

From: The BrightWines Beacon <lighthouse@brightwines.com>
Subject: Dave's Raves and Customer Faves
Date: February 2, 2010 6:53:19 PM CST

The BrightWines Beacon for 2/2/10: a special "Below Wholesale Sale" extra-edition

February has arrived (Happy Ground Hog Day) and the **BWS-10 sale list has been UPDATED and is just as exciting as ever!** Many **NEW wines have been added** and although a few items sold out over the first weekend, the sale list is still in very good shape with **GREAT wines at GREAT prices** in just about every style imaginable. **The sale runs for 8 more days yet**, so there is plenty of time to peruse the list. **BWS-10 is on NOW through February 11th.**

I would like to THANK all of my valued newsletter readers who made the first official weekend of the BWS-10 such a great success. The store was really hopping both Friday and Saturday. But today is a new week and a new month, and in the quiet after the storm of weekend #1 of the BWS-10 I have **time to send along some of Dave's Top Picks and Customer Favorites** of the sale list so far to get geared up for weekend #2 of the sale coming up.

Today I am not going to re-send the full PDF of the sale list, but **the list has been UPDATED and is ONLINE** at BrightWines.com <http://www.brightwines.com/bws-10.pdf> (remember that e-mail orders are accepted)

**** FANS of FANTASTIC PINOT NOIR please take note:** one of the NEW wines on the Below Wholesale Sale is the tastiest Pinot Noir I have had in a very long time! The multiple 90-point rated 2006 **BABCOCK grand cuvee Pinot Noir** from the Santa Rita Hills near Santa Barbara. This is FANTASTIC affordable-luxury Pinot Noir. See Bright Lights for more details and the 90-point reviews from Wine Spectator and Wine Enthusiast. (from \$40 down to just **\$26.99 on the BWS-10 list**)

THE LAMP IS LIT: Week #2 of BWS-10, Store Hours and Tasting info

**** TODAY through Thursday Feb 4th: OPEN from 10:30am to 6:30pm** (regular hours)

**** FRIDAY Feb 5th: OPEN from 10:30am to 7:30pm** (regular hours, plus tasting at 7:30pm)

**** SATURDAY Feb 6th: OPEN from 10:30am to 6:30pm** (regular hours)

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: will return soon

During the hectic times associated with this, my biggest and best sale of the year, it is difficult for me to find the time to write a few educational paragraphs for the newsletter like I prefer to do each week. Possibly for this coming Friday's regular newsletter (yes today is just an "extra" edition) I will have time to explore a theme, and I think it MIGHT just be an article on "off the beaten path" Italian wines. (stay tuned, and a few of them might also pop up in the tasting that night too)

BRIGHT LIGHTS: Dave's Raves and Customer Faves (BWS-10)

The Below Wholesale Sale List has been UPDATED and is ONLINE at BrightWines.com <http://www.brightwines.com/bws-10.pdf> (e-mail orders are accepted)

I have already written up several of my favorites a week ago in the "Sneak Preview" edition, but I have plenty of great NEW favorites too, and so do the customers who have shopped the sale already or come to one of the tastings. Here is the full scoop on some of the best of the list.

**** NEW ADDITION to the BWS-10 sale list: nearly 50% off a delicious reserve-style Carneros Chardonnay ****

Many of you are familiar with the brand Castle Rock, a label that often provides very good all-purpose California wines and quite popular for their region-specific Pinot Noirs from places like Russian River, Carneros, Monterey, etc. About a year ago, Castle Rock switched wholesale suppliers here in Minnesota and as part of that process the new supplier ended up with a spare pallet or two of some previous vintages. The most noteworthy of said wines was the 2006 reserve Carneros Chardonnay.

We have a chance to get the RESERVE (a true "reserve" style with limited production compared to the regular) for the price of the regular wine. This is a very classy and classic California/Carneros Chardonnay; **full-bodied and smooth and richly-oaked, yet dry with balanced complex flavors true to Carneros form.**

CASTLE ROCK 2006 RESERVE Carneros CHARDONNAY @ \$8.99 each (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$17 Published Wholesale cost: \$11.33 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$8.99 per bottle

STOCK IS GOOD, I bought every case left in the warehouse (over a pallet) and spread it out over 3 shipments here.

**** The Best of both Worlds: over 40% off a lovely Stellenbosch Shiraz with a touch of Aussie to it ****

TASTING FAVORITE for myself, and several customers too, this past Friday/Saturday evenings. This wine is a joint venture wine, Radford Dale makes BOTH an Australian Shiraz from Barossa and a Shiraz from Stellenbosch in South Africa.

RADFORD DALE 2005 Stellenbosch, South Africa SHIRAZ @ \$11.67 each (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$20 (WS and WE) Published Wholesale cost: \$14 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$11.67 per bottle

Wine Spectator notes (\$20 retail): "Forward, with plush mint, milk chocolate, plum and spice notes followed by an open-knit finish. Drink now. 300 cases imported."

Wine Enthusiast notes (\$20 retail): "A firm, spicy backbone gives this Shiraz heft, but it's balanced by juicy red fruit and soft floral notes that keep it from becoming too austere. Complex but not complicated, it's a great example of the restrained but flavorful elegance for which South African Shiraz is known. A touch of smoke adds character."

**** BARGAIN ALERT: 2 new red wine bargains have been official added to the sale list ****

Both of these are new additions to the BWS-10 list having arrived on Thursday, this first one is a "WINE ADVENTURES" closeout on a wine that BrightWines has featured previously at the regular price and is a full one-third off that original price!

DOMAINE de VALDERNIER 2005 AIX-EN-PROVENCE rouge @ \$6.67 each (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$10 (online sources) Published Wholesale cost: \$7 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$6.67 per bottle

DAVE notes: from the region between the Southern Rhone and Marseilles, this Coteaux de Aix-en-Provence rouge is a classic example of Provençal/Rhone reds. The 2005 was a textbook vintage throughout France. Herbal red cherries on the nose and on the palate, medium-bodied, quite dry and ready for a wide range of simple-but-hearty winter fare. No reviews in the major magazines, but in the internet era there is always someone with an opinion and this one matches mine and is also widely read as the **30-Second Wine Advisor** at WineLoversPage.com: "Fresh raspberry aromas, with a distinct edge of fresh herbs that makes me think of herbes de Provence. Raspberries and something a little more tart - cranberry, maybe - in a fresh and inviting flavor. Good, crisp red fruit lingers in a cleansing acidic finish."

WINDMILL 2006 Lodi SYRAH @ \$6.99 each (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$12 (RP) Published Wholesale cost: \$8.58 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$6.99 per bottle

Robert Parker notes: "a relatively **sexy, soft style of wine**, with plenty of roasted herbs, bouquet garni, and black fruit, with **no hard edges**. 87 points. \$12 retail."

DAVE notes: This wine comes **from the 7 Deadly Zins guys** (Michael and David Phillips) and is a direct-from-the-winery, vintage-change, closeout deal offered exclusively to BrightWines for the month of February! **BrightWines has a long history with the Windmill wines, being the FIRST retailer in Minnesota ever to offer them way back in the early days** when I had to get them from a Chicago distributor. Recently, I have offered the Windmill Petite Sirah at the \$12 retail (\$11.99 of course) so I know that the \$6.99 price is a no-brainer, especially since the wine tastes exactly like Robert Parker says it does! STOCK IS GOOD, I bought a whole pallet and the second shipment arrives this week.

**** AFFORDABLE LUXURY: a FANTASTIC Pinot Noir has been added to the list ****

The tastiest Pinot Noir I have had in a very long time! **90 points is too LOW** a score, based on the bottles I have tasted.

BABCOCK 2006 Grand Cuvée Santa Rita Hills PINOT NOIR @ \$26.99 per bottle

Suggested Retail: \$40 (see WS and WE)

Wine Spectator notes: **Score: 90 points. Release Price: \$40. "Starts out supple, with fresh complex aromas** of earth and black cherry fruit, picking up a hint of sandalwood and spice. Chewy but ripe tannins provide structure. Drink now through 2012. 950 cases made."

Wine Enthusiast notes: 90 points. Retail Price: \$40. "dense and sappy in youth, showing extracted cherry, raspberry and cassis fruit, with complex notes of bacon, leather and spice. Not particularly subtle now, it **should gain elegance in a few years. Best late 2008 through 2012.** (tasted in early 2008)

DAVE notes: **this was a HUGE HIT as the "special treat" for the in-store tasting** last Friday. We did not do it on Saturday because stocks were low, but I still have a couple of cases left and more arriving this week too. There are about a dozen cases total available, so if you love top-shelf Pinot Noir for affordable prices, this is the one to buy soon!

**** AFFORDABLE LUXURY FEATURED WINERY: the BEST winemaker in Washington? ****

Chris Camarda (Andrew Will is named for his 2 sons) is one of the best in the world, in addition to Washington. And regardless, these are 4 great wines all at a BIG DISCOUNT (which is rare anyway) from their usual retail prices. VERY LIMITED so act quickly if you are a fan. BWS-10 offers the ANDREW WILL 2006 CABERNET BLENDS and 2005 SYRAH.

ANDREW WILL 2005 "Annie Camarda" SYRAH @ \$29.99 per bottle (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$47 (WS) Published Wholesale cost: \$31.67 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$29.99 per bottle

Robert Parker notes: **91 points. Chris Camarda's efforts with Syrah deserve serious attention.** The Annie Camarda Syrah is a blend of fruit from the Champoux and Ciel du Cheval Vineyards, two of eastern Washington's finest. The 2005 Syrah Annie Camarda delivers a more alluring perfume of meat, game, bacon, blueberry, and violets. **Layered, ripe, and creamy textured, this hedonistic effort should evolve for 3-4 years** and drink well through 2020. \$45 retail. 91 points."

Wine Spectator notes: **91 points. \$47 release price. 263 cases made.** "Smooth in texture, with dense, ripe cherry and blackberry fruit, hinting at smoke and coffee as the finish expands nicely. Drink now through 2013."

ANDREW WILL 2006 Horse Heaven Hills SORELLA @ \$49.99 per bottle (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$80 (RP) Published Wholesale cost: \$53.66 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$49.99 per bottle

Wine Spectator notes: **95 points!** "Tight, focused and distinctive, this sharp-edged Washington red shows ripe currant, spice, tobacco and coffee flavors that sneak up on you. They start slow, but swirl through the mildly grippy tannins into a long, expressive finish, making for a beautifully compact and complex wine. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. **Best from 2011 through 2018.** \$74 retail. 95 points."

Robert Parker notes: **94 points.** \$80 release price. "The 2006 Sorella is produced from Block 1 of the Champoux Vineyard and is the winery's flagship. It is composed of 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, and 4% Petit Verdot. Saturated purple in color, the nose offers up an enticing mix of pain grille, pencil lead, espresso, incense, black currant, and blackberry. **Already complex, this layered, fleshy, intensely flavored effort will benefit from another 4-6 years of cellaring** and will have a drinking window extending from 2013 to 2026."

ANDREW WILL 2006 "Champoux Vineyard" @ \$43.33 per bottle (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$70 (RP) Published Wholesale cost: \$45.50 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$43.33 per bottle

Robert Parker notes: **93 points**. "The 2006 Champoux Vineyard is made up of 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Cabernet Franc, and 8% Merlot. Purple-colored, it sports an aromatic array of wood smoke, pencil lead, cinnamon, clove, black currant and blackberry. This leads to a **mouth-filling wine bordering on opulence. Rich, ripe, and impeccably balanced**, it has the stuffing to evolve for 6-8 years and should offer prime drinking from 2013 to 2026. \$70 release price."

Wine Spectator notes: **92 points**. Best from 2011 through 2016. Firm, with a tart balance to the bright raspberry and brooding black fruit flavors. A distinctive minerally note emerges nicely on the expressive finish. Needs time to soften. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

ANDREW WILL 2006 "Ciel du Cheval Vineyard" @ \$43.33 per bottle (BWS-10 price)

Suggested Retail: \$70 (RP) Published Wholesale cost: \$45.50 per bottle

BrightWines BWS-10 Price: \$43.33 per bottle

Robert Parker notes: **93 points**. \$70 release price. "The 2006 Ciel du Cheval Vineyard (on Red Mountain) is a blend of 40% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Franc, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 4% Petit Verdot. Purple-colored, it has an **outstanding bouquet of cedar, cinnamon, clove, black currant, and blackberry**. On the palate the tannins so predominant in Red Mountain are nicely tamed. There are layers of savory fruit, considerable complexity, excellent balance, and a lengthy, fruit-filled finish. This lengthy effort will benefit from 3-5 years of additional cellaring and drink well through 2026."

Wine Spectator notes: **92 points**. "Supple, generous and sharply focused, delivering a complex mouthful of cherry and plum fruit with elements of dried flowers, exotic spices and savory, meaty notes competing for attention. A nice lift of acidity drives the finish, which lingers impressively. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2016."

DAVE SAYS (about ALL of the Andrew Will wines): I have been a fan for years, and am luck enough to have handled nearly every great wine/vintage available in Minnesota of Andrew Will wines since I have been in business, following them from supplier to supplier and often getting the BEST PRICES in town! I have 2 - 3 cases available of each of these, but that is all that was available at these vintage-change closeout prices at the end of this past year. Very limited, but if you are a fan of Washington or just want some of the best wines made in the world at discounted prices you will want to mix up a few of these!

That is about all the time I have for today. Remember, **the BELOW WHOLESALE sale (BWS-10) runs through February 11th**. THANK YOU again for making the first weekend such a success, but there is plenty left to go for BWS-10 so I look forward to weekend #2 and the many new arrivals in today's newsletter. -- Dave