



Fall, 2011 Claudia Springs Winery Newsletter

Roadtrip!

It has been a long time since I wrote about a road trip that Claudia and I took, frankly because we haven't taken any for a long time. In 2005 Claudia and I splurged for our first new car in 20 years, a Nissan Murano. We loved everything about the car, but mainly salivated at the prospects of taking a road trip in this comfortable, roomy and responsive vehicle. Well, the economics and time demands of a small winery got in the way and a trip was put on the back burner.

In the meantime we transformed that beautiful car into our second "truck". We discovered that the design and heavy suspension system allowed us to carry over 30 cases of wine at a time (that's more than ½ a ton). We have made many trips back and forth from the winery to our case goods storage facility in Petaluma, a good 1 ½ hours away. The car survived the abuse, and last May we finally made that road trip.

It was inspired by a week's free stay near Banff, Canada in a time share unit owned by Claudia's daughter Kelly. We set off right after the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival with the aim of seeing as much wine country as possible along the way. We headed up highway 101, and then branched off on highway 97 which took us on a direct route through Oregon, Washington and the Okanagan Valley wine region of British Columbia. We didn't go through any wine region in Oregon, but we were headed right through the heralded Yakima Valley in Washington. We were pushed for time, but were determined to visit at least one winery in the area. We kept our eyes peeled for signs of vineyards, tasting rooms or wineries but somehow passed through the area without finding one promising detour. There must be many hidden gems there, but apparently it would take a bit of research and planning to do it justice.

So we continued north toward our Canadian destination, but of course were stopped at the border. It started out badly when I missed the red light in the line to the inspection area and PO'd the agent in charge. When she questioned us and I advised her we had two cases of wine in the car she ordered us to park and see the officer inside. We explained that we own a winery and were taking our wine along to trade with Canadian wineries, take to restaurants for dinner, etc. and that one case was for delivery to friends in Montana when we returned to the states. We were informed that we could bring in two bottles per person free, but there is a tariff on additional wine brought into the country

that was 90% of the value of the wine! We had a choice to pay it, abandon the wine or take it back to the states. Fortunately this officer was sympathetic and finally agreed that what we were to consume ourselves and what we would be taking back into the states could be exempt. We ended up paying for only 4 bottles. An odd thing about tariffs, if we re-entered into Washington State we would be allowed only 2 bottles/person tariff free. When we entered into Montana we were allowed 3 gallons /person tariff free! So... an excuse for you to visit the beautiful state of Montana.

We spent the night in Kelowna, a charming town on the lake in the middle of the wine region and visited wineries when we continued our trip the next day. Okanagan Lake is over 65 miles long and is situated in a scenic valley that is more like a huge canyon with high ridge tops on both sides and a narrow floor that is mostly lake with vineyards and orchards clinging to the edges. At the lower end the primary plantings are Bordeaux varietals and Syrah with some Italian varietals. As you move north the climate is cooler and the white wines of Alsace predominate. Eventually vineyards give way to only orchards as the conditions change. There are about 100 wineries in the valley, most of which are relatively small. Since we started in the middle of the valley we experienced mostly white wines during the day. The quality ranged from just ok to some exceptional wines, so any one interested in visiting the area should plan on spending several days and researching the wineries to hit.

To reach Banff National Park we had to continue north, passing through a snow storm and countless beautiful and rugged mountain peaks. Our six day stay in Canmore, near Banff included side trips to Jasper National Park, Calgary, the major hotels and lakes and the gondola ride at Banff. The mountain ranges are truly spectacular and awe inspiring and I wouldn't hesitate to return.

The weather didn't cooperate on the next leg of the trip. It was now June but basically it was still winter up there, especially as we moved south from Banff. Banff and the surrounding area are actually at a low altitude, so the jutting mountains peak out at only around 8,000 feet. As you move south into the high plains of Montana the mountains are the same height, but they start from a higher altitude so the peaks are well over 10,000 feet and the climate is more alpine. We visited the outskirts of Waterton and Glacier Parks but most of the roads and sights were closed by snow so we didn't see much. It was quite a change from the sunny California we had left, but we enjoyed it nevertheless. We visited an incredible Native American museum that was all built underground at the site of a historic buffalo jump in Alberta. We spent a day and night in Fort Benton, Montana which was the end point for the river boats traveling up the Missouri River to the mines and homesteading trails of the 1800's. There are seven museums in this small town which has numerous restored houses, hotels and, of course, bars. Several days were spent staying with friends in my home town of Big Timber, Montana where much of the wine we had brought to share was consumed. A night with friends in Red Lodge, a weather thwarted effort to enter Yellowstone National Park from the East, a day in Cody Wyoming where we toured the huge western museum and then a marathon drive across Utah and Nevada at maximum speed completed a memorable trip. We arrived home just



in time to drive to San Francisco to pour wine at the Taste of Mendocino at the Presidio. Welcome home!

James Beard, you better be home

Francois did it again. Francois was invited by his former protégé and prep cook, the Iron Chef Winner and Food Channel star Beau MacMillan, to work with him as he hosts a James Beard Foundation dinner in New York City in December. Of course they both wanted Claudia Springs wines to be served at the dinner. After a lot of hesitation about the cost, Claudia decided we had to be there, so go we will. To help justify the trip I contacted a couple high school friends in Vermont and Baltimore who invited us to come stay a few days with them. And it turns out the best way to do this is to take the train which sounds cheap and pretty cool. The menu, printed below, sounds great. Francois and Beau have promised to take us on a gastronomical journey through the best eating spots in the city one night which sounds a bit over the top. Darn.

James Beard Foundation Dinner

TO BEGIN

lobster papillion with vanilla orange butter
fire roasted island creek oysters, hijiki sesame, lop chung
pickled vegetable summer rolls
pork buns with cucumber, scallion, hoisin
Claudia Springs 2010 Viognier, Lolonis Vineyard, Redwood Valley

1ST COURSE

chilled hamachi
yuzu kochu, avocado, citrus
*Claudia Springs 2010 Estate Pinot Gris,
Klindt Vineyard, Anderson Valley*

2ND COURSE

seared diver scallop
fragrant black beans, creamed corn, thai lobster curry
Kimmel Vineyards 2009 Estate Chardonnay, Mendocino County

3RD COURSE

foie gras crème brulee
black truffle meringue, spiced korean pear,
szechuan pepper caramel

Kimmel Vineyards 2007 Estate Merlot, Mendocino County

ENTRÉE

grilled venison loin
spiced butternut squash, cherry braised cabbage,
honey hoisin sauce
*Claudia Springs 2009 Vittorio's Secret Red Field Blend,
Redwood Valley*

DESSERT

salted caramel panna cotta
candy corn, toasted peanut, vanilla bourbon cream



Bob Klindt and Master Chef Beau MacMillian

Fall Recipe

Lamb Shanks with Olives, Lemon and Basil

a super simple lamb preparation with big, bold flavors!

ingredients for four servings:

4 each	Lamb Shanks, each should weigh 1.25# approximately
1 T.	Sea Salt
2 t.	Black Pepper
¼ c.	Canola Oil
1 each	Sweet Onion, peeled and sliced
3 each	Carrots, peeled and sliced
1 each	Tomato, chopped
4 cloves	Garlic, roughly chopped
2 T.	Tomato Paste
2 T.	Flour

1 each	Lemon, zest only
½ t.	Red Pepper flakes
2 each	Bay Leaves
1 t.	Fennel Seeds
2 each	Star Anise
1 sprig	Thyme
1 sprig	Rosemary
1 qt.	Chicken Broth
1 c.	Olive Oil Cured Black Olives
1 t.	dried Oregano
1 bunch	Basil, chopped roughly
1 each	Lemon, zest only

Directions:

Season lamb with sea salt and black pepper. Heat oil in pan large enough to hold all ingredients. Sear lamb on all sides, then remove from pan. Add sliced onions and carrots and cook till lightly browned and tender, about five minutes. Add chopped tomato and garlic and continue cooking two minutes. Add tomato paste and flour and stir till well mixed. Add first lemon zest, red pepper, bay leaves, fennel seeds, star anise, thyme, rosemary and chicken stock. Stir well, add lamb and cook slowly till lamb meat is tender and starts to fall off the bone, about three hours. Remove lamb from broth, strain sauce pressing the solids in a mesh strainer to extract all the flavors. Add the olives, oregano, chopped basil and second lemon zest. Return the lamb to the pan, pour a big glass of Zinfandel and get ready to smile!!! I suggest serving with creamy polenta.

Chef François de Mélogue

A Challenge

Describing wine aromas and flavors is an art, and one that I find separate from the making of the wine. I know what I am looking for when I coax a wine along its journey from grape to greatness in the bottle. What I struggle with is putting descriptions to what I see developing. At Claudia Springs we collaborate in tasting the wines and describing what we find. Needless to say we don't always agree. Each of you also has an interpretation to offer of each of our wines. Please send us a brief e-mail of any of our current wines and we will get your review on our blog or facebook or any of those other sites that Francois has set up for us that I usually don't know how to use. I value your input for it is you that I am laboring to please.

Fall, 2011 shipment

2010 Lolonis Vineyard Viognier, Redwood Valley
Alcohol 14.4

