



The 1947 Cos d'Estournel was enjoyed at an afternoon Bordeaux tasting. A comparative Bordeaux tasting included these wines, listed below.

The Hedonistic/Rabelaisian Event to Remember—Part 2

AFTER ENJOYING the Adrianna Vineyard Vinos de Parcela tasting, we adjourned to DiPiero's Ristorante in Lake Zurich where we had an excellent dinner paired with great Italian wines. After Baked Clams and Calamari Puttanesca were served with 2012 Aubert Chardonnay Lauren Vineyard, we were properly launched for the evening. The richness of the Aubert complemented both appetizers, but was particularly wonderful with the calamari.

The Pasta Carbonara is always great in this restaurant and marries well with the Nebbiolo grape. This evening we were able to pair it with a 2012 Prodotti del Barbaresco in magnum as well as a rare treat—the 2010 Cordero di Montezemolo Barolo-Corette. The wine was also from magnum and is very rare. It is produced only in great years and bottled only in magnum. (The 1,000-bottle production is available for purchase only at the winery and is available only if a bottle is also purchased for tasting. I observed the winery owner's daughter watch us drink our purchase, and only after noting our enthusiastic acclaim for the wine did she offer to sell us some.)

Both wines were superb with Cream and Pancetta Pepper Topped Noodles. The Barolo was bigger and bolder and transitioned to the meat course.

We had Veal Saltimbocca, which is a favorite of mine, at DiPiero's served with 2008 Mastrobardino Taurasi made from the Aglianico grape. The volcanic ash of Mount Vesuvius is a tell-tale giveaway when tasting the wine.

The other wine with this dish was the 2015 Altesino Brunello di Montalcino. From one of the greatest years, this is an impressive wine of great value. Produced from the Sangiovese Grosso grape, this was rich, complex, and formed a perfect union with the veal, pancetta, and cheese. The alternative wine for the veal was the 1990 Contino Fantino Barolo Sori Ginestra, which was superb also and was a great complement for those who chose rack of lamb. This meal was a fine finale to this day's food and wine events.

A BORDEAUX EXTRAVAGANZA

The following day started in the afternoon with a comparative tasting of some of the greatest Bordeaux from the 1980s and 1990s, with two additions. Brief descriptions follow.

1947 Cos d'Estournel—Earthy, rustic, red and black fruits, spicy, cedar, tobacco, and aged leather.

1982 Cos d'Estournel—Cassis, cigar, graphite, red fruit, cedar, blackberry, spice, flowers, herbs, long finish, great.

1982 Ducru Beaucaillou—Dark berries, cedar, tobacco, red currants, spice, fully mature, elegant.

1982 Gruaud-Larose—Cassis, leather, tobacco, truffle, cedar, black currant, plum, approaching maturity.

1986 Gruaud-Larose—Saddle leather, graphite, dark fruit, cedar, pipe tobacco, funky, pine forest, mushroom, youthful but approaching maturity.

1973 Mouton Rothschild (Picasso Label)—Balsamic, strawberry, smoke, leather, tobacco, slightly tired.

1986 Mouton Rothschild—Leather, red fruit, cigar box, graphite, smoke, minerality, young.

1989 Troplong Mondot—Minerality, plum, herbs, tobacco, smoke, earth, spice, cherry, elegant, fully mature.

1995 Lynch Bages—Black currant, red currant, earth, mushroom, leather, graphite, tobacco, strawberry, mature.

The '80s and '90s wines were excellent to outstanding. The two older wines were somewhat tired, probably because they were purchased at an auction. In addition, 1973 was a weak vintage, nevertheless, they provided a historical glance back in time.

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Dinner at David Varwig's home included (in front) David Varwig; (counterclockwise) Jim Bryant, Danny Kent, Scott Dawson, Gregg Mason, Mike Curtis, Greg Pearson, and Don Gockenbach.

A WORLD-RENNED CHEF

All the wines were accompanied by delicious meatballs, prepared by Chef Patrick Chabert of Le Francais fame. We also enjoyed the assistance of his son, Dustin Chabert, who was the top-ranked sommelier in the United States in 2019 by Association de Sommelierie Internationale.

These wines were in top form and had been perfectly stored since purchased as futures. Favorites were the 1982 and 1986 Gruaud Larose, the 1982 Cos d'Estournel, and 1982 Ducru Beaucaillou and towering above all was the 1986 Mouton Rothschild. Probably none of us aged 55 to 76 will be alive to see this wine at its peak, but all the rest, except for the '47 and '73, were within the window of drinkability and will stay there for one to four decades.

This event demonstrates why one pays hundreds of dollars upon release for such wines to give them perfect storage and to be able to appreciate the secondary and tertiary flavors and aromas they give consumed at or near their peak.

After a short rest, we assembled in the dining room for an unforgettable meal. Patrick Chabert prepared our eight-course feast. His son Dustin decanted and poured the wines, and Briana DiTommaso Cardone and Dustin Chabert served the food. All of the courses were, as always with Patrick's food, near perfection or actually perfect.

We started with a terrine of salmon, smoked salmon, and Alaskan King Crab with dill and cucumber sauce. We paired this with the 2007 Marcassin Estate Chardonnay and the 1982 Louis Latour Meursault-Genevrieres. Both were rare, in perfect form, and married wonderfully with the terrine.

The second course was a decadent mushroom terrine of chanterelles and morels with a cream sauce. The richness was accented well by the 2009 Robert Groffier Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru "Les Sentiers".

The sauteed halibut with Patrick's signature Vietnamese broth (shown below) brought forth many compliments, but when paired with the 1999 Leflaive Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru we were out of control.



Halibut was served at the dinner, prepared by Chef Patrick Chabert.



Chef Patrick Chabert of Le Francais fame, Chef Briana DiTommaso Cordone, and Sommelier Dustin Chabert created an unforgettable dinner and wine experience.

As a special treat, Patrick prepared rabbit cooked two ways, simmered rabbit leg and rabbit loin in Chasseur (Hunter's) sauce, I have been searching world-wide for Rabbit Chasseur similar to one I found in Quebec City in 1970 and at long last I am happy. With this meal we chose the 1998 Frederic Magnien Charmes-Chambertin Reserve which is produced from the best barrel of the vintage. This wine is ethereal on its own, but when matched with the rabbit, I saw stars! The main course was a combination of Rack of Lamb and Loin of Lamb Encroute with rosemary jus. Sides of Gratin Dauphinois and Haricots Verts made for a truly unforgettable experience. The wines were remarkable also.

First served was one of the world's greatest Burgundies, 1998 Domaine Anne Gros Richebourg-Grand Cru. It left all of us speechless and this was followed by the 2015 and the 2017 Chateau de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Both were outstanding, also, and due to their youth had been properly decanted for hours. A tender green salad was served with three typical French cheeses. The remaining Burgundy and Rhône wines paired perfectly.

Dessert was a Warm Walnut Chocolate Cake with Raspberries and Raspberry and Mango Coulis. The dessert wine was of course the best. We finished with the 1990 Chateau d'Yquem, one of the finest vintages served with mignardise known as petits fours. Nothing in the world beats d'Yquem. I have had all great vintages starting with 1893 (2nd best of the 19th century) and about this I am certain!

How apropos was it that our host for this dinner, David Varwig, turned to me at the end and said, "I never thought I would have a 3-Star Michelin restaurant in my house." What a finale to one of the best gourmet and wine experiences enjoyed by some of our dearest friends! A Votre Santé! 🍷

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