

Two weeks ago I was introduced to Duel at an "open tasting." (Open tasting means that the labels are visible for all to see and there is no judging.) What really got my attention was the fact that I am familiar with the Darioush Winery where Duel is produced. The wine is not a "second" label from Darioush Winery. It is a product unto itself, and well it should be. I have to admit that this wine got past me and I was unaware that it was in the product line-up. My loss. In any case, I was delighted to have it brought to my attention.

Darioush is located on the Silverado trail in Napa Valley. For quite a while, quality wines have been produced at this winery without a lot of hoopla and fanfare. The products sell themselves. This particular wine is 65% Shiraz and 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, and aged 20 months in 50% new French Oak Barrels. As you may have suspected, Darioush is a Persian word. On the label of the bottle we find a dueling lion and a bull. At first glance, the bull and lion look as though they are doing battle with each other. This, however, is not the case. They are presented as a symbol of harmony, in transition during the Persian New Year, which is called No Ruz. Inside this powerfully decorated glass container is one terrific wine with flavors of spice and dark fruits, a hint of chocolate, some cinnamon and boysenberry. It is pricey at approximately \$52; however, Darioush fans will appreciate it.

(Gary, this one's for you.) Finding the Quinta do Crasto bottle of wine was like finding buried treasure. I found it one evening in a package store way out on Cape Cod. I was searching for a wine to have with dinner, when all of a sudden the store owner suggested that I try the Quinta. Leaving the store \$19 poorer, I looked forward to dinner. I was not disappointed. The wine was intense with aromas of spice. On the palate it carried great balance with flavors of Douro Berry fruit and a long finish. (I will research Douro Berry Fruit in October when I go to Portugal.) I was disappointed the next day when I tried to order a case. It seems that there is a long lead time in receiving this wine. Oh well! As long as I can get it, it is worth the wait.

Quinta do Crasto is one of the great family wine estates of the Douro. The winery is located between Regua and Pinhoa. Most of the vines face south towards the Douro River. The winery is firmly established and can be traced back to the 1600s. Since 1992, exporting their wine to other countries has become a major portion of their business. Maybe some will land in the Lowcountry on a regular basis.

BONUS. The Waterbrook winery is located in Walla Walla, Washington. It was founded by Eric and Janet Rindal in 1984. The winery produces Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, and Melange. (Melange is a wine made from a blend of many different grapes.)

I bring this winery to your attention for many reasons:

- Waterbrook is continuously recognized by wine publications, i.e. Wine Spectator, Wine Advocate, etc. as being consistent in quality and therefore recommended.
- Waterbrook is a COMPLETE house. Within each varietal mentioned above, there are many different offerings. For example, the Cabernet Sauvignon may offer a reserve or the Chardonnay may offer a select from a single vineyard. Whatever the case, Waterbrook has been selected as one of the fifty great producers every wine lover should know for smart buys.
- Waterbrook is available in the Lowcountry. It is price competitive, the supply is plentiful, and the quality is there. Try one. You will not be disappointed.

WINESPEAK

Outdoor grilling season has officially started, and here in the Lowcountry there is no shortage of entre selections. Shall we look at a few wines to accompany our summer fare? Let's face it: barbecue and wine are here to stay. So let's start with reds. Red wine goes better with barbecue than white. (You can break this rule if you so desire.) Allow me to suggest just one. That would be a 2011 Willamette Valley Vineyards Pinot Noir, which carries vibrant aromas of cherry, strawberry, and raspberry. Okay! One More. The 2012 Marques de Caceres, available in the Lowcountry, is the perfect rose for pork, fish, or chicken. This wine should be drunk young and chilled to around 45 degrees. Neither of these wines will break the budget.

Happy summer, be safe, and cheers!

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