

Tasting the Wines of Francis Ford Coppola



By George Parkinson
Certified Sommelier

Our wine bar at The Peacock Inn in Princeton, New Jersey has begun a wine-tasting series every Wednesday from 4-6 pm. The inaugural tasting was January 16th with the Wines of Francis Ford Coppola—recently awarded the 2017 Winery of the Year. Many of you may be aware that Francis Ford Coppola is an award-winning movie director with multiple Golden Globe, BAFTA, and Academy Awards to his credit. His filmography includes “The Godfather” series, “Apocalypse Now,” “Patton,” “The Cotton Club,” and “Tucker,” among others.

The Coppola wine holdings are just as impressive. The genesis for the wine business began after the release of “Godfather II,” which provided the necessary capital to purchase the storied Inglenook estate in Napa and lay



the foundation for other winery projects to follow. Mr. Coppola is a serious, hands-on vintner who, along with his family, is involved in day-to-day operations and decisions for the vineyard’s continued growth.

On this particular day, we offered guests in our bar six wines from Coppola’s extensive portfolio. We started with Sofia Brut Rose, a crisp and clean sparkling wine that showed notes of ripe mountain berry and some sweet cream. This was followed by the Diamond Series Chardonnay, a full-bodied wine aged in French and American oak for an extended period that offered notes of apples, Myer lemon and toasted nuts.

Then we tasted four red wines:

1) Bees Box Pinot Noir, a new project that shares a percentage of its proceeds with honey bee protection groups. This wine was ripe with notes of cherry and coco that offers you the option of pairing it with both meat and fish.

2) The Diamond series wines could be considered the best of the best, and, along with the previously mentioned Chardonnay, we offered the Claret. The name Claret is a throwback to earlier times when most California red wines were marketed as this using a field blend of various grapes. This wine is made mostly of Cabernet Sauvignon, and the blend is bold yet elegant. It’s a true steak wine that is full bodied with notes of blackberry and toasted walnuts.

3) We followed this selection with the Dry Creek Region, Directors Cut Zinfandel. I personally found this to be my favorite in the field of wines we tasted. It received high scores nationally including a double gold medal at the San Francisco International Wine Festival. Aromas of raspberry, strawberry and dark chocolate with a long-lasting finish called for pairing with roasted lamb, venison and root vegetables.

4) Lastly, Pitagora (Latin for Pythagoras)—a red blend—was offered. This full-bodied wine combines three different varietals grown in three different appellations: Syrah from Dry Creek, Petite Verdot from Sonoma Valley, and Cabernet Sauvignon from Alexander Valley. The wine is big, round and supple with a dark blue/black color and aromas of deep red plums and cherries.

Francis Ford Coppola isn’t simply a big-name Hollywood producer fronting his name on a label for continued exposure. He owns active estate vineyards in key regions that produce world-class fruit, and the wines he makes show his passion and determination. Acquiring the original estate at Inglenook, now renamed Rubicon Estate Winery, was his lifelong dream. Growing up, the Coppola family made wine to serve at the family table. That exposure left a lasting impression on Francis and inspired his passion for family, food and wine.

His purchase of the Chateau Souverain in Geyserville, California expanded the dream of combining family, food and wine into a theme park experience. The estate was inspired by Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, and, using that inspiration, Coppola has created a “pleasure garden for all people to enjoy.”

As of late, there is a new Coppola project in Oregon’s Willamette Valley soon to be released that highlights the region’s best



fruit, Pinot Noir. In addition, being a serious film producer and vintner, Coppola was also awarded the Green Medal Award for leadership in sustainable winegrowing as exemplified by the Bees Box project. I mention this because climate change, global warming and conservation are very important to consider in terms of sustaining the planet and continuing to grow grapes for wine. The Coppola family takes these issues very seriously, and it was one of the reasons I chose to launch our wine series with them.



If you are out shopping for a great wine tonight, don’t pass up the Coppola Estate options on your local wine shelf. To learn more about the winery or to plan a visit, go to www.francisfordcoppolawinery.com

Cheers!

George Parkinson is presently the Sommelier for the historic Peacock Inn, Princeton NJ. He is an active member of the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas and is studying for his advanced level. George has over 30 years of experience in the wine and hospitality industries and lives in Hilltown Township PA with his family.

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