


From: The BrightWines Beacon 
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The BrightWines Beacon for 4/10/26: marking 26 trips around the sun

Wait though, don't you mean around the moon? Yes, today is the day that Artemis-II will splash down back on earth after their trip around the moon this past ten days. But this week also marks 26 "trips around the sun" (as the kids these days like to say) for me because this week is also BrightWines' birthday. Yes indeed, the grand opening event at BrightWines was on April 8th of the year 2000. And while there's nothing particularly special about 26 years, other than it's a pretty darn long time, I usually manage to make note of the anniversary in my weekly newsletters.

My plan for the next couple of newsletters, as we get into mid and late April, is to look ahead to the new season of wines as we can hopefully fully embrace the springtime of 2026. I also have some "spring cleaning" planned for the store, lots of accumulated cardboard and bottles for recycling, and at some point I might put together a list of the last of the winter wines for folks to peruse too.

For THIS weekend, I want to do what I've done before in my anniversary edition features... a return to a theme that I like to do every so often (and why wouldn't I) for "a few of Dave's favorite things." And of course a few other hidden gems related to my 26th trip around the sun too, so be sure to check out BRIGHT LIGHTS today. Here are some highlights:

** a few of Dave's Favorite Things (ongoing series): **Wines from WASHINGTON**

New and very **impressive (92-point rated) Smart-buy** (and some affordable luxury) **red wines from three of the best wineries in Washington**, all three locations are places I have visited and have long history with, and fondness for, their wines. Plus **2 highly rated white wines too** from the most famous winery of the three. See *BRIGHT LIGHTS today for all the details*.

** In Case You Missed it (**ICYMI**)

(the first two newsletters of the spring season are online now in PDF format)

The BrightWines Beacon newsletter for March 27th - 31st:

Wonderful new vintages of a great Cotes du Rhone red - and a highly rated New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc white - plus Dave's Favorite California Pinot Noir, and some incredible affordable luxury, and more! All 5 of the great wines in this newsletter are IN-STOCK and available in reasonable quantities.

<https://www.brightwines.com/greatscott-winesoftheweekend.pdf>

The BrightWines Beacon newsletter for April 2nd - April 6th:

Wines that are "having a moment" like Chenin Blanc (3 options in stock now) plus a wide range of Pinot Noirs for spring, as well as recommendations for good brunch wines, and a bargain alert red, and more. (some stocks may be very limited, or temporarily sold out, due to Easter business)

https://www.brightwines.com/wines-rites_of_spring-26.pdf

BRIGHT LIGHTS: Top Picks this weekend, including some of "Dave's Favorite Things"

Over the next couple of newsletters this month, I'll be taking note of the April anniversary of BrightWines (26 years and counting) and for this weekend I want to make special mention of a range of impressive wines that are in-stock right now, related to a longtime favorite wine feature of mine.

Did you know that the very first edition of The BrightWines Beacon was a feature about the wines of Washington State? The first few editions were naturally sent out in the weeks prior to the "grand opening" event here. That grand opening event was on Saturday April 8th of 2000 (so basically this weekend's Saturday) but the first wine sales here were actually made in late March, and the first email newsletter was sent a few weeks prior to that. The very first one was sent after "Presidents Day" and the topic was about Washington wines. I've been a longtime fan and early-adopter of the wines from Washington.

To this day one of my favorite "wine trips" I've taken as part of being in the wine industry was visit of wineries and vineyards of Yakima, Zillah, Rattlesnake Hills, Red Mountain, Prosser and Walla Walla, encompassing the Columbia Valley east of Yakima all the way to the Oregon border south of Walla Walla. As part of that particular wine trip, some of the highlights included L' Ecole #41 in Walla Walla, and Airfield Estate (Yakima/Prosser) as well as seeing the "Two Blondes" and Sheridan vineyards near Zillah (Rattlesnake Hills). In previous newsletters I've written about some great experiences on Red Mountain too.

Here are the **in-stock highlights** for this weekend...

** Top Picks from Washington **

L' Ecole No. 41 (Walla Walla, WA) **2023 "Frenchtown Red" @ \$22.50 per bottle LIMITED STOCK**

Case Price: \$270 per case (limited stock)

Rated **92 points** by **Wine Enthusiast** magazine!

This Columbia Valley designation "**Frenchtown red brings Bordeaux and the Rhone together** in an **eight-grape variety blend** that ranges from Merlot to Mourvèdre. Its fresh and floral aromas are an equally diverse mix of raspberries, blackberry tea, gardenias, lilacs and spun sugar. The wine feels fresh and clean on the palate as tart black cherry and lemon zest flavors dance about. Tannins and acidity dance a gentle waltz in harmony. 92 points." (Wine Enthusiast)

AIRFIELD Estate 2022 Yakima SYRAH @ SOLD OUT sorry

Suggested Retail: \$20 (limited stock, \$215.88 per case)

Rated **91 points** by **Wine Enthusiast** magazine! Here's a balanced, pretty Syrah where you don't have to break the bank to buy a case. It features aromas of blackberry compote and roasted pork shoulder that were meant for one another. That theme continues on the medium-bodied palate, where silky tannins support flavors of smoked black cherries, cranberries, and a hint of pork fat. **This is truly a "great buy." 91 points.** \$20." (Wine Enthusiast)

L' Ecole no. 41 (Walla Walla, WA) 2024 "Frenchtown" Sauvignon Blanc @ \$22.50 per bottle LIMITED STOCK

Suggested Retail: \$24 (see Wine Enthusiast) limited stock, \$270 per case

Rated **92 points** by **Wine Enthusiast** magazine!

Source from famously great Columbia Valley vineyards including Stillwater Creek, Rosebud, and Seven Hills, all of which "Dave" has a long personal history with, and **showcasing the distinctive Washington style of Sauvignon Blanc** (hint: more Bordeaux, less New Zealand/Loire) **that is classic and textbook**. Here's how Wine Enthusiast describes it: "A glorious peach aroma, complete with fuzz, is complemented by scents of chamomile flowers, white grapefruit segments and chalkboard dust. The wine's zingy acidity accompanies its tart orange zest, saline and Granny Smith apple flavors. The Frenchtown spent its time in a combination of stainless steel and neutral French oak barrels. That was clearly time well spent. \$24 retail. 92 points." (Wine Enthusiast)

L' Ecole no. 41 old vines 2024 Yakima Valley Chenin Blanc @ \$21.99 per bottle VERY LIMITED STOCK

Suggested Retail: \$24 (very limited stock)

Rated **91 points** JD: "The old vines in the 2024 Chenin Blanc Old Vines were planted in the 1970s. Inviting aromatics of peach and apricot... The texture is **creamy** and long-lived. 91 points." AND also rated 91 points JS: "Fragrant notes of **jasmine, sliced pears and golden apples waft from the glass. It's bright and creamy** with a medium body. Pretty floral and mineral undertones to the fresh fruit." 91 rating."

(special orders only) **Andrew Will 2020 "Two Blondes Vineyard" Cabernet Franc @ \$33.33 per bottle**

Suggested Retail: \$40 **INQUIRE** with Dave for **VERY LIMITED** current stock

The local supplier is offering a very small quantity of this rare Cabernet Franc, which I was lucky enough to taste recently. One Washington wine expert wrote in his blog that this Cabernet Franc is a "**Stunning wine**" and **rated it 94 points!** But generally don't expect to find too many ratings on all the Andrew Will, because the shy and awkward Chris Camarda (owner/winemaker) doesn't submit many samples to magazines. His vineyard sources are some of the best in the Yakima and Columbia Valley of eastern Washington, but his winery itself is located on Vashon Island, in the Puget Sound, reachable only by water taxi or ferry! "Andrew Will" are his two sons, and one of the two blondes is his dearly departed wife.

ALSO AVAILABLE (very limited, in-stock now) the last of the 2020 of this great wine...

Andrew Will 2020 "Two Blondes Vineyard" Merlot @ \$33.33 per bottle (the LAST BOTTLE of the vintage)

This is a **Cab-lovers Merlot**, one of the BEST in Washington sourced from a single-vineyard in the Rattlesnake Hills near Zillah/Yakima, Washington. **Drinking superbly!!**

And here are just a couple MORE of "Dave's Favorite Things" all this month, including a nice VALUE PRICED Cabernet plus a Sneak Preview of a planned winemaker visit here, a meet-and-greet tasting planned for later this spring!

n.b. - Nota Bene: I am a longtime fan of wines from Chile!

Frida Kahlo Vineyard 2020 Maipo Chile Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case)

Chile. 90 pts by noted South America specialist Tim Atking, and recommended by Wine Enthusiast too, saying "Aromas of ripe black fruit shape the inviting nose of this Cabernet from various vineyards in the Maipo Valley. It has tension, with gripping tannins supporting prune, bell pepper and hints of truffle. Light notes of bay leaf show in the fresh finish." (Wine Enthusiast)

n.b. - Nota Bene: winemaker Erik Miller will visit us May 7th for a wine tasting meet-and-greet (rsvp will be required)

Breaking Bread (Dry Creek, Sonoma) 2024 **dry Rose of Zinfandel (Octopus label) @ \$19.99 per bottle** (limited stock)

Made from Dry Creek sourced Zinfandel, meaning top-quality fruit. This has an eye-catching label, as they all do in this fun project by Erik Miller at Kokomo wines. This drinks like fresh-squeezed dry pink grapefruit or sliced strawberries, and being unfiltered offers up an "orange wine" personality to boot! Hip and happening. If you loved the "Pet Nat" sparkling version of this wine last holiday season, you should love this regular "dry rose" version this spring!

That's pretty much it for today, looking forward to a new season of wines, the first weekend of the new 27th year of BrightWines, and of course to splashdown for Artemis-II, all beginning THIS WEEKEND. Cheers to spring! —Dave

The Right Wines are BrightWines!

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