

UPCOMING EVENTS



END OF OCTOBER: A DOUBLE-SECRET TASTING OF RAUL PEREZ WINES! Open to Premier Cru Wine Club members only.

We will be tasting 3 very limited, very special wines from winemaker Raul Perez. The biggest import out of these was 160 bottles for the entire U.S., and they are all rated between 95 and 99 points. I love these wines--I'll be as excited as you are! Taste the heart and soul of an obscure wine region in Spain with Albarino and Mencía. Stay tuned--we will know 2 weeks before the tasting what the exact date is (notification by email).

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13 A GROWERS CHAMPAGNE TASTING HERE AT SHIRAZ!

featuring Master Sommelier Michael McNeil, back again by popular demand. He has a wonderful knowledge of Champagne, and enjoyed meeting our customers so much last time we talked him into coming back! Michael and Emily will be pouring and discussing growers' champagnes, the best of what France has to offer. As importer Terry These says, you should drink Grower Champagne "if the individually distinctive flavors of terroir-driven wines matter more than the lowest-common-denominator pap served up by the mega conglomerates in the "luxury-goods" business. I say you should drink it because it is DELICIOUS. (and the winery is taking the risk of selling wine no one has heard of instead of selling to Dom. . . at a price less than Dom)

THURSDAYS AT SHIRAZ

Every Thursday, starting when we open at 11, we have fresh (never frozen) fish delivered--check our emails for the catch of the week. These selections will change weekly, but they will always be fresh--and delicious.

Shiraz
FINE WINES & GOURMET
675 PULASKI ST
SUITE 400
ATHENS GA 30601

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

JOIN OUR WINE CLUB!

Each month, Emily and the staff here at Shiraz select 3 wines we think are special and that you are sure to enjoy. All wines that we pick come complete with tasting notes and serving suggestions. Though all of the wines may be purchased separately, members receive a substantial discount on their package every month. This package consists of the three wine picks and one of our gourmet items selected for your sampling pleasure. The cost of the wine club package each month is \$45 (the cost separately is \$50-60); save money on the picks each month, plus a discount on each featured bottle purchased! Wine club also gets an extra 5% off all cases in the store. If you are a member of our wine club, you'll also get the first peek at special items here in the store. Wine club gets you extra access to everything in the store, including events! Please ask us if you'd like more information or to join--it's the best deal in town! For even more savings and great wines at a different tier, take a look at our new Premier Cru wine club level! Details inside with the picks of the month. . .

These wines are extremely limited! Join us for a fun gathering where you can taste them all. This party will start at 6 p.m. Formal attire, black tie optional. Catering will be by Dondero's Kitchen. Light hors d'oeuvres, water, and champagne included. RSVPs needed. See us for more details as the event unfolds.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14 MASTER GRILLER WILLIAM MILLER IS BACK FOR GREAT BBQ HERE AT SHIRAZ!

We had so many compliments that we talked him into cooking for us again--but this will be the last time this year, so don't miss it! 12-hour smoked BBQ with Willie's Hog Dust (now available at Shiraz):
smoked pork butts, \$10 per pound, averaging 5 pounds each (weight after cooking)
BBQ plate of pork, beans, slaw, bread, and dessert \$6 each
Four BBQ plates plus a bottle of red, white, or rose \$30 total
please order your BBQ by Thursday afternoon before the game to guarantee we'll have everything you want.

THROUGH FOOTBALL SEASON:

We are putting together fantastic cheese platters this fall. These will only be \$30 (plus a \$10 deposit for the plate). Make things easy for yourself this fall and order a cheese plate from us to give yourself time to enjoy the day! (Order ahead only)
Each platter will feature three different cheeses, each paired with a sauce or dip, a side item, and crackers. Enjoy!

PUT DECEMBER 10, 11, AND 12 ON YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!

**Call us for reservations at 706-208-0010.
And drop in any Saturday between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. for our theme wine and food tastings.***

**Our wine tastings are for educational purposes only.*

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Shiraz

FINE WINE & GOURMET

"Raúl Pérez has emerged in the last few years as one of the most talented and creative winemakers in Spain. Exploring the varieties and terroirs of Bierzo and Galicia, his wines, far removed from the Tempranillo appellations and the Mediterranean styles, has set new standards for those regions and the country, winning top accolades and scores from the most influential critics"
-Local Wine Events, New York

www.shirazathens.com

OCTOBER 2009

The Cil river is 100 miles long, 210 feet deep, and has 25 camps along it. It is a natural canyon formed over 2 million years ago that has had an interesting and evolving history, and will continue to hold our interest as it garners more international attention in the decades to come.

In the first century, the area was heavily populated by Romans seeking gold. Slaves of these early rulers mined throughout the area of Ribera Sacra to fill Caesar's coffers. After 100 years, it was realized that this same area that had been rich in ore would also be rich farmland. The 3,000 slaves that had mined there were now put to task building the terraces that line the riverbanks that are now home to some of the most unusual wine-growing land in the world.

The climate here is Mediterranean, although the sea is a good 1,000 miles away. The granite and slate surrounding the Cil helps retain the heat reflected off the water. One of the most prominent grapes in the area is Mencía, a grape once thought to be a clone of Cabernet Franc. The three regions known for this varietal are Bierzo, Valdeorras, and Ribera Sacra, all located in Spain, and all on the riverbanks of the Cil. Though more popular than it was 30 or even 10 years ago, Mencía is still relatively unknown in the United States.

Access to all of the vineyards in Ribera Sacra is by boat only, since the land is on such a steep slope leading to the river. Some places even require the employment of a ladder for harvest, as well as rails to swing boxes of wine grapes down to the barges. The average elevation here is 1200 feet, but what is really impressive is the incline. The locals call the area hell, and for good reason--not only is it difficult to farm (or walk), the average temperatures are 120 during the day and a balmy 100 at night.

The area became famous in the 1100s, but the land that previously housed the best vineyards is now under water because of a dam built in 1955. Though the area had been abandoned in the 50s because it was so difficult to farm, it is in a state of resurgence due to recent work by winemakers like Raul Perez. Not interested in making an international wine, Perez is concerned only in making a snapshot of a vineyard through the juice. And what a snapshot: these solid, velvety smooth reds and whites showcase a great and unique raw material available surrounding the Cil.

Raul doesn't believe that human intervention is necessary in these wines. He does, however, believe that vineyards are living beings and deserve to be taken care of. One of his iconic wines, El Pecado, is his favorite of the wines he makes from the area. He only uses enough oak to stabilize the wine, and macerated the grapes in whole clusters. This is also a parcel he harvests later than most, letting mother nature do the work. It is a great example of what can come from Ribera Sacra when terroir is the focus.

Ribera Sacra still faces many challenges in the near future. First of all, most people in the area are over the age of 60, so workers are few and far between. Secondly, most farmers own 2 hectares or fewer and sell to large cooperatives. One kilo of grapes is only selling for \$1.50 in the local market, which makes it hard to make a living on these hillsides. But Mencía, which belongs to the Cil River, may be the saving grace of this beautiful piece of living natural history.

ASK US ABOUT WINE CLUB!
706-208-0010 OR
EMILY@SHIRAZATHENS.COM
EMILY'S WINE CLUB SELECTIONS FOR
OCTOBER

**Fournier Sauvignon Blanc 2007
Vin de Pays, Loire Valley, France**

This winery is the third largest landholder in Sancerre--sort of like being the biggest restaurant in Watkinsville. It is a tiny appellation, and hence, a tiny winery. Soft minerals and a lemon drop kind of aroma foretell the flavors that avoid the over-the-top-grapefruit. Pretty but with racy acid, it is stony, with lemon peel, and a dry, sandy soil, lightly chalky taste. Overall, it is a citrusy, fresh, refreshing wine. Try this with seafood topped with med. medley.
\$11.99

**Cortijo III Tinto 2008 1.5 liter
Rioja, Spain**

**80% Tempranillo, 20% Garnacha
89 points, Robert Parker (Wine Advocate)**
Dark, delicious berries. Cherries, minerals, and currant make for a full-flavored wine. It shows great balance amongst all of its components, and is easy to drink without being simple. After four years of tasting it, my notes always have something like "this is just great wine," "solid fruit," or "yum." Not exactly complex winespeak, but I think it shows how consistent and delicious the Cortijo always is. And it is great with any type of tapas, pizza or pasta topped with mediterranean vegetables.
\$18.99 1.5 Liter

**Lariat Cabernet Sauvignon 2003
Napa Valley, CA**

What rich, elegant fruit is in my glass! A beautiful example of what Cabernet can be, the Lariat is dark and pretty, with blackberry compote in the flavors, along with hints of leather and smoke. Spicy, with dark berries, blueberry, coffee, liqueur, and dark chocolate, it has been described as that first cup of coffee in the morning--the one that tastes the best. This would be great with a filet paired with our potatoes gratin recipe. John Gibson, winemaker for Andrew Geoffrey (\$75), Snowden (\$40), Frazier (\$55), and Rockledge (\$60), makes this--though you won't find a paper trail! No wonder, as this is such a steal. And we've made it even more affordable. . .
**\$28.99
this month = \$18.99**

**TASTE WHAT THE WINE CLUB ALREADY KNOWS--
OUR PICKS ARE DELICIOUS!**

**THE FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, THE WINE
TASTING WILL STAR THE WINE CLUB PICKS!**

JOIN US ANYTIME BETWEEN 1 AND 5 P.M.

This Month's Feature:

**Wits End Sidetrack
McLaren Vale, Australia
60% Shiraz, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon,
10% Grenache**

Another great wine by our friend Jock Harvey, this one is an unusual blend from a mediterranean climate within Australia. Rich, big, and meaty, this has all sorts of ripe mulberry and blackberry fruit to it. It is enhanced by mellow cranberry and raspberry flavors, and it has a very smooth but gamey backbone. For those of you who like a big wine without big tannin, this is for you. Try it with something on the grill! Oh--as always, we bought all the Wits End--buy some before you get to yours!
They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. -Psalm 107:27
**\$21.99
wine club deal of the month = \$14.99**

Wine Club Premier Cru Level!



We are adding a new optional feature for Wine Club members! With the Premier Cru level, members will enjoy all the benefits of the Wine Club with even more added perks. For an extra \$25 a month, you will receive the three wines and food item in the club, plus another special, allocated bottle priced between \$25 and \$35. We will, of course, add other specials for Premier Cru members as well! Premier Cru Level members also get an extra 10% discount on all cases in the store. See us for any questions about becoming a PCWC member!

Premier Cru Level Pick

**Margerum Syrah 2005
Colson Canyon Vineyard,
Santa Barbara County, CA**

Only 125 bottles were made of this Syrah that is black in color, with a deep, spicy, and rich flavor. There is a lightness to it, though, that exudes elegance--pretty and delicate, despite the fruit you would expect. The grapes actually have stunning minerality, with gravel and pepper. Complex, earthy, and meaty, it comes straight out of the glass--but has restraint at the same time. The balance of that with the peppery richness make for a gorgeous combination! This wine is a steal. Buy it while you can.
**\$59.99
for wine club this month = \$34.99!**

**SHIRAZ'S RECIPES FOR
OCTOBER**

Classy Delites Mediterranean Medley is a blend of artichokes, onions, peppers, olives, and cheese for a hearty flavor without any heaviness. It is great on its own with chips or as a bruschetta topping, and it is fantastic over fish. Try it in a variety of ways. Classy Delites Marvelous Mediterranean Medley is only \$6.99, and is automatically included in this month's wine club.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT WITH
MARVELOUS MEDITERRANEAN MEDLEY:**

Simply put, this is too easy to cook with to justify actual recipes. Here are some of the many uses I've found for the new Classy Delites spread--

- Cold pasta salad with marinated mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, and medley (including juice)
- Serve warm over cheese and crackers
- Stuff chicken or pork and grill
- Make a panini with smoked gouda and medley. Layer and grill. (meat is optional)
- Put it in deviled eggs instead of relish and top with a dollop for a garnish.
- Use in tuna salad instead of mayonaise
- Fantastic potato salad: potato wedges, ham, olives, and medley
- Make a pizza with tomato sauce and medley (extra toppings can include salame)
- Top rice with chickpeas, tomatoes, onions, and medley
- Make potatoes au gratin with an extra layer of medley for a dish on its own or a great side
- Saute brussels sprouts and tofu until crispy brown outside. Chop sprouts and mix with medley, and top tofu. Sprinkle with pine nuts.
- Did I mention how good this is on simple grilled fish?
- Mushroom, tomato, and chicken pasta doesn't need a sauce--use the medley.
- Add to a cheese plate or an antipasti platter. You could make an entire meal out of cheese, sopressata, cornichons, medley, crackers, olive pate, and grapes. Add grilled vegetables for a simple second course.

The Mouse Trap

Yummy! Emily told me that she was making a Mediterranean dip and my mind went straight to mini/tapas cheese plates. Both are great foods that are interactive and thus great for parties. If needed, Shiraz can put together a cheese plate for you. However, do not be intimidated to make one yourself. Also, here at Shiraz you do have an educated cheese monger to help guide you through the process.

There are many ways to prepare your cheese plate. You can select cheeses that have different flavors (1 goat's milk, 1 sheep's milk, 1 cow's milk) or textures (1 soft, 1 hard, 1 semi-soft). You can also select cheeses that follow a theme, such as we did before with cheeses from Spain. Or, perhaps you could select cheeses that pair with the specific wine.

When you do put together the cheese plate the next step is deciding on what will you plate the cheese. Do not fret if you do not have "cheese plate" be creative and use what works with your personality. I use slate tiles that I have leftover from a gardening project. Do place the cheeses from lightest flavor to strongest going clockwise -- the logic here is to not overwhelm your taste buds. Don't forget garnishing for extra flair. Seasonal apples are great this time of year, though some may prefer dried fruits, nuts and breads. Enjoy!

ALL THIS MONTH: TRICK OR TREAT!

FOR GROWNUPS

Trick or Treat Bags are back! Enjoy a bottle each of Cortijo III, Ludovicus, and Carro Tinto packed in a colorful orange bag with black tissue paper. Only \$30 for a premade gift bag!! (more than a case discount!) Don't be scary--give good wine!!!

FOR LITTLE ONES

Halloween cauldrons filled with white chocolate ghosts and other chocolate yummys. \$9.99
Jack-o-Lantern "lollipops" of milk chocolate \$4.99