

SOUTHBURY PACKAGE STORE

UNCORKED

Steve's Picks

As the Labor Day holiday passes, Summer will soon end and the colder weather soon upon us. I've always, as have many of you, thought of the this Summer holiday as the last chance at a family BBQ, a trip to the beach or the last ditch effort at a weekend getaway before the leaves begin to fall and the cold weather sets in. To help extend the warm weather feeling we have a few Summer and early Fall selections to help you carry out these transitional days, waning daylight evenings, and crisp nights hopefully staving off winter for a couple of months.

I would like to begin with a couple of rosés with enough backbone to handle the cooling temperatures and to help keep your vibe on the warmer, sunnier days of Summer. The first is **Château de Trinquedel Tavel 2019 (\$17.98)** from the southern Rhône Valley. This wine hails from a region where the only AOP (Appellation d'Origine Protégée) is rosé. The Tavel region is famous for long sunny days, stony soil and exceedingly ripe, red berry flavors and spicy notes of "garrigue". A rich wine able to impress even the non-rosé drinker. Next up is **Herdade do Rocim "Mariana" Rosado 2019 (\$13.98)**. Built from traditional Portuguese varietals (Touriga Nacional and Aragonez) this medium-bodied, dry wine shows off a mixed berry pie on the nose as well as the palate with excellent structure and acidity; proving that not all the most satisfying rosé comes from Provence.

This Summer we have added quite a bit from across the globe to our selections. Here are a couple of white wines that would be a super addition to your table. From the Loire Valley in France we picked up a chic little white blend, an oddity as most white wine from the Loire Valley is single varietal. **Domaine de la Fruitière Les Vignes Blanches 2018 (\$11.98)** is a blend of Melon de Bourgogne (varietal used to make Muscadet), Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. One might think that this wine was thrown together, it is not. Each varietal contributes something to the final blend. The richness and slight nuttiness of the Chardonnay, the zesty aromatics of the Sauvignon, and the mineral depth of the Melon are harmonious and complement each other with each sip. Next up we travel to northwestern Italy. Piedmont, home of Nebbiolo (my favorite) but also home to an outstanding aromatic white varietal, Arneis. The **Paitin 'Elisa' Arneis 2018 (\$24.98)** is a great

seasonal transition wine. Refreshing enough for hot Summer days and structured enough for cool, Autumn evenings. These vineyards were named for the matriarch of the Paitin family as she tended to and saved the vineyards during the Second World War. In her honor they produce this medium-bodied, tangy, rich white wine with floral aromatics and flavors of pear, apricot, crushed hazelnut, and almond. A dynamite white wine.

Soon, leaves will turn, darkness lengthens and the endless pumpkin flavored drinks will invade our local coffee shops. We turn our food choices to more seasonal ingredients, trying to keep Old Man Winter at bay. Here are some reds to pair with this heartier Fall cuisine. Starting with an under the radar SLAM DUNK pairing with the common Friday night choice of pizza. Whether you are seeking out a wood-fired pie or a deep dish Chicago slice, **Terradora DiPaolo Aglianico 2016 (\$15.99)** should be your go to. Originating from Naples, (birthplace of pizza – 660 B.C.), it is only natural that this wine would be compatible with any type of 'pie'. Bright red fruits on the nose and palate but it is not a one-dimensional wine as the structure of acidity and tannins balance out the complex flavors from your favorite pie. A must try! Staying in Italy and moving north to Piedmont, the **Pecchenino Dolcetto San Luigi Dogliani 2018 (\$15.98)** is a lively red wine with oodles of fresh fruit up front, giving way to light tannin underneath the refreshing low acid mouthfeel. Dolcetto is often misunderstood as its name means "little sweet one." This is hardly the case. It screams for hearty dishes and pastas. A snazzy wine for the serious or casual wine consumer. Finally, I need to let you know about one of the best values I have tasted in the last year. **Bodegas Maddi Reserva 2014 (\$14.98)** from Rioja. Rioja is divided into three subregions: Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Baja. The Rioja Alta is widely considered the best subregion of the three for growing Tempranillo. Jam packed with strawberry and blackberry notes, the wood undertone rings true in this modern-styled Spanish red. An excellent value for a Reserva.

I hope you enjoy these selections and more as we get ready in a few weeks for our Holiday issue. Again, thank you for your support.

Jim's Picks

The first three selections are all perfect for anything you want to do on the grill.

First up was a total surprise for me (in a good way). **Domaine Faillenc Sainte Marie Corbieres Rouge 'Noe' 2018 (\$14.98)** comes from an area in southern France known as Corbieres. Being quite hot in the summer, Corbieres specializes in a varietal known to be able to 'take the heat', Carignan. One of Carignan's less admirable traits is the ability to set copious amounts of fruit and it is one of the varieties responsible for the 'wine lake' in France. However, with the correct training, in select sites, Carignan can produce some remarkably deep and tasty wines that are exceeding reasonable in cost; Noe is one such example. Domaine Faillenc farms a parcel of one hundred year old Carignan for the Noe. They include a splash (less than 5%) of Grenache and ferment and age the wine in neutral containers. The result is just short of remarkable. My notes read: Great color, ripe nose. Boysenberry abounds. Super ripe. Peach and pomegranate too. Velvety tannins give structure and drinkability. The only 100% Carignane I have really, truly, enjoyed. Never had a Carignan before? Start at the top with Noe.

Saint Cosme Cotes du Rhone 2018 (\$14.99) is an outlier from the southern Rhone and a real treat for Syrah lovers. Winemaker Louis Barroul owns one of the great estates in Gigondas, producing Grenache based wines but his heart (and true love) lies in the Syrah grape. So to satisfy that need Louis also produces a Cotes du Rhone from 100% Syrah. The more liberal wine regulations for Cotes du Rhone allow it to be made 100% from Syrah but few winemakers attempt that feat. Louis obviously has a deft touch with his first love. This Syrah sees no oak. It is fermented and aged in cement tank and offers classic Syrah aromatics and flavors of violets, black olives and cassis fruits. The tannins in the wine are round, soft and this medium-bodied red is delicious to drink now. A great value.

Clos La Chance Cabernet Sauvignon 2017 (\$15.98). It is difficult to find a good quality, honest Cab from virtually anywhere in the world for under \$20. Most of the ones below that price are over-cropped, under-ripe and then 'enhanced' with color and flavor additives. One tends to settle for Cab in this category because it 'isn't terrible', Clos La Chance Cabernet Sauvignon belies that stereotype. It is family owned. It is 100% estate fruit, a blend of 85% Cab, 9% Merlot and 6% Petit Verdot. Aged for 16 months in French and American oak. Flavors of

blackberry, chocolate and cherry plus a wisp of cedar. Medium-bodied, medium-acidity, medium-long finish, maximum value and flavor.

Chateau de Valmur Vouvray 2017 (\$14.99). This white from the Loire Valley is made from what I refer to as the 'Rodney Dangerfield' of grape varieties, Chenin Blanc; it doesn't get any respect. Chenin Blanc is one of the world's oldest 'noble' grape varieties and among the most versatile. It can equally make great sparkling wine to the longest lived of dessert wines. What makes Chenin so good is that it combines incredible aromatics with great acidity. If you've never tried a Loire Valley Chenin then this Vouvray is the perfect place to start. The nose offers juicy aromas of pear, quince and apple with a little hint of beeswax followed by a crisp, fresh, ripe fruit balanced by refreshing acidity. Try this with fish, crab or lobster...delish!

Anthill Farms Pinot Noir North Coast NV (\$24.98) is unusual in that it is a blend of both 2017 and 2018 vintages, hence the designation 'non-vintage'. Anthill Farms was founded in 2004 by three Williams Selyem alums. In case you're not familiar with Williams Selyem, it is one of California's most renowned Pinot Noir producers. Their highly allocated wines start at around \$60. In an unusual twist, the North Coast Pinot is a non-vintage blend of Sonoma Coast, Anderson Valley, and a bit of Comptche (Mendocino County) fruit. There is nothing wrong with blending older wines with fresher stuff. It just adds complexity. This Cali Pinot is light on its feet with a translucent ruby beet red color, a lively nose of red cherry and cranberry with a vibrant acidity that gives the wine a savory quality. It is simply delightful to drink now. Great with lighter fare like salmon.

Nicole Chanrion Cote de Brouilly 2018 (\$21.98). I love a good Beaujolais and Nicole Chanrion makes one of my favorites. This is 'Cru' Beaujolais and is sold by the name of the region, Cote de Brouilly. Nicole Chanrion inherited her family's estate at a time when few believed that women could make great wine. Yet, she persisted in making one of the best, most traditional Côte de Brouilly's according to natural methods of winemaking. Her gloriously grapey Cote de Brouilly remains a killer value among Cru Beaujolas. Made from Gamay grown on a small 6.5 hectare estate. Fermented in cement and then aged for nine months in large oak barrels (foudres). The results are delicious upon release but are so well crafted that they have a remarkable ability to age and develop complexity. The flavors are bright, ripe raspberry and strawberry, with cinnamon and a touch of earthiness. Smooth tannins and a longish finish. BBQ and/or fish would fit the bill.

Liquor Locker

At Home Cocktails

COVID-19 has many of the world's cocktail enthusiasts foregoing the experience of getting a uniquely crafted cocktail at their favorite watering hole and supplemented that with a more DIY approach. If you are one of the many like myself – you've had your fair share of at-home margaritas over the past few months and are ready to switch things up. In that light, when making a unique cocktail at home I always like to see what is available in my fridge and cabinets that would work well together; taking a little inspiration from the cooking world could never hurt either. Out of that mindset came the **Liquid Caprese** cocktail. A little bit of this. A little bit of that. Most ingredients found in the everyday American home. Please enjoy!

Liquid Caprese

Muddle: 3-4 cherry tomatoes, 4-5 basil leaves

2 oz. Ford's Gin

½ oz. fresh lemon juice

½ oz. simple syrup or agave nectar

2 dashes Fee Bros. Plum Bitters

Soda water

In the bottom of a shaker, gently muddle cherry tomatoes and basil. Add all other ingredients with ice and shake until well chilled. Double strain over new ice in a rocks glass. Top with soda water.

Lemon slice garnish

CHEERS!

A Closing Note

The Sideways Effect

If you have been following our previous versions of 'Uncorked' you know I am an Italian wine lover who borders on being obsessive. However, a varietal I hold in high esteem is Merlot. Merlot was my father's favorite red and without it, I am not sure I would be in the wine business. Without his interest and passion, I may never have gotten involved with wine professionally. These days Merlot suffers from a condition known as 'The Sideways Effect.' The 2004

film Sideways has a pretty raucous scene where oenophile Miles (main character) famously proclaims his distaste for drinking Merlot.

"If ANYONE orders Merlot, I'm leaving. I AM NOT DRINKING ANY F***ING MERLOT!"

The result of this snippet of Hollywood hostility towards the benign little grape varietal was harsh, resulting in a precipitous decline in Merlot sales and eventually production in the following years. Part of the 'The Sideways Effect' was psychological for both the consumer and the producer. Some wineries began to reduce the percentage of Merlot in their wine so they could rename them "red blends" and not have stigma of the Merlot varietal on the label.

So why did Miles declare his distaste for Merlot? At the time Merlot was over-planted, over-produced, over-manipulated and, more often than anyone would care to admit, was somewhat "green" and vegetal. As the popularity of Merlot declined, wine consumers found new varietals to try (Pinot Noir) and Merlot was seemingly left behind.

So why am I talking about this? I think 'The Sideways Effect' has had a positive influence on Merlot in the industry and today there is more high-quality Merlot than ever before. France, Italy, and many other countries aside from the United States are producing world class Merlot and it is being rediscovered.

A couple of examples to try right here at SPS:

Christophe Avi Buzet 2016 (80% Merlot – 20% Cabernet Sauvignon) – imported by Mary Taylor out of Sandy Hook, CT – here's what she says: "Super graceful. Haunting, tertiary rich red berry / coffee bean / tobacco leaf. But not oaked." **(\$17.98)**

North Fork Project Merlot 2016 – began as a collaborative effort between Pellegrini Vineyards and Martin Scott Wine Co. (The Winebow Group) with a simple goal of bringing high quality and great tasting locally produced wines to market. I would say it is a success. **(\$14.99)**

Lastly, the great irony of the film is never explained. Miles' prize wine is 1961 Cheval Blanc. Chateau Cheval Blanc produces some of the best and most expensive wines in Bordeaux. It is a blend of **MERLOT** and Cabernet Franc; another variety Miles slights in the film. Cheers!

Services Offered

We'd like to thank everyone for their support during the pandemic. We will continue to offer a curbside option for the foreseeable future, just give us a call to set up your order.

We have offered delivery since our first day, and we will continue to do so. We deliver to Southbury everyday; Lakeside, the Purchase, Southford, Heritage Village, Georges Hill, etc. If you live in Southbury, we will deliver it to you.

Did you know our delivery service extends beyond Southbury?. We're happy and able to deliver to Middlebury, Woodbury, Roxbury and Oxford. Please inquire. We will do our best for our neighbors as well.

For free delivery in town we require a \$75.00 minimum order. Again, thank you.

Wine School Update

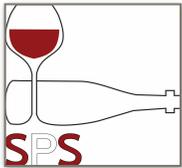
Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, we have decided to postpone the SPS Wine School until further notice. If you would like to set up a Zoom tasting with friends, please inquire within and I'm sure we can lead a group tasting through Zoom.

Concierge Wine Service

Given the state of social gatherings and wine tastings being put on hold, we would like to offer a Concierge Wine Service.

This would be a scheduled tasting event in your home for an hour to 90 minutes. We request you limit the invited guests to 10 people. We will come to your home and taste wine with you and your guests in a classroom style manner so that we can maintain a healthy "social distance" between guests. This is a great option if you enjoy trying new wines and are curious about the where, why, who and how of the wine world.

Please contact Steve for scheduling and rates.



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Hours
Monday - Saturday
10-8

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