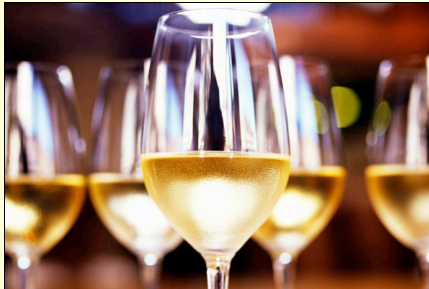


# Barreling Along



Hello Wine Guild members,

Last week over two nights, the Holly Hill Inn Wine Guild tasted twelve Chardonnays representing a wide variety of styles from wine-growing regions across the globe. Our modest goal was to determine who made the best Chardonnay in the \$20 or under range. We took this awesome responsibility very seriously. We didn't want to neglect any region or style.



We tasted the Old World of Spain, and the New World of Sonoma. We sampled Washington from the North Pacific and Chile from the South Pacific. We drank oaked wine from Argentina and unoaked wine from Oregon. Australia, Burgundy, Chalone ... to ... New Zealand -- we drank all the Chardonnay the world had to offer.

And now, the results from **Battle Chardonnay** are in.

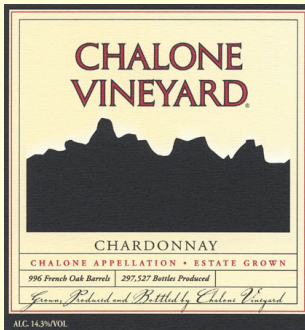
The voting was close and opinions somewhat divided, but a consensus from the blind tasting was achieved. The top three Chardonnays were judged to be ...

## 3rd Place -- Marques de Casa Concha Chile 2007



This Chardonnay is produced in Chile's Maipo Valley, situated in the shadows of the Andes Mountains to the east and the moderating climate of the Pacific Ocean to the west. It exhibited a plush, creamy body and a solid foundation of toasty oak from its time spent aging in new French oak barrels. Our Wine Guild members gave it a rating of 92 on a 100-point scale. We were not alone in our valuation of this Chilean Chardonnay, as it also received high praise from the *Wine Spectator* (91) and the *Wine Advocate* (91).

## 2nd Place -- Chalone Estate Grown Chardonnay 2007



Chalone Vineyard is located in the mountains of Monterey, just south of San Francisco. Their estate vines are the oldest in the region, having been planted in 1919. Chalone is a cornerstone winery for the California wine industry, with a long, successful history of producing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. "Balance" was the word I heard most describing this particular wine at our tasting. It shows a delicious, long, full-bodied complexity. Similar to the previous wine, it is underlain with a notable oak foundation. This Chardonnay was rated 92 by the *Wine Spectator* and it was chosen as one of the *Spectator's* Top 100 wines of 2009. Our Wine Guild rated it 92.5, just behind our #1 choice for the event.

## 1st Place -- LIOCO Sonoma County Chardonnay 2008



There were no mixed feelings about this California Chardonnay. LIOCO was bright, refreshing, juicy and yet, a bit creamy. It stood out, in part, because LIOCO Chardonnay is completely unoaked, meaning it is aged in stainless steel, not oak barrels. As a result, it featured a host of pure, ripe citrus flavors. Named after the two owners -- Matt Licklider and Kevin O'Connor -- LIOCO recently received recognition from *Wine & Spirits Magazine* as Winery of the Year. The fruit is sourced from the top growing areas of Sonoma County, including



the Russian River Valley, the Alexander Valley and Dry Creek Valley. The Holly Hill Inn Wine Guild rated this wine a 93, with several members giving it a score in the high 90s. Look for LIOCO on the Holly Hill Inn Wine List and at upcoming Wine Guild events.

Other top finishers at **Battle Chardonnay** were the Foxglove Central Coast 2008 which, like the top ranked LIOCO, was a crisp, unoaked Chardonnay; the Chehalem INOX Chardonnay from the Willamette Valley in Oregon, also unoaked; and the Craggy Range Hawkes Bay C3 Kidnappers Vineyard 2008 from New Zealand.

Be sure to try one of these the next time you're drinking white wine here at the Holly Hill Inn.

I'll be writing to you soon about our upcoming Wine Guild events.

Warm regards,

*Steve*

Steve Mancuso  
Guildmaster  
Holly Hill Inn Wine Guild



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