



Hartley-Ostini Hitching Post Wines

Tuesday, March 19th, 2013

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

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

Members' Fee: \$59; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$75

"It's a hard grape to grow. As you know. Right? It's, uh, it's thin-skinned, temperamental, ripens early. It's, you know, it's not a survivor like cabernet, which can just grow anywhere and thrive even when it's neglected. No, pinot needs constant care and attention. You know? And, in fact, it can only grow in these really specific, little tucked-away corners of the world. And only the most patient and nurturing of growers can do it, really. Only somebody who really takes the time to understand pinot's potential can then coax it into its fullest expression." - from the character of Miles Raymond in the 2004 movie Sideways.

In March, TVC will welcome Gray Hartley of Hartley Ostini Hitching Post Winery for an exclusive tasting of some of his finest wines. Hitching Post Winery is known as the restaurant where Miles meets Maya in Alexander Payne's Academy Award winning film Sideways, but it is also famous for producing exceptional Pinot Noirs.

Co-owners/winemakers Frank Ostini and Gray Hartley began making wines for the Hitching Post Restaurant in 1984, five years after producing their first wine in an old whisky barrel. The duo has worked with some of the best growers in Santa Barbara County from vineyards of Santa Maria Valley, Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Rita Hills and Los Alamos. The cool marine-influence climate and unusually long growing season of the area produces Pinot, Syrah and Cabernet Franc grapes that drink well young, yet have the ability to improve with age.

The Hitching Post website explains Frank and Gray's philosophy: "Frank and Gray believe that great wines are made in the vineyard. Their winemaking philosophy is that they are caretakers who guide the wine into the bottle. As the wine matures it is simply left to gently age in the barrel. This minimalist approach allows Hartley-Ostini Hitching Post wines to reflect the character of the vineyard and the vintage, preserving the essence of the grape for you to enjoy when you open the bottle."

The website goes on to describe the winemaker's technique: "The grapes are picked in the early morning and de-stemmed into 1.5 ton open-top fermentation vats. Cold maceration is allowed for several days and then a cultured yeast is added to promote a long and cool fermentation. Then comes the manual punch downs from one to three times/day depending on the stage of fermentation. Pressing occurs after 14-21 days directly into barrel (no settling of solids). The wine rests in barrel until racking just before bottling. Most wines are aged in French Oak barrels for 18 months and are bottled unfiltered."

Hitching Post Wines produces ten selections of Pinot Noir, as well as a Dry Rose called PINKS, a Syrah, a Merlot, and a Merlot-Cabernet Franc blend. We will be sampling a variety of wines including a couple brought directly from the winery for this occasion as well as two before they are released to the Ontario public. Six of the eight wines will be Pinot Noirs from different vineyards including one pair from an older and younger vintage for comparison. Co-owner and winemaker Gray Hartley, a former Alaskan salmon fisherman, will be joining us in March for this **exclusive** tasting. This is a unique opportunity to hear from the winemaker himself and definitely a tasting not to be missed. Seating is limited so please purchase tickets early.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=vxghb4bab&oeidk=a07e73iklib918237eb>

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 Friday, March 15th. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tuesday, March 12th after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday March 17th or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact chris@torontovintners.org before trying to register again.

Tasting Notes and Information for Hartley-Ostini Hitching Post Wines

2011 Pinks Dry Rosé \$20

Bursting with redcurrant, watermelon and rosewater aromas. Tangy, with waves of racy acidity and a lip-smacking finish. This will make a very refreshing sipper, or pair with grilled salmon and green beans with saffron. (VINTAGES panel, April 2012)

2009 Hometown Pinot Noir \$27

Pinot Noir Hometown is an attractive, mid-weight wine laced with sweet red cherries, flowers and sweet spices. It shows good depth and balance to match its juicy personality. Best of all, it is a terrific value in Pinot Noir. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2016." 88pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Aug/12.

2009 Cork Dancer Pinot Noir \$35

"The 2009 Pinot Noir Cork Dancer is one of the more harmonious wines in the lineup. Sweet red berries, flowers, spices and licorice waft from the glass in this perfumed, gracious mid-weight Pinot. The style is very much on the feminine side of things. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2015." 87pts. Antonio Galloni, erobertparker.com, Aug/12.

2009 St. Rita's Earth Pinot Noir \$49

"Dark fruits, good structured blend of Sanford & Benedict, Fiddlestix and Clos Pepe Vineyards." From winemaker's website.

2007 Highliner Pinot Noir \$50

"Highliner is a barrel selection (70% new French oak) of maritime-cooled vineyards in Santa Barbara County, combining the forward fruit and richness of the Santa Maria Valley, with the earthiness and structure of fruit from the Sta. Rita Hills. This blend includes these vineyards & clones: Rio Vista 777, 115, Fiddlestix 115, 667 & 777, Bien Nacido, 115 and Pommard 4, and Julia's Pommard 4. A special wine, HIGHLINER is meant to be the "best of their fleet" of Pinot Noirs." From winemaker's website.

2004 Julia's Vineyard Pinot Noir \$59

"Briery raspberry/Zinfandel-like fruit aromas are found in the 2004 Pinot Noir Julia's Vineyard. Noticeable acidity, a tart character, medium body, and a clipped finish suggest it should be consumed over the next 3-4 years." 87pts. Robert Parker, erobertparker.com, Aug/06.

2007 Julia's Vineyard Pinot Noir \$42.50

"Sweet cherry fruit and natural earthiness, bold and forward." From winemakers' website.

2009 Late Harvest Gewürztraminer

Alisos Vineyard, Santa Barbara County. Harvested at 38 degrees brix. 2184 bottles (350 ml). Bottled April 13, 2010. "Balanced with acidity to balance the sweetness, and offers a young and elegant expression of the spicy flowery gewurtz fruit, with an apricot ripeness, and a touch of the mushroom complexity of the noble rot. While this wine tastes delicious now, we think it will gain complexity over the next ten years." Winemakers' notes.