

What is Greg Drinking?

Editorial and photo by Gregory Post

Cabernet Franc is, in many ways, the liquid equivalent of the 2004 Boston Red Sox.

Gritty and scrappy, compared and competing with varietals that have more prestige and notoriety, yet never backing down. It thrives under duress and lives in the wine world as an underdog, a role it relishes. You can count on many things when you are opening a bottle of Cabernet Franc, but never count it out when you are exploring the shelves of your local package store. For October we explore a wine that fits the fall like a pumpkin spiced latte in the hand of a Uconn student walking from Mirror Lake to Arjona: 2021 Gaspard Cabernet Franc.

Before we delve deeper into this fall favorite, let me just acknowledge the divisive reference to the 'Curse Breakers' of 2004. I get it, Connecticut is a battleground state with deeply divided allegiances between the cities of New York and Boston. Growing up in Mystic, just a few estuaries from the Rhode Island border, the family sports focus was all things Boston (save the ill-fated Hartford Whalers, may Brass Bonanza forever live in our hearts). But regardless of how you feel about the comeback of the century in that ALCS, you have to admit that it was a baseball drama the likes of which we will probably never see again. If you were fortunate to have lived through the dramatic events of that fall, you most certainly have some stories about where you were and who you watched it with. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for hosting so many of those late night affairs.

Back to the Loire liquids we are discussing, you might remember that this column covered a Folle Blanche back in August. Well, this Cabernet Franc hails from the same neighborhood, a stretch of France that deserves another tribute to their tributaries! This is a wine that looks and smells as good as it tastes with raspberry and cherry notes that start in the bouquet and slide into the first sip. Herbaceous and honest, it will steal your heart like Dave Roberts stole second! This wine is a switch hitter, too, in that it can be served just as easily with a slight chill as at room temperature. A part of the Jenny and Francois Selections Group: the grapes are organic and hand-picked/destemmed/sorted before being routinely punched-down (crushed) into vats where only local and indigenous yeasts are awaiting. From there it is a month and a half

maceration (leaving the wine in contact with the skins) that ends in concrete vats. I am a champion for any wine aged in concrete. One of the biggest selling points for this process is something called micro-oxygenation. Effectively, it is the middle ground between the porous and flavor changing process of using oak and the neutral option of stainless steel. The concrete allows the wine to breathe without interfering with the flavor.

I am a sucker for spice in general, and my red wine preferences are definitely a reflection of that. How vigorous are you when dealing with black or red pepper shakers? Are dark berry jams a mainstay in your fridge? Have you found that red bell pepper hummus is frequently a guest in your picnic basket? Is 'earthy' an adjective that puts you at ease when you are stocking your cellar? If you are checking one or more of these boxes, make this Cabernet Franc from Gaspard your go-to glass this fall! It is as versatile of a vintage as one can acquire, pairing well with just about any grilled or roasted dish. Soup and stew season is well upon us by now, and a better companion to your crock pot creations is a fruitless search (pun intended). It is a medium-bodied beauty, and priced usually right around \$20, so as far as the spectrum of wine goes, you are getting top tier vino for a fair price. The sustainability of the wine practice should put even the organic obsessed at ease.



I attained this particular wine at the Cove Ledge Beer, Wine, and Spirits shop on Water Street in Stonington Borough. As I have mentioned in an

earlier piece, Annette (one of the owners) is a kindred spirit, with a shared pursuit of pouring only the best things into glasses. She is the lighthouse on the shore, guiding you away from your preconceived notions and out of your comfort zone to the promised land of exceptional beverages. Being aware of both Saltwater Farm and Kingdom of the Hawk vineyards (where I work) having sizable Cabernet Franc acreage, she suggested going across the Atlantic for an example of the origin of this grape, showcasing it at its very best in the land it originated in. This wine is everything that you could hope for, from a grape often known as a blending agent rather than a star on its own.

Cheers to Cabernet Franc, a treat that does the trick for fall and beyond!