

WINE TALK

... WHEN THE CONVERSATION IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE WINE

Winter 2009/2010

Middle Ridge Holiday Survival Guide

THE BRING-SOMETHING-TO- THE-PARTY LAST MINUTE SCRAMBLE

You've been invited to a cocktail party and don't want to show up empty handed. Check out these simple solutions.

Grab a bottle of Middle Ridge Pinot Grigio as you head out the door, then pop into your favorite cheese shop to pick up a nice Humboldt Fog. This amazing goat cheese from Humboldt



County, California is inspired by the French classic Morbier. Humboldt Fog has a white, bloomy rind and is best eaten when the edges get creamy. It is a versatile and mild cheese and will be a smash pairing with the Middle Ridge Pinot Grigio and all its punchy, bodacious flavors.



If red wine is your thing, then by all means Middle Ridge Syrah is the way to go. Pack it in a wine bag fluffed with festive tissue and bring along a mix of smoked almonds, dried cranberries, cherries and blueberries.

People will sip and snack until the very last drop of wine and scrap of almonds are gone! The nutty smokiness of the almonds will bring out the classic French profile of this wine, and the dried fruits will be a nice nuance to the dark rich fruit notes.

Words from the Winemaker

HI FRIENDS,

It's amazing to think of how short a time it's been since Middle Ridge wine debuted at Idyllwild Jazz in the Pines on August 29. Melody and I met many of you there. We had the opportunity to see you again and meet others at many events over the last couple months. We've enjoyed getting to know you. That's the beauty of wine -- it has a way of changing a frenetic day or week into a good time with friends.

The fall also brought us a great harvest. The new vineyard I selected for our Paso Robles Bordeaux reds uses a very interesting type of growing trellis, and it yielded some of the best fruit I have seen. I made several trips to Paso Robles to inspect the fruit as it was growing, and I saw how advantageous this system is. We're talking lush berries, no raisins, great ripeness and as close-to-ideal chemistry any winemaker could ask for.

I personally supervised the harvest of each varietal and observed the picking crew selectively harvesting at an absolutely crazy rate. Raisin bunches and bird (eaten) fruit were quickly dropped to the ground without regard while only the choice fruit went in my bins.

The Temecula fruit was also of excellent quality and will yield some great wine! The aroma coming out of the fermentations was delightful. One of the most exciting was the Pinot Grigio from Blue's Creek Vineyard. For the second year in a row, I took the grower's full harvest of grapes. Following a technique I first tested at my "innovation lab" in Idyllwild, a three-yeast parallel fermentation was used. Each strain of yeast generates a unique aroma and mouthfeel. When the three batches of Pinot Grigio are blended, we are going to have some awesome stuff!

Until we see you again,
Good Health, Good
Drink, Good Times



Chris Johnston

Winemaker & Bottle Washer

GREAT GIFT IDEAS

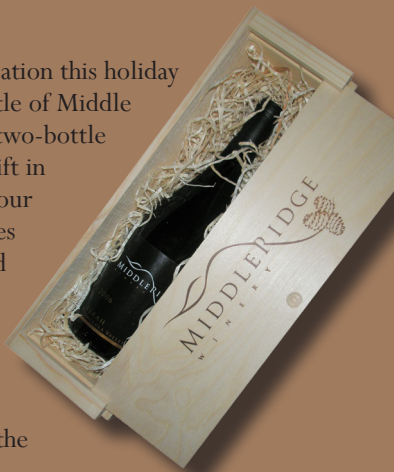
Let the Conversation Begin

“A bottle of wine always seems to start a conversation.”

Chris Johnston, *Winemaker*

Give the gift of conversation this holiday season by sharing a bottle of Middle Ridge wine. One- and two-bottle wood boxes help you gift in style. Order online on our website or pick up boxes at The Collective in Old Town Temecula.

You can also keep the conversation going all year round with a wine club membership – it’s the perfect gift!



WHATEVER THE MOOD,
WHATEVER THE REASON ...
OPEN YOUR FAVORITE BOTTLE
THIS SEASON. A LIGHT, CRISP
MIDDLE RIDGE WHITE OR
A NICE BOLD RED. THEY ALL
START A GREAT CONVERSATION.

TIME TO PAY HOMAGE TO THE TURKEY

Thanksgiving dinner is always a challenge when it comes to choosing wine. “Why” you ask? Because a typical t-day spread includes every type, texture and flavor of food there is. That being said, pick the dishes you want to showcase and bring out a wine to match their flavor profiles.

If you love the savory flavors of the vegetables – you know, peas, broccoli, and stuffed celery – pop open a bottle of Middle Ridge Temecula Sauvignon Blanc. It’s a clean and bright New World style wine that likes to complement fresh, crisp flavors.

Are you an Easterner and love your grandmother’s famous oyster stuffing? If so, the Middle Ridge Paso Robles Sauvignon Blanc is the way to go. Its French Sancerre qualities do a dance with the oyster and other flavors enjoyed in this traditional stuffing!

Or maybe a robust smoked turkey smothered in creamy gravy your favorite part of Thanksgiving dinner. If so, trot out a bottle of the Middle Ridge Meritage. This Bordeaux style wine is a true champ when paired with the big smoky, creamy flavors of turkey and gravy!



JELLY DONUTS AND POTATO PANCAKES

What would Hanukkah be without potato pancakes? The good news is that they seem to go with everything. Top them with applesauce and serve up your spuds with Middle Ridge Temecula Sauvignon Blanc with its clean, fresh flavors. Or maybe you like your latkes with crème fraiche and caviar. Now that’s a heavenly twist! In that case, open a bottle of Middle Ridge Paso Robles Sauvignon Blanc and let the caviar soak up the minerality

Or, if a brisket accompanies your potato latkes, consider the Middle Ridge Syrah. It’s big and bold – a great match for red meats and hearty dishes. And did I mention how good it is with a jelly donut or Hanukkah chocolates? Way to go!



CHRISTMAS IS COMING AND THE GOOSE IS GETTING FAT . . .

Okay, so maybe you don't do a goose (although many do), but you probably do a pretty sumptuous Christmas feast. This isn't the time for caution . . . rather, it's time to throw caution to the wine, er, I mean wind, or do I mean wine? In any event, line up each of your beloved Middle Ridge wines, open them (whites nicely chilled, and reds at the perfect 60 degree cellar temperature), and have at it!

There's no better time to be merry with your wine. That Pinot Grigio with a lemony, creamy pasta – YUM! The Temecula Sauvignon Blanc and a festive creamy tarragon beet soup – WOW! The Paso Robles Sauvignon Blanc with a big bowl of clam chowder – HELLO!



The Syrah with that perfect medium-rare grilled rack of lamb, finished with a rosemary/cherry demi glace – a foregone conclusion. And the Cabernet Sauvignon is perfect with anything big, red and juicy.

Try it with a slice of fruitcake too. Yes, that's right – fruitcake! It really can be wonderful when done right. If you just can't handle the



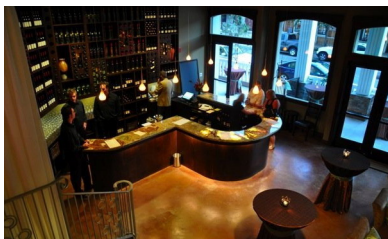
thought of fruitcake, then finish your meal with a glass of this yummy wine and a chunk of dark, rich chocolate!



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