

Cab Ride!

On May 5<sup>th</sup> John Brandli and Kevin Kean presented 6 Cabernet Sauvignon's. John's presentation was a continuation of his April presentation featuring the wines of Chile and Argentina. Kevin followed up with three cabs from California to illustrate the "drink it now" market and wines that could be cellared. Details follow.

John's presentation consisted of three wines from South America. The intent was to show that reasonable quality wines could be purchased for under \$10. Argentina and Chile are the up and coming countries that produce numerous white and red wines that are gentle to the palate and the pocketbook. Here are the wine makers' descriptions followed in bold italics with the group's general comments from the tasting:

**La Boca Cabernet Sauvignon, 2004, from the Mendoza region of Argentina, 13% Alc. by Vol.**- This varietal is grown on the foothills of Los Andes at about 3,000 feet. This is a noble wine of lively ruby color, fresh flavors of plum, prunes and black current, with a pleasant long-lasting sensation. Delicious with roasted or grilled meats, and spicy vegetable dishes. Serve at room temperature. *At the astonishing price of \$3.99 per bottle, it's an easy drinking, lightly fruity with a short (not in agreement with the wine maker) finish, non-tannic wine. A good wine if you are looking for the taste of red without the boldness.*

**Trapiche Oak Cask Cabernet Sauvignon, 2003, from the Mendoza region of Argentina, 13.5% Alc. by Vol.**- This cabernet sauvignon is intense and dark in color with purple hues, exhibiting aromas of cherry and black current. It is full-bodied and persistent on the palate with soft tannins, and touches of tobacco and smoke on finish. Enjoy with grilled or roasted red meats, and any flavorful dishes. Serve at room temperature. *This wine is somewhat complex but with a soft, lingering finish sure not to offend the delicate palate but a wine good with hearty food.*

**Los Vascos Cabernet Sauvignon, 2004, Caneten Valley of Chile, 13.5% Alc. by Vol.**- Los Vascos, one of Chile's oldest wine estates, is controlled by Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite), who began a comprehensive modernization and investment program in 1988. The 500-hectare vineyard is located in the Caneten Valley of the Colchaqua province which offers a healthy microclimate for its ungrafted pre-phylloxera Bordeaux rootstock. The harvest resulted in a wine of intense ruby color, with varietal characteristics, well balanced with strong tannins, and a round, well-structured cassis aroma with a very red fruit nose and some very chocolate and bay leaf touches. This wine is pleasant, excellent body, juicy and ripe. Persistent and outstandingly balanced Cabernet Sauvignon. Goes well with red meat, pasta and cheese. Serve at room temperature. *Typical of low cost Chilean wines, this "cab" is light on the palate with a short but tasty finish. It goes good with mild to moderately sharp cheeses.*

Following John's presentation, Kevin brought out the first of the California Cabs, a 2003 J. Lohr Estates Seven Oaks Cabernet. Both John and Kevin agreed that the J. Lohr of about 5 years ago was a better product. This wine was developed for a drink now market. With filtering and skilful blending the wine is manipulated to produce a balanced

product. The drink now wines are more applicable to “jug wines” those sold in large bottles or boxes. They will never be any better than when they are put in the store! J. Lohr is a step above these but still a manufactured wine vice an artisan wine. This J. Lohr was very fruit forward with aromas of cherry/berry and oak. The finish was pleasant with a bit of spice! A OK wine for the price.

Kevin’s next offering included two BV Cabs. One was from Napa Valley and the other from the Coastal region. There were quite different in depth. The Coastal was a much thinner wine and the price reflected it. Comment was made that there was much more moisture in the Coastal region than in the Napa Valley wine. In the Napa Cabernet BV said fifteen percent of the wine underwent malolactic fermentation in barrel, contributing to a richer mid-palate texture and well-integrated new oak component. The wine was further aged in a variety of oak barrels prior to blending and bottling for 18 months in American and European oak barrels. Both were good cabs, but the Napa was the favorite of the BV’s.