

The first Tuesday of May this year was a beautiful day followed by a very stormy evening. I remember it well because I had a gathering on my porch that was ruined by a rainstorm with strong winds. It was also the last time that the daytime temperature was below 90 degrees Fahrenheit. So here we are in the middle of August with no relief in sight and Bacchus and Zeus appear to remain at odds with each other. (When no one was looking, I did sneak a cold frosty beer, however that only brought a few moments of relief.)

So, what to do? How do we survive this crisis of “way too hot and lingering weather”? I thought it might be interesting to take a look at a method of purchasing wine on the Internet – in the air-conditioned comfort of your own home. There is a program called WTSO that has caught on quite well in our Lowcountry. WTSO stands for Wines 'Til Sold Out. If you subscribe to the website, you could receive as many as 10 or 12 announcements a day for wines that have been significantly reduced in price and are ready for shipment. If you have no sales resistance, do not even consider opening the solicitation because very shortly thereafter you will be totally broke! That is how good the pricing is. (If you should purchase some wine, WTSO will hold the wine in their temperature-controlled warehouse until the weather improves.) There are also deals on freight – e.g. the price is a delivered price if you take x number of bottles. In most cases this results in significant savings.

I check my email every three hours or so and I usually find a few announcements for wines from WTSO. The wines are very well-presented. There is a picture of the wine with the label clearly in view. Offset to the right of the picture is the name of the wine, including the points it was awarded by Wine Spectator or any other wine rating agency. An example would be:

Rioja 2011 Consejo de la Alta Cata de Consejero

92 point rating and 69% off

Free shipping on 4 bottles or more

Original Price \$48.00

Our Price Delivered \$14.99

The above information is followed by a description of the wine. This particular wine is described as follows:

Appellation Rioja

Unit Size 750 ml

Varietal/grape Tempranillo

Vintage 2011

Alcohol Content 14.00

This information is followed by some tasting notes. This particular wine is described as an unbelievable red from the very heart of Rioja Alta, which is perhaps the finest terroir for Tempranillo in the world. All of the hallmarks of Rioja Alta are expressed vividly and elegantly through a long and inviting palate profile of the wine; a core of ripe black and red fruit is treated to fascinating savory notes of leather and spiced meats, with beautiful oaks integration and lively acidity. Complete and satisfying, this is a real treat for lovers of Spanish Wine.

So there you have it. The wine is introduced with its original price and then the WTSO price. My first question was: How do they do it? So I asked. WTSO actually has a team of people selectively choosing each and every wine that is offered. Each wine is reviewed by the team the day before it goes live on the site. The team uses Wine Searcher Pro to find the lowest wine

retailer or winery that has the wine in stock. All auctions, futures and pre-arrivals are disregarded. The retailers' cost of shipping is included in the final cost of the product delivered to the customer who makes a purchase online. The wine deals are offered one-at-a-time, beginning at midnight EST. An offer will stay on the website until it is sold out. At that point, the next wine will appear as the new current offer.

WTSO offers a variety of ways in which to be notified of a new deal. The options include email, twitter, or a notification to your smart phone.

Every wine has a free shipping option, provided you choose the minimum number of bottles (1,2,3, or 4 bottles depending on the offer.)

WTSO has a feature called MY Cellar. This allows the client to track all of his purchases and to give the wines his or her own rating. The client can also add notes – i.e. your own tasting notes. You can also record the full details of the wine such as alcohol content, grape varietal, region, etc.

WINESPEAK

WTSO is a unique approach to selling wine. It is a system that works very well. I have seen and read most of the announcements that appear on my computer and I have yet to see a clunker. WTSO has made it abundantly clear that the wines that are offered are quality wines and that they have been carefully screened. I would not hesitate to purchase an offering or to recommend any of the wines. Then WTSO website is very informative and easy to follow. Check it out at www.wtso.com

Cheers!