

Uniquely Mediterranean

Saturday, March 31, 2007

A recent trip to **Mediterranean Cellars** provided us with new experiences. Since our last visit, the tasting menu expanded to include thirteen offerings, and Jo, our tasting associate, eagerly encouraged us to sample the entire slate. With glasses in hand, we did indeed tackle the tasting menu in its entirety; in the process, we discovered some remarkable pours!

Mediterranean Cellars now offers six whites in the tasting room, and the most interesting was the 2005 Rechina. (Keep in mind that Mediterranean Cellars is owned and operated by the Papadopoulas family, and Retsina is the renowned varietal associated with Greece.) To the nose, the Rechina brings Pine-Sol to mind; however, this is normal. As Jo explained to us, the Greeks fermented the Retsina and transported it in barrels coated with pitch; hence, the wine exhibited aromas and flavors reminiscent of pine. However, with food, this wine is quite enjoyable, and grilled seafood must be the first choice. However, if Greek cuisine is not your thing, please try the Chardonnay as either a sipper or a partner with white meats and/or cheeses.



As our readers know, Virginia Wine Time awards Gold Stars to stand outs, and at Mediterranean Cellars, these were awarded to at least two reds. These included the 2004 Merlot and the 2004 Chambourcin Special Reserve. Warren is not a fan of Chambourcin; yet, this one was intriguing. More full bodied, the Mediterranean treatment lacked the grapey-sweet characteristics that recall grape jelly. Think steak or lamb with this one; its long, peppery finish will remain long after the meal is done! Paul favored the 2004 Merlot with its cherry/plum qualities. Quite the sipper, this red wine should be quite popular with grilled steak; Warren thought of the classic comfort food, meatloaf with mashed potatoes.

Now we must admit that we went to Mediterranean Cellars with summer concerts on our minds. We're Wolftrap fans and reserve our lawn tickets as soon as possible; we like lawn tickets because we like to bring our own food and wine. Now is the time to stock up on what we call the Wolftrap Wines! So what did we find at Mediterranean Cellars to fit the bill? The 2004 Romance---light bodied with lots of fruit, is destined to please on balmy summer nights. We guessed that Chambourcin is the varietal used to produce Romance, but Jo was mum on the secret varietal; however, she did hint that a classic French varietal was used. For those still not sold on red wines as summer sippers, try the 2004 Matina's Rose. Crisp and clean, this Rose is quite versatile and would be accepted at the summer picnic, the Wolftrap concert, or the Thanksgiving table. Bright red fruit prevail here, but it is rather dry.

The gold star winners found their spaces on the wine rack, and we thanked Jo for her expert commentaries as we bid our farewells. We do intend to return, but we know our readers will want to visit Mediterranean Cellars sooner rather than later. Please mention that Virginia Wine Time sent you!