

From: The BrightWines Beacon lighthouse@brightwines.com
Subject: Fwd: 25th Anniversary of BrightWines!
Date: April 26, 2025 at 11:13 AM
To: The BrightWines Beacon newsletter

TB

The BrightWines Beacon for April 25th, 2025 a BIG one, and worth reading through ALL of it! (*count up all the number 25*)

There are 25 cases worth of wine in a *barrique* wine barrel.... there are 25 ounces of wine in a bottle.... and the newsletter for April 25th of 2025 is here to announce... there have been 25 years of the “right wines” at BrightWines!

25 years ago this month, BrightWines officially opened for business. The Grand Opening event for the opening of the BrightWines store itself was **on a fine spring April Saturday** (like we hope to have this weekend) **at this very same location here in North Saint Paul.** I’d already begun sending weekly newsletters in February of that winter, and received my license to sell wine here in March (just in time to provide the wine to a friend’s wedding) but didn’t begin keeping regular weekly store hours until after that Saturday, which was April 8th of the year 2000. It’s hard to believe that was all a full twenty five years ago, and that I’ve been actively and professionally in the wine business for well over 30 years now.

Speaking of that grand opening, just a very, very small number of you would have been here for that. A rather large portion of the approximately 50 original email newsletter subscribers attended the event, which featured just “Nine Wines” displayed on two sets of wooden shelving. We used just the front 1/3 of the floorspace, plus the office. I had not yet acquired a cash register, so all of the wines purchased that day were on handbills. My memory is that most of the cases of the nine different wines that I’d selected to offer sold out that day, and the rest is history! If you want to read the full story of the history of BrightWines and Dave’s back-story from 25 years ago, I have written a brief history for THE VIEW FROM THE TOP today.

Come to think of it, not all that much has changed since those first days. Plenty of other excitement and adventure, events and activities, and wines upon wines, upon wines, have come and gone over the past 25 years, and this spring I hope to incorporate a few stories and wine “call backs” in my newsletters to celebrate. Yes, 25 years of BrightWines is definitely worth celebrating! Starting this weekend, and all the way through next week, and for the rest of “spring” 2025 we’re going to do just that.

For THIS weekend, here is what’s planned for the next week or so...

**** Dave’s Favorite Things in the World of Wine:**

In honor of the 25th anniversary of BrightWines, for this spring’s newsletters I’ll be selecting a range of some of Dave’s favorite things in the world of wine and highlighting good examples from what’s available in-stock right now to order at BrightWines! FOR EXAMPLE... and you’ll get the idea here pretty quickly...

BORDEAUX is one of Dave’s favorite things, and I have a NEW and **highly recommended red Bordeaux at nearly 50% off** a \$25 retail price. It’s a *Medoc cru bourgeois Chateau* on a fantastic deal direct from a brand new small importer. It’s a smart-buy that’s drinking very well now in it’s peak 7 - 10 year maturity. IN-STOCK NOW at just **\$12.99 per bottle sale price!** (see Bright Lights for more details)

AVV is one of Dave’s favorite things, and it’s that time of year when **Alexander Valley Vineyard is offering their BEST prices of the year** on their current vintags of **estate-grown Alexander Valley reds** AND the new fresh (and delicious) vintage of the **AVV dry Rose of Sangiovese!** IN-STOCK NOW at sale prices! (see Bright Lights for more details)

And MORE... read Bright Lights today for MORE of Dave’s Favorite Things - including what **I believe to be my TOP-SELLING MALBEC of all time!** And then **stay tuned all “spring” long for additional wines and styles** to be featured in the newsletters and highlighted as Dave’s Favorite Things. You’ll get the idea pretty quickly, I’m sure!

**** check out the BrightWines Time Machine for a throwback "Bargain Alert"**

25 cases in stock now for my 25th anniversary at just \$7.99 per bottle!! (see Bright Lights for more details)

**** In Case You Missed It: the “Easter Beacon” is online** with a range of great Smart-buys like **Angels Ink Pinot Noir**, an **UN-oaked California Chardonnay**, a **90-point rated New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc**, The Immortal Zin, and MUCH more - many of which are still in-stock in reasonable quantities! <https://www.brightwines.com/easterbeacon-updated4-25.pdf>

THE LAMP IS LIT: Store Hours this weekend and next week

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of BrightWines all week long, and probably the rest of “spring” too...

**** SATURDAY April 26th: OPEN from 10:30am until 5:30pm** (regular Saturday hours)

BrightWines will be OPEN this Saturday for order pickups from this newsletter, other recent newsletters, and for Dave-as-personal-shopper requests too. email orders are preferred, just reply to this newsletter or contact Dave and be sure to mention when you prefer to pick up your order so I can reply and prepare accordingly to fill your order.

**** MONDAY & TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY April 28th - April 30th: OPEN at 11am on the weekdays**

BrightWines will be OPEN next week for order pickups from this newsletter or other recent newsletters and for Dave-as-personal-shopper requests too. email orders are preferred, just reply to this newsletter or contact Dave and be sure to mention when you prefer to pick up your order so I can reply and prepare accordingly.

**** THURSDAY & FRIDAY & SATURDAY May 1st - May 3rd: OPEN after 10:30am on the weekends**

*BrightWines will be OPEN next weekend for order pickups from this newsletter or other recent newsletters and for Dave-as-personal-shopper requests too. **email orders are preferred**, just reply to this newsletter or contact Dave and be sure to mention when you prefer to pick up your order so I can reply and prepare accordingly.*

Stay tuned for more celebratory email newsletters coming soon, including another "throwback" edition for "7 days in May" next weekend...

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP: a brief history of BrightWines, how it all began...

Many of you know this story, but many more probably do not. In honor of my 25th anniversary, I'd like to share the story of the early days of BrightWines. Personally, I first got into the retail wine business way back in the year 1992 (that's 33 years ago this summer). I was a budding wine aficionado, and had just returned from a trip to Australia to visit my folks who were living in Melbourne at the time. In addition to visiting Melbourne and Sydney, and the outback, and the great barrier reef, and so much more, we also took a day to visit wine country in the Yarra Valley outside of Melbourne. I returned home to Minnesota after roughly 5 weeks in Australia to my job and my classes at the University of Minnesota rather strapped for cash as you can imagine. So one day, on a whim, I responded to a help-wanted sign in the window at a nearby liquor-store/wine-shop. I have been working in retail wine ever since that day in August of 1992. I worked my way from part-time evenings, to store manager, to ultimately becoming the Sales Manager for the whole chain (we had 8 stores by the end of my career there). As sales manager I was responsible for the sale flyers and wine tastings and staff training, and much of the wine buying, and of course wine selling. We did not e-mail a newsletter on wines back then, we mailed one - and faxed one! I often say that the story of my profession is going down the slippery slope from part-time to full time job, to a career, to a business. I left that chain of stores at Christmas of 1999. I was not really interested in continuing in traditional liquor retail, but rather had decided I wanted to carve out my own niche in the wine business.

So in December of 1999 I began working on the BrightWines project, I reserved the web domain and rented office/warehouse space here in North St Paul. Funny story about that: this location at 2420 Margaret Street was perfectly acceptable to the city of North St Paul to issue a retail license for wine/liquor, but it was too much of a warehouse for the State of Minnesota. I was not able to get final licensing until I had installed a regular doorway (with a window) and had met with the State to provide assurances that I was not some fly-by-night internet operation. So it took about 4 months to go from renting the office/warehouse space to finally receiving my license to be open for business. That's ancient history now - but explains why the BrightWines anniversary date is a few months after I started publishing my newsletter. The first weekly editions of The BrightWines Beacon were e-mailed beginning in February of 2000 (there are about 50 of you who might have read those) but my first actual transaction was a couple of cases of wine for a friend's wedding the last week of March. About a week later, I put together a Grand Opening in-store wine tasting which was held on Saturday April 8th of 2000 here at BrightWines! That day I had "nine wines" available to taste and to purchase, all arranged on just two sets of wooden warehouse racks using only the front 1/3 of the space in the warehouse, plus my office. Over the years I have expanded the warehouse/retail space from within, time and time again, most recently was after the pandemic, when the store's facade and interior configuration that we use now was organized.

So where did the name BrightWines come from, and why is the newsletter called The Beacon, with sections like "The Lamp is Lit" etc? All of the imagery and logos and slogans for BrightWines fell into place for me once I had chosen the name BrightWines for my company. If memory serves, it all stems from a brainstorming list that friends and family had come up with - and "Bright Wines" in particular was a name suggested by my wife, which I stylized as BrightWines as one word. I wanted a name that would convey my vision of what my wine shop and newsletter were all about, and I also needed a name with an available web address too. BrightWines means many things. Bright can mean smart, well-chosen, exciting, interesting, etc. and is also a great taste profile for a wine to have (a bright beam of burnished berry, for example). From very the beginning, as I have stated on my website, the goal at BrightWines is to offer a well-rounded but carefully selected inventory of delicious wines. While other stores may offer more wines, BrightWines strives to offer better wines by seeking those wines that offer the highest quality for the price, from bargains on up to Affordable Luxury.

And when it came time to design a logo for BrightWines I chose to use a wine bottle shining forth brightly, almost as if the bottle were a lighthouse or "beacon" or "lamp" shining through and showing the way to the best wines. It helped that I like lighthouses (the e-mail address that sends the newsletter is "lighthouse" in honor of the concept) and it was easy to follow that leitmotif (pun intended) of a wine bottle acting as a lighthouse to call my newsletter The BrightWines Beacon; with sections named The Lamp is Lit (for logistical info) and The View from the Top (where I can opine on the world of wine) and Bright Lights (featuring Dave's Top Picks for wines) and it also serves as the template for my company logos too.

The Lamp is Lit section of the newsletter always contains the logistical details and schedule info for the coming weekend and weeks at BrightWines. The name is a reference to the idea of a "drinking lamp" or the "smoking lamps" of yore, which when lit meant that the host was serving wine or that on board ship the crew could smoke. This imagery also occurs often in ancient poetry, as in this version of a Greek poem: "*Why wait for the lighting of the lamps? Night is a hair's breadth away. Take down the great goblets from the shelf, dear friend, for Dionysus gave us wine.*" It can also be a reference to the lamp of a lighthouse, which is part of the logo and motif here at BrightWines.

And speaking of poetic inspiration for BrightWines, there is also that wonderful line from an ode by Percy Bysshe Shelley that is featured on the front page of my website: *O, thou Bright Wine whose purple splendor leaps and bubbles gaily from this golden bowl under the lamplight, as my spirits do.*

So there you have it, a brief history of how it all began at BrightWines and how my logo and slogan and company name and newsletter got their beginnings. And whether you are a new subscriber or have been on board for 25 years, thank you ALL for you patronage and support of the BrightWines concept, where The Right Wines are BrightWines!

BRIGHT LIGHTS: Dave's Favorite Things, the BrightWines time machine, and more!!

*Before I get to the main attractions for this weekend's newsletter ... **In Case You Missed It...** the "Easter Beacon" is online with a range of great Smart-buys like Angels Ink Pinot Noir, an UN-oaked California Chardonnay, a 90-point rated New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, The Immortal Zin, and MUCH more - many of which are still in-stock in reasonable quantities!
<https://www.brightwines.com/easterbeacon-updated4-25.pdf>*

AND NOW... in honor of the 25th anniversary of BrightWines for this spring's newsletters I'll be selecting a range of some of **Dave's Favorite Things in the world of wine** and highlighting good examples from what's available in-stock right now to order at BrightWines!

TODAY'S EXAMPLES... and you'll get the idea here pretty quickly... are BORDEAUX - and - AVV (Alexander Valley Vineyards) - and - VINHO VERDE, plus my TOP-SELLING MALBEC of all time (at least that's my guess).

**** BORDEAUX Smart-buys, in-stock now some of "Dave's Favorite Things"**

I've long said that my "desert island" wine is Bordeaux. I'm a claret man at heart, to quote a phrase. And BrightWines has always been one of the leading purveyors of Bordeaux in the Twin Cities, and it's not just me that says so!

Chateau Troussas 2017 Medoc cru bourgeois @ \$14.99 per bottle (\$155.88 per full case = **\$12.99 each**)

Suggested Retail: \$25 (see Wine Enthusiast) *40% off retail per bottle - and the case price net is nearly 50% off retail on solid cases (one case per customer)*

WINE ENTHUSIAST magazine notes: "**\$25 retail. A balanced, just-now mature wine** with red fruits and generous tannins. It is structured with a fine potential. **Drink the wine from 2024.**"

— and —

A European wine source, Vert de Vin, offers the following tasting notes and an 88-89 point rating: "The nose is fruity and offers freshness as well as power. It reveals notes of wild blackberry, small wild fruits and small notes of ripe cherry/griotte associated with fine touches of violet, a hint of pepper and a very discreet hint of nutmeg. The mouth is fruity, well-balanced and offers a juicy/finely acidulous frame, tension as well as fat. In the mouth this wine expresses notes of fleshy/ripe cassis, ripe/fleshy cherry and small notes of strawberry associated with fine touches of violet and a subtle hint of sweet spices (in the background). Tannins are finely marked. Good length."

— and —

Rated * in Guide Hachette (France)** saying: "Three Stars. (Made by) the leading producer of wines in the Médoc appellation. The winery brings together some 160 winegrowers. Full, powerful, and long, yet refined and well-balanced, the palate offers **a beautiful expression of Médoc wine.**"

— and —

DAVE says: this wine is in its 7 - 10 year prime. And while I'm not sure a cooperative in the Medoc qualifies for the "petite chateaux" nickname, this is a **very good example of a "classic claret"** and fans of the the style (like me) are sure to enjoy this! I have just shy of 25 case available and 40% to 50% off the retail, a deal direct from the importer (and no tariffs).

(white Bordeaux) **Chateau Tassin 2023 Bordeaux blanc @ \$14.99 per bottle** (\$178.99/case)

My new favorite White Bordeaux in a poor-mans true **Graves style** and price. Very good mineral stoney qualities, with lime tones and other citrus in the background. A real property *mis en bouteille au Chateau* that's NEW to our market from a small importer.)

(affordable luxury) **Chateau Moulin de la Roquette 2020 Cotes de Francs @ \$19.99 per bottle** (limited stock)

2020 is a fantastic vintage in Bordeaux, and the "**Francs**" **Cotes de Bordeaux is a right bank, higher elevation region above Castillon and nearby St Emilion.** This is the *Cuvee l'Esperance* bottling from this property, is *eleve en fut du chene* (oak aged) and is **nearly classified-growth quality** and already drinking well. It's prime will be in two to five more years, or with a couple hours of breathing/decanting. for drinking sooner if you can't wait. The best \$20 Bordeaux I've had here going back to last fall, at least!

**** AVV (Alexander Valley Vineyards) and more, in-stock now "Dave's Favorite Things"**

I have always been a strong supporter of **California wineries that make high quality, estate-bottled wines, at reasonable prices**, in available quantities. Believe me, this is actually no small feat. As I'm sure you've experienced, in California wines, it's relatively common to be awesome but expensive and hard to get, and it's also awfully easy to be a huge and boring brand. That's not what BrightWines is all about. Around here, what I'm looking for is a family (or individual, or collective) California winery that makes GOOD quality, estate-bottled wines at reasonable prices, in readily available quantities... and this weekend I have 3 great examples from the Alexander Valley in Sonoma, plus a reminder of a favorite Dry Creek Zinfandel too!

AVV (Alexander Valley Vineyards) 2024 Sonoma Dry ROSE of Sangiovese @ \$15.99 per bottle (new release, sale price, \$191.88 per case)

Suggested Retail (see winery website) \$22 per bottle

* typical local feature price of \$19.99 per bottle means this is 20% off while current supplies last

DAVE says: tor the past several years, the surest sign of spring is the new release, and my one-time only spring winery "blitz" week shipments, of **our FAVORITE dry rose from California!** The new fresh vintage of this Sonoma dry Rose of Sangiovese is as good as ever! Very tasty, very classy, and just \$15.99 per bottle while current stock lasts. Word to the wise... I do try to load up, but this wine sells out fast and is only available at the 20% - 25% savings from the winery during their April annual "blitz week" shipments. Fans should order up soon!

AVV estate Alexander Valley 2021 MERLOT @ \$15.99 per bottle (sale price, \$191.88 per case - limited stock)

Suggested Retail (see winery website) \$24 per bottle so \$15.99 is 33% off retail, while current supplies last

DAVE says: **Rated 93 points** by James Suckling (former editor of Wine Spectator) who says "**Aromatic, complex and nicely chewy in texture, it makes a good argument for Sonoma merlot in this excellent vintage.** Intriguing, earthy, tobacco-like aromas, then dark plum, black cherry and bay leaf flavors fill out the full body, wrapped in velvety tannins. Drink or hold. 93 points." (James Suckling, Sep 2024)

PEDRONCELLI "Mother Clone" 2022 Dry Creek (Sonoma) ZINFANDEL @ \$19.99 per bottle (limited stock)

Suggested Retail: \$24 per bottle CASE PRICE \$225/case (\$18.75 ea)

Rated 92 points Wine Spectator! This is the flagship red wine for Pedroncelli nowadays, and each vintage that goes by just reminds us of how rare these full-bodied, dense, peppery, oaky, classic Dry Creek Zins are. Wine Spectator notes: "Supple and brambly, with jammy raspberry, licorice

and cracked pepper flavors that end on a zesty accent. Drink now through 2032. 92 rating.”

AVV estate Alexander Valley 2022 CABERNET SAUVIGNON @ \$17.99 per bottle (\$199.99/case = **\$16.67 ea.** limited stock)
New vintage of the **flagship bottling for Alexander Valley Vineyards. and 2025 marks the 50th anniversary for AVV** as their first Cabernet Sauvignon vintage was in 1975. And since it's the 25th anniversary of BrightWines, this just seems fitting!

**** TOP-SELLING MALBEC** of all time at BrightWines, plus VINHO VERDE are two MORE of “*Dave's Favorite Things*”

Allow me to brag... can you guess which small wine retailer was the FIRST in the Twin Cities market to ever feature the FRESHEST POSSIBLE bottlings - with guarantee seals to show it - of VINHO VERDE (you know, the famous refreshing dry whites from Portugal with that hint of fizz) ??? YES, the answer is BrightWines - and I have the email newsletter history “receipts” to prove it!

And yes, I've done it again... **RAZA 2024 vintage (2025 shipment) VINHO VERDE @ \$9.99 per bottle** (\$107.88/case = **\$8.99 ea**)
Our favorite of the past few recent summers, Quinta da Raza has a family history back to 1758 in Portugal. This is the new fresh vintage, in the classic style with traditional slight fizz and good lime/stoney zest. ALSO AVAILABLE in 2024 vintage ROSE Vinho Verde, which is super tasty!!

So what is the top-selling Malbec of all time here at BrightWines? There's no way to tell for sure, but given the number of cases I tend to buy/sell, and the number of vintages of this wine that we have loved and that I have offered here over past decade (or longer) I think it's this one...

And yes, they've done it again - new vintage **La Posta “Pizzella” 2023 Mendoza Malbec @ \$17.99 per bottle** (limited stock currently)
La Posta “Pizzella” is a **single vineyard family property (Pizzella) in the Paraje Altamira district of La Consulta** in Mendoza. And to fans of Malbec ALL of those names mean something great! This new vintage is as good as always, and again has high ratings! Rated **91 points James Suckling**, and rated 90 points by noted South America expert, Tim Atkin: “**Bold, rich, ripe and intense**, especially for a wine with (just) 13.5% alcohol, this is a 10% new oak-aged Malbec from Paraje Altamira, mixing grapes from three different soil types. Textured, firm and focused, it marries appealing fig and dark berry fruit. **90 points.**”

**** check out the BrightWines TIME-MACHINE for a throwback "Bargain Alert”**

25 cases instock now (*mixed among 4 styles*) for my 25th anniversary

This is a blast from the past for 2 reasons (three, if you count the \$7.99 throwback price):

Reason number one is that the Twin Cities market has literally NOT SEEN this winery and label in years! I have not had it here since a few years *before* the pandemic! And reason number two is that this winery and wine label used to be a “**go to**” **Bargain Alert brand for BrightWines...** because they offer some of “Dave's Favorite Things” or namely - good quality at a great price, and of course... CARMENERE.

Santa Rita “120” (Chile) 2022 CARMENERE @ \$7.99 per bottle (\$95.88/case, email orders preferred)
The best-selling red wine Santa Rita (a famous and long-standing winery in Chile) makes is their “120” Cabernet, but **the BEST of their best-selling is the Carmener!** (I'm a true fan of Carmener, so inquire with Dave if you want to know more) BrightWines was absolutely “in on the ground floor” of loving and promoting Carmener wines from Chile, back in the day.

Santa Rita “120” (Chile) 2023 PINOT NOIR @ \$7.99 per bottle (\$95.88/case, email orders preferred)
aromatically complex and juicy and lively palate, lighter bodied and dry, but very enjoyable

Santa Rita “120” (Chile) 2023 SAUVIGNON BLANC @ \$7.99 per bottle (\$95.88/case, email orders preferred)
Blast from the past! We used to go through 10-case stacks of this like it was jsut “shelf stock” and t's still a good bargain option at \$7.99 with grassy green apple and citrus zest.

Santa Rita “120” (Chile) 2021 RED BLEND @ \$7.99 per bottle (\$95.88/case, email orders preferred)
“Low-budget Laydown” (*another one of “Dave's Favorite Things” over the years*) This is a powerful and not-yet-ready to drink bargain red blend of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Carmener. To drink now, buy the pure Carmener I listed above. But if you want to age a “bargain” red until 2028 - 2031 range, this is the wine you could do that with!

That's all for today. I wonder how many folks will read this entire lengthy edition... but hey, 25 years deserves a BIG newsletter! It's been a quite a ride. And I'll keep going a while longer, fear not... at least as long as “the lamp is lit” here! Thank you for you patronage and support of the BrightWines concept. Cheers! —Dave

The Right Wines are BrightWines!

<https://www.brightwines.com/easterbeacon-updated4-25.pdf>
2420 Margaret Street
North Saint Paul, MN 55109
651.748.0793