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Subject: **Mistletoe and Wine**
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The BrightWines Beacon for 12/22/17 - 12/26/17: Mistletoe and Wine (annual The Gift of Wine edition)

"Christmas time, mistletoe and wine" (refrain from the song, Mistletoe and Wine by Cliff Richard , 1988)

How are you doing on your holiday list? I hope your your gift lists, parties and dinners, and any travel plans, are all coming together nicely. Here at BrightWines I am pleased to report that business has become rather brisk lately, and I'm doing my best to keep the store well-stocked. This weekend my college-graduate son will be here to help keep the aisles clear of boxes, the shelves stocked, and to help you carry your purchases to the car. I'll be able to keep my attention focused on helping you select wines for holiday entertaining and for gift-giving too. This weekend and BrightWines will likely be one of the very busiest of the year. So let me briefly say "Thank You" for your patronage recently (and to come) and for your patience during any hectic stretches. It's been a busy (or should that be "festive") week, and we have a full slate of store hours for Friday (plus a full-house for the guided tasting tonight too) and a FULL day on tap for Saturday the 23rd, from 10am to 7pm, before Dave@BrightWines takes off for 3 days of much needed rest. Here is what's up for the Christmastime weekend...

**** RE-STOCKED CUSTOMER FAVORITES:** this week I loaded in another 10 case stack of several recent favorites, including: **Cline 2015 Old Vine Zinfandel @ \$9.99** per bottle, **Cline 2015 "Ancient Vines" Carignane @ \$12.99** per bottle, **Silk and Spice @ \$9.99** per bottle, **Las Ninas (Apalta-Colchagua) Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$9.99** per bottle, **Smith and Hook (93 points) Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$19.99** per bottle, **Canoe Ridge (90 points) Washington Merlot @ \$12.99** per bottle, **Kono Marlborough New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc @ \$10.79** per bottle, **Runquist "1448" Red Blend @ \$14.99** per bottle, and many more 3 to 5 case restocks of things like **Chakras Malbec @ \$10.79** each, **Poppy Reserve Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir @ \$15.99** per bottle, **Cleto Chiarni Brut de Noirs rose sparkling @ \$12.99** each, and more - and more! There are also some NEW wines that have come into stock, like **The Snake Charmer 2015 McLaren Vale Shiraz @ \$15.99** per bottle, **Vigilance 2015 Red Hills Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$12.99** each, as well as some **new Cotes du Rhone, new Chianti**, and **new dry ROSE wines** and more! See Bright Lights for more lists, or stop by this weekend to stock up yourself for the holidays! INQUIRE for CASE PRICING (most of the above mixes/matches with case discounts) TOO.

**** Affordable Luxury (and some plain old Luxury-Luxury):** **White Rock 2013 and 2014 Napa Valley Cabernet and Claret** (one of the wineries that totally burned down in the fires) and **Amarone** from Italy, **Barolo** from Italy rated 93 points, **91-point rated Chianti Classico**, **92-point rated Rose Champagne**, the **BEST Malbec that Piattelli** makes, and much MORE too, including **Bordeaux** and **Burgundy** (whites and reds, both Bordeaux and Burgundy and also Sancerre) from **France from \$17.99 to \$59.99** per bottle. See BRIGHT LIGHTS for more lists, or stop by this weekend to stock up yourself for the holidays!

THE LAMP IS LIT: Store Hours for December 22nd through December 26th

**** FRIDAY December 22nd: OPEN until 7pm tonight**
(sorry, tonight's guided tasting is full - look ahead to next week for bubbly tastings)

**** SATURDAY December 23rd: OPEN from 10am to 7pm** (extended hours)

**** SUNDAY December 24th (Xmas Eve): CLOSED** per usual for Sundays
Sorry, despite the busy season, BrightWines will be closed on the remaining Sundays of 2017.

**** MONDAY December 25th (Merry Christmas): CLOSED**

**** TUESDAY December 26th (Boxing Day): CLOSED**
Yes, BrightWines is taking a rare 3-day weekend off for some much needed rest. I will be back to FULL regular hours from Wednesday through Saturday leading into the new year.

**** WEDNESDAY December 27th: OPEN from 11am to 6:30pm** (regular weekday)

**** THURSDAY December 28th: OPEN from 10:30am to 7pm** (plus upcoming tastings, see below)

**** UPCOMING TASTINGS (next weekend):** I am now accepting email RSVP to attend the annual Guided Tastings on bubbly/sparkling Champagne that will be held on THURSDAY Dec 28th, and FRIDAY Dec 29th, and SATURDAY Dec 30th, in the evenings next weekend. **NEW THIS YEAR we will be "Sabre-ing" open one of the Champagne's with an actual Sabre intended for such use. Thursday at 7pm, and/or Friday at 7pm, and/or Saturday at 6pm** - space is limited at all three options. So check your calendar and **rsvp by email to attend** one of the three options!

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: the gift of wine

"Wine is one of the most civilized things in the world... and it offers a greater range of enjoyment and appreciation than, possibly, any other purely sensory thing which may be purchased." (Ernest Hemingway)

It was a gift of a bottle of wine, given to me at Christmas in the late 1980's, which started me on the slippery slope to where I am now. Shortly thereafter I began my quest to "always have a few good bottles of wine around the house" and the rest, as they say, is history. And that gift of a bottle of wine, although it was nothing fancy at all (it might have been a Sutter Home White Zinfandel) turned out to be a gift that kept on giving. **Wine has given me opportunity to travel, a career and a business, wine has given me new appreciation for history, for art, for the earth. Wine has given me new friends, and given opportunities to deepen relationships with old friends and family** too. Over the years I have given and received plenty of wines as gifts, and I don't intend to stop.

Wine is a social beverage and the gift of a bottle encourages sharing, and toasting, and more! A well-chosen bottle of wine can enhance holiday meals, gift-giving, family fun, holiday romance, holiday parties; the list is nearly endless. I have learned that a bottle of fine wine is a wonderful gift for anyone on your list, especially for those that seem to already have everything else! During the holiday season, a bottle of wine is always a welcome host/hostess gift - and at this time of year a safe bet for that is a bottle of bubbly to toast family and friends or for New Year's Eve if you don't already know the recipients taste or preferences.

Well-chosen doesn't have to mean expensive, which is a guiding principle for BrightWines (as you probably know) but **it can also be fun to give a special bottle to someone who might not otherwise indulge** themselves, or to find an unknown gem for the connoisseur. No matter your taste or your budget, there is sure to be an interesting and delicious bottle of wine to suit. I am always willing to help you find a bottle that might make a superb gift, read on to Bright Lights for some ideas to help you catch up on your lists this year - with an emphasis on some great wines in the Affordable Luxury category, some of which are indeed very "affordable."

BRIGHT LIGHTS: making our list and checking it twice

'Tis the season for something wet in every cup! (Ogden Nash) And for all you Santas out there making a list and checking it twice, here is just a **brief list of hints from one of Santa's helpers located nearby the Snowman in North St Paul:**

(be sure to inquire with Dave here in-store, or by email, for more details on these IN-STOCK selections)

I have **checked my list** and Santa recommends any of these to suit any price, style and taste.

**** RE-STOCKED FAVORITES ****

Cline 2015 Old Vine Zinfandel @ \$9.99 per bottle (&107.88/case = \$8.99 each)

Cline 2015 "Ancient Vines" Carignane @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88 per case)

Runquist "1448" Red Blend @ \$14.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case = \$12.99 each, sale price)

Cleto Chiarni Brut de Noirs rose sparkling @ \$12.99 each (\$155.88/case)

Smith and Hook (93 points W.E.) Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$19.99 per bottle (\$215.88/case = \$17.99 each)

Silk and Spice @ \$9.99 per bottle (\$119.88 per case)

Las Ninas (Apalta-Colchagua) Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$9.99 per bottle (\$99.99/case = \$8.33 each)

Canoe Ridge (90 points W.S.) Washington Merlot @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88 per case)

Kono Marlborough New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc @ \$10.79 per bottle (\$119.88/case = \$9.99 each)

Chakras Malbec @ \$10.79 each (\$129.48/case)

(new addition) **Vigilance 2015 Red Hills Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$12.99 each (\$149.99/case = \$12.50 each)**

Poppy Reserve Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir @ \$15.99 per bottle (\$191.88/case)

(new addition) **The Snake Charmer 2015 McLaren Vale Shiraz @ \$15.99 per bottle (\$179.88/case = \$14.99 each)**

Did you know? Some of the lyrics to the Judy Garland / Frank Sinatra song "Have yourself a merry little Christmas" were changed for the movie Meet Me in Saint Louis. One of those original lyrics was "Have yourself a merry little Christmas, pop that Champagne cork."

\$9.99 Prosecco (check) to \$12.99 Prosecco (and check) to \$17.99 Prosecco (and check again)

\$15.99 Brut "champagne style" (check, check, 2 types)

\$29.99 to \$39.99 (3 styles) of true Champagne Brut (check, check, check)

Laurent-Perrier Brut Rose Champagne @ \$79.99 per bottle (very limited)

This Champagne house is more famous for their pink than their regular Brut.

Rated 92 points (current disgorgement, current issue of Wine Spectator) "The fine knit and balance of this elegant rosé sparkler recommends it as an aperitif, but the firm frame of acidity, the subtle richness of the smoky underpinning, and the flavors of baked strawberry, pastry cream and candied orange peel recommend it to food as well. Try this with Peking duck. Drink now through 2022. **92 points. \$99 retail.**" (Wine Spectator, Nov 30th - 2017)

10 year Tawny Port for \$19.99 (check)

Ruby Port and Vintage-style Port (check, check)

Bourbon, Scotch, Rye, (all top-tier, priced \$39.99 - \$69.99 each) Check!!!

nicely oaky/creamy buttery rich (but dry) **Chardonnay at \$10 (check)**

top-rated great Chardonnay from \$17.99 - \$29.99 (92 to 95 points) check and check

good value \$17.99 Sancerre (check)

White Burgundy from \$12.99 - \$19.99 (check)

Red Burgundy from \$24.99 to \$59.99 per bottle (limited and great) check and check and check again!

BORDEAUX from \$12.99 - \$39.99 (all highly rated, award winners) check, check, check, check, check!

AMARONE from Italy (check)

93-point rated **BAROLO (check)**

\$15.99 - \$39.99 Oregon and California Pinot Noirs (check, check)

And so on, and so on... I think you get the idea! As I noted in last week's newsletter: *"It's the holiday season, and BrightWines has, a good wine, for every price range and every taste. (to the tune of Happy Holiday, by Andy Williams)*

And last but not least, for a **"luxury" style Affordable Luxury**, how about a gift bottle - or one for prime rib - of a very impressive \$49.99 - \$59.99 per bottle Claret and Cabernet Sauvignon from **one of Napa Valley's oldest wineries, but one of the wineries which unfortunately fell victim to the fires** in Napa this past fall.

White Rock Vineyards and winery, located near Stags Leap, was entirely burned during the wildfires of October 2017.

<http://www.sfgate.com/wine/article/White-Rock-Vineyards-assesses-fire-damage-looks-12276195.php>

The local supplier had stock of the 2013 Cabernet and the 2014 Claret, and even ordered additional cases from the San Francisco area warehouse (not fire-damaged) to offer their wines this fall and show them some support. I tasted these and was very impressed and pleased and happy to feature them here at BrightWines! IN-STOCK NOW. This would make a great gift for a Napa lover, and a great wine for prime rib too, and of course makes for a great conversation piece too!

WHITE ROCK 2014 Napa Valley CLARET @ \$49.99 per bottle (very limited)

A Meritage style full-bodied drinkable blen of Cabernet Sauvignon 76% Merlot 18% Cabernet Franc 3% and Petit Verdot 3%

WHITE ROCK 2013 Napa Valley estate grown CABERNET SAUVIGNON @ \$59.99 per bottle (very limited)

Rated 91 points Wine Enthusiast at \$65 retail. "Blackberry, cherry and plum notes form this estate wine's fruity core, complemented by an earthy thread of cedar, pencil and tobacco. Dry, firm tannins give it a structure that takes time to unwind, the finish marked by powerful grace and spicy clove. \$65. 91 points."

"Holly and ivy hanging up, and something wet in every cup." -- Ogden Nash, American poet and humorist

Let me just conclude by saying one more quick thank you to the many-many newsletter readers and in-store customers who have made the past several days and recent weeks prosperous, I sincerely hope all of the wines we selected for your meals, for gifts, and for gatherings, are indeed the "right wines" for you all. --Dave

The Right Wines are BrightWines!

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