

### Super Wines for the Super Bowl



The game of champions is upon us this weekend, and since I do not have a proverbial dog in the upcoming football finale, I have been nominated to pick out the wines for a big bash hosted by friends for this year's Super Bowl festivities.

Even though beer has long been the king of sports outings and football tailgates, more consumers are turning to fancier game-time spreads and, therefore, wine appears to be gaining in popularity.

So, I want my guests to know that I put a little thought into my wine selections beyond just the appropriate food-and-wine pairings (what does one pair with pigs-in-a-blanket?). Therefore, I decided to make sure that each set of fans have wines that could help them show their true colors – and I am not talking about white versus red. I am talking about, of course, Bronchos versus Seahawks.

As soon as the final teams were selected, I started tasting through a variety of wines that I thought could represent each team. However, since wines from Colorado are not readily available in our area, I decided to choose the wines for the Denver team based on something in the wine's name that fans could identify with, i.e. "horse," so I am using horse-related themes for the Bronchos. But the Seahawks are from a state that is known for producing a plethora of quality wine, so I decided to opt for a couple of wines that pair well with upscale tailgate fare.

My plan is to have one set of wines – Bronchos versus Seahawks - on opposite sides of the room and a "neutral" bottle in the middle...

#### **For Broncho's Fans:**

According to their website, the original owners of Wild Horse made their first wine in a plastic tub, stirring it with a baseball bat, as a senior project at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Today, the wines are made with much better equipment, like the **2010 Wild Horse Chardonnay** from the Central Coast of California, which has a touch of Viognier blended in for depth. The wine is vibrant and lively, with scents of green apple, lemon/lime citrus, and a touch of buttered toast on the nose and repeated on the crisp palate. Part of the wine is produced in stainless steel and then aged sur lie in barrels which provide balance and a creamy, textured finish. Try it with crab dip or chicken sliders. **\$15**

**For red wine loving Broncho's fans, try the 2010 Wild Horse Cabernet Sauvignon** from the Paso Robles region of the Central Coast. It displays aromas of plum, dark cherry, mocha and dried herbs on the nose. Flavors of rich cocoa and coffee join the dark cherry and blackberry notes echoed from the bouquet. Juicy and deep, this wine stays bright and lively thanks to smooth tannins on the well-balanced finish. Great with burgers and ribs. **\$18**

#### **For Seahawk's Fans**

The ultra-balanced **2010 Chateau Ste. Michelle Eroica Riesling** from the Columbia Valley in Washington State is always a bit hit at parties. Originally conceived as a collaboration between the world-renown German winemaker, Dr. Ernst Loosen, and the winemaker for Chateau Ste. Michele, Bob Bertheau, this off-dry wine has a lovely bouquet of nectarines and honeysuckle. The abundant acidity keeps the fresh fruit flavors of apples and peaches energized and the sweetness in check all the way through to the end of the medium finish. A perfect match with spicy fare, like Asian-style chicken wings. **\$20**

It was the delightful aromas of cinnamon, crushed berries and cherry that grabbed my attention of the **2008 Pomum Shya Red Wine** from the Yakima Valley of Washington State. The palate is rewarded with rich flavors of red fruit framed by sweet tannins and balanced acidity. Creamy vanilla and peppercorn on the mid-palate enhance the solid core of fruit while additional notes of black pepper provide a deep and spicy finish. Try it with ribs, lamb chops or steak. **\$35**

#### **For Those Who Want To Remain Neutral:**

If you can't decide who to root for, then the perfect wine for you would be any wine from The Horse Heaven Hills appellation of Washington State. It is home to 25% of the state's vineyard acreage and a source of the four 100-point wines from Washington, like the wines from Quilceda Creek Vineyards. Fortunately, the **2008 Quilceda Creek Red Wine** from Horse Heaven Hills is available in our area. It displays aromas of plum, dark cherry, mocha and dried herbs. Flavors of rich cocoa and coffee join the dark cherry and blackberry notes echoed from the nose. Juicy and deep, this wine stays bright and lively thanks to smooth tannins on the well-balanced finish. But neutrality can have a steep price. **\$60**