

UNDER THE GRAPE TREE

Diary of a Geek, Retailer and Guerrilla Wine Reviewer

Tag Archives: Amberhill

WINE REVIEWS

BROTHER LOU AND HIS TWO-PART SNAKE OIL PITCH: TESTING THE DEUCE'S METTLE, OR BEELZEBUB WEARS GREEN SNEAKERS

August 10, 2011 – 9:37 am



Brother Lou, in a little tasting exercise before he and his wife takes off for the West Coast for some R&R, brought some new wines, old favorites and a fistful of brown bagged beauties:

Amberhill Secret Blend White California 2010. Grade=**Outstanding**. Nice white blend of Chardonnay, Muscat and Sauvignon Blanc, easy on the palate, showing perfumed flowers, apples and pineapples, a slight glimpse of sweetness and some balanced acidity.

Buena Vista Chardonnay Carneros 2008. Grade=**Average**. Think this is a bit tired. A veritable desert of fruit; it is almost like drinking splinters. Interested to see the 2009 vintage.

Buena Vista Chardonnay Carneros Ramal Vineyard 2008. Grade=**Outstanding**. This seems far more balanced than its baby sibling, showing rich, creamy stone fruit, a balanced display of oak, and hints of nectarine, pear and caramel.

Amberhill Secret Blend Red California 2009. Grade=**Outstanding**. A blend of 7 varieties, including Syrah, Merlot and Grenache, this go-down-easy red is full of black and blue berry fruits, smoky spices, touches of chocolate and espresso, slight bay leaf and sage characters and a smooth finish.

Garnet Pinot Noir Carneros 2009. Grade=**Outstanding**. A splashy, medium-bodied PN with hints of cherry pie, strawberry pie, dusty minerals, blanched almonds, truffle and rosewood. Solid value for Carneros PN.

Buena Vista Pinot Noir Carneros 2007. Grade=**Above Average**. A bit thin but still showing some nice hints of cherries, mulberries, mineral and cinnamon.

Buena Vista Pinot Noir Carneros Ramal Vineyard 2006. Grade=**Outstanding-**. This single-vineyard PN is more woody than fruity, showing primordial oak and hazelnut shells, with faint plum and black cherry nuances, and a touch of Oolong tea leaves. Leaves me wishing there were more.



And now for the brown bagged reds:

#1, **Ernie Els Proprietary Red Stellenbosch 2008.** Grade=**Outstanding**. Brooding, earthy black fruits lurking ominously on the palate, the wine equivalent to film noir. Dark black and red currants, blackberry jam, dried herbs, wet stone, charcoal and dried dates.

#2, **Sebastiani Secolo Sonoma County 2007.** Grade=**Outstanding**. Youthful yet complex with sweet black fruits, loads of brown spices, pecan pie, mocha, cedar smoke and chocolate. Needs a bit of time though; finishes slightly sanguine.

#3, **Avalon Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2009.** Grade=**Outstanding**. Lots of ripe cherries, red and black raspberries, mulberries, bay leaf, graphite, tobacco leaf and black olive notes. Medium-bodied. Good value.

#4, **Avalon Merlot Napa Valley 2009.** Grade=**Outstanding+**. This is much more in league with the Washington State Merlots than California; has a lot more richness with cherry, blackberry, baking spice, cocoa and cedar notes. Really good.

#5, **Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon Estate Santa Cruz Mountains 2008.** Grade=**Amazing**. Simply gorgeous, with red and black fruits, brown spices, cigar box, mocha, graphite, tar, leather and black pepper notes. Full-bodied. Demonstrates both power and grace. More people should discover the Cabs of Santa Cruz Mountains – they seldom disappoint.

Tags [Amberhill](#), [Avalon](#), [Brother Lou](#), [buena vista](#), [Ernie Els](#), [Garnet](#), [Ridge Vineyard](#), [RNDC](#), [Sebastiani](#), [wine reviews](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comment \(0\)](#)

▸ [ABOUT THIS BLOG](#)

▸ [MY “RATING” SYSTEM](#)

▸ [WHO’S UNDER THE GRAPE TREE](#)

Powered by [Web Design Company](#) Plugins