

## Barrel Tasting at Sleight of Hand Cellars

Written by Rand Sealey

Thursday, 15 April 2010 13:51

### Barrel Tasting at Sleight of Hand Cellars

Trey Busch is one of the Walla Walla Valley's most talented winemakers. His winery, Sleight of Hand Cellars, was picked by Seattle Magazine as one of the "Next Cult Wineries of Washington State." Little wonder, as Trey and partners, Jerry and Sandy Solomon have been turning out some head turning wines. Sleight of Hand's 2007 reds are outstanding. I rated the Illusionist 19/20 points, the Archimage, 19+/20 points (both in the November 2009 issue) and the Levitation Syrah 19/20 points (September 2009). On March 23rd, I went down to Saviah Cellars (where Trey makes his wines) and tasted these highly promising 2008's from the barrels. Here are my notes.

#### 2009 Chardonnay, Yakima Valley, French Creek Vineyard

Before going to the reds, we sampled this wine from Jon Martinez's (Maison Bleue Winery) vineyard which has a small block of 30 year old Wente Clone Chardonnay vines. It showed a crisp, fresh apple and pear nose with apple blossom and acacia scents. The flavors were crisp and applely with authentic varietal character, quite a contrast from tropical California Chardonnays. **18.5/20 points.**

#### 2008 "Levitation" Syrah, Columbia Valley

Composed of 54% Les Collines (Walla Walla Valley) and 46% Lewis Vineyard (Yakima Valley), this wine showed a purplish color with an enticing nose of wild blackberries, currants, lavender, sage and a hint of violets. The ripe berry and cassis flavors initially showed more Les Collines than Lewis character. Then on the back, the wine shifted to a dark dried berry character and blueberry background, followed by an opulent licorice, chocolate and coffee finish. **19/20 points.**

#### 2008 "The Archimage" Red, Columbia Valley

Aged in 40% new oak (enough to give it a presence without being obtrusive) this 50% Merlot, 33% Cabernet Franc and 17% Cabernet Sauvignon combination showed a deep ruby color, and an exotic nose of wild berries, incense, crushed roses and sandalwood. It was thick and saturated on the palate, laced with licorice, cola, coffee grounds, graphite and minerals. The deep, almost meaty background led into a roasted berry and fine grained tannin finish. Sources: Double River Ranch and Va Piano Merlot; Frenchtown Cabernet Franc; Red Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon. **19+/20 points.**

#### 2008 "The Illusionist," Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley

This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon is composed of approximately one-third each of Red Mountain, Blue Mountain (Walla Walla Valley) and Phinny Hill (Horse Heaven Hills) vineyards, aged in 50% new oak. It exhibited a deep purplish color and terrific aromatics of crushed blueberries, cherries, cassis, roses, lavender, incense and even violets. On the palate the saturated fruits were amazingly opulent, marked by minerals, pencil lead and French roast, all culminating on a back palate of roasted berries, orange peel and toasted oak. The finish lasted two minutes. **19.5/20 points.**

#### Next Week: A Preview of Walla Walla Valley Spring Release Weekend

Last Updated on Thursday, 15 April 2010 15:53