

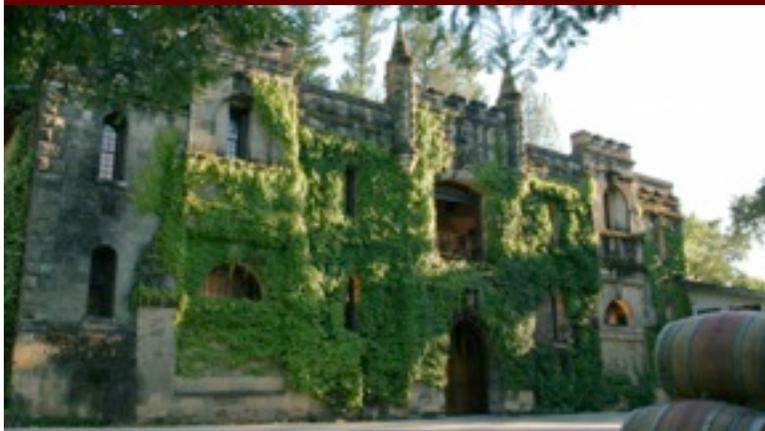


Grapevine

Price Chopper Plaza 1355 New Scotland Road Slingerlands, NY 12159
518.439.5535 slingerlandswine@yahoo.com www.slingerlandswine.com

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Chateau Montelena and the Judgment of Paris



The strikingly beautiful Chateau Montelena in Calistoga, Napa Valley

May Day, May Day...mark your calendars. This month is chock full of holidays, from the Kentucky Derby to National Wine Day and plenty in between; and we aim to celebrate. One of these May dates is particularly noteworthy in the wine world, namely the 39th anniversary of the 1976 Paris Tasting, aka the 'Judgment of Paris,' held May 24th of that year. Considered by many to have been *the* event to have put California on the winemaking map, this blind tasting turned the wine world on its bottle neck.

In case you haven't seen *Bottle Shock*, the 2008 film about the event, here's the gist: Intrigued by some of the California wines shared with him by students at his Paris Académie du Vin wine school, Englishman Steven Spurrier — who also owned a wine shop in Paris at the time — visited the Napa Valley in search of wines to rival those of France. Spurrier conceived of and carried out the famed Judgment

of Paris, a blind tasting of French white Burgundies and Red Bordeaux pitted against California Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. Much to the shock and dismay of the judges — a highly respected group of French wine experts — the 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay from Napa Valley beat out the French Burgundies, and the 1973 Stag's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon, also from Napa Valley, trumped the Bordeaux. While each took first place in their varietal class, the Chateau Montelena was voted the best by a wide margin and thus became the main character in the film adaptation 32 years later.

A little about the winery's history...In the 1880s, then owner Alfred Tubbs built the estate's breathtaking Chateau, hired a French winemaker and began

making wine. A.L. Tubbs Winery made wines until Prohibition, when it was closed. Back in business in 1933, Tubbs' nephew renamed the estate Chateau Montelena, a contraction of Mt. St. Helena. The estate was bought by Jim Barrett in the early 1970s, and the 1972 vintage was his first. It was the 1973 Chardonnay, made by Barret's then winemaker, Mike Grgich, that swept away the Paris judges. (Grgich left Montelena in 1977 to open his own winery, now called Grgich Hills Estate.) Chateau Montelena is still owned by Barret's son Bo, and still makes outstanding Chardonnay. *To honor this historic event, Wine & Spirits of Slingerlands will further discount the 2012 to \$39.99 throughout the month of May.*

Does it warrant all the hubbub, you ask. Well, let's take a look at this legendary wine. Produced according to sustainable and organic practices, the winery employs modern winemaking techniques and minimal manipulation to allow the grape and terroir to shine. Using slow, controlled fermentation with no malolactic treatment, the wine is aged in neutral and new French oak barrels, imparting only a subtle presence of oak.

According to Robert Parker, who gave it 90 points, "You

know you're doing something right when, after 45 years of Chardonnay winemaking, they name a California Chardonnay style after your winery, the 'Montelena style.' In short, it means a non-malolactic, minimally oaked Chardonnay." Citrusy, rich and bright, Parker says it should cellar well for 10-15 years, not so with all Chardonnays.

With **Mother's Day** this month, a bottle of the ethereal 2012 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay would be the perfect gift for the mother in your life. Which brings us back to the busy wine calendar this month. In addition to World **Moscato Day** on the 9th and **National Chardonnay Day** on the 21st, May is celebrated all month long as **Finger Lakes Wine Month** and **Oregon Wine Month**. See page 2 for our full roster of wine tastings, and enjoy a month long celebratory step into the sunny, warm days ahead. ♦

Incredible Savings!
15% off all Wine —
Every Bottle,
Every Day!!!

Did you know... Grown throughout the world these days, Chardonnay originated in France's Burgundy region. It is the grape used to make white Burgundies and some Champagne, though usually with far less of an oak presence, if any at all.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

We'll feature a Finger Lakes wine every Saturday to commemorate May as Finger Lakes Wine Month.

Fri 5/1: Wines for May Day: Kick off a month of wine holidays with this tasting of wines for May merrymaking.

Sat 5/2: Wines for the Kentucky Derby: Special wines for Derby Day and handmade mint juleps.

Tues 5/5: Special Cinco de Mayo Tasting 3:30-5:30: Jose Cuervo pre-mixed Margaritas in a rainbow of flavors.

Fri 5/8: May Staff Picks: Give our latest favorites a try.

Sat 5/9: Wines for World Moscato Day & Mother's Day: A selection of Moscatos for World Moscato Day and special wines to honor mothers everywhere. Great gift ideas!

Fri 5/15: International Sauvignon Blanc Day: Different styles of Sauv Blanc and its offspring, Cabernet Sauvignon.

Sat 5/16: New Arrivals: A roundup of the latest can't-miss wines we want to share with you.

Thurs 5/21: National Chardonnay Day: Early weekend kick-off with a Chardonnay tasting all day long.

Fri 5/22: Memorial Day Bbq Wines & National Wine Day: A stellar selection of wines for your Memorial Day picnic and barbecue bash. Plus, wines to celebrate National Wine Day!

Sat 5/23: California Meets France: Our own competition to honor the 39th Anniversary of the Judgment of Paris, including the 2012 Chateau Montelena (see page 1).

Fri 5/29: Wines for Oregon Wine Month: Oregon produces some stellar vinous gems. Celebrate with all Oregon wines.

Sat 5/30: Another Round of New Arrivals: We'll wind up the month with more fantastic wines we think you'll love.

Dinner & Cocktails for Memorial Day

Mick's Baby Back Ribs on the Grill

Recipe courtesy of friend and customer, Mick Pettit

1 Tbsp ground cumin
1 Tbsp chili powder
1 Tbsp paprika
Salt and pepper to taste
3 lbs baby back pork ribs
1 cup barbeque sauce



Preheat grill to high. Combine spices, salt, and pepper; shake to mix. Trim membrane sheath from the back of each rack. Run a sharp knife between membrane and each rib, and snip off as much as possible. Sprinkle as much of the rub onto both sides of the ribs as desired.

Place aluminum foil on lower rack to prevent flare-ups. Lightly oil grate, and lay ribs on top grill rack. Reduce heat to low, close lid and leave undisturbed for 1 hour. Do not lift lid. Brush ribs with barbecue sauce and grill an additional 5 minutes. Serve ribs as whole rack or cut between each rib bone and pile on a platter.

Melon Sangria

Makes 6 to 8 drinks

This refreshing sangria is perfect for your Memorial Day barbecue.

3 c mixed melon balls
2-4 Tbsp honey, to taste
1 lime, juiced
1/4-1/2 c St. Germain
1 750 ml bottle Sauvignon Blanc
1 1/2 c chilled Prosecco

Mint leaves, lime slices and frozen melon balls for garnish

Place melon balls in a large pitcher, add 2 Tbsp honey, lime juice and 1/4 c St. Germain. Refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours.

Add the Sauvignon Blanc, mix gently, taste and add more honey or St. Germain, if desired.

Right before serving, add frozen melon balls as ice cubes, lime slices and mint leaves to garnish, and top off with Prosecco. Toast to good friends and warm days ahead.



May 2015 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2013 Beringer Napa Valley Chardonnay (Napa Valley) \$10.99 (reg \$14.99) Tropical notes layered with hints of citrus and green apple. A round mouthfeel with refreshing acidity and a clean finish. *Scallops with citrus beurre blanc

Ted: 2014 Ulacia Txakolina (Spain) \$13.99 (reg \$15.99) From the Basque region, it is made from two varieties of the Hondarrabi grape and fermented in stainless steel. Bracing acidity and citrus. *A dozen raw oysters with mignonette

Bill: 2014 Bieler Père & Fils Rosé (Provence) \$8.49 (reg \$11.99) Grenache-Syrah driven with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Rolle, it is crisp and tastes of strawberries, watermelon and Provençal herbs. *Barbecue chicken

Ian: 2013 Sarl La Fage Côte EST (Catalan, FR) \$9.99 (reg \$11.99) Made from Grenache, Chardonnay and Marsanne and aged in stainless steel, it elegant and refreshing with minerality. *Grilled Ahi tuna steaks with dill-spiked cream

Graham: 2011 Renieri Invetro 'Super Tuscan' (Tuscany) \$13.69 (reg \$15.99) 90 JS Superbly rich, its fruity aromas meld with pleasant earth tones. Solid structure and smooth tannins. Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. *Spaghetti Bolognese

Damian: 2013 Educated Guess Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley) \$16.19 (reg \$18.99) Blended with touches of Merlot and Cabernet Franc, it is rich and ripe with juicy blackberry and milk chocolate notes. *Grilled skirt steak

Max: 2010 Frescobaldi Nipozzano Riserva Chianti Rufina (Tuscany) \$18.99 (reg \$23.99) 92 WS Sangiovese-driven blend with 10% Malvasia Nera, Colorino and Canaiolo, it has notes of tart cherries and earth. *Spaghetti & Meatballs