

BEER, WINE & SPIRITS

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Vodka VALUES

Stocking Mid-Priced Sellers

BEST BRANDS

Top-Selling Beer, Wine & Spirits

SUCCESS in SEATTLE

Bottleworks Brews up Big Profits

WIDE WORLD of Wines

Experimenting with Global Varietals

By Fred Tibbitts Jr.

What's new in global varietals? Well, I guess that depends on who you are and where you are. If you are just graduating from Coke or Pepsi or Dr. Pepper, maybe it's White Zinfandel heaven, or if you're trading up from White Zinfandel, Chardonnay or Pinot Grigio may just be that next step.

But for others who have the benefit of their White Zinfandel doctorates, there have never been so many delicious choices worldwide.

For those of us residing in the United States, it was actually pretty basic once you turned first base (White Zinfandel Lane) and were heading for second; it was Chardonnay on the white side and Cabernet Sauvignon on the red side. Then the California vintners figured out that not everybody wanted red wine with lots of wood, especially para Las Mujeres, and before you knew it everyone was talking

France has always been ready to put some sparkle in our eyes with a million versions of everything Champagne and sparkling, lots of Bordeaux and Burgundy and dessert wines.

Spain has sent us their cavas (the best values in sparkling wine) plus reserve red wines priced like California table wines; Italy has shown us why Tuscany, Veneto, et al, are destinations for wine and food; Portugal has taught us that Port is a marvelous drink with endless variations; and Germany's Rieslings prove that the key to more wine sales is to make wines that complement food.

The hottest varietals from Chile will be Syrah or Shiraz (depending on the producer) and Carmenere.



Retailers are now offering better wine values at every price point from everywhere

about Merlot, because it was softer and a lot easier to drink without food.

Going Global

Today it's a whole new world no matter where you wake up. On the California mainstream side it's been Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc and lots of reserve everything. But watch California Syrah and the growing number of Bordeaux blends called Meritage.

Vintage Values

Argentina is known for its Malbec and that's not changing, but look for their Torrontes and Tempranillo or possibly Syrah and Johannisberg Riesling. South Africa is producing great Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and now Shiraz. New Zealand has given us Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir and now Bordeaux Blends and Riesling. Australia continues to flood the U.S. market with millions of cases of super values at nearly every price point. The top-selling Australian wines are Yellow Tail, but now you have Little Penguin, Jackaroo Big Red, Jindalee Shiraz and lots of others.

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Fred Tibbitts Jr., a member of the Advisory Board of Oxford Publishing Inc., is the foremost wine-by-the-glass consultant to chain hotels globally. He is president of his own global beverage consulting agency, Fred Tibbitts & Associates Inc. Visit him online at fredtibbitts.com.

