



PALAZZO 2005 Napa Valley Red Wine

A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity (Honest)

Your opportunity to purchase a new Napa Valley "Cult" Bordeaux-Style Red *equal* to \$150-plus/bottle super-wines in everything but price!

Dateline: Summer, 2008-Napa Valley

*Robert Parker Discovers Palazzo Napa Valley Red Wine at Charity Dinner, gives the 2005 a "93" rating: Overnight everything changes for Proprietor Scott Palazzo. This is Your Opportunity to get in "On the Ground Floor" of this spectacular "Right Bank" (Saint Emilion) styled Red.

And now, the REST of the story...

I have it on good authority that Robert Parker was the featured celebrity at a recent charity event held at Leslie Rudd's new Napa Valley hot spot "Press" Restaurant. The attendees of this soiree had paid serious bucks for the opportunity to sit and schmooze with the "Emperor" his bad self whilst sucking down several bottles of wines the big guy had personally awarded his mystical and extremely rare score of "100 Points".

Foreword, into the past; fall of 2005

One of those in attendance that night was a Hollywood producer / director of Grammy-Winning Music Videos named Scott Palazzo (The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo...check out their You Tube performance). In a previous life, Scott had taken a horizon-expanding summer trip to France, which evolved into a two-year extended stay. With requisite guitar on his back, he happy-wandered into the small winemaking village of Saint-Emilion (on the right bank of the Gironde) and quickly fell in love with the people, the land and the wines.

Palazzo's European adventure shaped his palate and served as inspiration for the eventual establishment of his eponymous labeled wine 20 years later when he teamed up with famed winemaker Peter Franus (Franus Hendry, Brandlin and Planchon Zins, Rancho Chamilies Cabernet) to produce a Saint-Emilion styled red from some of the finest vineyards in Napa's cooler climate/marine influenced southern Carneros region.

In a bit of Serendipitous coincidence, Parker was made aware of Scott's presence at the restaurant that night and made the effort to wander over to his table and strike up a conversation which ended with a request to taste the current vintage of the Palazzo wine. Which brings us to present day...

Scott's transition from wine amateur to wine "auteur" has been assisted by the careful guidance of Peter Franus. Sourcing fruit from some of the most celebrated hillside vineyards in the Carneros, Palazzo has realized his vision of producing a world-class wine combining new world fruit with old-world sensibility in the cellar. With only a few vintages under his belt the wines have been embraced by some of the wine world's most respected and influential critics, retailers, restaurants and sommeliers.

Shell out \$300 bucks or more to taste the Palazzo alongside the food at one of the countries world-class restaurants or respond to this e-

alert and throw a steak on the grill whilst pulling the cork on a bottle in the comfortable confines of your kitchen, dining room or front porch.

You'd be in rather exclusive company by doing so...

You can order bottles or "by the glass" of Palazzo at Thomas Keller's Napa Valley "French Laundry" (still the most famous and respected restaurant in the U.S.), San Francisco's Gary Danko and Michael Mina, L.A.'s Spago and Bastide, Las Vegas's "Charlie Palmer's Steak", Valentino and "Cut" and New York's (also Keller's) "Per Se".

I've been playing E-mail tag with Scott over the last couple days and what I've gathered from our "conversations" is that his creative, energetic and principled approach to the wine business is the result of his growing up in an Italian-American household where wine was a backdrop for life's everyday events, meals and celebrations. As such, Scott has made the intelligent decision to price his wine well below other micro-production, hand-crafted, appellation-designate, Napa Valley Reds of equal stature.

While fifty-five-bucks-ish is hardly "cheap" (at least by the standards regularly discussed in my peer group), considering the exclusivity (total production of 1,100 cases), grape source, winemaking/winemaker, presentation and inherent quality of the Palazzo, it is an obtainable albeit reserved treat which can elevate the ordinary and make the festive moments of our everyday lives (birthdays, anniversaries, promotions, graduations, Ground Hog Day, puppies, new shoes, etc) a bit more elegant and special.

*Bob Parker on Palazzo's Napa Red (Wine Advocates #s' 162 and 174 (Dec, 2007)...

"It's funny how life goes. I met proprietor Scott Palazzo at a charity dinner at Napa's hot, fashionable new French-styled California Bistro, "Press". After striking up a conversation with Scott Palazzo, I asked to taste his Napa Valley Red made by consultant Peter Franus".

Bob continues...

"A blend of 70% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Franc and 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2005 may be the finest wine to emerge from this producer, who makes only 1,100 cases of an unfinned/unfiltered, French-styled blend". This sexy, Pomerol-styled Red exhibits aromas of chocolate, espresso roast, sweet cherries and black currants. The fragrant bouquet is followed by a silky-textured, medium to full-bodied wine with lush, mocha-infused flavors that cascade over the palate. It is accessible at present, but will be even better with another year or so of bottle age and evolve nicely for over a decade. ***It's nice to see such finesse styled efforts emerging from California as there is often a misconception that everything produced in the state is too ripe, too big and too extracted" **93 Points**.

Will the Circle be unbroken by and by Lord, by and by...

***Funny to hear Bob say that as many American wine lovers and industry insiders attribute the currently popular, (and international) big, alcoholic and high-extract style of winemaking to Parker's perceived preference for big, extracted, ripe wines; his rewarding high scores for just that sort of wine hence winemakers required need to MAKE wines of that type as a means of receiving "90" and above scores in order to sell their wines...funny.

****94 Points"/Root Cellar Review...**This is a beautifully complex wine with amazing depth of color and body (I could convince you it was a Syrah in appearance alone), wonderful layers of rich fruit, a silky texture, soft tannins and a lush, weighty presence on the palate. Cool-climate Merlot makes up a significant percentage of the blend, giving the wine power, strength and beautiful layers of dark cherry and blackberry fruit. The Cab Franc adds brightness, acidity and a floral component while the Cabernet Sauvignon provides structure, tannin and dimension along with hints of smoke, cocoa, espresso bean and black licorice. The finish is super-clean and fruit driven. Given the southern Napa grape source, the Palazzo possesses ingrained long term age-ability and decanting is recommended. Open a bottle, pour it into a decanter and serve an hour or two later and you'll be rewarded with a CA-Pomerol hybrid with layers of complex flavors and textures.

I wouldn't have batted an eye if he told me the retail was \$75-\$100...

Is this the next Harlan Estate, Bryant Family or Screaming Eagle? I dunno...but the Palazzo has certainly lifted off on the right wing toward that lofty Eyre, yet the price remains relatively modest... The winery price of the Palazzo is \$55/Bottle \$660.00/Case. Given that the 2005 is only the 3rd release from Palazzo, it's a minimal gamble to suggest that this wine will appreciate if you're into such things.
