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# Ease into Cooler Weather with 10 Autumn-Perfect Wines

Sep 22, 2018   Cindy Rynning   1 Comment

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When the heat of the day transitions into a chilly night, we know that fall is here. And, for many, when the weather changes, so do our choices in wine and food. That crisp, mineral driven white wine that was perfect by the lake suddenly isn't as satisfying while sitting next to the warmth of a backyard bonfire. The almost translucent rosé that paired so well with a fresh seafood salad enjoyed alfresco doesn't taste as luscious with those spicy ribs falling off the bone at the tailgate barbecue (as you're huddled under a blanket).

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Fortunately for us all, I've tasted a few wines, *sent as samples* from the following producers. The wines reviewed below are rich, flavorful, incredibly food friendly, and perfect for autumn sipping. Who needs summer anyway?

## Department 66 (D66)

Department 66 (D66), owned by renown winemaker Dave Phinney, is located in Southwest France; it's only two hours east of Barcelona, Spain and thirty minutes inland from the ancient Roman city of Perpignan. In this area, the Côtes Catalanes (a sub-appellation of the Roussillon), old vine Grenache, Syrah, and Carignan flourish. D66 consists of 300 acres of vineyards, planted over 60 years ago, among the Pyrénées-Orientales mountain range. Soils are of black schist with small deposits of granite and limestone in red, rocky soils.

**D66 "Fragile" Rosé 2017** (\$18), a wine of mostly Grenache but with small amounts of Syrah and Carignan, was a pale salmon color in the glass. On the nose, I found intense notes of roses, red berries, florals and a hint of spice. The palate, boasting flavors of more red berries, candied fruit, pink grapefruit, and minerality, was framed with lively acidity. *Pair with a chicken salad sandwich from your favorite deli and crunchy chips for your early autumn picnic.*

**D66 Grenache 2014** (\$38), a glorious mélange of Grenache, Syrah, and Carignan, is from vines that are 10-65 years old. Notes of bright spice, white pepper, oak, red fruit compote, and blueberries wafted from the glass. Framed with vibrant acidity and integrated yet bold tannins, flavors of spice, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, and caramel led to a rich, fruit and mineral-driven finish. *Pair with good conversation and juicy burgers straight from the grill.*

**D66 "Others" Red Wine 2015** (\$25) is a delicious blend of Grenache,

Carignan, Syrah, and Mourvedre. Bursting from the glass were aromas of blueberries, plums, dark red fruit, and lavender. Notes of dried herbs, mint, dark, rich red fruit, and juicy plums were bolstered by medium acidity and soft tannins. The lingering, spice filled finish was exceptional. *Pair with your favorite herbed pot roast over warm pasta for a weeknight treat.*

## Domaine Bousquet

During a vacation to Argentina's Gualtallary Valley high in the Tupungato district of the Uco Valley's Mendoza region, third-generation French winemaker Jean Bousquet found his dream location to produce organically grown wines. Soon thereafter, in 1997, he signed a contract to purchase 1000 acres of land and Domaine Bousquet was founded. Whereas other winemakers or owners failed in the region, Jean Bousquet thrived. He quickly realized that the access to water was the crucial element for success. Water rights were secured and for two years, beginning in 1998, a well of 495 feet was dug, after which vines were planted. By the time Bousquet released his first vintage in 2005, some of the original acreage had been sold, leaving 173 acres. Now, thanks to sales of wine and savvy business practices, 667 acres are planted under vine and a modern winery includes a hospitality area and restaurant.

**Domaine Bousquet Rosé 2018** (\$13) is of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Malbec. Fresh cherries, raspberries, and strawberries were present on both the nose and palate...and I can't forget the bright acidity. *This well-priced rosé will pair beautifully with warm goat cheese on crusty bread and a good book.*

**Domaine Bousquet Malbec 2017** (\$13) offered lively aromas of cherries, vanilla, and wet moss. Food friendly acidity and soft tannins surrounded notes of blueberries, blackberries, pepper, cherries, and earthy mushrooms. *Pair this easy drinking Malbec with homemade lasagna and freshly baked bread dipped in olive oil.*

**Domaine Bousquet Cabernet Sauvignon 2017** (\$13) is of 100% Cabernet



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Sauvignon from estate vineyards. Instead of a big, bold, and powerful wine, this Cabernet is soft, elegant, and fresh. On the nose, I found aromas of deep red fruit, vanilla, and spice leading to a palate offering snappy acidity, medium tannins, and red berry notes. Quite balanced with a spice-filled finish, *pair this wine with rack of lamb, rice pilaf, and your besties on Saturday night.*

## McIntyre Vineyards

Located in Monterey County's Santa Lucia Highlands AVA, McIntyre Estate Vineyard lies along a 12 mile stretch of benchland that produces wines of character and complexity. Planted in 1972, the 80-acre site of which 60 acres are under vine, offers some of the area's oldest Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vines. Proprietor Steve McIntyre, who also owns and operates Monterey Pacific, notes that the McIntyre Estate Vineyard was among the first properties in the Santa Lucia Highlands to be SIP (Sustainability in Practice) Certified.

**McIntyre 2016 Chardonnay** (\$28) will satisfy every Chardonnay lover's palate. Intense aromas of juicy citrus, yellow flowers, and stone fruit paved the way to flavors of lemon, citrus, baked apple, tropical fruit, and bananas. Thanks to a round mouthfeel, vibrant acidity, and juicy finish, *pair this wine with roast chicken and fingerling potatoes for Sunday supper.*

**McIntyre 2016 Estate Vineyard Chardonnay** (\$38) is sophistication in a bottle. Creamy on both the nose and palate, structure, complexity, and minerality were obvious with each sip. I discovered notes of oak and vanilla, almonds and warm apple pie, lemon and stone fruit as I appreciated the brilliant acidity and lingering finish. *Pair this wine with homemade crabcakes, spinach salad with warm bacon dressing, and candlelight.*

## Real Nice Winemakers

I'm guessing that the winemakers truly are as nice as the wines! The inception of Real Nice Winemakers began when friends who just happen to



### ArT Wine Preservation



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be sommeliers at some premier restaurants in the United States asked the “real nice winemakers” to create wines that expressed the nuances of the Willamette Valley... but that would overdeliver on quality for the price. With the challenge accepted, the team spent two years developing on the concept and drawing from their experience working in Burgundy, New Zealand, Australia, Napa, and Oregon. The results? Read on.

**Shallow Seas Rosé 2017** (\$18), a snappy blend of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Riesling from Willamette Valley, is yet another reminder why a fall trip to Oregon should be on my travel agenda! Notes of bright strawberries, raspberries, and minerality were hints of what was on the palate: mouthwatering acidity, freshly picked berries, more minerality, and a long, tart finish. *Pair this keeper with grilled, herbed salmon atop saffron rice.*

**Black Magnolia Pinot Noir 2016** (\$22) is another reason to love Oregon wines. Aromas of exotic spice, red fruit, plums, blueberries, earth, and cinnamon were enticing. On the palate, lively acidity, smooth tannins and notes of strawberries, black cherries, wood, and blueberries prompted more than a few of my friends to say “WoW!” after they enjoyed the long, spice filled finish. *Pair this wine with your favorite wood-fired vegetable pizza.*

**Cheers to autumn sipping! ~ Cindy**

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Lynn

November 17, 2018

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Always looking for wines to try, looks like some fun ones here, and styles for every type of autumn-into-winter day!

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