

Wines that Salute Veterans



Next Tuesday is Veteran's Day, a time to pay tribute to and honor those who served in our country's military service. Many Americans will find ways to celebrate and remember the sacrifices made on our behalf by those in uniform in a manner that's personal and meaningful.

I plan on opening a bottle and toasting our veterans with a glass of wine that not only acknowledges our men and women in uniform, but rewards them as well. This week's Wine of the Week salutes wineries that are either owned by or donate proceeds to our veterans.

Veteran Rob Mercer's roots run deep both figuratively and literally. His ancestors fought under George Washington, and his more recent descendants have been in the vineyard business in Washington State's Horse Heaven Hills. In 2007, the family launched Mercer Estates and Rob took the reins of the family business. Part of the winery's charitable giving program is to give back through donations to different organizations serving the needs of children, veterans, educators and students, to name a few. 100% of the fruit for the **2013 Mercer Estates Viognier** comes from the Culloden Vineyard located in the Horse Heaven Hills and it is beautiful. This wine is bursting with aromas of cantaloupe, lychee and banana. In the palate, the wine is initially full, round and fat, leading into a clean, crisp finish. The combination of rich mouth feel with bright acidity on the finish makes this wine difficult to set down. **\$18**

Valor was branded in 2007 and established as a winery in 2011 by United States Marine combat Veteran and owner, Josh Laine. Josh had the vision of establishing a winery that empowered and honored Veterans. Today, Valor Winery is educating Veterans and the community in green, self-sustainable farming, and forging leadership and team building. The **2010 Valor Winery Livermore Valley Cabernet Sauvignon** from Livermore, California provides a delicious combination of dark fruit flavors, including jammy blackberry, dark cherry, and cassis, reminiscent of fresh preserves. Underpinning of black pepper, leather and baking spices adds nice depth and character. A remarkable value at **\$16**.

Local entrepreneur-slash-do-gooder David Keuhner is one of the partners behind Honor Winery. David's father served two tours of Vietnam as a helicopter pilot and tragically was killed in 1976 when David was just six years old. Honor Winery is committed to supporting and celebrating those that have served or are serving, and dedicated to the continued growth and development of our men and women in uniform by providing a premium wine selection in Honor of them. The grapes for **2011 Honor Cabernet Sauvignon** are sourced from top vineyard sites throughout Napa Valley's best appellations. Smokey tobacco and dark fruits show prominently on the nose. Flavors of blackberry, cassis and black cherry persist on the palate leading into a long finish of cocoa and berries. This wine pairs well with everything from cheeseburgers to grilled lamb. **\$49**

In 2010, Jim and Yvonne Hurson founded Bravery Cellars whose motto is "Honoring Heroes and Serving Veterans." Each of their Bravery Cellars wines is dedicated to a specific Hero, and 100% of their after-tax profits are donated to programs which benefit Veterans and their families. Their **2011 Bravery Cellars Chardonnay** is from Dry Creek Valley and honors Hospitalman Kenneth J. Long, USN August 7, 1952. This is a beautiful Chardonnay, fresh, succulent and nicely balanced to go with meals. It has just the right kiss of oak that complements the wonderful fruit aromas of citrus and green apple along with a hint of melon and tropical fruit. It is refreshing and crisp with a silky texture, perfect to complement all manner of cuisine from pastas with cream sauces to seafood and salads. It's a great example of how flavorful this grape can be when it's allowed to express itself. **\$24**