

From: The BrightWines Beacon <lighthouse@brightwines.com>
Subject: four R's: Rioja, Riesling, Rose, and Re-stocks
Date: May 3, 2018 1:27:02 PM CDT
To: The BrightWines Beacon

The BrightWines Beacon 4/27 - 4/30, 2018: four R's (Rioja, Riesling, Rose, and Re-stocks)

The month of April sure has redeemed itself this past week or so, and the NEW SEASON means NEW WINES:

**** a new vintage of "Silk and Spice"** (which rated 90 pts W.E. again) is in-stock, plus new shipments of the **90-91 rated reds "Colossal" and "Confidencial"** which are the upstart competitors to Silk and Spice from Portugal

**** new RIOJA and Tempranillo reds from Spain**

**** new fresh vintage French Rose from Provence** and the Rhone/Languedoc too

**** Re-stocked Favorites:** Tinto Historico Malbec by Catena, both the Poppy "Santa Lucia Highlands" Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and a small (I wish it was bigger) back-order shipment at the sale price of the three most popular Peirano Estate reds

**** a listing of all of my in-stock Riesling**

and MORE, see Bright Lights section today...

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: in praise of Tempranillo and Riesling

"Arguably the greatest white wine on earth." -- Oxford Companion to Wine

"The noblest of all noble grapes." -- Hugh Johnson (World Atlas of Wine)

"The king of white wine." -- many sources

"The Best White Wine on Earth" - wine writer, Stuart Pigott

"My own seasonal signpost is an annual thirst for German rieslings. Usually in spring I find myself drawn to the filigreed, finely etched rieslings of the Mosel, as delicate as the petals of those Park Avenue tulips." -- Eric Asimov, New York Times

If it were not for the topic of today's newsletter, I bet most of us would assume that the opening quotes were referring to Chardonnay or maybe Sauvignon Blanc. The fact is, many of the most respected wine experts in the world feel that Riesling is the pinnacle of white wine. Those of you who believe strongly in the idea of terroir (that wine reflects its specific place of origin, right down to the individual vineyard plots) ought to revere German Riesling above even the great White Burgundies. No grape more consistently conveys individual terroir differences than Riesling. Also, if you believe that wine improves with age, no white table wine ages longer, with more impressive results, than German Riesling. Also, for those of you who enjoy wine on its own, as much as you do with a meal, no wines are more ideally suited to such pursuits than the great German Rieslings.

Tempranillo is a wine that wears many hats. For some wine lovers it is one of their favorite red wines, and for Spain it is certainly their most famous red variety. But Tempranillo is not that widely known outside of Spain, is often overlooked when the noble red wine varieties are listed, and even within Spain it comes in a variety of styles from a variety of regions and under a variety of nicknames to boot. The Oxford Companion might have put it best when they said that "Tempranillo is Spain's answer to Cabernet Sauvignon... it's grape are thick-skinned and capable of making deep colored, long-lasting wines. Temprano means early in Spanish, and Tempranillo probably earns its name from its propensity to ripen early, certainly up to two weeks before the Garnacha/Grenache." Tempranillo is often thought of as synonymous with Rioja, the important region of northern Spain, but actually Rioja wines are mostly Tempranillo-based blends, with the other varieties being Garnacha/Grenache and Mazuelo/Carignan; although they are predominantly Tempranillo - which ripens earlier as noted and is more powerful and colorful. Confusingly enough, as important as Tempranillo is to many of the most famous wine regions of Spain - and probably partly because it is so important - the variety goes by a wide range of regional nicknames. Tempranillo can rightfully be called everything from Tinto Fino, Tinto del Pais, Cencibel, Tinta de Toro, Valdepenas, Aragonez and Tinta Roriz (the latter two in Portugal).

More confusingly, Tempranillo is also a bit of a chameleon, flavor-wise. Often wines made from Tempranillo reflect the character of the oak barrel aging regimen, or the region of origin, moreso than it does its own varietal characteristics. As the Oxford Companion notes: "the variety does not have a particularly strong flavor identity. Some find stawberries, others spice and leather, but determining a constant aroma attributable to the grape (other than the oak barrels it was aged in) can be a fruitless task. Thankfully though, Tempranillo does have an

affinity for oak - and that is partly why some many of us love wines from Tempranillo. Whether it be aged in new French barrique as is often done in the Ribera del Duero and/or by other "modernist" wine producers, or older American oak casks as in the traditionally-styled Rioja crianza and reserva wines, both styles can be quite tasty - and allows Tempranillo to shine.

Read on to Bright Lights for some great Riesling and Tempranillo wines, in-stock at BrightWines.

BRIGHT LIGHTS: Dave's Top Picks of new arrivals - the four R's of Rioja, Riesling, Rose, and Re-stocks

**** the first "R" is for RIOJA:**

(word to the wise: Dave usually prefers the classic/textbook styles of Rioja Crianza and Reserva)

Vina Eguia 2015 RIOJA Tempranillo @ \$9.99 per bottle (case price \$107.88 = \$8.99)

This simple but satisfying Rioja rated 91 one points from one of the more generous wine reviewers. It's a screwcapped bottle and a nicely dry and purple/peppery modern style Rioja that will make for a good burger wine.

Bodegas MURIEL 2015 RIOJA Crianza @ \$12.99 per bottle (case price \$150)

Classic and traditional with smoothness and ripe fruit underlying the "crianza" required oak barrel and bottle age.

Vina Eguia 2013 RIOJA Reserva @ \$12.99 per bottle (case price \$150)

Simply put, this is a steal for Reserva quality, in fact every recent vintage of Eguia Reserva Rioja rated by Wine Spectator is at \$19 retail. Fully mature in oak barrel and bottle aged with full-bodied red and purple fruit richness.

Bodegas Muriel 2013 RIOJA Reserva @ \$15.99 per bottle (\$159.99 per case = \$13.33 each)

Aged in both French and American oak barrels, using Tempranillo from both Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Alta. This Reserva is the best Rioja I've had for the \$15 price range I've tasted in a very long time, and frankly is a retail price wine of more like \$19 anyway.

Senorio de P. Pecina 2013 RIOJA Crianza @ \$17.99 per bottle (\$199.99/case = \$16.67 each)

This "crianza" tastes more like a Reserva, and at \$23 retail and back-to-back vintages (2012 and 2013) of ratings from **Robert Parker's Wine Advocate of 91-points** this is a very impressive, classically styled Rioja!

**** the second "R" is for RIESLING:**

(listed in price order, and then from sweeter to dry)

"Way Kuhl" 2013 Mosel RIESLING @ \$9.99 per bottle (case price \$95.88 = \$7.99 each if you love it)

Case Price: \$95.88 Suggested Retail: \$14

An importer cuvee screwcapped bottling from a good importer, a nice kabinet/spatlese (slightly sweet) style from the Mosel, with green apple flavors backed by refreshing mineral zing that finishes deeply.

Willamette Valley Vineyards 2016 Willamette off dry Riesling @ \$12.99 per bottle (limited)

new vintage of a Riesling that has rated 87 to 90 points by Wine Spectator for 8 consecutive vintages!

St. Hallett 2015 Eden Valley (Barossa) Dry Riesling @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case)

The previous vintage rated 89 WS @ \$16 and this current 2015 vintage is rated 88% - 90% in online user-reviews too, a very consistent wine from a TOP Barossa producer. Dry and lively with lime, green apple, and hints of fusel/mineral tones.

Jim Barry "Watervale" Clare Valley 2017 Dry Riesling @ \$14.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case = 12.99)

Wine Spectator rated at \$20 retail, who notes: "Rich, ripe pear and yellow apple accents are juicy and appealing, with fresh acidity on the finish. Drink now. 250 cases imported." Another famous dry Riesling from Australia by another top producer.

Herman J Wiemer 2013 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes) @ \$14.99 per bottle (very limited)

Rated 92 points (at \$19 retail) by Wine Enthusiast magazine, who notes: "While dry and impeccably elegant, this buoyantly perfumed Riesling balances subtle notes of honeysuckle and bees wax against a backdrop of luscious, mango, pineapple and peach flavors. The palate is satisfying and supple yet balanced by a sheen of lemon-lime acidity. 92 points."

Weingut Furst 2014 Spatlese Mosel Riesling (dry) @ \$15.99 per bottle (\$179.88/case = \$14.99 each)

Has the body and richness of a Spatlese (later-harvest) Mosel Riesling, but done as a DRY wine. Powerful and impressive!

DR. HERMANN Riesling QbA Mosel off dry "From The Slate" 2012 @ \$15.88 per bottle (\$179.88/case = \$14.99 each)

Wine Spectator recommended at \$19 retail, and notes that only 850 cases were made of this Kabinett-styled Riesling by a great Urziger (Mosel) producer. **90 point rated at \$19 retail** by Wine Enthusiast magazine, who notes: "Delicate whiffs of orange blossom and honeycomb scent this slightly off-dry Riesling. The palate is ripe with honey and peach, but elegantly balanced with lime acidity and a lingering touch of crushed-stone minerality. \$19. 90 points."

Gunderloch 2014 "Jean Baptiste" Rheinhessen feinherb Kabinett SOLD OUT (sorry to disappoint)

Recommended by Wine Spectator at \$24 retail, in a new more dry style for this famous "Jean Baptiste" Kabinett (feinherb is a half-dry style). **Rated 93 points** by Wine Enthusiast magazine, who notes: Sea spray and salty mineral complexities accent luscious, peachy fruit from nose to finish in this delightfully complex Riesling. It's weightier and more expansive on the palate than a typical Kabinett, but spine-tingling tangerine and lemon acidity lend a fresh, persistent finish. Ready to drink now but should improve through at least 2021."

**** the third "R" is for Rose** (new arrivals in fresh 2017 vinage dry Rose wines, in-stock)

(new, from St Tropez) **Chevalier de Torpez 2017 Cotes de Provence rose @ \$14.99 per bottle**

(new, from Rhone/Languedoc) **Domaine de la Patience "Nemausa" Costieres de Nimes rose @ \$14.99 per bottle**

(new bargain from France) **Altera vin de pays d'Oc 2017 Rose Garnacha @ \$9.99 per bottle**

(good stock from March shipment - 2018 bottling) **PLUMA vinho verde Rose @ \$7.99 per bottle**

(certified organic, 900 cases made) **Horse and Plow 2017 North Coast, California @ \$15.99 per bottle**

**** the fourth "R" is for Re-stocks** of recent favorites

(new vintage, 90 points WE, in-stock now) **Silk and Spice 2016 red blend (Portugal) @ \$9.99 per bottle** (\$119.88/case)

(re-stocked, new shipments, 90-91 rated on both) **Casa Santos Lima 2015 "Colossal" red (Portugal) @ \$10.79 per bottle**

(re-stocked, new shipments, 90-91 rated on both) **Casa Santos Lima 2015 "Confidencial" red (Portugal) @ \$10.79 per bottle**

ALSO RE-STOCKED THIS WEEK, customer favorites like:

"Tinto Historico" MALBEC (by Catena) from Mendoza @ \$15.99 per bottle (\$191.88/case)

Poppy "Reserve" Santa Lucia Highlands 2015 Pinot Noir @ \$15.99 per bottle (\$191.88/case)

Poppy 2016 Santa Lucia Highlands 2016 Chardonnay @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$149.99/case)

and a small (I wish it was bigger) back-order shipment of **the three most popular Peirano Estate reds: The Other Red 2014 @ \$7.99 per bottle** (sale price) plus 2016 **Illusion Red @ \$9.99** and **The Immortal Zin 2014 at \$9.99 per bottle too!**

(favorite Italian on the Como list) **Tenuta di Seste "Poggio d'Arna" 2104 Rosso Toscana @ \$17.99 per bottle** (\$199.99/case)

**** Last but not least...** a new season means new wines!

(some very affordable, affordable luxury)

(special purchase off winery-visit to MN, from Napa Valley)

PRIEST RANCH 2014 Estate Grown Napa Valley SAUVIGNON BLANC @ \$14.99 each (\$179.88/case)

Rated 91 points (at \$22 retail) by Wine Enthusiast magazine, who notes: "This slightly tropical, very pretty wine is inviting on the nose and palate. Pure, crisp and focused, it shows **softly crafted layers of lemon and vanilla that provide a lushness on the finish. 91 points.**"

(new from Bogle/PHANTOM) **JUGGERNAUT 2015 Hillside CABERNET SAUVIGNON @ \$19.99 each** (very LIMITED)
Better than Phantom?!? The label is impressive, the wine is impressive, the best "new introduction" Cabernet release of the year so far.

The Right Wines are BrightWines!

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