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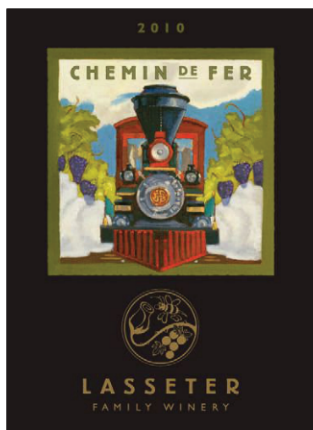
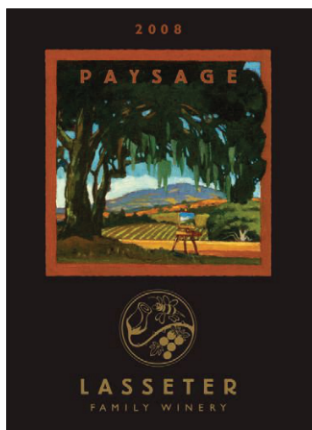
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Some New Finds and Some Old Friends

Excellent values from Lasseter



By Denman Moody

Author: *The Advanced Oenophile*

White Wines:

Erath Pinot Gris (Oregon) 2010 — One of two great varietals in Oregon, this crisp little filly has excellent acidity with apples and citrus flavors, followed by a clean, bright finish. Sips well alone or with food. \$14

Kendall Jackson Chardonnay Grand Reserve 2010 — Just as the KJ Vintners Reserve at \$10 a bottle is a good value, this wine is an equally good value at \$17.95. Made from the top 3 percent or 4 percent of Kendall Jackson's estate Chardonnay grapes and showing a hint of beneficial oak aging, this is a \$25 wine with a \$17.95 price tag. Lovely. \$17.95

Dierberg Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley Estate Grown 2009 — The Dierberg Vineyard is located in the coolest area in the Santa Maria Valley. Just right for Chardonnay. Perfect kiss of oak from aging in larger 400 liter barrels. The natural acidity is bright and crisp, so only 10 percent undergoes malolactic fermentation. "...opens with vibrant orchard fruit aromatics, particularly Anjou pear and Fiji apple." A beautifully balanced wine that should be just as good in five years as now, with proper cellaring. A perfect match recently with red snapper topped with crabmeat. \$52

Antica Family Estate Chardonnay Napa Valley 2010 — From the 600-year-old Italian firm Antinori, great care is given to ensuring its California wines match the reputation of their Tuscan icons. The vines are up to 22 years old with an average elevation of 1420 feet. Whole cluster, French oak barrel fermentation in the estate temperature-controlled caves. 100 percent malolactic. A wine of elegance with peaches, pears and a subtle touch of oak. Expressive finish. \$55

Red Wines:

Rodney Strong Zinfandel Knotty Pines Northern Sonoma 2009 — The base for this wine comes from estate Zinfandel vines that were planted in 1904, producing bright, fresh berry fruit, along with a handful of Alexander Valley Zin vineyards that add ripe, peppery jamminess. Aged for 16 months in French and American oak. A great value. \$17.95

Lasseter Chemin de Fer Sonoma Valley Estate Grown 2010 — An impressive blend of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Chemin de Fer means "railroad", and the label depicts the red steam train that meanders its way through the estate Syrah vineyard (I guess if



you were the executive producer of all the Pixar films and director of *Toy Story* and *Toy Story 2* — which John Lasseter was — you can have a train or anything else you want ensconced in your vineyards). Deep garnet color with tantalizing flavors — berries and spice. Perfect with meat stews or meat pizzas. \$40

Lasseter Paysage Sonoma Valley Estate Grown 2008 — Paysage means "countryside" which is artistically depicted on the label. A right bank Bordeaux blend, but with ramped-up Cabernet Sauvignon instead of Cabernet Franc as the main blending grape with the 42 percent Merlot. Organically farmed vineyards and an eco-friendly winery assure generations of Lasseters a wine-friendly environment. This is the flagship wine, with the blending skill of winemaker Julia Lantosca evident. Exceptional fruit and perfect oak aging result in a full-bodied but

elegant wine that "...pairs artfully with food, especially when enjoyed with good company (like Nancy Lasseter) in beautiful settings." (like Brasserie 19 on May 24, 2012). A \$65 wine with a price tag of — \$40

Erath Pinot Noir Prince Hill Dundee Hills (Oregon) 2009 — This winery has come a long way in the super-premium category since my visit there with Dick Erath in 1989. Cranberries and violets in the aroma/bouquet combine with chocolate-covered strawberries in the taste. Lovely, earthy quality. \$45

Erath Pinot Noir Prince Hill Pommard Clone Dundee Hills 2009 — Single vineyard wine with about 40 percent new French oak aging for 14 months. Berries and floral notes in the bouquet with boysenberries and spice in the taste, accompanied by a hint of vanilla in the lingering finish. \$50

Erath Pinot Noir Leland Willamette Valley 2009 — From about 20 miles across the valley from Dundee Hills with similar soil, but slightly more rainfall. Also, the fog burns off faster here, so more sun exposure. Because of increased rain and sun, vine management more important here. Currants and cherries in the nose with black cherries and cranberries in the taste. Excellent, bright acidity and silky mouthfeel. Should age very well. \$50

Antica Family Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2009 — Still unknown to many oenophiles, this is the wine from the Antinoris — the most heralded wine family in Italy. Piero Antinori, 25th generation owner, runs the 600-year-old company, and his three daughters are already involved in the program.

With a huge holding of over 1,200 acres in the eastern hills of the Napa Valley, great care is taken to produce elegant wines worthy of the Antinori name. This is 100 percent Cabernet Sauvignon from nine individual blocks on Diamond Mountain, planted up to 1,800 feet. Excellent fruit, with the violets of Lafite in the bouquet, followed by currant and blackberry flavors. Elegant with tender tannins and a graceful persistence on the finish. Perfect with a beef tenderloin. \$55

EnRoute Pinot Noir Les Pommiers Russian River Valley 2010 — The 2008 EnRoute is the wine I selected at my luncheon with Georg Riedel at Reef Restaurant about a year ago. Both he and his regional manager Tommie Leman were blown away with the incredible quality. Not generally known is the fact that Pinot Noir is the varietal that was missing from the Far Niente stable — but no longer! Ripe, dark-cherry fruit, excellent acidity and subtle tannins define this beauty. Roasted chicken, pheasant or duck with cherry sauce would be a perfect match. \$65●



Denman Moody is the former publisher of *Moody's Wine Review*, which the *Washington Post* said was "...certainly the best publication in this country for tracking the state of rare and exotic wines." He was also the contributing editor on rare wines for the *International Wine Review* in New York from 1984-1990.

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