

Speaking of wine

By Russ Disotell

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!
MAY YOUR YEAR BE
FILLED WITH HEALTH,
HAPPINESS
AND PLENTY OF
DELICIOUS WINE!**

This column we look at some tasty reds to match mid-winter cuisine. To combat winter's cold, most of us turn to more robust dishes such as stews, casseroles, hearty soups and basic meat and potatoes. Even the vegetables we favour are mostly root vegetables, turnips, carrots, onions and the aforementioned potatoes. They all share richer, deeper flavours and are quite substantial.

We are looking for food friendly reds with a bit of substance to match this big, winter flavour profile. Remember the days when you could read a wine column and find all sorts of wines below \$10? Well we're going retro! All three of our recommendations are priced below \$10. But don't tell your guests and they'll be none the wiser, because all offer the qualities of much more expensive selections.

Spain and Portugal offer travelers an escape from winter and so do these tasty Iberian reds. The first, Berco do Infante Reserva 2012 (CSPC# 253864, \$9.75), hails from Portugal and is an outright steal for the price. The nose is open and aromatic with ripe plum, black cherry and spicy aromas. It's medium to full-bodied with dense flavours of fig, black fruit, plum, mocha, chocolate and toasty oak. The robust fruit is nicely balanced by crisp acidity that shows through nicely on the persistent finish. It will pair nicely with winter menus, especially pork, poultry and meaty pasta dishes.

Beso De Vino Old Vine Garnacha 2011 (CSPC# 253591, \$9.95) is produced from 40 year old Spanish vines, which helps account for its amazing complexity. Fresh raspberry aromas dominate the nose, augmented by Bing cherry and a hint of herbaceous spice. We are again talking about a medium to full-bodied red with spot on balance of all the elements, fruit, tannins and acidity. The palate is multidimensional with plum, jammy blackberry, the raspberry from the nose, mocha, cocoa, licorice and black pepper spice flavours. The tannins are soft and supple, the acidity ample enough to match the generous fruit, producing a silky smooth quality to the palate. The lingering finish has great length and depth of flavour. Bold enough to match our cuisine, yet subtle enough to enjoy by itself.

Finally, we spoke of Portugal's Quartetto 2009 (CSPC# 253880, \$9.70) in the September/October column. It is a perfect choice for our winter fare. It is just in the midst of changing vintage, but not to worry, the 2010 is just as tasty. Better yet, the price has dropped! Enjoy!

Russ Disotell enjoyed a twelve year career with the LCBO. He spent the last four years as Product Advisor in Vintages purchasing where he was a member of the buying panel and endured the arduous task of tasting products every week! Since leaving the Board he has written columns and articles on wine, helped develop wine lists and conducted wine tastings. LH



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