

“Punky’s Dilemma”

I make the Light.

I dive into this velveteen summer night sitting on the horizon, its gaudy twilight puffs of lavender and peach fill the sky, and I make the next light on my descent into the city when the rain kisses my cheek. It is just then that Summer breaks and the Great Heat passes.

I focus on the descent, steering into the turn, keeping my knee tucked close. I tilt the bike not the body - that's the rule. I could glide forever, I always believe I can, but today I know I shouldn't.

The Accrual of Obligation is upon me, but the air is soft and warm and if I stay out a little longer, well, no one will miss me if I take a few more strokes. The decision is made. Its summer and whatever it is trying to pull me away can wait. Today Grasshopper wins. Duty always calls, obligation and the like - never ever reducing in number or scope of course but still, I sneak out for a spin, and for a few sweet sweet moments, I am Emperor of the Air again. I am light and graceful, and the weight of time and age are a burden for others, not me. It is in lightness that I remember who I am, stroking the pedals with a metronome tempo, legs pumping heart thumping. The upper body stays stable, the legs do the work - that's the rule, and to me it is the essence of all Grace.

Push a little harder. Old and careful says touch the brakes - brakes shmakes. Brakes are for people without stitches. I push, my body drops toward the top tube, my elbows bow a little, my head dips, and as I hit the imagined finish line, my toes are pointing almost straight down.

Thunder and lightning continue etching the sky with a kind of violent speech, all the while tracing wicked witch waltzes on the ever darkening, bruise colored clouds. It is a violent night, but I embrace the evenings sultry heat, making it in just before the storm rends the sky. I don't recall Utah ever feeling quite so "bayou", but with it comes a rain and a cooling breeze. There are buds on the basil, finally, telling me of the season's impending close. Summer's heat was more generous this year and my fingertips become inky black nipping the buds (nipping buds keeps the leaves tender - that's the rule). My hands are infused with a rousing aroma that stays with me for the evening. I smash lavender blossoms on my chest and ruffle them in my ever unruly hair and the aroma brings with it a deep inviting breath of sleep. I want my hands to take root in my careful spring soil treatments so I can return to this very same spot next year. There is a perfect grace in my dirt. I drink rose wines and graze on the fruits of my blossoming labors, the **Bedrock “Ode to Lulu Rose” (\$17)** attunes me to this late summer heat and it is in summer that I am a creature of earth, from whence I came so shall I return, or so I can hope.

Time passes, chop chop! and each year the same summer signposts greet me; a picnic, a concert, a hungry honking Liberty Park goose trailing after me and my breadcrumbs, then on to a World Series, the peaceful drone of baseball on the radio, the vintages that stretch with greater and greater length in my memory, the Auld Lang Synes; I celebrate the same way each year, playing the same songs and digging through a pile of books that never seems to shrink and for all of it, always and forever seeking the moment, the ease from anxiety, the calmative cure. Fading Summer stains the August air in hues of rose and orange. The days grow smaller, shorter; then, nigh unto imperceptibly slow, each day's kiss of sun is a few minutes shorter than the one before it. I can't help but feel cheated. I do not kid when I say I could have baseball year round (I never joke where baseball is concerned). It all goes much too much quickly.

The crickets are quieter tonight, save for the occasional soft chirping in the evening air, and in the distance there go the sounds of life, cars shushing by, people rushing from obligation to obligation, a siren or two, then home, home. I imagine the burn of the million-and-one self inventories of a million-and-one days, the attendant howls, the incessant punctuating skull clattering chatter of phone-radio-ipod; the craving for a constant distraction from cold contemplation. The TwentyThirty something in the car next to me, the earbuds are jammed in deep, such that it seems the only thing that will Bring-Them-To, is a closer proximity to a louder noise, the music can't be loud enough and the buds are jammed ever deeper. I wonder what it is they want to escape. I know the look. If I turn this up loud enough, just a touch more, tune it out, drown it out, smother it. Why the fear of silence? No one wants to be alone I guess, but solitude is a different and necessary creature and there are few enough silent moments anymore for reveling and sniffing and smelling, or breaking loose from the electronic leashes that keep us from a quiet private moment to raise one's leg on the noise of the day.

It is another hour in a long fracturing chain of them, choices build on choices, life wends its way hither and thither and yon, the results of those choices scarring evident. People move back and forth, it's a sign of something grander animating this quiet peaceful city of mine. Its an almost-anguish in the air around me, I know I am not the only one feeling the time slip by,

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Your feedback is welcome and wanted - any thoughts on how I might improve this newsletter are welcome. I want to hear it all — the good, the bad and the ugly. Questions, concerns, thoughts, experiences, both fair and foul, francis.fecteau@gmail.com

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Punky's Dilemma

(continued from p.1)

the results of choices made and unmade are scrawled on every passing face; the incessant rattling second guessing, cut into their brows, the love, the loss, the finding -- but there is warmth and light and life in the air and now is not the time to reflect on dark things.

My Summer Register, my Summer Life, is rife with high lark-like shimmering top notes, the same new-sneaker exuberance of the nine year old who thinks he can outrun the universe - oh how I'd sprint and sprint and sprint! Clumsy? Yes! Fat? Yes! Sweaty? Yes! but to me in my fantastical little head I was Noble Mercury with wings at my feet! Eat! Drink! Run! Even at nine I was a bundle of battling agitated impulses bouncing on my furry little satyr haunches from the ball park to the finocchiana to the creamed herring and maybe a swallow of Almaden Mountain Chablis (my father's secret stash was never ever so secret) and lets not even start on the subject of me discovering my older brother's stash of skin mags. I only later learned the art of steering away from a fall after a few hundred intimate encounters with the macadam driveway (from a rather luxe purple banana-seat ride I might add, one my parents later purchased from the neighbors for a scant ten dollars. I soon graduated to a sexy little sky blue French number with a cattered steel crank and Christophe toe clips with luxurious leather straps — whereupon crashes were ever so much more spectacular).

I do make attempts at resistance, adulthood and the like, my long dead mother whispering in my ear for me to make something of myself; much as I wish I could, I can't really respond. I often wonder if I've lost my voice. Miss her? Oh God yes, but her best parts have gone forward and I have her to thank. I read I write I want; oh how I want, I want, I want and I remain a curious desirous soul. I understand better each year the agitation of "want".

There is more than enough time on the winter horizon for me to meditate on the Gravity of All Things, but right now, right now, Summer, I just want to focus on an absence of clothes.

I wish I was a Kellogg's Corn Flake. I would float all day in a bowl of summer, I would converse with the raisins and meditate on the nature of milk. My ant and grasshopper spend the remainder of summer locked in mortal combat.

I focus on the next light.
It's all I can see.

The best of the best wine stores;

Park City /1550 Snowcreek Drive / 435-615-8538
Metro Salt Lake /255 South 300 East / 801-533-6444
Cottonwood /1863 East 7000 South / 801-942-2580
The Big Shiny New One /280 West Harris Avenue
(about 1600 South, 300 West) / 801-412-9972

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Burly Juggs



Liter
Bottle!
\$13.99

Sherman & Hooker's Shebang! \$13.99 is a non-vintage blend of Zinfandel, Sangiovese, Cabernet, Syrah and Petite Syrah from a variety of Sonoma and Napa Valley sources. Ordinarily vineyard designates for most mere mortals (Rockpile, Dry Creek, Monte Rosso) winemaker Morgan Peterson (of the Ravenswood Vineyard Petersons) put them in a **1 liter jug** (complete with thumb grip-ring) finished with a screw cap. Its plush, fat, smoky, and loaded with black fruit — its incredibly delicious and weighs in at a rather zaftig 14.2%. Do as I do, pour off a glass, put the cap back on, give the bottle a vigorous shake. This is serious stuff that needs a little extra air time. Give Thanks and bring it to the table and remember to toast Mr Peterson's egalitarian ethic.

Burly Juggs Espanol

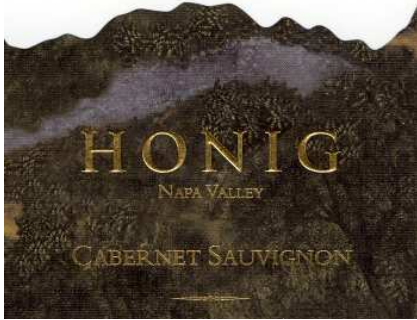


I am a fan of the large jug, the big bottle, the chi chi grande. My own base desires aside, I am also a fan of wines that fool. Bodegas Borsao, producers of the luxe **Vina Borgia Old Vine Garnacha** \$14.49 are my benchmark for the perfect intersection of bang and buck. Located in the ancient Roman town of Borja, near the cold white shoulders of the Alto Moncayo, Garnacha reaches a level of craft on the high plains of the Campo de Borja that is rarely equaled. The Vina Borgia is the entry level wine, from vines 40+ years in age. The winemaking is brilliantly simple and hands off, simple tank fermentation with a modicum of used oak, minimal fining and filtration. The result is an intense, rich, powerful mouthfilling, sappy, clingy wine. Bringing this to the Turkey table makes you both clever and smart. Old Vines. Fresh Wine. Big Bottle 1.5L. Meager Price Tag. Fool your friends.

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Grrrl Wine Mutant-licious



The **Honig Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon '07 / \$31.49** is the DEAL of the appellation with incredibly rich concentrated cassis fruit. I say Grrl wine because Kristen Belair Winemaker shreds - in the best snow dork sense of the word, as her newly repaired ACL will attest, and her latest releases are her best yet. These are stunning wines, responsibly farmed (sustainable) and made with a most un-Napa like sense of restraint without losing any of its sense of sunny, fresh opulence. Napa really is capable of Value-its called Honig. And I couldn't be more excited about the '07 Cab. For you press whores, even Wine Spectator approves, granting this 07 a 92 point score.

Whheeeeeeee



Dry Creek's spicy brushy undertones frame lovely black fruit with terrific acidity that sings over the top—this is not silly jammy flabby hot zin, this shows a precision all too often missed in this crowd pleaser varietal. Wonderful aromatics and a long rich finish make this a welcome new entry in Utah. **Bluenose Sonoma County Zinfandel 2006 / \$19.99**

Despite its Pinot Noir mutant origins, **Skylark Orsi Vineyard Pinot Blanc 2009 / \$14.99** rings with astonishing clarity. The usual suspects don't get my attention, its always the stuff at the periphery of my vision. There are oceans of Pinot Noir, greater oceans still of Pinot Grigio; Pinot Blanc is an odd and endearing little duck that shares little with its mutant forebears. From the dynamic duo behind the **Alondra Chardonnay 2009, \$11.99**, the Skylark Pinot Blanc shows great precision in its bright, stony floral aromas and terrific intensity and vivacity across the palate. Expect an array of bright, crisp, well defined aromas and flavors; ripe crisp apple, pear, sweet herbs and white flowers. Zero Oak, Zero Malolactic. An ideal mate for the Turkey Table.



The Bravery of Pinkitude



I have always proclaimed the wearing of pink to be the mark of a confident man. As for pink wine? Never really roused my ire one way or another. They are what they are - I used to think - and for the most part, they are without charm. As has been the case throughout most of 2010, I find myself washing down healthy portions of wrongness crow, with wines I heretofore would not have touched. These are magnificent selections for any Glutton's table.

There are, generally, two ways to make rose. Saignee refers to a bleeding-off of free-run juice from a primary fermentation, then fermenting the now-pink juice into something fun. The other is a little more serious, when the fruit is taken direct to press, allowed to soak for a bit and then fermented. The second "direct press" method produces a wine with greater astringency on the palate.

The **Belle Glos Rose of Pinot Noir 2009 / \$16.99** is a brighter fresher bone dry pink with terrific acidity. It is rife with rosy aromas of red berries and apples and finishes with a bone dry snap. It is made by the impeccable hand of Joey Wagner from rather serious cool climate goodness in Mendocino, the Yorkville Highlands.

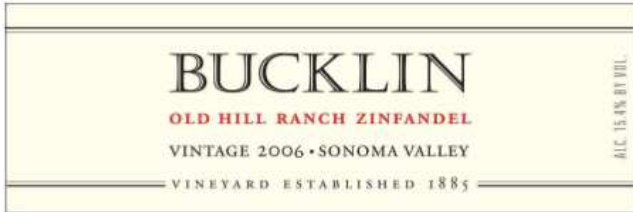
The **Bedrock Ode to Lulu Rose (of Mourvedre) 2009 / \$17.99** is a different animal, a serious pink beast if you will, borne of a dry farmed organic vineyard over a century old, this is compelling serious stuff and only gains in the glass. It used to be that the greatest Roses in the world were made by Domaine Tempier of Bandol, where winemaker Morgan Peterson learned the art of Rose; thanks to MP's efforts, the giants now vacation in Sonoma. This is a MUST.



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Yes I have...



You've heard me preach, rant and rave before. I've begged and pleaded with you. The magic of 2007 Seems to have left no corner of California untouched; but this much is clear, Old Hill, was, is and remains, a truly blessed place. Yes, I've tasted several vintages in a row. I've also tasted several vintages yet to come, but I say this without reservation; Will Bucklin's 2007's are his best releases yet. There is that trademark Old Hill perfume, it makes me weak in the knees still, with those scents of sandalwood, lavender, smoke and gorgeous gorgeous gorgeously precise black fruit. This does not suffer from the goey alcoholic foolishness of other Zinfandels. The length on the palate is ungodly long and the finish both intense and precise. It is as complete a set of wines as can be found. I suggest you do as I do, grab a bottle, take it home, lose the cork and go about your evening, preferably with minimal interruption. Go back to it every few hours for a sniff and a taste, and then let it go to the next day repeating this same routine and see that each hour brings new music. It is the only way to "know" a wine and this offers escape, forcing a higher level of interaction and life in-the-moment, and each time I nose the glass, I am right back on the guest house deck admiring the eucalyptus on the hill and watching the birds rinse between meals. **The Bucklin Old Hill Zinfandel 2007 / \$24.99 - it's a cheap escape.** (By the way? His Cabernet is a steal too)

Wild A** Sh*t

BINOMIO
MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO
denominazione di origine controllata

made in bottiglia alla proprietà di
BINOMIO
Spokane (Finanz) Italia

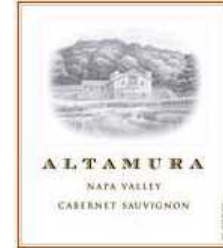
There are a few bottles of this precious ichor (I mean it in the divine sense) kicking around. It prompts deep reflection on the meaning of \$50. This is one of the greatest bottles of Italian wine made. It provides one of those rare moments when a wine incites thoughts of riot altering what your senses perceive. It is deep, rich, luxurious. **Binomio Montepulciano D'Abruzzo 2005 / \$50**

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Vintage Improvement



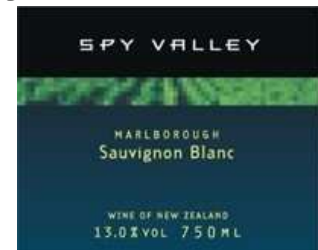
JUDD'S HILL



Each year I taste their stuff, I am always reassured that great people make great wine, but each year, they seem to magically elevate the bar making softer, deeper richer more compelling wines. The **Judd's Hill Merlot 2006 / \$21.99** is easily the most classically styled they've ever produced. It shows deep black fruits, soft easy tannin framed by notes of mint and sweet cocoa. It's a superb effort for the money, as is **Judd's Hill Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 / \$26.99, which is easily their most opulent and supple to date.** It is a juicy opulent creature.

On a more epically styled note, the Press seems to be discovering more and more what I knew all along, Frank Altamura makes massive, enormous rock-em sock-em Cabernets that measure up against any of the heavyweights. This is deep intense heavy mouthcoating stuff, loaded with cassis, vanilla and spicy French oak. The finish is easily 45 seconds long and it's a wine for the ages. **Altamura Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa 2006 / \$75**

Turkey Magic



Who'd a thunk this one? Penetrating stone fruit with plush aromas of apple and peach from New Zealand, the **Spy Valley Marlborough Riesling 2009 / \$12.99** ~ it's a dead ringer for Mosel Kabinett with its minerally snap. Those down undah are quietly developing into a destination for World Class Riesling (all caps intended). This has the acidity to complement any meal, but with its immediate floral aromatic juicy charms its also an easy solo guzzler (not that I've ever struggled much for that much self control) **Spy Valley Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2009 / \$14.99** is one of the most perfectly balanced pitch perfect expressions of Sauvignon Blanc I've encountered. It is loaded with sweet herbs, fresh melon and gooseberry and is as crisp and crunchy as one could want as the seasonal chow gains weight. This is a pricey neighborhood for NZ Sauvignon Blanc, yet for some reason, Spy Valley is still half the price of its more famous neighbor Cloudy Bay. Again, the egalitarian vibe....

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Eating, Drinking



308 West 300 South
(801) 531 ~ TONY

I know its old news by now, but there is more of Caputo's to love. **The 15th and 15th store has opened** and settled into its new neighborhood as if it were always there and always would be (and always should be). It's a marvelous formula; good passionate committed people doing what they do best. (And its just a damn civilized habit to have a decent glass of wine with a trademark Tony Caputo Deli Sandwich).

Holiday Foodstuffs have hit the shelves and there are several utterly noteworthy and amazing treats that await. My personal favorites (having adopted a gluten free diet) are the gluten free **Cookies Con Amore, (specifically the Pignoli)** which cross two of my favorite things, amaretto cookies and pine nuts with nutty chewy sweet delight. There also are new flavors of **Chocolatier Blue** and a multitude of new Spanish Pig products from Iberico. The most remarkable of this holiday hit parade are the **Lomo Iberico Bellota dry-cured pork loin**. From D.O protected swine (descended from indigenous wild boars crossbred with Phoenician / North African pigs) these spoiled swine eat nothing but acorns and roam free all day. Its a gorgeously well-marbled velvety treat that adds to an already breathtakingly long list of my oral addictions. As if I needed another excuse to put things in my mouth.

Otherwise Merriment

December 6th - Caputo's 3rd & 3rd Holiday Wine & Cheese Basics

The cave is going full steam ahead and creating classics to come for the holidays. We will go around the world with global favorites along with tips and tricks to create harmony on your holiday cheese plate. **Call 801 531 TONY to reserve a spot**

Class: \$25 Wine: \$15

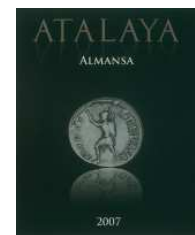
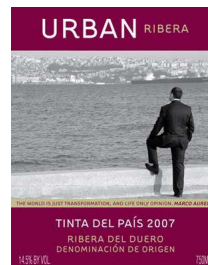
December 16th - Caputo's on 15th More Christmas Curd

Make it a holiday date night on 15th and 15th. At the intimate setting of Caputo's on 15th, get a front row seat as Troy Peterson and I root through the cheese cave again. We will reprise some of our greatest hits and share some of the newest discoveries. Caputo's original cave aged cheeses will be featured of course with the now famous local Fundamental Cheddar leading the way. All will be paired with wines of suitable weight for winter. **Call 801 486 6615 to reserve a spot**

Class: \$25 Wine: \$15

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Methadone?



The weather outside is indeed getting frightful and my palate knows it. Budgetary considerations what they are, I can't always drop a hundy (\$100) to get what I want, and there are times where I want what I want what I want. I remember a stretch where my oral obsessions led to fiscal improprieties in the service of Burgundy. I did shameful things to feed my habits. We all do what we must for our angry fix. That said, there is such a thing as a bridge to moderation, a temporary fix to satisfy the deep dark urge and it doesn't need to cost a fortune.

There are commonalities to these three wines; all are extremely low yield sources (less than two tons an acre), vineyard areas are miserably desolate, arid, hot nasty places, none are abused by new oak, all possess uncommon color and richness for type. These are dark, intense and sappy efforts that drink well out of their weight class. They've got \$50 swing in a \$15 suit.

The **Venta Mazzaron / \$15.99** is the most elegant of the bunch. From the area outside Toro, this is a dry farmed rendition of the native clone of Tempranillo known as Tinta de Toro. It shows bright aromas and flavors of ripe raspberry, smoke, coffee and finishes with lovely acidity. The Fournier **Urban Ribera del Duero / \$14.99**, the most rustic of this trio shows aromas and flavors of dark jammy black fruit, espresso and chocolate with aromas of wet clay and leather. This gets very serious with air and has a remarkably long finish. The **Bodegas Atalaya Almansa / \$16.99** is the most "new worldy" of the bunch with terrific precision and intensity. Made with Alicante Bouschet, this is inky stuff loaded with characters of cassis, black fruit, truffle and lead pencil shavings. This shows insane length with time in the glass.

Little Did We Know



I have never been in the camp for Gewurtztraminer. On a good day its got the charm of boiled hand soap. Well, pass the crow. This is a brilliant, mélange of rose petals, pineapple, lychee and grapefruit with terrific acidity. From Anderson Valley's famed Ferrington Vineyard, it's a brilliant effort for a reasonable price. **Londer Gewurtztraminer 2008 / \$17.99**

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Please Join Me

Utah seems to be the most popular market in the country right now with winemakers and wine personalities alighting willy nilly like horny Monarch Butterflies migrating for attention. Some of Utah's finest restaurants have created events around some awfully fabulous wines. Please join us if you can

December 1st / Shallow Shaft (at Alta) presents an evening with John Fetzer of Saracina (the Mondavi of Mendocino).

If you didn't know, Shallow Shaft is, in my humble opinion, home to one of the most consistently fascinating wine lists in all of Utah, a hidden gem managed by the inimitable Greek wine geek, Peri Ermidis who has teamed with Curtis his chef to create a dazzling menu. Make it a snow day.

Doors open at 6:30 for meet & mingle with John Fetzer. Go to www.shallowshaft.com for reservations or call 801-742-2177. Dinner \$40, Additional Wine Pairings \$25

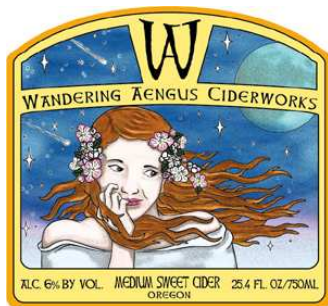
December 7th / The Paris Bistro presents an homage to the wines of Maison Louis Latour.

The Paris Bistro is home to the most consistently fine French cuisine in Utah, and when Emmanuel Levarak and Eric D start banging their hard heads in excitement over a food and wine pairing opportunity, the results are not to be missed. You will want to google Brillat-Savarin when this is done. **Unique old vintages will be featured as well.**

Dinner begins at 6:30, Dinner is \$45, Wine is \$45. Call 801-486-5585 for reservations

December 29th / Wine Wednesday at Wild Grape featuring Donkey & Goat Wines; husband & wife winemaker owners Tracey & Jared Brandt

Dinner begins at 6:30; Dinner is \$45, Wine is \$25. Call 801-746-5565 for reservations.



New Cider, new package. This is brilliant stuff, bone dry with just enough sweet apple character and spice. It's a perfect pick for a bubbly prelude to holiday food. The acidity is tremendous, crisp as a ripe cold apple. **Wandering Aengus Ciderworks, Bloom Cider / \$7 (750 ml)**

All Purpose Happy



S O T E R
VINEYARDS

The headlines occasionally read wrong and celebrate incompetence over virtue and such is the story of my coming across these wineries and incorporating them into my portfolio. But, there is such a thing as a Chauncey moment, even for such as me, and thus it was that I dipped my umbrella and went walking. And this time of year when making the choice for the holiday table more often than not falls to the hapless, Pinot Noir is always a good option and a never-fail in soothing the savage palates of the assembled holiday hordes laying siege to your homes. We are indeed the lucky ones this year. These are impeccably crafted terroir driven wines that make use of minimal amounts of fine French Oak and impeccable vineyard sourcing. The economy may have hemorrhaged in 2008, but the Pinot Noir was impeccable.

Flowers Vineyard Pinot Noir 2008 / \$40 is a stunning thing that demands a first date. Oh how it takes its time to unfold and I can imagine it getting lost and guzzled quick at a holiday table. I recommend that this be kept just for oneself and maybe one or two others. (It's a habit I acquired some years ago during holiday dining with brother and his awful-girlfriend-of-the-moment. We sequestered the bottle of choice and passed a bottle of holiday plonk on to the unknowing ter-magant who then fell silent with drink and holiday cheer). After an hour or two in the glass this wine reveals a frilly silky bouquet of summer-ripe raspberries, milk chocolate and hints of sweet herbs like sage & mint. The finish is long with silky fine tannins and a crackling freshness to its acidity.

The Soter offerings on the other hand are more brusque, rough-and-tumble characters by comparison, possessed of a greater immediate intensity on the palate. Where the Flowers tends more toward a French mouthfeel, with its high-toned bright primary red fruit, the Soters share that same high-toned acidity and definition but offer darker fruit characters.

The shockingly affordable **Soter North Valley 2008 / \$24** is an intense full-throated thing, with aromas of smoke, rose and a mix of cherry & raspberry characters. The finish shows incredible phenolic character (that's the astringency on the tongue from skins, seeds and stems - green tastes bad, brown tastes good—this is GREAT). Immediate gratification? Absolutely; this will shock and astound with time in bottle. The older, bigger badder brother in the Soter lineup is the **Soter Mineral Springs 2007 or 08 / \$36** bottling where the bouquet alone is worth the price of admission. Deep intense, layered, think incense, five spice powder and ripe blackberries. A Wow.