

Wine Stories with Neil Matias



by Neil
Matias

Most people who know me know that I am able to “talk the talk” when it comes to wine, thanks to years of study and practice in the wine industry. I know how that sounds, but trust me: it’s not all tasting and drinking. Knowing the flavor profiles and the technical aspects of wine is part of the service that is expected from me. I must possess the ability to help the customer navigate their way through the many wines available while assisting them in making the best choice. I’ve attended many classes and seminars to acquire the tools needed to do the job well.

The other day I found out that I am in possession of another tool that helps me in my job, one that I didn’t learn from a book. I was unaware of its importance until one of my customers told me that the reason she bought most of her wines from me was because of the personal stories I include with each particular wine...and here I thought she was buying from me because of the the way I described the flavor profiles and the minutiae of the wine. She explained that it was the details that I included while talking about each bottle; the where, the when, and the why of my experience with each one gave her a better understanding of what the wine was all about. I just like to talk to good people about good wine; I never really thought too much about the stories as a sales tool. Having said that, and after much deliberation on whether or not to embarrass myself, here are but a few of my wine stories.

Quinta da Alorna, Arinto 2 for \$20



It was early May in 2008 and I was cutting my Friday short in order to get a head start on the weekend. Before I left, a sales rep gave me this bottle as a sample and told me to drink it at home. The next day was beautifully sunny so I decided to wash, wax and polish my car with the help of this bottle of wine. Four hours later,

not only was my car sparkling, but the bottle was entirely empty! Needless to say I really enjoyed the crisp and refreshing profile of the wine, and of course, my car has never looked so sharp. This white wine, which is made from the grape called Arinto, could be considered Portugal's answer to Sauvignon Blanc. A bright, golden wine has greenish hues and a pronounced grapefruit and citric nose lead to flavors of tropical and citric fruit that dance across your tongue. Expect some mineral and stony nuances in the later stages that finish very clean and crisp.

Volver Tempranillo, \$17.99

100 % Tempranillo, made from vines planted in the heart of Spain over 40 years ago. From the the region of La Mancha, this is a wine that would make even Don Quixote proud as it brings to mind all that is classic Spain. This is a deeply dark-colored and brooding wine, with warm aromas of plum and black cherry. The well structured tannins add a sultry mouthfeel, with seductive flavors of rich, dark fruits, ripe plum, and some soft spices. This all leads to a finish that is initially firm, but softens to reveal even more subtle layers and depths. As much as I love this wine, it does bring up some painful memories. It was over a bottle of Volver that my neighbor (and fellow 'wine guy') defeated me in a very hard fought game of NCAA Football 2011 for the Xbox 360. We still haven't had a rematch, but I have the wine ready.



Billi Billi Shiraz, \$13.99



Ah yes, this story. I met the winery rep, a charming and attractive woman, here at the store. She was visiting key accounts in the state and stopped by to visit myself and the other half of our wine team, Kristian, who happens to be a certified Somelier and Master of Wine. Also of note is that Kristian is from Bulgaria. The wine rep. showed us this wine from Australia. It's a big, bold, and spicy wine, made with 80 to 100-year-old bush vines. With a focus on fruit intensity, this shiraz is produced with the drinker in mind. A plush texture with a very sultry mouthfeel mesh together with flavors of exuberant black fruit, ripe plums and an abundance of spice that will certainly please. At the end of her presentation, like most wine presentations, there was plenty of small talk while we continued to sample the wine. She then said, "I like listening to you speak. You have a very attractive and charming accent." Naturally I thought she was talking to Kristian, but she was in fact speaking to me! Imagine that...I out-accented a Bulgarian.

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