

Oyster wines for 2009



Liz Hafalia/The Chronicle

Just awaiting the perfect glass.

Earlier this week were the San Francisco finals of one of my favorite wine judgments of the year: the [Pacific Coast Oyster Wine Competition](#).

Organized now for 15 years by seafood expert Jon Rowley, the competition takes a different tack on wines. Rather than just judge the best wine, judges in three West Coast cities -- Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle -- are asked to taste 20 different white wines with Kumamoto oysters and choose the best match. In Rowley's take, that's the combination that provides the most bliss. Wines are selected from all over the West Coast.

Some of us wine folk like to kvetch about the instructions for the competition -- we can smell the oysters, but not the wine. And most notably, I seem to have acquired a role as [the Muscadet-loving foil](#) to Rowley, to the point where we had a 2007 tasteoff pitting his top wines against a bunch of Chablis and Muscadet.

But really, how bad can it be to spend an afternoon eating oysters and tasting wine? Perhaps that's why Rowley gets a top-notch roster of judges each year. (Sitting next to me at Wednesday's tasting was Harvey Steiman of the Wine Spectator, who boldly snuck in a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc -- thus making me not the only one to offer counterpoint to the West Coast hegemony.)

Official results won't be out until next week, but I can share my top picks from the roster. They were, not surprisingly, names that I've had surface high on my list in past years. The **2007 Kenwood Sauvignon Blanc** took my top spot. Next was the **2007 Elodian Sauvignon Blanc** from Tom Eddy Wines (which I still could swear had some semillon in it, though not being able to smell the wines, is a half-baked guess on my part). The top five was rounded out by the **2008 Kunde Family Estate Sauvignon Blanc**, and two Oregon wines, the **2008 Anne Amie Pinot Gris** and the **2008 Sweet Cheeks Pinot Gris**.

How close am I to the final results, which factor in about 36 judges from along the coast? We'll have to see next week. Meantime, there's no shortage of good Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris to choose from. Or look farther afield with a Chablis or Muscadet. The 2007s are around and the 2008s should be here before too long. I know the current wisdom says there's no down season for oysters in the Bay Area, but spring seems like the perfect time to indulge, so why delay?

Posted By: Jon Bonné (Email) | April 24 2009 at 09:40 AM

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