

IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

"Who's back yard?" ... you say.

"Mine?"

Yes indeed you lucky Washington state residents. (And us lucky Northwest residents also!)

While conducting a private winery tour in Oregon a few months past, a guest asked a most interesting question.

"Fred, if you had \$10 to spend on a wine, would it be an Oregon or Washington wine?"

After a few seconds of thought, I answered; "Washington". Then I added, "That is a good question and now that all fifty states have at least one licensed and bonded winery, lets expand that question to the whole US". Upon further discussion, most everyone on the tour agreed.... again it would be Washington with only 1 guest out of 12 choosing California.

But that is no great revelation considering the great wine values coming out of both states. The quality of the fruit of the individual varietals and the dense rich red blends from Washington's warm weather growing areas would surely have larger numbers on their price tags, if the state of origin was California.

This years judging at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, where Sagelands Vineyards won Double Gold with their Four Corners Columbia Valley Cabernet is a strong indicator of what can be found in the state. A most enjoyable wine that is frequently available under \$10. Barnard Griffin's 2005 Sangiovese Rose was awarded Best of Class at the same event, and is but part of their portfolio of outstanding reasonable priced wines. Chateau St. Michelle's Syrah is well worth searching for when on sale at our target level.

We can all go into our favorite stores and find very drinkable wines, two bottles for twenty dollars, and not have to be concerned about anything lacking in craft. Do be aware of the second label values that

exist. Nelms Road from Woodward Canyon is just one example, priced in the mid teens.

Tasting Tip: Even though the dog days of summer are dwindling, pay close attention to serving temperatures and keep those reds in the sixties! Pinot Noir 58° to 62° and the more tannic reds 64° to 68°. You will be rewarded by the effort.

Cheers ~

Fred Gunton
A Nose For Wine