



Washington Southern Rhône-Style Reds

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Faculty Club, Univ. of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$78; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$98

The state of Washington, with over 20,000 hectares of vineyards, is now the second largest producer of wine in the USA (California having the largest production). Those hectares of vineyards primarily contain French varietals from Bordeaux (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot) and from the Southern Rhône Valley (Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre). June's tasting will focus on red wines made from Southern Rhône varietals.

In the southern Rhône, Grenache is frequently the dominant grape used in a wine's blend. Grenache does not handle Washington's tough winters well. However, recently Grenache is making a comeback as producers are carefully selecting sites that allow this grape to survive and thrive. In Washington, Syrah dominates and, like several of the wines in our tasting, is frequently vinified alone. Syrah is a terroir-driven wine, soaking up the elements of the place. In Washington, Syrah can result in blackberry and blueberry fruit-driven wines with savory components of olives and earth and fat. Mourvèdre is also known for its savory profile with elements of meat, herbs and black pepper. These qualities make it a perfect grape to blend with rich Grenache and spicy Syrah.

Washington has fourteen AVA (American Viticultural Area) sub-regions and we will taste wines from five of them: Red Mountain, Walla Walla, Yakima Valley, Columbia Valley, and Wahluke Slope.

Red Mountain has become Washington State's premium red wine AVA where conditions result in low-yield harvests and full-body wines. Cabernet Sauvignon is largely responsible for the region's fame but Syrah also performs to a high standard. In the Walla Walla Valley, you will find high-quality Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon with intense, robust flavors. Ancient volcanoes and floods formed the landscape of Yakima Valley where free-draining and low organic-matter soils stress the vines, which concentrates structure of the region's wines. Many producers have vineyards in the high-production Wahluke Slope. A large portion of the region's production is destined to become part of a Columbia Valley blend. Premium, AVA Wahluke Slope wines that provide flavor intensity and structure exist and you will have the opportunity to experience one at this unique wine-tasting event.

Our guest speaker is **Tim Reed Manessy** of The Living Vine Inc., www.thelivingvine.ca which specializes in importing organic biodynamic natural wines.

The event price includes a reception wine, bread, appetizers and our main wines. Please refrain from wearing scented products. Dress is business casual. Newcomers and those wishing more tutoring are encouraged to sign up for our Newcomers' Table on our registration page.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

[Register/buy tickets](https://form.jotform.com/tvc_wine/wa-rhone_style) online at https://form.jotform.com/tvc_wine/wa-rhone_style You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation by email, please contact torontovintners@gmail.com before trying to register again.



Tasting Notes and Information – WA Southern Rhône-Style Wines

2013 Betz Family Winery La Cote Rouse Syrah, Red Mountain \$70

“Much more mineral driven than the La Serenne release, the 2013 Syrah la Cote Rouse comes all from Red Mountain and is always 100% Syrah. Like the other Syrahs here, it saw 11 months in barrel and won't be released until the fall of 2015. Exhibiting lots of blackberry, black raspberry, graphite, smoke and crushed rock, it's beautifully concentrated, has top-notch purity of fruit and a great finish. I love its mid-palate density, and while it has a lot of tannins, they're nicely integrated into the body of the wine. Give it 2-3 years in the cellar and enjoy bottles through 2033. It should be one of the longest-lived Syrahs in the vintage.” Jeb Dunnuck, www.robertparker.com. 95 Pts.

2014 Tenet The Pundit Syrah, Columbia Valley \$40

“The finest vintage of this cuvee to date (it's only the second year for the cuvee though), the 2014 Syrah The Pundit has loads of ripe dark fruits, charcoal, smoked herbs and licorice in a concentrated, rich, yet always balanced and fresh style. Made from 88% Syrah, 6% Grenache and the rest Mourvèdre, aged mostly in French oak (which is a positive change from the American oak used for the 2013), with a small part in concrete, drink this pleasure-bent effort over the coming 4-5 years. Jeb Dunnuck, www.robertparker.com. 92 Pts.

2014 Palencia Winery Syrah, Yakima Valley \$58

“Alluring aromas of blackberry and barrel spice lead to ripe, full-bodied black-fruit flavors, showing beautiful depth and a long finish. It packs a hefty punch while never losing its sense of balance.” Sean P. Sullivan, *Wine Enthusiast*. 92 Pts.

1997 McCrea Cellars Syrah (\$ Not Avail.)

“Bright ruby-red. Clean cassis and spice aromas enhanced by sexy oak notes. Sappy and fruit-driven, with bright acids and restrained sweetness. Expands nicely and builds slowly on the ripe, persistent finish.” Stephen Tanzer. 88 Pts.

2014 K Vintners The Hidden Syrah, Wahluke Slope \$109

“I continue to feel that this is one of the top Syrahs coming out Washington today, and it certainly doesn't get the notoriety it deserves. . . . This deep ruby/purple tinged effort offers a sensational, deep, rich and

concentrated style that closes down quickly in the glass. Black cherries, wet earth, lavender and incense characteristics dominate the bouquet, and it has a core of sweet fruit, ripe tannin and a blockbuster finish. Give bottles 2-4 years, count yourself lucky, and enjoy over the following decade or more. Jeb Dunnuck www.robertparker.com. 99 Pts.

2011 Force Majeure Vineyards Collaboration Series VI, Red Mountain \$60

“A blend of 47% Mourvèdre, 42% Syrah and 11% Grenache; made by James Mantone, winemaker for Syncline): Full red-ruby. Distinct Mourvedre aspect to the aromas of black cherry, blueberry, licorice, leather and Serrano ham. Sweet and concentrated on entry, then tightly coiled in the middle, boasting terrific verve and energy to the dark fruit and spice flavors. Most impressive today for its energy and spicy length, this wine should unfold gracefully over the next five to seven years. A very good job of timing the harvest here!” Stephen Tanzer. 92+ Pts

2012 Rasa Vineyards Tilting at Windmills, Walla Walla \$100

“Grenache-dominated, yet incorporating 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Syrah, the 2012 Tilting At Windmills is also rock star stuff. Decadently styled, with creme de cassis, melted licorice, road tar and spice, this full-bodied effort has superb mid-palate depth, an unctuous texture and sweet tannin that coats the palate on the finish. It's impressive and will have a decade or more of longevity.” Jeb Dunnuck, www.robertparker.com. 95 Pts

2014 Tenet GSM, Columbia Valley \$99

Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre blend. “Bright ruby-red. Distinctly reduced aromas of crushed raspberry and musky mocha, plus a leathery nuance. Impressively concentrated and dense, conveying a crushed-berry urgency complicated by game and coffee notes. Finishes ripe and long, with firm tannins. This plush, sweet big boy needs time but has the material and structure to gain in complexity with bottle aging.” Stephen Tanzer. 91 Pts