

EDUCATION

Find out what makes champagne unique, who first captured the bubble in the bottle and how it was done at GiraMondo Wine Adventures' **French Wines Discovery: Champagne Wine Class** on Tuesday evening in Washington. Visit localwineevents.com for more information. **Price:** \$65

SCOTT GREENBERG *Vine Guy*

Charles Krug *The other Mondavi legacy*

When you see or hear the word Mondavi, most wine consumers think of Robert Mondavi, the legendary wine visionary whose death last week at the age of 94 heralded the end of a remarkable era in the California wine industry. But the Mondavi name reaches far deeper into the fabric of Napa Valley than the aforementioned luminary.

For example, not many people outside of the wine industry are aware that the Mondavi family actually got their start back in 1943 when Italian immigrants Cesare and Rosa Mondavi purchased the old Charles Krug estate — the first and oldest winery in Napa Valley — from San Francisco banker James Moffitt. Over the next 20 years, Cesare, Rosa and their two sons, Peter and Robert, worked tirelessly to develop one of the most recognized brands in California wine.

Unfortunately, a dispute between Peter and Robert over how to run the business led to Robert's departure from Krug in 1965. A year later, Robert built his own winery down the road in Oakville and began making premium-quality wines that incorporated many of the techniques employed by European winemakers. Charles Krug continued on with Peter Mondavi Sr. at the helm and sons Peter Jr. and Marc implementing innovations of their own.



Today, Peter Jr. and Marc Mondavi are ushering in a new era of wines under the Charles Krug label. The project began back in 2000 when the Mondavis started a program to systematically replant most of the 850 acres of vines owned by the family. In addition, the winemaking operation has gone through a major upgrade, including state-of-the-art temperature-controlled fermentors and new crush pad facilities. Their efforts and investments are now paying off big dividends, and the proof is in the bottle.

Peter Mondavi Jr. is responsible for running the operations at Krug while brother Marc concentrates his efforts on the family's other wine venture, CK Mondavi. His background as a mechanical engineer — earning both undergraduate and graduate degrees from Stanford University — gave him

remarkable insight regarding the winery's physical plant, but it was his time spent in the winery itself (since age 8) that provided him with the skills he needed to bring quality wines back to the Charles Krug brand.

Peter Jr. recently came to town with samples of his new-and-improved portfolio in tow, and despite his charm and gentle manner, he was definitely a man on a mission. His enthusiasm for his "family" wines is infectious, and I found myself enjoying the wines as much as the history behind them. Here are my favorites. Retail pricing is approximate and is subject to change.

2007 Charles Krug Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, Calif. (\$18)

There's a lot of sauvignon blanc on the market, but this one will grab your attention — from the guava and passion fruit nose to the flavors of grapefruit, melon and tropical fruits that dance across the tongue. The bright acidity keeps the flavors focused and the finish clean and refreshing. Stock up on this wine to keep you company in the hammock this summer.

2006 Charles Krug Chardonnay, Carneros, Calif. (\$20)

Only 28 percent of this wine was aged in new oak, so the natural fruit aroma of pineapple and creamy lemon shines through. Crisp flavors of

apple, peach and pear are focused on the front of the palate while hints of toast follow through on the medium finish.

2006 Charles Krug Pinot Noir, Napa Valley, Calif. (\$25)

A remarkably "perfumy" nose of wild strawberries and bright cherries jumps out of the glass — a nod to the cool growing conditions that the Carneros region imparts. Flavors of strawberry, red plum and cherry cola remain delicate and charming all the way through to the elegant finish that has just the right amount of acidity to keep it all in balance.

2005 Charles Krug, Zinfandel, Napa Valley, Calif. (\$25)

A wonderful example of how charming "America's Grape" can be, this wine features a fragrant nose of black raspberry and ripe blueberry. Rich flavors of red cherry, plum, blueberry and sweet red licorice are balanced by soft tannins. Notes of vanilla and black pepper glide in on the robust finish.

2005 Charles Krug Merlot, Napa Valley, Calif. (\$25)

I usually think of merlot as a mellow grape, but this version is built on a delightfully spicy frame and features charming flavors of black plum, wild cherry and vanilla. The pleasant finish delivers notes of black cherry and spice with great balance and structure.

2005 Charles Krug Cabernet Sauvignon, Yountville and Napa Valley, Calif. (\$27)

A powerful wine that offers up




loads of jammy black fruit and cassis liqueur in the bouquet, leading to concentrated flavors of blackberry, ripe cherry and plum. The complex, lengthy finish features layers of chocolate-covered blackberries, mocha and licorice that resonate on the tongue for more than 30 seconds. A very well-made wine at twice the price.

2004 Charles Krug "Generations" Red Wine, Napa Valley, Calif. (\$51)

A blend of selected fruit — cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc, petit verdot, malbec and syrah — is used to produce this exquisite wine. Scents of black plums, cocoa and espresso entice the nose while flavors of earthy red plum and black cherry coat the palate on the well-balanced frame. The sweet tannins provide great structure and deliver a long, lush finish where notes of blackberry jam and roasted coffee leave a wonderful impression.

So the next time you want to pour a little California wine history into your glass, try a bottle of Charles Krug.

 Do you have a favorite royalty of wine? E-mail me at scott@vineguy.com.



DINE WITH US

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AMERICAN	THE WAREHOUSE BAR & GRILL	703-683-6868	ALX	warehousebarandgrill.com
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	\$25 - "Spring Dining" - One entrée plus any 2 other items, Sun - Thurs 4pm to 10pm			
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