



Teatown Cellars

2005 Napa Valley Right Bank

Although it is a long time ago (in the scale of human years) that wine first passed my lips I can tell you with fair certainty that it was Bordeaux. In those times the focus of wine drinkers was Europe and Bordeaux was the preeminent wine growing region. You memorized Bordeaux, the appellations (all 57 of them,) the growths, the history, the cepages, geography, topography. It was never ending. Then came Burgundy, Italy and maybe Germany, eventually the West Coast. Don't forget

Chile or Australia and for heavens sake New Zealand, South Africa and Idaho. Wine Babel!

Bordeaux is divided by the Garonne River. The Left Bank of the Garonne is noted for wines dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon. On the Right Bank of the Garonne around the city of Libourne, Red Libourne, or "Right Bank" wines are produced in 10 appellations. These wines are dominated by Merlot with very little Cabernet Sauvignon, the two most famous being Saint Emilion and Pomerol. The wines often have great fruit concentration, softer tannins and are long-lived. Saint-Emilion, in proper Bordeaux fashion, has an official classification.

I have always wanted to produce a Bordeaux style, Merlot based blend and in 2005 I got my chance. I sold off 1,000 gallons of 2005 Merlot and bought Cabernet Franc (18%), Malbec (14%) and a small amount of Cabernet Sauvignon (11%). With 2005 Merlot (57%) from Kenefick Ranch this blend was assembled in April - May of 2007 and was put back down to barrel. As always older oak barrels predominate, with a very small percentage of new oak (American, Hungarian and Center of France.) Bottled in mid-December 2007, 1,200 cases.

A extremely dark ruby red wine. On the nose this wine shows candied fruit reminiscent of cherry cola and not in an unpleasant way at all. Lightly oaked, well integrated, even a touch of cedar, cigar box and tar. On the palate the candied fruit character follows through to cassis flavors with some spiciness, menthol - mint, herbs and underbrush. The additional time in oak gives fully integrated and resolved fruit. Nice minty dark fruit finish with a bit of toasty oak. Elegant and supple, this wine has the finesse and body to stand up to all manner of hearty and robust meals and will pair particularly well with meats whether braised, roasted or grilled. Drink now and over the next 3-6 years. What *was* that moron who drank a bottle of Cheval Blanc in Sideways saying about Merlot?

(No, I can't leave it be!)