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DALLAS DINING NEWS AND REVIEWS, SERVED DAILY

# What to Drink Now: Incredible Reds

BY HAYLEY HAMILTON COGILL | OCT 10, 2011 AT 9:04 AM | POSTED IN WINE & SPIRITS

One of the joys of wine is that we live in a world where Old World processes and traditions, dating back hundreds of years, are still in use. At the same time, New World technology and imagination are taking place in the vineyard and ending with the sales department. The results of both, readily available, are incredible bottles of wine. Here are a few standouts I have enjoyed recently; some selections were sent for editorial consideration.

**Herrera 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Seleccion Rebecca** from [Mi Sueno](#) winery in Napa Valley. Owned by Rolando Herrera, former winemaker for such places as Vine Cliff and Paul Hobbs, is making incredible wine in a warehouse space lined with framed, signed baseball jersey's from some of the best in the game. Not because Herrera is a fan of the game, but because they are a fan of his.

Jump.

Mi Sueno (My Dream in Spanish) was launched in 1997 as a side project while Herrera was Assistant Winemaker at Chateau Potelle with a goal to create exceptional wine in Napa Valley. Today his dream is a reality, with approximately 6500 cases made annually, this former Mexican immigrant who moved to the United States at age 15 and started as a dishwasher now produces award winning wine from some of the best fruit sourced throughout Napa and Sonoma, and is a constant at White House dinners, most recently on May 19, 2010 where the Herrera Seleccion Rebecca was poured. The Herrera collection of wines in the Mi Sueno portfolio are only made when Mother Nature is especially generous, creating wine that is something special and above the norm. The Rebecca, created in honor of Herrera's daughter, is dense and concentrated, yet well balanced with bold black fruit, mocha, coffee and licorice flavors. Only 100 cases are made of this single vineyard wine, which is delicious now, but will soften with a bit of aging revealing more cocoa and caramel notes in the wine.

If innovation was an art form, [Vineyard 29](#) would be its Picasso. Acquired in 2000 by Chuck McMinn and his wife Anne with the goal to bring the best that technology had to offer to the best wine region in the world, combining technologically advanced practices with natural perfection, and bringing on one of the best in the business, Philippe Melka, to bring it all together. Chuck's belief that "if you can't measure it, you can't improve it" is a practice he follows daily, always looking for ways to improve. The recently acquired Clare Luce Abby Vineyard is an example of this, as they were able to acquire the land directly next to their existing winery and promptly started replanting the entire vineyard to meet their high standards. Until these vines are ready, the **2008 Aida Estate Cabernet Sauvignon** is an excellent example of the work Vineyard 29 puts into each and every one of its beautiful wines. Elegant and concentrated with dark



chocolate, espresso and cherry aromas followed by hearty flavors of black fruit, cedar and licorice with a slight layer of smoke and spice.

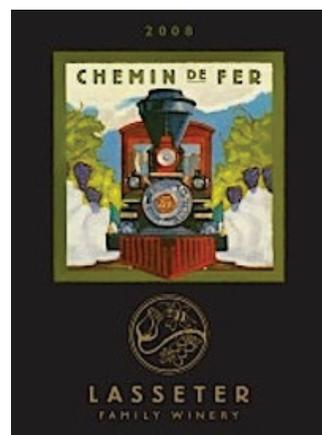
A few weeks ago when I was in Napa I visited a remote winery on Spring Mountain recommended to me by my friends at [Veritas](#), [Philip Togni](#). After personally opening and closing the pad locked fence I meandered by way up to the winery to meet with Philip Togni and his daughter Lisa, who is currently taking over as winemaker for the almost 30 year old winery which focuses on creating Bordeaux-style blends heavy on Cabernet Sauvignon and with great ability to age. For many years Philip Togni has had a practice of releasing a 10 year old bottle of wine with his new releases, as 10 years is a minimum to hold the Philip Togni wines before drinking them, with the belief that these wines should age upwards of 25-30 years. Last weekend I enjoyed a magnum of **1999 Philip Togni Cabernet Sauvignon** we had purchased at [Pogo's](#) for a dinner party. After letting the wine breath for about two hours the aromas poured out as powerfully as the wine, with hearty forest floor, leather, sage and black fruit aromas. Bold tannins, the wine sang with blackberry, black cherry and licorice, pairing wonderfully with a herb roasted beef tenderloin.



I first tried a [Justin Isosceles](#) about 10 years ago when a friend gave me a bottle as a birthday gift. At the time I didn't realize how special the wines of Paso Robles were, lucky for me it didn't take me long to find out. Justin Vineyards & Winery was created in the style of great left-bank Bordeaux houses like Marguax, in Paso Robles, that has incredibly hot days and very cool nights, along with the addition of coastal breezes creating ideal growing conditions for hearty Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Isosceles is the signature wine of Justin, predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon, with Merlot, Cab Franc and Petit Verdot, the 2008 is delicate yet powerful, filled with raspberry, currant and red plums layered with caramel, roasted hazelnuts and mocha. Aged 24 months in 65% new French oak the wine is ready to be enjoyed now, but will also age nicely over the next few years, continuing to soften and become more expressive.

The 2008 release of [Spring Valley Vineyard Uriah](#) celebrates 10 years the winery has made this stellar Merlot from fruit grown in the ever changing landscape of Walla Walla, Washington. At the time the vineyard was planted there were only a handful of wineries in the region, best known then for their wheat farms and onions, not their wineries and tourism. My how things have changed. Today Walla Walla is a growing wine region producing some of the best Merlot in the world from mineral rich soils. What remains constant is the quality bottle of wine you will get from Spring Valley. The 2008 Uriah blends mostly Merlot (53%) with Cabernet Franc (36%), Petit Verdot (8%) and Malbec (3%). A wine to change non-Merlot drinkers minds, as this refined wine shows the elegance in Merlot with aromas of licorice, clove, eucalyptus, almond and cherry, leading into red cherry, ripe plum and toasted nuts with subtle tannins.

**Chemin de Fer** is a French phrase meaning "railroad" which signifies the path that Lasseter Family Winery took to get into wine. If the Lasseter name sounds familiar, it should. The founder of [Lasseter Family Winery](#) is John Lasseter, animator, executive producer, director of such films as Toy Story, Cars and A Bug's Life and CEO of Pixar and Walk Disney Animation Studios. After years of traveling through France and developing a passion for the wines of Bordeaux and Cotes du Rhone John and his wife Nancy moved to Glen Ellen in Sonoma County and began the winery, with the goal to create wines similar to those they loved in France. The Chemin de Fer is a blend of predominantly Grenache with Syrah and Mourvedre. Smoke and spice on the nose with layers of earth and fruit, without being jammy. Flavors of raspberry, cherry and blackberry with pepper and a slight hint of vanilla on the finish.



[Col Solare](#) on Red Mountain in Walla Walla, WA prides itself on creating intense, powerful and stunning Cabernet Sauvignon from mineral rich soils. The winery, that is a collaboration between Chateau St. Michelle and Italy's Marchesi Antinori, has been making stellar Cabernet since its inaugural vintage in 1995. The **2007 Col Solare** vintage maintains this reputation, with bold aromas of espresso, black cherry, black berry and plum with the slightest hint of vanilla, leading into to flavors of dark chocolate, tobacco, black fruit and spice. Tannins are refined, making this full bodied wine easy to enjoy and leading to a silky and lingering finish.