

From: The BrightWines Beacon <lighthouse@brightwines.com>
Subject: "WS Top 100" availabilities (plus Thanksgiving cheat-sheet)
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To: The BrightWines Beacon

The BrightWines Beacon for November 21st/22nd, 2014

(the regular edition, full-format newsletter for the weekend and week leading up to Thanksgiving)

"Pour forth the cheering wine: there's life and strength in every drop, thanksgiving to the vine!"
(American poet and literary/library patron of the 1800's, Albert Gorton Greene)

**** prologue from Dave ****

As we embark on the busy holiday season, it is perhaps worth noting that the "BrightWines concept" is designed for wine lovers on a year-round basis, and I'm aware that that the more hectic pace during the busier times of the "holiday season" can sometimes overwhelm that concept a bit. **I would like to thank my newsletter readers in advance for your patronage and your patience during the busy times here at the shop.** I will do my best in the coming weeks to balance speed and efficiency with good customer service and individualized attention when helping select wines for the holidays.

This weekend I have a **Thanksgiving cheat-sheet of wines from the BFS-14 Fall Sale (plus NEW additions) where stock is good and the SALE prices are still valid**, all with an eye towards good wines for Thanksgiving. There should be a little something for everyone on the list, and if not - there are PLENTY of more great options in-stock here at BrightWines. The store is well-stocked, in other words.

<http://www.brightwines.com/thanksgiving2014.pdf>

- ** Review of the Wine Spectator Top 100 List, current (and former) availabilities here at BrightWines. See The View from the Top.
- ** Store Hours and TASTING schedule, now through Thanksgiving weekend. See The Lamp is Lit.
- ** Bright Lights: a Thanksgiving cheat-sheet, plus 3 new "Dave's Top Picks" and Beaujolais Nouveau too!

THE LAMP IS LIT: Store Hours and Tasting Schedule

**** SATURDAY November 22nd: OPEN from 10am until 6pm - plus RSVP Guided Tasting at 6:15pm**

-- tasting details --

This Saturday evening is **the annual pre-Thanksgiving wine tasting (emphasis on fun wines for the holiday) here at BrightWines. This will be a Guided Tasting and we'll begin as close to 6:15pm** as my regular in-store business allows. Note the odd start-time, I'm hoping to be done in time to catch the second act of the highschool play that my daughters are doing. RSVP by e-mail if you would like to attend, space is limited to no more than 25 tasters. This fun tasting usually fills fast, so rsvp by noon Saturday if you can and I will confirm space available (by email) first thing Saturday and as best I can this evening too. RSVP Guided Tasting, this Saturday evening November 22nd at 6:15pm.

**** NEXT WEEK: OPEN Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday extended hours**

Monday November 24th: OPEN from 10:30am to 6:30pm

Tuesday November 25th: OPEN from 10:30am to 7pm

Wednesday November 26th: OPEN from 10:30am to 6:30pm (or later)

**** Thanksgiving Weekend Hours and Tasting Schedule** (now accepting e-mail RSVP for next weekend's tastings on Bordeaux)

Thursday November 27th: CLOSED - Happy Thanksgiving

FRIDAY November 28th: OPEN 10:30am - 6:30pm - plus RSVP Class/Tasting on BORDEAUX at 6:30pm

SATURDAY November 29th: OPEN 10am - 6:30pm - plus RSVP Class/Tasting on Bordeaux at 6:30pm

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: my annual report on BrightWines availabilities of the Wine Spectator Top 100 list

It's a sure sign that we are nearing the end of the calendar year, it's time for the "best of" lists for the year that was. Among widely circulated wine publications, the "best of" list that carries the most weight and is the most anticipated is the Wine Spectator magazine "top 100" of the year. Officially published in their late-December issue annually, that naturally means it's actually released online and on newstands by about Thanksgiving every year. This year is no exception, made even earlier by a weeklong sneak preview of the top 10 which was last week

already. This Monday, the full Top 100 was published online and naturally wine lovers were excited to see the list and read about the wines. Here is what Wine Spectator magazine said about this year's list:

"Each year since 1988, Wine Spectator has released its Top 100 list, where our editors select the most exciting wines from the thousands we reviewed during the course of the year. Our editors found dozens of thought-provoking wines among the 18,000 we tasted in 2014. Whether from emerging labels and regions or historic estates upholding tradition, these wines turned our heads for a singularity and authenticity we call the X-factor. Our selection also prioritizes quality (based on score), value (based on price) and availability (based on the volume of cases either made or imported). These criteria were applied to determine the Top 100 from among the more than 5,400 wines that rated outstanding (90 points or higher on Wine Spectator's 100-point scale) this year. Overall, the average score of the wines in this year's list is 93 points and the average price \$47 - an excellent quality/price ratio and a slightly lower average price than the 2013 list. Many wines on the list are made in limited quantities, a reflection of the greater wine world. As such, our Top 100 is not a "shopping list," but rather a guide to wineries to watch in the coming months and years, comprising the producers and wines our editors were particularly passionate about in 2014."

<http://www.winespectator.com/wines/top100archivelist/year/2014>

I'm glad they note that it's not a shopping list, and it's important to remember that it's a retrospective list looking at wines reviewed all year long by Wine Spectator - and not all of the wines will still be in current availabilities. For example, **the #1 wine of the year this year is the Dow 2011 Vintage Port - which BrightWines had in stock for much of last winter Nov/Dec/Jan/Feb**, but of course is long ago sold out locally. But every year BrightWines is proud to be able to say that I have offered what amounts to a representative sampling of the wines up and down the list. This year, including two of the top ten.

So every year I compile a list of the Wine Spectator "Top 100" wines that either WERE, or in some cases ARE available, via BrightWines. It's an interesting benchmark to hold myself to. Partly to the \$47 per bottle average price of the wines on the list, and the limited production of some of them, as well as the retrospective nature of any such list, only a good handful of these wines are wines that BrightWines is able to feature. On many other wines on the list, if I had a better crystal ball I could have had the wines when they were current. But as always, there are quite a few worth mentioning that either ARE or WERE available (and a few that WILL be) via BrightWines. Here is that portion of this year's Wine Spectator Top 100 list:

**** WERE available at BrightWines** (reasonable stock quantities) but are now Sold Out and in the cellars of BrightWines customers
note: I am excluding wines that were offered to me as "pre-arrival" and sold only as special-orders, like Bordeaux futures etc.

#1: DOW 2011 Vintage Port (was part of "Port Week" and also last year's holiday season offerings at BrightWines)

#90: Domaine Wachau 2012 Gruner Veltliner "Terrassen" (has moved beyond 2012 vintage, and I've got other Gruner picks now)

**** WILL BE** (inquire) **AVAILABLE SOON** (inquire with Dave for details, orders subject to confirmation)

#9: Conchy Y Toro "Don Melchor" Cabernet Sauvignon (rated 95 points, listed at \$125 retail)

I have sold out of my initial shipment from this fall, but I do have additional 6pk cases confirmed to arrive from the importer later this winter. INQUIRE about discounted bottle price, and case pricing.

#19: LUCA 2012 MALBEC (rated 93 points, listed at \$32 retail)

I have handled Luca Malbec for years, and had one small shipment of 2012 arrive this fall (sold out) but the local supplier is currently on the cusp of vintages, switching from 2011 (last few cases) to the great 2012 on a shipment arriving for December. I should have at least several cases of this wine available, so please INQUIRE and Stay Tuned.

#100: St Claire 2012 Awatere Block 16 New Zealand Pinot Noir (rated 92 points at \$31 retail)

I had the 2010 here, and am working with the local supplier to get the 2012 vintage - which they have not yet received. Stay tuned.

**** CURRENTLY AVAILABLE** and are **CLOSELY RELATED** to wines on the current Top 100 list, IN-STOCK NOW
note: the availability on these wines is limited and orders are subject to confirmation

MELVILLE 2012 Sta. Rita Hills estate PINOT NOIR @ \$33.33 per bottle (92 pts RP, 92 pts ST)

compare to: winemaker Greg Brewer made this wine with Chad Melville AND also made the **#8 ranked Brewer-Clifton 2012 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** (94 points, \$40). Same winemaker, same vintage, same region, means the same quality - just not the same exact wine.

THREE RINGS 2012 Barossa SHIRAZ @ \$15.99 per bottle (90 points W.S.)

compare to: the #59 Peter Lehmann 2011 Barossa "clancy's" Shiraz (90 pts, \$15 retail). In addition to this \$15 Barossa 2011, the great 2012 vintage in Australia resulted in 3 different Shiraz 2012's hitting the list including one at #2 overall. In my opinion, a 90-point rated 2012 for \$15.99 like Three Rings is going to be more exciting to BrightWines customers than the one that actually made the list. The 2012 Shiraz vintage has been justly rewarded by Wine Spectator though, and often featured here at BrightWines.

AZUL PORTUGAL 2011 Reserve DOURO @ \$10.79 per bottle (RP recommended)

compare to: the great 2011 Douro vintage in Portugal not only garnered two vintage Ports in the top 100 but also 3 different 2011 dry reds too - including back to back listings in the top ten for 2011 Douro reds. The value priced Azul Portugal might not be as famous nor as expensive, but it's a darn impressive red from the same great vintage - and for a bargain price too.

BORGO SCOPETO 2010 CHIANTI CLASSICO @ \$14.99 per bottle (92 points, Wine Spectator)

compare to: #21 Castello Volpaia 2010 Chianti Classico Reserva (\$29 retail, 93 pts). The great 2010 Chianti vintage was represented by two wines in the top 21 of the list, I actually thought this great value with 92 points had a shot to also make the list.

DOW 2007 bottling Crusted Port @ \$29.99 per bottle (season-long sale price)

compare to: #1 Dow Vintage 2011 Port. The "crusted" Port is more vintage-like than even an LBV if you ask me. A multi-vintage blend of ruby/dark ports, bottled unfiltered in 2007 and released in 2014. A poor-mans Dow's Vintage Port, and ready to drink now whereas the true vintage ports need time.

KOPKE 2011 Vintage Port @ \$59.99 per bottle (94 points, Wine Spectator)

compare to: #1 Dow Vintage 2011 Port. I thought this wine had a chance to be in the top 100 itself, but it turns out that it's probably too limited. Here is the full review (94 points). Wine Spectator notes: "Offers layers of dark plum, raspberry ganache and dark cherry flavors, filled with chocolate truffle notes. Shows seductive cedary details on the finish. Best from 2025 through 2050. 300 cases imported."

**** ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE at BrightWines** (quantities are limited, details below in Bright Lights section) IN-STOCK

#31: Tommasi 2011 Poggio al Tufo "Rompicollo" Sangiovese-Cabernet @ \$14.99 per bottle (rated 92 points, \$18 retail)

This wine has been on the BFS-14 fall sale list since the get-go, and happily has hit the top 100. I have 20 cases available.

#45: TIKAL 2012 "Patriota" MALBEC-Bonarda @ \$17.99 per bottle (rated 91 points, \$23 retail)

New addition the BFS-14 "Thanksgiving Cheat-sheet" and I have 5 cases available, in-stock now.

#60: St Urbans Hof 2012 old vines Mosel QbA Riesling @ \$14.99 per bottle (rated 90 points, \$16 retail)

This wine was in my spring sale too, and I've just added it to the Thanksgiving cheat-sheet. Off-dry Mosel Riesling, great producer.

If you are interested in buying some of the wines listed in the current Wine Spectator Top 100 list, you would be wise to do so soon. Each year, supplies of these wines tend to sell out quickly. Of course, there are PLENTY of GREAT WINES that are available above and beyond just this one list from this one magazine. The Wine Enthusiast also has a Top 100 list, with an emphasis on value (so naturally many of those wines come through BrightWines too). Plus, as the Wine Spectator themselves even suggest, just use this list as a "starting point" to more deeply explore the world of wine; which is certainly something that BrightWines encourages too!

BRIGHT LIGHTS: New Arrivals for the Thanksgiving cheat-sheet (attached PDF) and a W.S. Top 100 wine too

**** New Additions to a Thanksgiving cheat-sheet condensed version of the BFS-14 fall sale list ****

Note: these may be a bit **off-the-beaten path, but would make lovely Thanksgiving dinner wine** selections, so I have added them to the list. Limited to stock on hand.

OPOLO 2010 Paso Robles GRAND ROUGE red blend @ \$13.33 per bottle (\$20 retail)

This was a popular wine on previous BrightWines features this year, and I was able to get one more shot of the 2010 vintage at the best price of the year! Everything Opolo makes is rich and juicy and usually \$20 - \$30 per bottle. This "Grand Rouge" is **a California version of a**

Chateauneuf-du-Pape! Really, it is. It's a **blend of Counoise (rare outside of CdP and the Rhone) with Grenache and Syrah**. Spicy and exotic with smooth juicy purple fruits in a medium-bodied Paso Robles red. 10 cases available.

HERMANOS 2012 Salta-Cafayate, Argentina TORRONTES @ \$10.79 per bottle (\$15 retail)

92 points in Robert Parker's Wine Advocate: "the 2012 Hermanos Torrontes from Cafayate in Salta is from 26-year-old vines. It has a superb bouquet of peach skin, pear and a hint of lime flower that has a Riesling-like personality. The palate is medium-bodied with crisp tannins and a precise, mineral-rich finish that shows what Torrontes can do in the right hands. **Excellent. Drink now-2016. 92 points.**"

One of the wines on the BFS-14 has been ranked #31 on the Wine Spectator's Top 100 of the year! I ordered an additional 20 cases, and they are in-stock now but that cleared out the local supplier's warehouse so these 20 cases are that last cases of this wine available

TOMMASI 2011 Poggio al Tufo "Rompicollo" Sangiovese-Cabernet @ \$14.99 per bottle

Wine Spectator notes: "Presents a whiff of blackberry, bacon and ink, followed by dark berry, black pepper and spice notes. Rich and supple, with ample structure for support and a long, fruit, spice, and mineral-filled aftertaste. Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2015 through 2022. 3,000 cases imported. 92 points. \$18 retail. Smart Buy. Top 100 rank #31."

**** Thanksgiving Cheat-sheet: a condensed version of the BFS-14 and some NEW wines have been added ****

<http://www.brightwines.com/thanksgiving2014.pdf>

My "fall sale" officially concluded yesterday with the arrival of the nouveau beaujolais, and with the sell-out of some of the most popular wines too. That being said, I realize that I still have at least one full page worth of very good wines at very good prices - all that would make **good picks for Thanksgiving dinner and for entertaining all weekend.**

I've decided to **condense the full BFS-14 fall sale list into one easy-to-navigate page, a Thanksgiving Wines "Cheat-sheet" of wines at sale prices** (valid while supplies last) this Saturday November 22nd through at least Thanksgiving weekend. The prices valid while supplies last, and be aware that restock prior to Thanksgiving is logistically unlikely. e-mail orders ARE accepted - so if you can't make it Saturday and prefer to pickup sometime next week, that's fine. I'll confirm e-mail orders all weekend long.

<http://www.brightwines.com/thanksgiving2014.pdf>

At this time of Thanksgiving, let me simply say "thank you" to all of my valued newsletter readers and clientele for your support and patronage of my fall sale. I would be happy to be of assistance if you need to make another visit to BrightWines prior to the holiday and perhaps I'll see many of you for the traditional post-Thanksgiving shopping days, or the in-store tastings upcoming. And to the many more of you who have already stocked up for this coming holiday, and everyone reading this newsletter: cheers!

Here's to a happy, safe, and enjoyable holiday season! --Dave

The Right Wines are BrightWines!

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