

Pacific Northwest produces fine wine

One of the fastest growing and most promising wine regions in the United States is the Pacific Northwest. Long known for their fruit and berry wines, the last decade has witnessed a real surge in quality grape production. Today such names as Amity, Elk Cove, Eyrie, Hillcrest, Humbug (real), Knudsen-Crath, Poni, Reuter's Hill, Siskiyow, Tantalus, Bingen, Hinzlerling, Preston and Viterhagen are unknown on Michigan shelves. It will probably be some time before we do see any of them. But if chance requires you to travel in this most beautiful area, there is a great variety to find on local wine merchant shelves. However, one winery, Chateau Ste. Michelle, bonded quietly back in 1934, has attained national distribution and

now has their full line of wines on our shelves. In general they are priced in the middle of the range of West Coast wines, most releases in the \$3.50-7 range. I have recently sampled the whole group and am most enthusiastic about them. The vineyards are located between the Yakima and Columbia Rivers in the Yakima Valley, east of the Cascade Mountain Range. The grapes are then taken to the winery in Woodinville, a suburb of Seattle, just northeast of town. The vineyard latitudes correspond almost perfectly to Burgundy as the growers are proud to point out in their promotional literature. To date their releases have been predominately white wines, although at least three reds have shown as well.

From the Wine Press

by Richard Watson

Following are some general tasting impressions:

JOHANNISBERG RIESLING: — (estate bottling called "White Riesling"). Their most prominent and successful release, the wine is beautifully balanced with soft fruit and enough acid to produce character.

SEMILLON BLANC: — a lush, soft wine from a varietal greatly out of favor in California now. Excellent introduction to a most elegant grape of subtle spice.

SAUVIGNON BLANC: — excels most of the white Bordeaux now coming out at half the price. This is my personal favorite of their white wine releases.

GEWURZTRANNER: — light flowery nose with a beautiful aftertaste. A marvelous accompaniment to a mildly spicy dinner.

CHABLIS: — their only generic release, this is a crisp wine with a strong hint of fruit. This is vintage dated. Be sure to get a recent vintage; this you'll want to drink young.

GRENADE ROSE: — very full-bodied and rich in color, the fruit nearly jumps out of the glass. This is as close to a Tavel as the West Coast has come. It may even be a bit too rich for some.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON: — the 1973-4-5 vintages are all available and all worthwhile. They tend more to the soft and elegant style and will require little more bottle age.

MERLOT: — the 1976 issue is the first we have seen locally. It is now very drinkable although a hearty amount of tannin will hold it some more years.

There is also a sparkling wine, available only at the winery. This I eagerly look forward to trying, whatever its price.

To be a wine critic suggests some negative comments are in order somewhere, and it is somewhat frustrating to acknowledge that, to date at least, no Chateau Ste. Michelle wines have disappointed me. They are dependable and frequently exciting and, perhaps best of all, they aren't yet sold at those inflated prices that some of their California counterparts are. Let's hope this continues and the quality holds.

Erte retrospective will open at DIA

A master of display and dazzlement, fashion and theatrical designer Erte will be the subject of a retrospective at the Detroit Institute of Arts from Tuesday, Aug. 28 through Sunday, Oct. 28.

Some 250 gouache paintings, pen-and-ink drawings and lithographs from 1911 through the 1970s from the Art Deco period for which Erte is most famous — will be displayed in the museum's Textile Galleries.

Erte continues to work even now at age 86 and is currently finishing designs for both a Broadway show and a Paris musical. This long and productive career began in 1912 when the 19-year-old Erte left his native Russia to study art in Paris.

By 1913, he was working for the couturier Poiret. Poiret's was then the only couture house to have a workshop specializing in theatrical costume design, and the owner was thought outlandishly theatrical by the Parisian establishment. Poiret scandalized and revolutionized the fashion scene of the times by doing away with the corset — thereby completely changing the female silhouette and carriage. He introduced "jupes culottes," or pant-skirts and used bright colors. In Poiret's fashion house, Erte felt right at home.

Throughout his life, Erte has loved fantasy, elegance, luxurious materials,

and all things theatrical. His extravagant costumes have been worn by Marie, Marion Davies, Mistinguett, other celebrities and fashionable women everywhere.

His lavish stage sets have been the rage of music halls, cinemas, and opera houses throughout the world — he designed decor and/or costumes for the Folies Bergere, the Opera de Paris, Diaghilev's ballets, Hollywood movies, George White's "Scandals," and the "Ziegfeld Follies" among others.

His designs for many years adorned the covers and pages of many fashion magazines, most notably Harper's Bazaar, and exclusive shops in Paris and New York have shown his fashions since the early 1920s.

In addition to fashions, theatrical decor and costumes, Erte designed accessories such as jewelry, shoes, gloves, umbrellas and fans. He also ventured into the world of interior design with tables, lighting fixtures, shutters, mirrors, cushions and floral arrangements. In the '60s, he made sculpture, which he called "Formes Picturales," and in the last 20 years he has made prints of his designs.

Designs in the show were lent by the artist and the Grosvenor Gallery of London. The exhibition was organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

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