

**From:** Debbie Rios debbie@santiamwine.com  
**Subject:** Merlot Tasting Friday at Santiam Wine and Bistro including high scoring K Vintners  
**Date:** August 13, 2015 at 6:11 PM  
**To:** tasting santiam tasting@santiamwine.com

DR

**Hello Red Wine Lovers! We are going to kick-it-up-a-notch and drink what the French call Pomerol or Bordeaux!**

**Merlot is a grape that it is wonderful to drink with your favorite cuisine or on its own. We are proud to present some of the finest Merlot in our market. Here at Santiam Wine & Bistro!**

**When: Friday, August 14th**

**Time: 4-8 PM**

**Cost: Full pour \$28 Half Pour:\$16**

**Entrée Pairing tonight: Spaghetti & Meatballs Summer Squash, Green Beans, French Bread. \$15. Take the night off and let us serve you! The Air-Conditioning is keeping us cool and the high tomorrow is only 72 degrees. Invites your friends and come on down!**

**More information about Merlot below.**

**The Wines:**

**2013 K Vintners Northridge Merlot Walla Walla, WA. \$57**

**Highest rated Merlot from Washington EVER!**

“I was blown away by the 2013 Merlot Northridge Vineyard, and this appears to be the finest vintage of this wine to date. Plums, violets, cassis, graphite and licorice notes all flow from this inky colored, full-bodied, rich, concentrated beauty. **Reminding me of a top flight Pomerol**, it's one sexy Merlot that will have 15 years of longevity.” 95- **97 Points Robert Parker**

**2011 Emmolo Merlot Rutherford, CA \$60 Amazing purity!**

My goal for this wine was to create a well-balanced Merlot with superbly rich fruit, soft tannins and dark color. This first release exhibits aromas of mahogany smoke, leather and brown spice, while earthy flavors intertwine with caramelized plum and smooth tannins reminiscent of ground cocoa.

**Jenny Wagner Winemaker –(Caymus)**

**2010 Freemark Abbey Merlot CA. \$30**

Freemark Abbey's 2010 Merlot is a wonderfully juicy, exuberant wine that bursts from the glass with flavor. Intense, round and supple, the 2010 is loaded with character and personality. Hints of spices, violet and tar add complexity over time, but ultimately, this is a wine to enjoy for its open, radiant fruit. The blend is 81% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Petit Verdot from Stage Coach (Atlas Peak), Keyes (Howell Mountain), Red Barn Ranch and Bosché (both in Rutherford). **90 Points Vinous**

**2010 Sbargia Family Vineyards Home Ranch Merlot CA. \$22**

Another reasonably priced, outstanding offering is the 2010 Merlot Home Ranch, which includes small amounts of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Its deep ruby/purple color is accompanied by notes of white chocolate, mocha, black cherries and vanillin in a medium to full-bodied, lush, round, generously endowed style. Consume it over the next 5-6 years. **90 Points Robert Parker**

**2010 Maghee Cellars Columbia Valley Merlot WA. \$36**

This exceptional Merlot has a ruby color, complex nose expressions, noble aromas, and stewed red fruits. The body is well balanced, very rounded, and has beautiful ripe fruit. The finish is elegant and long, primarily through its rich aroma. **92 Points**

**2012 Seven Hills Columbia Valley Merlot WA. \$24**

A wine this estate's been making for the past 25 years, the 2012 Seven Hills Vineyard Merlot is a big, rich, chewy wine

that offers ample cherry, currant, licorice and spice to go with a full-bodied, ripe and nicely tannic feel on the palate. Made from 100% Merlot that spent 20 months in 40% new French oak, it's outstanding, and will have 10-15 years of longevity. **90 Points Robert Parker**

#### **About Merlot:**

There was a time, about 10 years ago, when Merlot which was widely regarded as wine world's alternative to Chardonnay - an easy drinking red wine that went with almost any meal.

Then, as with Chardonnay, drinkers decided it was no longer cool, an impression cemented by the film *Sideways* in which the hero Miles expresses his view of it in no uncertain terms!

Now it seems Merlot sales are on the up again and we've fallen back in love with the grape, it's worth taking another look at which foods work best with it and why.

Of course, as with every other grape variety, there's Merlot and Merlot. Light gluggable Merlot, soft, voluptuous, fleshy Merlot and serious, structured Merlot, often blended with its stable mate Cabernet. But there are some general characteristics which affect its food pairings.

Merlot is generally softer, riper and fleshier than Cabernet lacking powerful tannins (though there are obviously exceptions to this) and marked acidity. Unlike Cabernet you can drink it very comfortably with a range of Italian dishes, especially tomato-based ones and it responds very well to the 'umami' (i.e. deeply savoury) tastes you get in foods such as roast chicken, mushrooms and parmesan.

Because a great many Merlots are medium-bodied they tend to pair well with richly sauced dishes such as steak (or even fish) in a red wine sauce or with casseroles, where a more powerfully tannic wine would be overwhelming. (It's also a good wine to use cooking, making a rich base for red wine sauces)

Good Merlot accompaniments for main dishes are caramelized roast veggies especially those with a touch of sweetness, such as roast squash, red peppers and beets and - as mentioned above - fried or grilled mushrooms. Fruity Merlots also segue comfortably into red fruit accompaniments such as cranberry sauce and salads that contain red berry fruits

Because of its inherent sweetness it also works well with foods that have a touch of hot spice, not so much Indian spicing as hot and smoked pepper: dishes such as blackened fish or jambalaya. I also find it works with the anise flavor of five spice and fennel.

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