

Bad Dog

The Universe is fu@%ing with me. It begins with a bronze goat forged by a drunken egomaniacal Spaniard, no kidding, and oh my it's a comical thing. It insists on my attention. I want to sit with it, lean back against it with a lunch of olives, feeling their buttery brine on my lips punctuated by good Zamorano cheese and wine, and watch the crowd roll by. (It wouldn't have been the first time I'd been scolded, asked to leave or arrested for inappropriate behavior at a museum.)

My senses go haywire that day, sparking and spitting; ears smell, eyes feel and the sweet rasp of peasant wine (**Bodegas Altos de Luzon, Cabernet / Mourvedre aka Mataro and Tempranillo blend from Jumilla - \$20**) singing on my palate makes my fingers tingle and my hands warm. I shiver from what I see. I can feel the burn of a cigarette between my fingers. The Body Electric. Peasant wine fuels this daydream, so I wander Midtown and find the nearest foodstuffs that will do, I tuck them in my coat and return to the site. I sit. I eat. A security guard wanders over. I offer him an olive.

Sculpture had invaded the personal space in a face to face, mano a mano confrontation. My nose had been rubbed in it, much like a wayward, misbehaving, very "bad" dog. I spent the week walking about New York, nose full, it having had been rubbed, thoroughly, in the glories of what could only be found in The City of my Very Best Self.

Overthinking New York comes easy. Why, there's so much to think of and speak of and verbally labor over! The legato lines of the tenor's voice at the Met! or the appreciation of history at the Museum of Natural Science! Why Teddy Roosevelt himself once strode the halls! Giants have walked this city for generations! And at some point it all becomes so much pointless gas. I do not go to The City of my Very Best Self to contemplate or pontificate on the nature and composition of my belly-button lint.

My Jewish soul chimes in, (we all have one, mine is named Saul Bellow), that "Intellectual Man had become an explaining creature. Fathers to children, wives to husbands, lecturers to listeners, experts to laymen, colleagues to colleagues, doctors to patients, man to his own soul explained. The roots of this, the causes of the other, the source of events, the history, the structure, the reasons why. For the most part in one ear and out the other. The Soul wanted what it wanted. It had its own natural knowledge. It sat unhappily on superstructures of explanation, poor bird, not knowing which way to fly." It had been a long gray winter of long gray hours that had left me numb. I did know enough to fly East, but not much more.

Spring unsettles me. How does it go? "April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land mixing memory and desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain" (If you don't like TS Eliot... screw you - he gets it). April called me elsewhere, away from dull eyes and long gray hours. Sapping Routine has no place in The City of my Very Best Self where I was feeling the perfume of the season at every turn, graced by the indulgences of warming earth; baseball, purple throated crocuses and women flush with a touch of sun.

In certain parts of the winemaking universe, donkeys are used for weed control. Apparently they are tireless beasts, insistently working themselves to the point of irritability. The farmer then offers said donkey a goat for companionship ~ the donkeys find the goats calming. An afternoon at Jeriko Estates in Mendocino proves the point. Walk the estate at twilight, slugging directly from the bottle, the grand and richly textured (**Jeriko Estate Brut 2005, \$23**), feel a calming warm wind, scented with sage and olive as it is, punctuated by the sound of goats on the hill, eating, shitting and letting loose with a happy meh - eh - eh-eh; and as the finish digs into your throat, try not to feel, maybe a wee bit of sympathy for your jackass brethren that don't know when to quit. Mine was a New York goat, a resident of the MOMA NY sculpture garden, and I ate olives with it, all in The City of my Very Best Self.

New York was a belly full of craving, asked and answered, right down to the very last moments with Rodolfo and Mimi at the Metropolitan Opera, and a walk from Lincoln Center to Midtown in a misting rain with the sweet blush of bubbles (**Chartogne Taillet Cuvee St Anne Brut NV, \$45**) fresh on my lips. The evening was an angelic suspension of disbelief, colored red and yellow by the majestic Chagalls adorning the Opera House entry, all in The City of my Very Best Self. I expected no less. Winter is not allowed to last forever, you see; color always, always, always returns.

Food as Restorative is as ineffable as joy. *We all know.* Who among us has not used food for crutch, for comfort, for companionship, for calming? Comfort food. The first thing that comes to mind at the moment? **Zamorano (\$15.95/lb)** a hard cheese from Zamora, its what Manchego wants to be, with its silky buttery length of finish and raw funky sheep milk sass. **Lucque Olives (\$17.95/lb)** finish the picture; while they originated in Italy, they found their best place in the rough & tumble cowboy country that is Languedoc, France. Lucques are perfect perfect olives; meaty, sweet and accented by a sultry buttery brine. It is the punctuation in a meal, a defining point, the breath in the phrase. I've been addicted before, nothing quite like this.



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

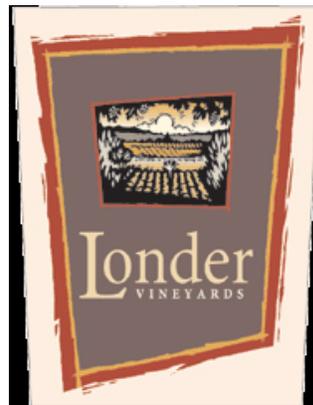
I am the Walrus

Nobody yet knows what a female listens for while she hears one or more suitors singing, but listen she apparently does", says the article. Walruses, it seems, have much in common with humans what with their large brains, collective social behavior and need to make amorous impressions by any means possible; chortling, blubbing, snorting and tooting, all for days at a time while bobbing about in the cold cold blue. At that very second, my inner walrus felt immediate pangs of sympathetic love for all who suffer through long wet schizophrenic months, the alternating napalm blasts and ice cream headaches of that seasonal rush of Spring ~ as dictated by the whimsies of she who turns ones head. I confess that for a minute Spring got the better of me and I found myself caterwauling willy nilly through one contortion after another, dizzy with affections and irrational impulses long since forgot, all made new again in the blush of warm sun. It was a magic cinematic flush too, with a Gershwin underscore, like the final scenes of "American in Paris" when poor Mulligan (Gene Kelly) thinks he's lost the delectable Lise (Leslie Caron) forever, only to have her reappear after a long dancing dream sequence made live by the rising and falling wails of ragtime trumpets...and poor Gene in his mustard yellow tights (even so, everyone wants to be Gene Kelly). The final rush down the stairs in the lavender-blue Parisian sunrise, with the swelling brass score, always melts even the most rock hearted cynic (me included). I am indeed a sucker.

This Spring has been a graceful mess. As my walrus song extended on and on, for a brief moment even I felt fluid and light. To be honest, there was a fair amount of champagne fueling the whole sweet meltdown, namely the inimitably pink, **Pehu Simonet Brut Rose NV (\$70)**. Its happy warble of strawberries and spice dazzled me for weeks. My Spring palate had returned and much like my inner walrus, it too wanted singing lightness. This means acid and freshness and the lift brought on by diurnal swings (that's the climactic condition that creates richness buttressed with acidity). Yes its possible for a wine to be syncopated, accenting the beat that weakens the knees; especially when a look across the dinner table captivates you with a glow that leaves you breathless, grinning like a jackass and feeling very very lucky. The other wine that evening? **H Billiot Brut, Ambonnay, 2002 (\$65)** a plush single vineyard expression, mostly Pinot Noir, blessed with a mind numbingly intense finish of fresh peach and mineral. Its perfume alone drives one to distraction (making it easier still to imagine that final rush down the stairs with the big brass swell, to she who leaves you grinning like the jackass that you are).

Me Gene Kelly graceful? Sadly, no. But given the right impulse, I too have been set to dancing. After all, grace is where you find it, and if a Gene Kelly film can't make a sucker out of you come Spring, its too late for you. Lets say too that a little brightness in the mouth helps fool me along into believing I can react to a wild season with a measure of that grace? Well ... then it'll be my true north, my lucky charm, my lilac and hopefully with it will come a perfume that will make my chortling, blubbing, snorting and tooting find receptive walrus ears.

Michelle ma Belle



Winery personnel say things that are by turns quizzical, comical and silly. Often they insist that their wines are "Burgundian". Laugh no more. The **Bethel Heights Estate Chardonnay 2006 (\$25)** is serious minded stuff, with aspirations of Chassagne-like clarity and brightness. It offers up subtle grace notes of peach, smoke and vanilla husk and a racy acid tinged finish. A sultrier option sure, the Meursault sister, is the **Londer Vineyards "Kent Ritchie Vineyard" Chardonnay 2006 (\$38—national retail is \$43)** the palate texture is hefty, offering up tones of orange marmalade, ripe sweet apple and a never intrusive oaky hazelnut buttery note. The brightness on the finish is thrilling too.

Octopuss's Garden

I am a rose whore. Its official. My gardening innocence is gone. A brief consultation with she-who-must-be-obeyed in all matters green (sister Francine) revealed the necessary secrets. I suspect that if she stood for more than a moment she would take root. Now the garden is off to a blazing fragrant start; all things aromatic, edible and alluring. The sense-connection is simple, I'd been sipping **Londer's Vineyards Gewurtztraminer 2006 (\$18)** and the craving played out in peaches, greens, pinks and Burgundy Blacks. It is quite frankly, the finest gewurtztraminer made in California, showing varietal brilliance in its layered expressiveness; first with defining primary aromas of roses, then asian fruits (lychee) and fresh pineapple finishing with a lemon zest and bright acid zing. A close second is Will **Bucklin's Compagni Portis Old Vine Gewurtztraminer 2006 (\$13)** which shows an added streak of integrity. Not purely gewurtztraminer, but an old dry farmed field blend, a dollop of Riesling adds a gorgeous texture and peachiness to the mid palate. Either way it's a win win. Chill and sip and sit in your garden in the shade.



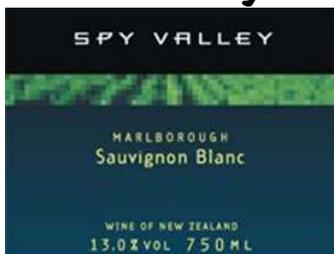
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and delicious in the world of wine.

Oh the Nerve!

Understanding wine requires patience. Sure, we can know all the facts of the matter; grown here, picked there, the wherefores, the whatfors and the whyfors ~ thats the easy part. Yes, the facts of the matter are all well and good, but its the heart of the matter that I am after. Can I share space with it, be amazed or beguiled by it, be intrigued, be seduced? Can I still enjoy it in the garden, the shower, after two days in the fridge? Technically these are critical points for better wine understanding -- let me translate that florid prose o mine; is it a wine for a warm day? a cold day? what makes it a good wine for either of those? does it open up over time and show me something I did not see at the pull of the cork? does it fatigue quickly and easily or does it gracefully unfold over the course of time (giving me a great drink for a couple of days)? California winemakers stress the importance of drainage and exposure and acid /PH balance; in Burgundy they speak of wines with "nervosite" or say that the best wines come from the vines with the best views, same things, but hey I've been watching Gene Kelly all spring. Me? I'm all for the view (and when is nerve not good?).

The Fresh shall bear it away...



This is, without fail, one of the very finest Sauvignon Blancs I have tasted in my career as a wine nerd (and I was there at the introduction of Cloudy Bay and the ensuing advent of New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs ~ *this is better and at half the price*). It's also been one of the finest surprises of the season. This stuff roars from the glass with brilliant heady Springtime aromas of mint, ripe sweet limeade citrus and pink grapefruits. Fermented in stainless steel with a modicum of extended lees contact, it shows dazzling acidity, a palate staining finish and a sassy curvaceous texture. It's a wine with "cheekbones" and "cut" and a thrill a minute personality. **Spy Valley, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, 2007 (\$15)**

The Pink and The Fleshy



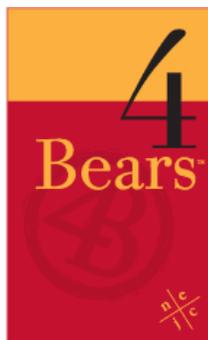
Portions of every sale of **Belle Glos Pinot Noir Blanc 2007 (\$22)** go to the Susan Komen Race for the Cure, Breast Cancer Research Foundation and with the new release, summer is officially here. It shows terrific Pinot Noir focus with an emphasis on ripe red fruits, peachy spices, a bone dry finish and a laser sharp palate. A beautiful wine, a great cause and a brilliant excuse to drink well.

Much like the winemaker, the wines get better with age. The latest releases are no exception. Suzy has two expressive new whites just in time for summer. **Selby Sauvignon Blanc (\$11)** is fermented in stainless steel and shows a summery range of fresh pink grapefruit and melon, **Selby, Russian River, Chardonnay (\$21)** shows a characteristic seamlessness in its silky, elegant ripe flavors ranging from ripe apples to more complex developed tropical expressions framed by the elegant toast of fine French oak.



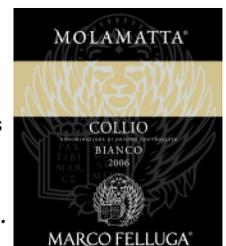
Rueda is dotted with ancient verdejo and viura vines, 6 hours from any ocean, with soil that looks & smells like beachsand. Picked at night to maintain acidity and made in stainless steel, **Bodegas Naia, "Naia" 2006 (\$14)** is fleshy, minerally, peachy and fresh with a hint of sea spray in the bouquet.

Chablis sits far north of Burgundy proper yet makes some of its most stunning Chardonnays. The new **Louis Latour Chablis Chanfleure 2006 (\$20)** is racy, aromatic, lengthy in the mouth and brilliant with fresh seafood. Summer in a bottle.



Sauvignon Blanc finds great voice in this bargain out of Sonoma's Dry Creek. **Four Bears Sauvignon Blanc 2006 (\$9—yes \$9)** shows a fresh, bright and crisp personality, loaded with sweet mint notes, pink grapefruit and melon, better still it develops terrific intensity with airing ~ and its cheap enough to fill the tub. All the right elements are here; stainless steel, terrific fruit sourcing (these guys are geniuses) and Utah's Small Winery Exemption, which makes this an exceptional value ~ *this is \$14 nationwide*.

Friuli was kissed by God when it comes to white wine" Marco Felluga declared. The **Marco Felluga Molamatta 2006 (\$19)** is a zaftig wine with a silky mouthfeel created by extended lees contact. It's a tropically rich, full bodied show of native grapes, Tocai, Pinot Bianco and Pinot Grigio. There's nothing better with the native Prosciutto di Sant Osvaldo.



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Meat Wine



Usually I am hesitant to recommend wines of such dimensions, especially as the season warms. These are BIG wines ~ dark, inky black brooding efforts with a depth of richness, flavor and concentration usually found in much more expensive bottlings. Over the course of two evenings, these two revealed brightness and lift with an acidity and freshness that framed their earthy, smoky black fruit characters. The more profound of the two, the **Saracina Syrah 2004 (\$29)** reminded me of something VERY expensive from the Rhone river valley. It is a dense, pure expression of a traditional French clone of Syrah and shows it with an array of tarry black fruits, smoke, earthy roasty characters and licorice. The diurnal variation in Mendocino is dramatic which helps create its palate impression of fruit intensity framed by acidity ~ think expensive Chateaufeuf du Pape. The **Atrea Old Soul Red 2004 (\$20)**, is inkier, blacker and a little meatier and juicier thanks to its component parts of Zinfandel, Syrah, Malbec and Petite Syrah (also a little higher alcohol). Its accessible fruitiness comes from its ripe Zinfandel backbone.

These will be magic all summer long as the BBQs fire up across the valley. Their tremendous structure allows me to recommend them for the season without any reservation. Siblings of the famed Jeriko Estate / Fetzer clans, **these are also certified Organic and Biodynamic.**

Subscription 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!

The best of the best wine stores;

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1901 Sidewinder Ave
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- Metro Salt Lake**
255 South 300 East
801-533-6444
- Cottonwood**
1863 East 7000 South
801-942-2580



Juicy goodness from Lodi. Young Judd found himself an **organic** old dry farmed Zinfandel vineyard and from it comes the **Judd's Hill Old Vine Lodi Zinfandel 2005 (\$23)** this is sweet, richly textured black fruit, framed by terrific lift and freshness. As always, the Judd light touch is present in the seamless winemaking.

Eat, Drink, Cook ...Lessons



308 West 300 South
(801) 531 - TONY

JUNE 19th

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**

JUNE 26th

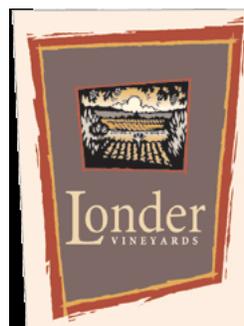
Pasta alla Romana—Great Traditions of Rome

Bucatini Amatriciana, Pasta alla Carbonara and Roman Gnocchi (you thought you knew gnocchi) meal & \$5 gift certificate. **Class: \$40 Wine Pairing: \$15**



This is for the Four Bears groupies out there ~ this is the Merlot, yes that one, the one that tastes several times its price **Twenty Rows, Napa Valley, Merlot 2006 (\$15)** this is a brilliant, fleshy and textured show of licorice, earth and black fruit with an unbelievable length that develops with airing. Stunning.

I have been wanting these wines in Utah for years; **Alonzo del Yerro (\$40)** and the luxury cuvee **"Maria" (\$68)** From Spain's Ribera del Duero, these are dark, rich black palate staining efforts, showing rich roasty characters of chocolate, coffee, olive, sage and jammy black fruit. The aromatics are nothing short of head-spinning. They sit fresh for days, resisting oxidation and fatigue. Cellar or drink now for the thrills.



Two new efforts from Londer; the **Londer "Anderson Valley", Pinot Noir 2006 (\$29)** and the **Londer Vineyards "Paraboll" Vineyard Pinot Noir 2006 (\$43)**. Utah's Small Winery exemption makes these brilliant wines cheaper in Utah than anywhere else. Both show unique Anderson Valley character (think Burgundy's earthy delineation crossed with Santa Barbara fruity richness) but the Paraboll is the more profound of the two.