



Dessert Wines - Pure Indulgence

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Formal Tasting: **6:15 PM**

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

Members' Fee: \$65; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$75

Heading into the holiday season there is no better time to indulge in some decadent, sweet dessert wines!

There is no simple definition of a dessert wine. In the UK, a dessert wine is considered to be any sweet wine drunk with a meal, in contrast to white fortified wines such as sherry which are typically drunk before a meal, and the red fortified wines or "digestifs" such as port and madeira consumed after it. Thus, most fortified wines (i.e., wines in which additional alcohol is added in the fermentation process) are regarded as distinct from dessert wines. In the United States, a dessert wine is legally defined as any wine over 14% (or alcohol by volume (15% according to some sources), which includes all fortified wines.

In the case of classic dessert wines, there are many types, styles and formats. Common to most is the cessation of the fermentation process, either naturally or artificially, which leaves residual sweetness in the wine. The more residual sugar or residual sweetness that remains in a wine, the sweeter the wine will taste. Dessert wine is made in practically every winemaking country and within each, there is often more than one style of dessert wine, some fortified, some not fortified some sparkling and some still.

Sweet wines represent some of the world's most interesting and exciting wines. They vary enormously in their flavour profiles, acid levels, cloyiness, weight in the mouth and length of finish, while desserts themselves can be fruity, creamy, chocolaty, cloying, tart, warm, cold or even combinations of all of these. The intense sweetness and luscious layers of flavor in the best dessert wines means that a little goes a long, long way. A 375 ml bottle is easily enough for four people and can even be stretched to serve six.

The finest sweet wines are those made with grape varieties that keep their acidity even at very high ripeness levels, such as Riesling and Chenin Blanc. The sweetness of a wine will also depend on the alcohol levels, the amount of tannin present, and whether the wine is sparkling or not. The general rule is that a sweet wine should be sweeter than the dessert it is being served with.

For November, TVC has assembled fine examples of sweet wine from various regions around the world. We will start close to home with a Niagara ice wine from the Vidal grape. We can contrast this with a selection of European wines such as the prized Kourtaki Muscat Samos from Greece, Hafner Old Vienna Composition Curvée from Austria, a 1er Cru Sauternes from Château Guiraud and Gewurztraminer SGN from France, and two Rieslings from Germany not to be missed, including Dr. Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese and Schloss Schönborn. Finally our tasting will take us down under for some delicious and award-winning Noble One Botrytis Semillon from Australia. (See over for more details on the wines). And to round out your wine tasting experience, we will be serving various food combinations to compliment these wines.

Our guest speaker will be Larry Goldstein, one of TVC's winebuyers and longest serving members. This tasting promises to be a delicious and fitting end to 2011.

NOTE: We will NOT be serving a reception wine at this event. The event will commence at 6:15 PM.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at <http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent9>. You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** Cheques must be received by Thursday, November 10th. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Monday, November 7th after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday, November 13th or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent a confirmation by email after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca before trying to register again.

Tasting Notes and Information

2008 Hafner Old Vienna Composition Cuvée Beerenauslese \$15 (350 ml) (Austria)

Beerenauslese means "select berry harvest" and is made from individually selected overripe grapes often affected by noble rot, making a rich, sweet dessert wine.

"The Hafner winery is located in Moenchhot. Austria's oldest wine growing community, where they've been cultivating grapes since 1217. This sweet wine is a straw-gold colour. The peach-and-floral nose is inviting and the flavours of apricot, candy and sweet, ripe pear circulate on the palate. There's a spicy note, too, when it reaches its finish." Vintages.

2007 De Bortoli Noble One Botrytis Semillon \$30

(Australia) Since its release. Noble One has been awarded 104 trophies, 352 Gold medals & 113 International Awards. Noble One was given its name in 1990 as a result of the bilateral agreement between Australia and the European Economic Community in which Australia agreed to phase out the use of European names on wine labels. Previously the wine was known as 'Sauternes' but today it is simply called Noble One. "Possessing a pale gold color, the aromas of the 2007 Noble One are still very primary - lemon curd, acacia honey, jasmine, mandarin peel, cedar and a whiff of complexity instilling VA. Very crisp, concentrated and intense on the palate with a great mid-palate added to the layers of complexity. Fully sweet with a very long finish. Drink now for fruitier style or this should develop wonderfully through 2022." 94 pts. Lisa Perrotti-Brown, www.erobertparker.com, April 2010.

2007 Inniskillin Vidal Icewine \$39.85 (375ml) (Canada)

Ice Wine is made from grapes that are left on the vines to freeze, thereby concentrating their sugar levels because the water content evaporates but the sugars do not. "This is the wine from Canada that I have most often seen in wine stores around the world. It is a fine ambassador for our ice wine prowess. Expect aromas of beeswax, honey, baked apricot, and lemon tart. It is sweet concentrated and elegant with excellent length and not at all cloying due to the fine acid balance. Try with baked stone fruit tarts." 91pts. Steve Thurlow, www.winealign.com, July 2010.

1996 Château Guiraud, 1er Cru \$100 (France)

"One of the stars of the vintage for Sauternes, the 1996 Guiraud offers a sumptuous nose of tangerine fruit intermixed with caramel and buttered corn. The wine displays a deep golden color, and striking favours of Chinese black tea, marmalade, honey and citrus. The powerful yet elegant flavors remain in the mouth for a significant period of time. While this wine is traditionally a blend of 65% Semillon and 35% Sauvignon, Xavier Plantey, the estate's manager, told me that there is nearly 45% Sauvignon Blanc in the final blend of the

1996." 91 pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 1999.

2001 Gewurztraminer SGN, Trimbach \$169 (France)

The Trimbach family has been involved in making wine since 1626 and their wines are considered the benchmark for quality, consistency and style and appear in every 3-star Michelin restaurant in France. "Apricots, white peach, lemon, rose and beeswax. A wine with unreal depth and rich, concentrated fruits on the palate. Brilliantly balanced by the zesty acidity with such power and fullness. Decadence in a bottle." 93pts. David Tanzer, www.entoria.co.uk.

2004 Dr. Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese \$80 (375 ml) (Germany)

Beerenauslese means "select berry harvest" and is made from individually selected overripe grapes often affected by noble rot, making a rich, sweet dessert wine. "The 2004 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese smells of candied, spiced apple and that same character dominates the palate, but with a satisfying leavening of fresh citrus. Apple jelly, candied lemon, peppermint, malt, honey, and abundant spice dominate a finish that at this youthful stat is a tad sticky and overtly sweet, but certainly betrays the stuff and stamina for a copy of decade's aging." 91pts. David Schildknecht, www.erobertparker.com, February 2006.

1989 Schloss Schönborn Riesling Hochheimer Kirchenstück Auslese \$38 (Germany)

Auslese means 'select harvest' and is made from selected very ripe bunches or grapes, typically semi-sweet or sweet, sometimes with some noble rot character. "15 hectares. A Grosses Gewachs (Grand Cru) site. Light loam soil, this is Hochheimer's most feminine and elegant vineyard. Gunter Kunstler compares Kirchenstück to Chateau Lafite."

Kourtaki Muscat Samos (NV) \$14.75 (Greece)

The muscat wine, "Samos", with a guaranteed appellation of origin (AOC), is produced from the grape bearing the same famous Samos Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains, cultivated on the slopes of Mount Ambelos situated on the island of Samos and are carefully controlled for low yields. Wines made from the muscat grape always smell of muscat which is reminiscent of orange blossoms and rose petals. "Lush and sweet, with apricot and pear flavours and a fresh, buttery finish. Drink now." 87 pts. Kim Marcus, www.winespectator.com, October 2008.