

Another Great Mutt Lynch Accolade!

Dan Berger's Vintage Experiences

The Weekly Wine Commentary

May 27, 2010

A Pedigree Brand

Anyone who's willing to say that his "inspiration comes from Randall Graham and what he can do with whimsy" easily gets my attention.

So I was pleased to sit down with Chris Lynch and his wine maker wife, Brenda, on Tuesday to try a few of their wines adorned with a cute label.

The brand name of the "dog series" is Mutt Lynch, with a lovable mutt on the label. Then there is the grown-up brand, Canis Major, which isn't funny, just great value.

Chris and Brenda both worked for E&J Gallo and Kendall-Jackson, and

both know what it takes to make a great wine at a fair price.

What was appealing about all the wines was their honest style based on good fruit unadorned with tactics or additives. I asked Brenda about it.

"I think it's about, I don't know, a code of honor?" she said, noting that the way to make such wines is by getting good fruit and making wine that is unadorned with any sort of manipulation.

Some wines I taste seem like they were made with additives that make

the wines richer, fuller—and less like wine.

Thus it is fun to discover the Mutt Lynch, which display a purity that offers balance and structure that works nicely with food.

Chris and Brenda seek out grapes that can be harvested with modest sugar levels, so alcohols are within a narrow range; most of the reds, though fairly "big" in flavor, rarely get much more than 14% alcohol.

The brands' success is due in part to a great relationship with Underdog Wine Merchants.

Tasting Notes

Exceptional

2007 Canis Major Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley, Perotti Vineyard (\$25): A subtle spice adds interest to racy red and black fruit, with a strawberry taste in the mid-palette and great silky tannins.

Exceptional

2007 Canis Major Petite Sirah, Dry Creek Valley (\$25): Blueberry jam, faintly earthy, with a massive slug of tannin, but such deep fruit that it will be superb in a few years. Limited, worth a search.

Exceptional

2007 Mutt Lynch Zinfandel, Central Coast, "Portrait of a Mutt" (\$14): Wild raspberry, leafy, and racy red fruit plus a dash of pepper in a mid-weight wine that has superb drinkability now and soon. A bargain.

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Dan Berger's Vintage Experience, May 20, 2010

"Bark Less, Wag More!"

Brenda Lynch, Owner & Winemaker

