

Message from the Proprietor



Warm wishes to all of our wine club members, new and returning.

I'm sure you don't need to hear another end-of-year message about what a strange one 2020 has been, but if I may focus on the positive for a moment, we have had no finer season when it comes to customer support. It has been genuinely inspiring to see the loyalty of our old customers and the fresh interest of the new. What's more, even with the safety measures we've put into place in our tasting bar, I'm not sure our employees (especially Larry) have ever had more fun pouring wine. Thank you all for helping turn this year into a very happy one.

Stay safe everyone, and happy holidays.

Bruce Schmidt

The 2020 Vintage Report



Melissa Smits:
Lead Winemaker and
Vineyard Manager

Hello Wine Club members! Harvest has wrapped up (for the most part... I'll get to the details shortly) and we've had an absolutely fantastic vintage - one of the best I've seen in the valley and at Intersection. This year, we picked around the same dates as we tend to: end of September for Riesling, early October for Viognier, mid-October for Merlot with Marsanne at the end (the skins stay quite tough on the variety so a longer hang time is to its benefit). The difference this year, and what makes it exceptional, is all that sunshine and heat we had in August and September. It gave a real boost to ripen flavours and develop sugar, and fortunately our site is positioned at the base of the Golden Mile slope so there's a cooling effect in the afternoon which preserves the fruit's acidity very well. The Riesling is consistent as usual, with vibrant citrus fruit and some balanced sweetness from arresting the ferment just before it's finished. It's a very co-

operative grape to grow, and yields well. When it's pressed whole-bunch, fermented cool and kept protected from bulk oxygen in the cellar, the result is a delicate, but bright and resonant wine that can age beautifully--if we can hang onto it in the cellar long enough! It's November at time of writing, and we've already fermented all our wines and pressed our three Merlots and put them into barrel. There's only one ferment still active, and it's only been going for a week. Can you guess what it is? That's right: our Appassimento Merlot is being made again in 2020! It's the first Appassimento of my term as winemaker here, and the conditions could not have been better to make this wine: a long, sunny fall allowed us to pick while all the leaves were still attached (rather than dropped due to frost). And we had beautifully structured fruit with small berry size, allowing for good air-flow through the clusters to dry them (this also makes for dynamite Silica and Alluvia). We picked the clusters from both Silica and Alluvia blocks, directly into small, flat baskets in a single layer, then stacked them to dry in our warehouse for about

four weeks. Through this time I monitored the climbing sugar levels by doing small berry samples and looked at the texture of the skins as they dried. We made the decision to crush the fruit and inoculate it last week, so now we'll ferment it until the yeast stops being active and press it with however much residual sugar it has left behind. The end result should be a rich, deeply flavoured and fully textured red which will impress and age for decades. It tends to be somewhat Port-like in profile, so its best food pairings tend to be similar: hard cheeses, sundried black olives, roasted nuts, cured meats... We did a little food matching and found that lamb shank with a classic mint sauce hit the spot for both the Appassimento and our Silica (hence the recipe on the back of this page.) It has definitely not been the easiest year in our communities, but we can look forward to the results of our work, and as always I'm impressed with how well Canada supports its small food and wine producers. When we're able to host gatherings again, I think many of us will have collected a lot of exemplary BC wine. Thanks for including us in your cellar.

Melissa

Homework Time



Moss Scheurkogel

Normally I post an educational piece here, but today I want to instead offer you a self-guided assignment (and it's a task that's suited to this year.)

Conduct your own wine tasting at home.

Now obviously it's wasteful to open multiple bottles if you're tasting by yourself or with just one or two other household members, but we can dodge that with a 'Time-Lapse Tasting'. The idea is as follows:
Day 1: open one wine, have a glass or two, make notes.
Day 2: continue drinking the same wine.
Day 3: open a second wine and

try it first before returning to wine #1. Note how that wine has changed since your first impressions, now in relief against wine #2. As they oxidize, all wines will lose their quality, but at different rates (and some get a lot better first). Most wines will last around three days before falling off.
Day 4: continue drinking wine #2.
Day 5: open wine #3 and compare it to the now 3-day old wine #2.
Day 6+: repeat as you see fit, recording your notes for each.

This system allows you to compare multiple wines without opening them all at once, and it also encourages you to consider how oxidization affects each wine.

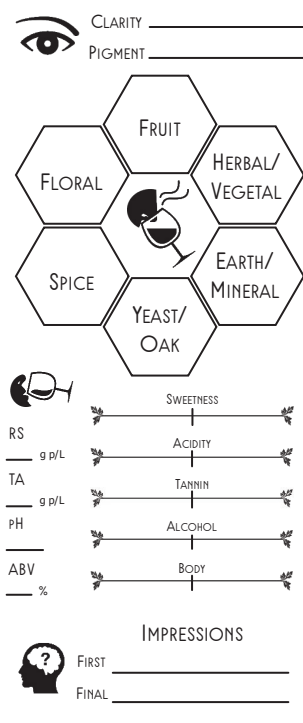
Now, how should you make notes? I offer to you (as a Christmas present) the placemats I designed for the Vinstute Wine School. You can download and print your own copies from our website (xwine.ca/placemat) and find notes there on how to use the sheets for a proper evaluation.

BONUS - even from a distance, you can coordinate with friends who have the same wine, and compare notes over a video call.

BONUS #2 - try mixing up your wines and brown bagging them (tape the necks so you can't peek) before your week of tastings, and hold off the big reveal until the very end. Nothing is more eye-opening than a blind tasting.

Have fun!

Moss



Example above of the placemat's content.

www.xwine.ca/placemat

Sam's British Mint Sauce (with Lamb Shank)

Pair with 2016 Silica

Mint Sauce

- ✗ 1 large bunch fresh mint
- ✗ 1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
- ✗ 5 tblsp boiling water
- ✗ 3 tblsp white wine vinegar

Lamb Shank

- ✗ 4 lamb shanks
- ✗ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ✗ 6 cloves unpeeled garlic
- ✗ 6 sprigs rosemary
- ✗ 1 cup chicken broth

Mint Sauce

- 1) Pull the mint from the stalks, roughly chop, and place in a mason jar (or heatproof jug)
- 2) Sprinkle sugar over mint, then add boiling water. Stir gently, cover with plastic wrap, and let cool
- 3) When cool, add vinegar and then balance to taste (too strong, add water. Too weak, add mint.)
- 4) Cover again and leave for at least an hour (or more!)

We serve this sauce with lamb shank. Not as rich as lamb chops and a little tougher and cheaper, shanks need to cook slowly to properly unlock their

potential. But when treated right, they are absolutely worth the time.

Lamb Shank

- 1) Preheat oven to 450°, and pop your lamb into a roasting pan, seasoned with olive oil, salt, and pepper.
- 2) Roast for 20 mins until browned, then remove from oven. Reduce oven to 325° while removing excess fat from lamb dish and adding garlic cloves and rosemary.
- 3) Wrap pan tightly (very tightly) with a few layers of foil and then return to oven for 2 hours.

- 4) Don't peek until the 2 hours are up! Then remove foil, add broth, raise heat to 400° and roast for a final 15 mins.

Sam is our newest employee, and she's been fitting in well with Intersection's somewhat nerdy, food-obsessed staff. She and Mel did a food and wine pairing session featuring this lamb and mint sauce, which they also paired with roasted beet halves (with red wine, balsamic, and rosemary) and roasted fennel risotto.

Serve with the 2016 Silica, (decanted for a half-hour)



2016 Riesling *Drink now through 2024 (optimal 2019-2021) - 650 cases made*

We make no effort to conceal how much we love Riesling here at Intersection. It's the favourite wine of both Moss and Melissa, in no small part due to the bright acidity that lends a refreshing finish to the wine's slight sweetness. Aged for two years in bottle before release to bring out lively petrol aromatics, this wine stands brilliantly on its own. But the Riesling also shows great pairing versatility, cutting through spice, oil, and fat.

2017 Milepost Merlot *Drink now through 2025 (optimal 2020-2022) - 481 cases made*

Bright and vital, the Milepost shows a clean expression of fruit from its vintage. With blackberry jam and cassis on the nose the wine is immediately inviting, opening up into liquorice spice and a smooth palate full of blackberry and allspice. When pairing, use tomato, spices, and peppers to really make the fruit shine in this versatile wine. Two of Mel's suggestions are chicken parmesan or a mushroom scallion tart with lentils and yogurt.

2016 Alluvia Merlot *Drink now through 2029 (optimal 2021-2025) - 296 cases made*

A new vintage of Alluvia, showing some of the balanced nuance of the 2016 year. Dark fruit leads into baking spice and earthiness, promoted by a year in French oak. A versatile and smooth drinking wine that opens up aromas of anise when decanted. Pair with lean meats and hearty vegetables.

2016 Silica Merlot *Drink now through 2030 (optimal 2021-2025) - 290 cases made*

The new 2016 Silica also shares the Alluvia's smooth texture and earthy richness, but with an even more concentrated intensity of jammy dark fruit. The Silica also shows stronger tannin at this point, embracing the palate with a satisfying grip. Also pairs well with lean meats, especially lamb (see recipe above.)

2014 Silica Merlot *Can cellar through 2028 (optimal 2020-2023) - 453 cases made*

A few extra years of age have mellowed the tannin of this rich red wine. With time, the concentrated flavours have matured into tones dried fruit: fig, prune, and dried plum. As well, the wine has retained its long, luxurious finish and its raspberry torte aromatics.

Tastes beautiful on its own, or with a

More tasting notes: www.xwine.ca/wine-list

More issues of the CrossWord with articles and recipes: www.xwine.ca/crossword

More of Mel's recipes: www.xwine.ca/cooking