

Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

Vol.36 December 2021

A BOLD WINE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A few years ago, I was at a family holiday dinner with my nephew sitting across from me. At such dinners I am expected to choose the wine, and I do so willingly.

At the start of the meal, before any wine was poured, he declared, matter-of-factly, "Uncle David, I don't like wine but if I ever find a wine I do like I'll let you know."

My nephew Christopher is an over-the-road truck driver. He can seem gruff on the outside but on the inside he is very caring. Actually, I think he might feel things a bit too deeply, internalizing society's ills and injustices. This can give him a lot of angst. He wears the causes of the common people on his shoulders. In his opinions, which are readily offered, he is always trying to bolster the working class. To him, the blue collar men and women that his days bring him in contact with, don't drink wine. They drink American beer, and American whiskey, or maybe Irish beer and Irish whiskey. Rough, yet humble fare for rough yet humble, honest people. For him wine is too elite, too refined, too...not his people.

So with his declaration, I dutifully poured some wine in his glass and said, "Ok well, try this one and tell me what you think." He took one cautious sip. His face changed, a

smile grew across his lips, he raised his glass and he said, "Well... I like this one!" The wine he reacted to so strongly was a South African Pinotage.

South Africa is the only country that is growing, in any meaningful way, a grape called Pinotage. Pinotage is a cross between two French varieties, Pinot Noir and Cinsaut. This cross was an intentional cross pollination made by Abraham Perold in 1925. Perold crossed the plants and planted the resulting seeds only to leave them at Stellenbosch University in 1927. Since grape plants don't mature for wine production until at least 6 years of age, Perold had no idea that what he was crossing and planting was going to be South Africa's signature red wine.

Pinotage inherited the best qualities of its parents: soft, high acid and fruity from Pinot Noir, and deep red, slightly tannic with smoky aromas from Cinsaut. This combination is a shockingly perfect pairing for Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas dinner, a summer barbecue or to impress someone who likes big bold smoky flavors.

Pinotage is almost black in the glass. Inky dark. The aromas at first are of smoke but also cocoa, and in the mouth these flavors mingle

with just a hint of dark cherry making one think that they might have just eaten a bourbon infused chocolate covered cherry.

Pinotage, with its tannins, is a perfect wine for a meal that requires big bold flavors. Holiday meals are generally difficult to pair with wine because they are different for each culture. Pinotage pairs well with ham, turkey, beef, BBQ, stew, or any bold side dish. It would also go well with umami rich foods like Korean ribs, or Japanese teriyaki. It doesn't pair with lighter fare like salad, seafood or foods that are spicy.

Pinotage at first sip is like my nephew, big, bold, overpowering, loud and opinionated but once paired with the right food you become aware of the subtle nuances of the wine. It has layers of flavor and complexity, and pairs well with a variety of big, bold, hearty dishes.

Pinotage is usually available in well appointed liquor stores. A bottle should cost \$15-\$25. They are not particularly impressive as an aged wine so forget about vintage and just buy one that looks good to you. Yes, I'm suggesting you buy it based on the label and this recommendation.

ADVENT CALENDAR WINE CLASSES



WHERE CAN YOU GO RIGHT NOW?

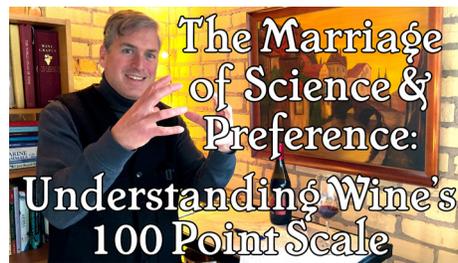
I'm not exactly sure what I was thinking...except, "Hey, this sounds fun." I think a lot of things start that way. And...now I've got to make 24 videos on random Costco Wines. If you are confused by this then please read last month's *Eau de Vie* or easier still - [follow this link](#) and [watch this video](#) or click on the top box in the next column.

As as a person who likes to get people together to do things that I'm interested in, the ongoing pandemic is a bit of a bummer. The pandemic has pushed us all into new spaces and so here I am making 24 daily mini wine class videos and posting them to YouTube.

Normally in the fall I teach wine classes or liquor classes. With Covid and Delta and Omicron and the next variant on the horizon, in-person wine classes seemed... not prudent. But I still felt that I needed to do something to bring a bit of cheer to the virus laden gloom that is seeping around the world. So here I am making videos.

The pictures on the right lead to the first five videos. I'll make a new one each day until I either collapse from exhaustion, or make it to the end of my self-imposed video marathon. I think I can do it; the topic is known to me so that's not the challenge. It's the technical aspect that is more difficult. I'll be posting these videos onto our [SavvyNomadTV](#) YouTube channel and if you want to follow along please consider subscribing to our channel.

If YouTube presents you an advertisement at the beginning of the video please know that I get no ad revenue from the ad. Google owns YouTube and has set a policy that to be eligible to share in any ad revenue a YouTube channel has to have 1000 subscribers and 4000 hours of watch time. I'm quite a ways off from that mark.



The landscape for travel is shifting more now than in any other time in my life. While I'm not the oldest person, I'm also not the youngest and I've been traveling all my life. I took my first international flight in 1973, not long after I was born. Of course, I don't remember it. I was just an infant when I flew with my parents from Australia, where I was born, to a family funeral in Arizona.

The freedom of movement enjoyed by me, throughout my life, by rights conferred just by nationality, have been unprecedented. Never before have I or anyone else had such unfettered access to almost any spot on the planet.

The pandemic continues to twist and turn and shut and open societies and specifically air routes. Every country in the world now has Covid related rules for entry. Keeping these rules current is part of the job of the United States Department of State. I consider their advice current, practical and possibly overcautious.

Another resource that is very helpful to start understanding current entry requirements is the continuously updated New York Times article titled, "[I'm a U.S. Citizen. Where in the World Can I Go?](#)" This article will give you a good start and then lead you to official web pages or American State Department resources.

The era of easy, unbureaucratic travel is over, maybe forever. Your options are to stay home or get used to it.