eat. Smile. Life is good. Another sip is always called for. \$11.99/bottle. Double-take there? If you're not buying this one by the case you are seriously missing the point.

#### 9 COLTIBUONO "CETAMURA" CHIANTI

I was reading Eric Asimov's recent column on Chianti in *The New York Times* and thought, "Hey, we sell a ton of the stuff, yet I never drink it myself!" So I called up my rep that sells Coltibuono and asked for some samples. I tasted a handful of the wines and really fell for the "Cetamura" bottling. As I suspect most of you know, it's mostly Sangiovese with a small amount (10% in this vintage) of Canaiolo Nero added. The Canaiolo adds a hint of ripe strawberries and saddle leather to the nose and also brings some added weight to the mid-palate. I drank my sample bottle with a sausage and mushroom pizza for dinner and couldn't have been more pleased. Normally \$15.99/bottle, it's on sale for just \$13.99 in March and April. A lovely little treat.

#### 10 LA MANO MENCIA

I have to confess to having a love/hate relationship with this grape. I have only liked a small handful of the many that I have tried, but I have been absolutely smitten by the few that I have liked. The La Mano really blew my mind. The color is deep crimson; the nose is earth, blueberries, black cherries, and pepper. It has a level of depth and concentration in the mouth that one normally associates with a much more expensive wine. If you were to braise or smoke some meat, purchase some olives and a hunk of Manchego cheese you would be really close to food/wine nirvana. The past three vintages have all earned rave reviews in the pages of the *Wine Advocate* with Jay Miller calling it "an awesome value ... as good as it gets for ten bucks." I can state with confidence that the just-released 2008 is just as good, if not better. \$9.99/bottle and yes, case discounts do apply.

