



# Southbury Package Store Uncorked



## Farewell

I opened SPS in November 2019. It was a calculated risk, but one I felt reasonable, and I was eager to take it. If you've read our musings online or in the newsletter over the past couple of years or possibly stopped in the shop on Wednesday or Friday mornings, you've had the pleasure to meet my friend Jim Brewer. Jim has been a pillar of support and I don't think I would have decided to begin this adventure without knowing he would be involved. This past January Jim decided to hang up his corkscrew and pen. I'm not one for long goodbyes, so I toast you Mr. Brewer. Thank you for being my 'wine consigliere'. It's been a pleasure. À votre Santé!

## Kicking Off a New Year at SPS!

Welcome to 2022! I know it's late February and we've already had the first Hallmark holiday of the year, but I promise you we've been busy bees at SPS! For starters, we've swapped the store around to keep you on your toes. We've increased the size of European wine sections. Italy, of course, has doubled in size as has France and Spain! We're adding more wines from Portugal, Germany, and Austria as well. Do not fret, the New World wines are also getting a boost with curated selections from Australia, South Africa and more. Lastly, we've added a value section. Great wines for \$10.00 and if you buy two, you get 'em for \$9.00 each.

## Wines so good, grab two!

I've heard the stories many times in this business. We were in such and such a place in Europe and the local café had wine from the local wineries and it was the best wine we drank. There wasn't even a label! **SFUSO Vino Bianco di Tavola, NV** embraces that concept and brings it to our market, although with a label. Light on its feet and supremely drinkable it is a blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Bianco. Bright, fresh, and unpretentious the instructions are easy. Open. Pour. Enjoy.

One region that is often taken for granted in this packed wine marketplace is southern France. Known more today for rosé (for good reason) than the varietal wines it infused the market with a short few decades ago there are still some excellent selections still being made. The **Alexis Lichine Sauvignon Blanc 2020** shows hints of pineapples, tangerines, and white flowers. Crisp and dry

but with ample presence on the palate. This little beauty will turn your Sauvignon Blanc preconceptions on their head.

Buin is located 20 miles just outside of Santiago, Chile. The Cousiño family had to move their estate there after the city of Santiago grew around their vineyards within the city limits. Their "entry" level **Cousiño-Macul Classic Chardonnay 2020** is graceful, clean and choc-full of ripe apple and pear notes. This wine sees no wood, but gains complexity from malolactic fermentation and an occasional stirring of the lees. Certainly not an oak bomb, but a satisfying, pure white.

The Colombard grape is a cousin to Chenin Blanc, one of the wine world's most versatile varieties. Aside from being a primary grape that goes into the production of Cognac, it can and does make energetic, zippy whites with complex flavors. The **Mont Gravet Côtes de Gascogne Blanc 2020** is made from 100% Colombard and has an unctuous palate coating texture that exudes citrus fruits and a touch of honeysuckle. I'm nominating this wine for our first patio pounder of 2022!

The grapes for **Palladio Rosso 2019** hail from the heart of Italy's most famous wine region, Tuscany. Made up of 50% Sangiovese and 50% Merlot, this wine technically could be deemed a "Super Tuscan". Like Palladio we're happy to call it a Rosso. This is table wine Tuscan style. Not too complex, not overdone, and true to its sources. If there were a Friday night pizza wine in the bunch, it's this one. Bright cherry and raspberry notes with polished tannins. Super easy to drink and great with food. It's from Italy, so of course it's a winner.

La Mancha is Europe's largest wine region, comprising of nearly half a million acres. Bigger is not always better, but in this case, we'll make an exception. **Familia Bastida Alceo Temranillo 2017** is from this area, and it hits the mark. Rich, limber, and full on the palate, this little Temranillo isn't so little and it over delivers. We were lucky to find the last six cases of this vintage and we scooped it up. Make sure you grab a few before it's gone!

If you've been in the shop, you know we're not a follow the crowd type place. However, we love the **M.O.B. Dão Lote 3 2016**. Portugal is, of course, known for making



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fortified dessert wines. What seems to be missed is how appealing their table wines are. This is a collaborative effort named for three winemakers: Jorge **M**oreira of Poeira, Francisco **O**lazabal from Quinta do Vale Meão, and Jorge Serôdio **B**orges of Quinta do Passadouro and Wine & Soul. When we tasted this, we thought the wholesaler made a mistake. It's had to be a six-pack case. Nope, twelve to a case and a tremendous value to boot. A soft rouge color and a charming aroma of blackberry, cassis, and fresh cut cedar. Join the **M.O.B.** for this one!

## In Store Tastings

12:30 -4:30

### Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>

- 🍷 *A valley divided. Explore the differences between the northern and southern Rhône River Valley.*

### Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>

- 🍷 *Willamette, DAMN IT! Come see what makes this Pacific northwest AVA special. Our own version of the Oregon Trail.*

### Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

- 🍷 *How low can we go? Wines from the southern most reaches of the planet. You have no idea how low.*

## Winter Warmers

It's been an up and down temperature classic New England winter. It'll be nearly 50 tomorrow as I write this with upwards of eight inches of snow forecast for later in the week. Here are a few bottles to keep you snuggly warm and dreaming of better (warmer) days.

I had an old manager that use to expound weekly in sales meetings about wines. He almost always spoke of the winery and vineyards being family owned. While I scoffed at his often-long-winded presentations he did have a point. Heritage matters. Quinta de Santa Eufemia has been in the Carvalho family for four generations with the youngest generation of seven brothers manning the helm. It appears Eufemia is in good hands for the years

to come. Well known for tantalizing port wine, of both the red and white styles, I'm here today to present a white (branco). A blend of four indigenous white varietals, the **Quinta de Santa Eufemia Branco 2020 (\$12.98)** is an interesting, step out of the proverbial comfort zone kind of white wine. Palate coating viscosity with notes of grapefruit, crushed stone, and a hint of almond. Open on a lazy Sunday afternoon with some cheese, charcuterie, and crusty bread in front of a fire.

Sometimes you just need a wine to be the alpha dog on your palate. **Tait Family's 'The Ballbuster' 2017 (\$19.98)** is a wine up to the task. A deep red blend of 77% Shiraz, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Merlot. They have been producing wines since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Son of an Italian immigrant in Australia (cooperage) Bruno Tait has been churning out BIG, BOLD reds in Australia for nearly 4 decades. A hearty wine for BBQ and grilled fare or nachos for March Madness.

If you head to the arch of the Italian boot, there's a little spoken about region called Basilicata. It's mountainous and the vineyards are drenched with almost limitless sun. In an area called Vulture (not like the bird) Cantina di Venosa has been producing Aglianico since the mid-1950s. Twenty-seven growers' band together to produce the **Cantina di Venosa 'Bali' Aglianico del Vulture 2016 (\$15.98)**. Earthier and heartier than its cousin to the north, these wines remind me of Nebbiolo but with a gritty underbelly. Think wild mushrooms, blackberries and forest floor aromas with a bone-dry mouthfeel and black tea tannin. A soul-warming red from the south of Italy screaming for hearty stews and roasts. Perfect for the next and hopefully last snowstorm.

## LIFE IS SHORT.... DRINK BETTER!

### Wine School Update

Once again, the SPS wine school is on hold. We're still looking for an appropriate venue to hold our classes. Follow us online or through our weekly email for updates.

## CURBSIDE PICK-UP & DELIVERY

*Free Delivery in Southbury with a \$100.00 order.  
We also deliver to Woodbury, Middlebury, Roxbury, and Oxford.*