

## A Night at the Movies

I was watching a movie when I realized someone I'd loved truly madly deeply was a heartless self-absorbed fraud. I knew from a movie that my heart was still there, and hers was missing, and I was so absorbed in a fiction that it took another fiction to shake me loose from one that would have ruined me. It was an *Amour Fou*, a *Crazy Love* gone wrong. It happens. I once read, that as young man I was allowed one harridan, for which I was blameless, the rest I had to take some responsibility for, even if it means admitting some ugly weaknesses. I have many. Love is imperfect.

I remember another time, another film when it became clear to me that I'd fallen crazy in love for one of my dearest friends (at the time), and for all the goofiness that ensued, her clock was ticking, mine was not, but I still recall her with endearing warmth. It was the sweet lingering finish you hope for at the end of a love. Even so, again, the displacement of rationality, logic and reason still ruled the day. Sanity had again gone on holiday. Ava Gardner drove Frank Sinatra mad for a time; Ronald Colman fell for Celeste Holm; the omnisexual Errol Flynn fell for everyone, everyone fell for him; and my Mom had a mad, mad crush on Gregory Peck. I am in good company. Love is maddening.

February is an awful month for the single man (or woman I imagine). Some preach that February is a month for love; bah I say, both bah and humbug. Any month or any moment is a moment for L'Amour isn't it? Shouldn't it be? Gosh...me a hopeless romantic. Go figure. Love is persistent.

I am forced to admit we aren't designed to be solo creatures. It's never been the divine design. We like to imagine that we are immune to mere impulse. Not to get political, but some say that such issues of biology are a matter of choice. Me? I just can't see it. Substantive supporting biochemical research aside, were that the case, my life would have been considerably simpler to this point in time. I've been reckless, stupid and obsessive; irrational even. Until Big Pharma comes up with a medical answer, a pill to allay the symptoms of hormonal insanity say, it is likely I will no doubt repeat that behavior at selected intervals for the next several decades given the first available opportunity. I will write volumes of bad poetry, I will buy flowers, I will sit through countless meals, I will wrack my brain for whatever small reserves of cleverness I can muster in hopes of getting someone's amorous attentions; in short I will bellycrawl over broken glass for the slightest possibility that there is a She out there for Me. I wish I could resist; the smells, the impulses, the pushing of my biochemical buttons, the heart throbbing warmth that ensues just having that someone near ~ but I won't. How do you argue with the essence of evolution? With every bubbling sip, every savory bite, every inhalation of scent or sidelong lascivious glance at some curvaceous backside we scream "I am" at the Universe and believe you me I will go down kicking and screaming. I will not give up any of it. Love is not to be resisted.

I can't bring myself to be cynical this time of year ~ much as it's in my nature to be so. I ascribe it to an excess of grower Champagne this month, (notably the **H. Billiot, Grand Cru Brut, Ambonnay, 2002 ~ \$72**). It's a magical brew, really, and its bedroom aromas of silk and peach and warm skin have driven me to a tingling distraction ~ not to mention what its incredibly persistent finish does to my tongue. (To hell with Georgia O' Keefe; who needs such blatant obvious symbology to prompt desire?). It has me reminiscing, remembering specific heated moments of bliss, realizing how long it's been since....well...so many things ~ lets just leave it at that. Still I persist (hope springs eternal after all) lingering too long when a woman passes, just to smell her perfume and wonder what the back of her neck smells like, or the daily stop at my favorite Starbucks, just to shamelessly flirt with "she-who-foams-my-cappuccino". I don't even like coffee that much, but it's these mil-lion and one Walter Mitty moments that keep my imagination hopeful and happy. Love is bubbly.

## chocolatier • blue

chocolates of the season

Its February. The Greeting Card industry along with the evil Sugar/Choco Industrial complex insist that we spend and spend in hopes of achieving our love objective, February is the month for love after all and we have to express our affections with a certain commercial ruthlessness. If we don't spend, the terrorists win ~ isn't that the reasoning? Well, pass that third martini and get me a large box of the new Valentine's releases from Chocolatier Blue, who, with Caputo's is making it really really hard to resist their evil decadent grasp. The new heart shaped flavors are mindblowing; kiwi-caramel, vanilla bean (really), banana, coconut almond (almond joy elevated to perfection) banana, keffir lime, tiramisu. If you haven't, DO. The impeccable temper of the chocolate is equaled only by the perfect balance of flavor and intensity. This is alchemy. What doesn't end up in your mouth should end up crushed into your skin...or hers. Make a big mess. Caputo's is the sole retail outlet in Utah for both consumers and on-premise alike. Call 801-519-5754 for details.

---

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](mailto:francis.fecteau@gmail.com)

# e-libation

A Salt Lake City guide to all things juicy  
and delicious in the world of wine.

## Giggles and Bubbles

What would you rather have for a valentine bottle? I asked a married friend of mine, “red or white or bubbly?” “Bubbly”, he said, “that will get her giggling and I won’t have to do all the work”. What more do I need to know? Gentlemen, start your engines. It makes girls giggle and speeds the wit, and its as close as most of us will get to a Love Potion #9. If you know it works, its worth every penny.

Champagne is set up like Burgundy on the Production end with negociants (those who might own a little land, but buy most of their fruit), cooperatives (places where small growers go to make wine) and growers (grow fruit AND make wine). Properties are classified, more sensibly than Burgundy or Bordeaux, based on geological and exposure parameters (things which actually influence vines & fruit). The only flaw is that entire communes (villages) are classified, not individual vineyards. By and large this system still holds up well and is an accurate guarantor of quality and a Grand Cru pedigree will always show.

These villages have soils that are as widely varied as any in the viticultural world, yet the Grand Marques (Labels such as Veuve, Moët/Dom, Roederer, Perrier Jouet) happily create a uniform house style, blending the same cookie cutter wine year after year, sourcing fruit from as many as 80 communes for their various cuvees—think of it thusly, why would you blend away Stag’s Leap Cabernet fruit with fruit from Lodi? The growers live with these vines year after year, and though they may sell large portions of their fruit to the Grand Marques, the fruit they set aside for themselves is subject to a much different treatment.

The Grand Marques pull fruit early to maintain acidity (this doesn’t make much sense in France’s northernmost appellation—but hey what do I know?) and when it comes time for dosage (refers to the yeast/sugar/wine used) to create the bubbles, the amount of sugar used is high. This larger dosage adds fleshiness to the mouthfeel and palate. It also obscures the character of the base wine, which thanks to its early pick, is often acidic and lemony. (Feel free to test this theory by letting a bottle of any Grand Marque (Yellow Label, Mumm, Moët...take your pick) come to room temperature). The Appellation Controllee allows a wine to have up to 15 grams per liter of sugar in the dosage and still be called Brut (this is actually a prevailing standard with the large houses). Dosage isn’t necessarily a bad thing, some is necessary, but it leads to abuses, covering up less than careful winemaking by the industrial producers such as the Grand Marques. That said, why would you want to blend away the natural expressiveness of a wine or cover it up with an excessive dosage as they do? Growers pull fruit much later for their own bottling. Their fruit is closer to physiological ripeness, this creates a base wine that uses a much smaller and more harmonious dosage, therefore making it much more reflective of a distinctive terroir (place) and style.

## Read the \$#\$% Label

Along the border of the label is the producer’s tax ID number (its very tiny, so look carefully); it will bear one of the three following prefixes, **NM** for negociants (Moët, Perrier Jouet, Veuve Clicquot), **CM** for Cooperatives (Nicholas Feuillate), and **RM** for Recoltant—Manipulant aka Grower/Producer. The Grower Producers also tell you more about vineyard sourcing, citing specific villages on the label and indicators of vineyard rating. Also — Grower Champagnes offer more information about their upbringing. A reference to a specific village guarantees a reflection of soil and place. Two, a designation of **Cru status** is a guarantee of quality; **Grand Cru**, the very best; **Premier Cru**, Pretty Damn Good still. Try to find that info on a Grand Marque Label. *Not going to happen.*

## The Real #9’s



The Recipe;

75% Pinot Noir,  
25% Chardonnay  
all Grand Cru

Perhaps the most seductive of the bunch. This one has savaged my palate with its forceful charm and intensity, showing aromas and flavors, that, were my eyes closed, would put me in a very expensive glass of White Burgundy. Its flavors of peaches, sweet herbs, cherries and toasty baking spices stain the palate with mineral intensity. One great proof of love in all great narrative literature was the procurement of a great rarity, Perseus, Hercules, Jason (Golden Fleece—remember?) Here’s your chance ~ only 65 cases made it to the U.S. Utah gets 12.

**H Billiot, Grand Cru Brut 2002 (\$72) ~**



Paul was struck on the road to Damascus, for me it was the road to Verzenay. These are the Epiphanies; the ones that made me see the light, that Champagne dazzles with all the depth, terroir and finesse one could ask for, from any region. Lallement makes extraordinary wines with a depth and power one usually finds in bottling of Grand Cru Burgundy. **Jean Lallement Grand Cru Brut NV (\$55)** and **Jean Lallement Grand Cru Brut “Cuvée Réserve”, NV (\$64)** Lallement owns some of the oldest Pinot Noir and Chardonnay plots in Verzenay and Verzy. The Green Label, fruit from the younger plots, is more opulent, immediately accessible and open knit with aromas and flavors of fresh sweet apples, butterscotch, and baking spices, the incredibly rare Blue Label (only 50 cases in the US ~ 15 c to Utah ~ yes, I am a magician) is from his oldest holdings. It is truly breathtaking, a virtuosic exercise, showing an array of powerful mineral driven fruit, citrus, apples, spice, cherries and, quite frankly....joy.

# e-libation

A Salt Lake City guide to all things juicy  
and delicious in the world of wine.

## Vilmart et Cie



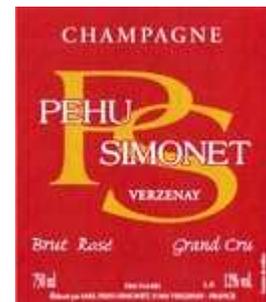
Vilmart is a cult star among Champagne producers, and the Grand Marques look to them for stylistic innovations such as the use of barrel aging and the blending of wines according to vine age, barrel treatment and malolactic treatment (a process which gives a creamy rich mouthfeel). The vineyard management is beyond reproach, focusing on Organic Viticulture and truly low yields, **Vilmart Grand Cellier D'Or NV (\$70)** is mostly chardonnay and a blend of multiple vintage, this is the creamiest and most open knit of the bunch, spicy; think of sweet, freshly baked pastries and a fresh ripe citrus zing with a long mineral grip in the mouth **Vilmart Grand Cellier D'Or 2000 (\$78)** Think of this as the older vine brother to the NV above. The grip is livelier and more intense. **Vilmart "Coeur de Cuvée" (\$121)** From the very oldest vines (all above 50 yrs.), the base wine is 100% barrel aged, 80% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Noir. This thing is a monster, loaded with spicy rich characters, elegant long mousse (mousse refers to the juicy delicious bubbles) and a long silky finish. Liquid cashmere, all of them.

## Chartogne Taillet



**Chartogne Taillet Cuvée St Anne Brut NV (\$45)** ~ Perhaps the best value in the grower catalogue. The recipe here is powerful, with 50% Pinot Noir, 40% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Meunier. The terroir in Merfy is so distinct that many feel it should be elevated to Grand Cru status, this stuff is explosive with notes of honey, baking spice, baked apple, peach, apple butter, cherry, ginger spice and floral aromas and flavors with a finish that lingers like a Grand Cru already, leaving a wild trail of flavor down the back of the throat.

## Varnier Fanniere Jean Milan Pehu Simonet



**Varnier Fanniere Grand Cru Brut 2002 (\$98)** **Jean Milan, "Carte Blanche" Grand Cru, NV (\$52)** are two sides of an incredibly seductive coin, one is single vintage (the SPECTACULAR 2002), the other is multi vintage. Both are from older vines, Grand Cru fruit, "blanc de blanc" a wine made from 100% Chardonnay. The **Varnier Fanniere** could be used to cut stone; it shows an intensity and minerality uncommon for a wine that goes through full malolactic (the conversion of fruit acid—malic, to a softer form of lactic acid). The array of floral and citrus blossomscent is dazzling and the wine improves for days as its open gradually progressing to aromas of ginger and white chocolate (so, if you start in the evening and want to finish it for breakfast....ahem. The **Jean Milan** is more open knit, broader & more expansive in its gingery, sweet pastry aromas & flavors and length of buttercream which snap on the long, spicy finish.

**Pehu Simonet Grand Cru, Brut Rose NV (\$70)** ~ Its pink! A beautiful rosy pink (80/20 Pinot Noir Chardonnay, no ML) a very popular trend, pink bubbles, this one delivers, serious red fruit, floral notes and an elegant mineral driven finish with brilliant bright acidity. As it airs, like great love, it becomes deeper, richer.

## Cool not Cold

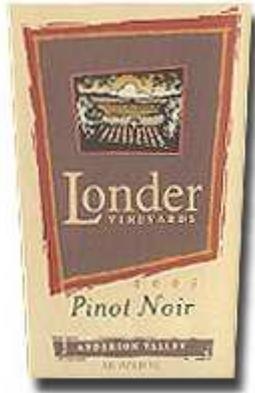
This isn't sugary negociant trash. **THEY ARE NOT TO BE SERVED ICE COLD.** As consumers we've been trained to serve bubbles at sub zero temperatures. Cold masks flaws in white wine. Period. Grower champagnes should be chilled to a cool temp not a cold one. Allow the wine to open up ~ these grower bubbles actually develop aromas, depth, flavor, texture and power as they sit open and gradually rise to cool room temperatures. Remember, when we speak of cellar temp, the original reference point was some grubby French guy's cool dirt root cellar that stayed 50 to 55 degrees. Treat these wines with deference, like all your other fine single vineyard bottling from all over the world.

# e-libation

A Salt Lake City guide to all things juicy and delicious in the world of wine.

## Geek Love, seeks same

These are two of the most brilliantly turned wines I've had all month. While wandering and whiling away the hours in Mendocino, I stumbled into the best tasting room ever, a place called "Sip!" operated by a Mendocino legend, Bernadette Byrne. She knew every bottle in the store, and more importantly the people behind them and why she cared. She pointed me to Larry and Shirlee Londer's **Londer Vineyards Estate Bottled Pinot Noir (\$41)**. This is one of the most quirky, beautiful Pinots I've come across in some time, expressing a gorgeous array of anise, sweet black fruit, a hint of smoky truffle and oak toast. This is Anderson Valley terroir at its best. **Londer Vineyards Gewurtztraminer 2006 (\$19)** a gorgeous expression of rosepetals and spice and pineapple fruit with scintillating acidity. Best I've tasted in a decade and a perfect match for takeout.



**S**ubscription to **E-libation** is voluntary & free. Let me know if you no longer wish to receive it OR feel free to pass along. All I need is an email to add friends to the broadcast!

## Eat, Drink, Cook ...Lessons



308 West 300 South  
(801) 531 - TONY

### FEBRUARY 21st

#### Advanced Tasting: Mountain Cheeses of Southern Europe & Wine Pairing

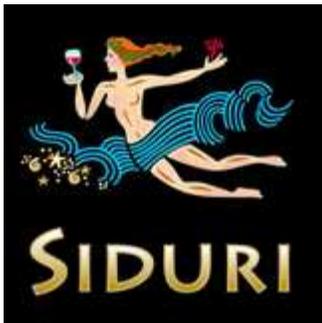
Taste your way through the high mountain areas of Southern Europe and learn why these areas produce the most robust cheeses in the world. From rich and creamy to sharp and pungent, this is the ultimate class for cold weather. Includes \$5 cheese gift certificate. **Class: \$25 Wine Pairing: \$15**

### FEBRUARY 28th

#### Pasta: Cold Weather Recipes to Warm the Soul

Get out of the cold and into Caputo's for some of Italy's most comforting pasta traditions. Matt and Yelena will prepare provincial recipes, including Egg Tagliatelle w/ Speck (smoked prosciutto) cream sauce, Florentine Ravioli w/ a buttery tomato and sage sauce, Mac & Cheese w/ Umbrian Truffles and more. Wine pairings will include big reds to match this hearty fare. Includes meal & \$5 gift certificate. **Class: \$40 Wine Pairing: \$15**

## Divine SWF seeks Partner for LTR...



She, Siduri, is a goddess, a creature of divinity in the Babylonian Epic of **Gilgamesh**, and like many great women, a source of answers to life's complicated questions, and if not answers, well, some really wonderful perspective. Although to be fair, she does try to dissuade Gilgamesh from his quest for immortality, to eat, drink and be merry, to stick around with her to enjoy life, carpe diem, seize the day and all that. Much to her credit in some translations, she does provide him with awfully good wine. I know I've been convinced for less, but there is no compromise here; Siduri Vineyards Pinot Noirs are silky expressive efforts than reflect with pinpoint flair, their unique and distinctive terroirs. Siduri produces more than 27 different Pinot Noirs from vineyards that stretch from Oregon's Willamette Valley to Santa Barbara. I have convinced the divine Ms. S to bring her charms to Utah; three of these seductive beauties arrived this month. **Siduri Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 2006 (\$20)** hearkens to France for its stylistic profile, with a range of floral notes, earth and ripe red fruits, framed by a hint of toasty oak. The finish is long and lingering and makes a marvelous match for softer cheeses and rustic cuisine. The **Siduri Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 2006 (\$36)** is the most opulent and open knit of the bunch, showing almost jammy fresh ripe red raspberries (fresh as in coming home from farmers market fresh, sticking your nose in the brown bag just to inhale the aroma) its finish is framed by sweet herbs and a touch of sweet French oak. The most elegant and high cheekboned of the bunch is the **Siduri Russian River, Parsons Vineyard Pinot Noir 2006 (\$44)** which shows all the floral, red fruited beauty one finds in good middle weight burgundy. Think Beaune and all points south in the Cote D'or where Pinot gets that extra little bit of sunny disposition. The extra touch of smoky toasty oak doesn't hurt and the wine opens beautifully for hours.

### The best of the best wine stores;

**Park City**  
1901 Sidewinder Ave  
435-649-7254  
**Metro Salt Lake**  
255 South 300 East  
801-533-6444  
**Cottonwood**  
1863 East 7000 South