

**From:** The BrightWines Beacon <lighthouse@brightwines.com>  
**Subject:** Dave's Top Picks: Fall Sale and Thanksgiving wines  
**Date:** November 22, 2016 7:42:04 PM CST  
**To:** The BrightWines Beacon

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**The BrightWines Beacon** for 11/18 thru 11/23, 2016: Dave's Top Picks of FFF-16 and for Thanksgiving too

It sure was a Fantastic Fall - but we have to admit that winter is starting today! I named my annual Fall Sale the "Fantastic Fall Sale" (FF6-16) and like the seasons indicate - this is **the FINAL WEEKEND for the FFS-16 sale list**. The sale runs NOW through at least November 21st - and **as an added bonus for Thanksgiving shoppers: I will do my best to honor prices in-store, and confirm e-mail orders as supplies permit, during the short week leading up to Thanksgiving** too. email orders are accepted, subject to confirmation while supplies last, for pickup by the end of Thanksgiving weekend.

**\*\* The View from the Top & Bright Lights**, a combined edition: **Dave's Top Picks of the FFS-16 and for Thanksgiving**.

HIGHLIGHTS include:

50% of one California's finest winemakers of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay (La Follette)

great values, for the general joy of the whole table, in Thanksgiving wines: whites and reds and roses!

90 and 91 point rated Smart Buys from California, Argentina, Spain, and more!

Affordable Luxury in Pinot Noir for Turkey, rare and great and TOP rated from Willamette and California

liter bottles for extra capacity in a Dry Riesling from Germany and a Barossa SHIRAZ from Australia

30% off retail on a limited production Zinfandel from Dry Creek - Sonoma

a full report on the 2016 Beaujolais Nouveau

and MORE...

**THE LAMP IS LIT: Store Hours and Tasting Schedule THANKSGIVING WEEKEND UPDATE**

**\*\* WEDNESDAY November 23rd: OPEN from 10:30am to 6:30pm** (or later)

**\*\*THURSDAY November 24th: CLOSED for THANKSGIVING**

**\*\* FRIDAY November 25th: OPEN from 11am - 6pm** (holiday weekend hours) plus **RSVP Guided Tasting at 6pm**

-- tasting details --

**Friday November 25th from 6pm until 7:30pm will be a guided tasting of interesting new arrivals from the up-and-coming (yet historic) wine regions of CROATIA.** Yep, you read that right. My longstanding tradition for the weekend post-Thanksgiving is to take a rest from "holiday season" wines and instead focus on a particular area of interest. Recently, I have tasted through a wide range of good wines from off-the-beaten path places like Slovenia, Hungary, Macedonia, Georgia, Croatia, and more. I have a personal fondness for Croatia, and many of the better more interesting wines in these recent tastings have indeed been from Croatia! So this **Friday evening at 6pm will be "option #1" of a guided tasting of 3 whites and 4 reds, all from Croatia and all priced quite reasonably at \$20 or less too.** Space is limited, and we already have a small group of folks who have rsvp's recently. RSVP by email, just reply to this newsletter is fine, if you would like to attend. I will do my best to confirm RSVP during the day on Wednesday, and/or by midday on Friday too (after Thanksgiving) so you can plan your weekend.

**\*\* SATURDAY November 26th: OPEN from 10:30am to 6pm** (holiday weekend hours) plus **RSVP Guided Tasting at 6pm**

-- tasting details --

**Saturday November 26th from 6pm until 7:30pm will be a guided tasting of interesting new arrivals from the up-and-coming (yet historic) wine regions of CROATIA.** Yep, you read that right. My longstanding tradition for the weekend post-Thanksgiving is to take a rest from "holiday season" wines and instead focus on a particular area of interest. Recently, I have tasted through a wide range of good wines from off-the-beaten path places like Slovenia, Hungary, Macedonia, Georgia, Croatia, and more. I have a personal fondness for Croatia, and many of the better more interesting wines in these recent tastings have indeed been from Croatia! So this Saturday evening at 6pm will be "option #2" of a guided tasting of 3 whites and 4 reds, all from Croatia and all priced quite reasonably at \$20 or less too. RSVP by email, just reply to this newsletter is fine, if you would like to attend. I will confirm space available and update as necessary (after Thanksgiving) so we can plan our weekend.

**THE VIEW FROM THE TOP & BRIGHT LIGHTS:** Dave's Top Picks of the FFS-16, and for Thanksgiving too!

Here are some fuller reviews and details on a wide variety of personal favorites, great deals, and Thanksgiving recommendations, all of which are list on the fully updated Fantastic Fall Sale (FFS-16) list.

**\*\* Featured Winery: Smart Buys and Affordable Luxury, Sonoma meets Burgundy via La Follette \*\***

Greg La Follette, the original winemaker for the famed Flowers winery (they of the \$40+ Chards and \$60+ Pinots) has been making wine on his own for several years now and is one of the most famous of all the north coast "Burgundy style" winemakers in California. Greg La Follette himself was here at BrightWines a few years ago and I was able to pick his brain about everything from yeast strains (he's been nicknamed "the yeast whisperer" to vineyard designations. This fall I have been lucky enough to have been offered a one-time special purchase on a vintage-clearance at 50% pricing. Timing is everything, as this particular great Pinot Noir would be a 100% perfect pairing for Turkey. I have a value-priced Chardonnay, an upper-tier Chardonnay, and this wonderful single-vineyard Pinot Noir to offer.

**La Follette 2011 "Van der Kamp vineyard" Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir @ \$19.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Suggested Retail: \$42 (see W.S. and W.E.)

This high-elevation Pinot Noir has wonderful Burgundian acidity, structure and spice, but with enough red fruit tones to be true to Sonoma.

**Rated 91 points (at \$42 retail)** by Wine Enthusiast magazine, who notes: "**quite complex**, offering high acid-inspired flavors of **raspberry sour candy, chamomile tea and cranberries**, plus minerally, dried herb complexities. Drink through 2020. 91 points. \$42 retail."

**La Follette 2011 "Sangiaco vineyard" Sonoma Coast Chardonnay @ \$17.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Suggested Retail: \$38 (see W.S. and R.P.)

Full-blown style, with lots of nutty Burgundian richness combined with underlying acidity and lively apple flavors. Only 510 cases made.

**La Follette 2012 North Coast Chardonnay @ \$9.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Suggested Retail: \$20

Dry and only very lightly oaked with some sur lie flavors amid apple and pear.

**\*\* "to the general joy of the whole table" (great value-wine picks for Thanksgiving) \*\***

*"Come love and health to all! Give me some wine, fill full, for I drink to the general joy of the whole table." --William Shakespeare*

(classic, off dry white) **August Bonhomme 2014 "La Forcine" VOUVRAY @ \$8.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

demi-sec (off-dry) famed Turkey pairing with the body and structure of Pouilly Fuisse and the pineapple/honeyed fruitiness of Chenin Blanc

(dry rose/pink from Spain) **RIO MADRE 2015 Rose/Rosado RIOJA @ \$7.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

This dry wine is dark pink and the best bargain rose I've had all year. You may have noticed alot of articles recently suggesting rose for Turkey, and this one is a very safe bet at the price. It's also **rated 88 points from two major wine magazines!** "The intriguing 2015 Rio Madre Rose is made from 100% Graciano and show **a deep, dark color, elegant berry fruit, crisp acids, and surprising body and texture. This is a serious, well-endowed rose. 88 points.**" (Robert Parker) and Wine Spectator says "Cherry, pomegranate and watermelon flavors are fresh and juicy in this fruity rose. 88 points."

(full LITER capacity, for those extra couple glasses) **TERRA BAROSSA 2012 Barossa SHIRAZ @ \$12.99 (liter bottles, FFS-16 price)**

Suggested Retail: \$16 per liter (see W.S.)

Wine Spectator recommends, saying: "Polished and round, with a velvety feel to the red berry and smoky meat and coffee flavors, finishing on a savory note. Drink now through 2018."

(full LITER capacity, for those extra couple glasses) **Stefan Winter 2015 Rhein'Germany "Troocken" Dry Riesling @ \$14.99 (liter bottles)**

... as served at the cabin for combined birthday and anniversary celebrations in my family

**The Other Red (Peirano Estate) Lodi red blend @ \$7.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

One of the two top-sellers from Peirano Estate and one of the two most popular bargain California reds of the whole year. This has been on a 2 x 20% discount (20% from the winery, 20% locally) to get down to \$7.99 per bottle ever since last spring's in-store meet and greet with the winery's rep. 50% Cabernet, 40% Merlot, 10% Syrah, with just enough mocha oak and body. SOLID CASE PRICE of \$89.99 = \$7.50 (case price may be mixed with The Immortal Zin).

**The IMMORTAL ZIN old vind Lodi ZINFANDEL @ \$7.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

One of the two top-sellers from Peirano Estate and one of the two most popular bargain California reds of the whole year. This has been on a 2 x 20% discount (20% from the winery, 20% locally) to get down to \$7.99 per bottle ever since last spring's in-store meet and greet with the winery's rep. Red Zin is a classic "Turkey pick" for the smooth fruites, low tannins, complex spice, and the All-American feel to a good old vine Zin. SOLID CASE PRICE of \$89.99 = \$7.50 (case price may be mixed with The Other Red).

**\*\* 90 - 91 point rated Smart Buy reds from around the world \*\***

**ZUCCARDI 2013 "Q" Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$15.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Suggested Retail: \$20 (see W.S.)

Rated **91 points by Wine Spectator**, who notes: "savory red, featuring notes of white pepper to the cherry and crushed red plum flavors. Lengthens out on the palate, with medium-grained tannins. Silky finish. Drink now through 2020. 91 points." Nicely oaked and chewy style.

**Murietta's Well "The Spur" California Red Blend @ \$15.99 per bottle (NOTE: SOLD OUT UNTIL DECEMBER)**

Suggested Retail: \$20 - \$24

**91 points Wine Spectator** in October, and **91 points Wine Enthusiast** in November. **Petite Sirah - Cabernet blend** from Livermore.

**Rio Madre 2014 RIOJA Graciano @ \$7.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Rated 90 points by Tanzer/Galloni (Vinous Media) a bargain Rioja styled like a Malbec.

**Montecillo 2010 RIOJA Reserva @ \$12.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Suggested Retail: \$19 (see W.S.)

Oak-barrel and in-bottle aged, a true "reserva" red. This is a 90-point rated W.S. classic style Tempranillo!

**\*\* Unique/Limited offers on Smart Buy Zin and a wood case Rosso \*\***

(for Turkey, my most food-friendly Zin) **DEUX AMIS 2012 Sonoma ZINFANDEL @ \$12.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Suggested Retail: \$19 (see winery website)

Dave says: Anyone who has been drinking red Zinfandel since the early 1990's will quite possibly remember this **semi-cult favorite called Deux Amis** (two friends). This wine has always been priced around \$15 - \$20 per bottle, despite being a small production, individual fruit-sourced (4 Zinfandel vineyards and 1 Petite Sirah vineyard go into this wine) and handcrafted sort of wine. I do not believe I have ever seen this for under \$15 in my entire career. They found themselves a little long on the 2012 vintage, although with a great vintage and just over **500 cases made of good Sonoma Zin** it's hard to see how, so the local supplier bought in on a winery-direct extra discount we are passing along the savings. Here are the specs on this Sonoma Zin:

**504 cases made, sourced from 5 vineyards in Dry Creek and Alexander Valley** (4 Zins, 1 Petite Sirah)

aged 20 months in American Oak barrels

**elegant food-friendly Zin with bright and smooth red fruits and subtle spice**

(wood cases, solid case purchase only for box) **MONSALAIA 2011 ROSSO (Maremma/Toscana) @ \$10.79 per bottle (FFS-16 price)**

70% Sangiovese and 30% Merlot blend, a very fruit-forward and plush "Rosso Toscana" from the Maremma district of Tuscany, known for great values nowadays. The importer has packaged this in a gorgeous wood case. Solid Case purchases can have the wine, and the wood box! (\$129.50 per case)

**\*\* Full Report (28 cases, mixed among 6 types, in-stock now): *Le Beaujolais Nouveau est Arrive* \*\***

(As noted in **Wine Spectator magazine, November 18th 2016**)

" Beaujolais Nouveau has arrived again, and the race to the third Thursday of November became even more of a sprint this year because harvest occurred three weeks later than in 2015. The 2016 growing season brought torrential rain and hail in the late spring and early summer. But heat later on was a saving grace for the vintage. Cool nights provided relief, allowed the grapes' natural acidity to be retained.

A post-harvest celebration of the vintage, the release of Beaujolais Nouveau is a tradition dating back to the early 1900s in local bars and bistros in Beaujolais. Over the years, the once-local event expanded to Paris, with exuberant races among Beaujolais distributors to see who could get their wines to the city first. Savvy producers, such as Duboeuf's father, Georges, seized upon this marketing opportunity, using the races and parties to promote Nouveau worldwide, bringing the humble region attention from around Europe, North America and Asia. In

1985, the third Thursday in November officially became Beaujolais Nouveau Day, and the celebration was a full-blown craze. Eventually, the hype faded as consumers have turned to newer wine trends, but Nouveau is still popular, said Duboeuf. "We ship to over 80 different markets. [The demand] is not growing, but it's stable." These youthful wines are meant for immediate consumption and enjoyment, a placeholder while the more serious Beaujolais wines take their time developing in the winery. Like all red Beaujolais, Nouveau wines are made from Gamay grapes, which must be harvested by hand.

The 2016 vintage resulted in **more elegant wines, with fresh red fruit. Notes of strawberry and cherry dominate their profiles, with savory details of herb, smoke and minerality** giving the wines dimension and complexity; bright acidity binds all the elements together. **Well-priced and easy-drinking, these wines offer a fun way to toast the arrival of the 2016 vintage and the start of the holiday season, pairing well with the wide range of foods on the table this time of year.**" (Wine Spectator)

**DOMAINE ROCHETTE Beaujolais-Villages Nouveau 2016 @ \$12.99 per bottle**

"A savory edge of grilled herb and fresh earth lines the boysenberry and cherry fruit. Ample sweet spice and zesty elements linger into the tangy, lightly grippy finish. 400 cases imported." (Wine Spectator)

**JOSEPH DROUHIN Beaujolais Nouveau 2016 @ \$12.99 per bottle**

"Juicy cherry and strawberry flavors burst through the creamy midpalate, with licorice drop and floral details giving expression to the finish." (Wine Spectator)

**JEAN-PAUL BRUN Beaujolais Nouveau Terres Dorées l'Ancien Vieilles Vignes 2016 @ \$14.99 per bottle**

"A light-bodied red, with floral aromas giving way to juicy cherry, currant and raspberry fruit, backed by licorice snap, anise and cedar accents. Offers a clean, lightly tannic finish. 800 cases imported." (Wine Spectator)

**PASCAL CHATELUS Beaujolais Nouveau 2016 @ \$10.99 per bottle**

"Bright and fresh, with raspberry and strawberry flavors matched to creamy gumdrop and light spice details. Offers a zesty, clean finish. 415 cases imported." (Wine Spectator)

**MOMMESSIN Beaujolais Nouveau 2016 @ \$9.99 per bottle**

"Crushed raspberry and cherry notes are interwoven with pink peppercorn, anise and light herbal elements, accented by fresh earth undertones. Offers a modest, clean finish." (Wine Spectator)

**BOUCHARD Aine 2016 Beaujolais Nouveau @ \$9.99 per bottle**

usually the most gluggably grape-juicy of them all with nice purple colors and only subtle pepper (Dave)

last but not least...

**\*\* AFFORDABLE LUXURY: the 2 BEST American PINOT NOIR available under \$50 \*\***

Pinot Noir is a classic pairing for game bird, whether it be duck or pheasant - or Turkey! In the past decade, the "American" Pinot Noirs from Willamette Valley, Oregon and from California's coast have been some of the finest red wines one can offer for Thanksgiving. Here are my 2 best right now, and (in my opinion) the 2 BEST under \$50 available in the market right now...

**STANGELAND 2014 "Vermeer Vineyard" Eola-Amity Willamette Valley PINOT NOIR @ \$35.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Only 168 cases made, this wine could pass for great Burgundy (think Volnay, or maybe Gevrey-Chambertin, or Chambolle-Musigny) but it actually one of the pinnacle expressions of what a great winemaker can do from a well-tended vineyard in a great Willamette Valley vintage. Pure Oregon, but will appeal to Burgundy drinkers and California (or New Zealand) Pinot Noir drinkers alike. The 5 cases I got of the 2012 of this were clamored-for by those who tried it a couple of winters ago. This time I have 7 cases, but they are sure to sell out quickly.

**BERNARDUS 2013 PISONI Vineyard - Santa Lucia Highlands PINOT NOIR @ \$44.99 per bottle (FFS-16)**

Suggested Retail: \$70 (see both W.S. and W.E. and winery website)

**Rated 94 points by Wine Enthusiast**, who notes: "Elegant and powerful sandalwood spice, myrrh, red-cherry juice and cola play prominently on the lush nose of this wine **from the vineyard of regional pioneer Gary Pisoni**. The palate is laced with cranberry fruit and hibiscus notes, yet the reward is the lifting herbal tone of dried marjoram, thyme, rosemary lavender and menthol. \$70 retail. 94 points." **AND Wine Spectator says: "Well done in an ultrarich, expressive style, with layers of blackberry, raspberry, pomegranate and plum.**

Deep, persistent and elegant, unfolding on the palate. Drink now through 2022. 449 cases made. 92 points. \$70 retail."

Dave says: Limited to six 6pk cases, only 449 total case made, and I might be the only retailer in MN to have this on a sale price!

Thanks for your patronage, this fantastic fall season - and here's to a great winter too! -- Dave

**The Right Wines are BrightWines!**

[www.brightwines.com](http://www.brightwines.com) 651-748-0793

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