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Welcome to the electronic voice of Steve's Liquor Stores. We aim to be brief, informative, and to-the-point. We want to speak to you in the same straightforward

manner that we use when you shop in one of our stores.

You will hear from us only by choice—your choice. If you sign up for our emails and change your mind, you can opt out at any time simply by clicking on the unsubscribe link which appears in every email we send.

We operate two stores. This site offers you access to either one by clicking on the appropriate picture on our Main Page. Be advised: while our stores have a shared philosophy and mission, we are not a “chain” in the traditional sense. Each store has its unique vision developed by a talented but largely autonomous staff. We feel you get more this way.

This site has two “real-time” components which we believe will be of interest to you:

(1) The Power Buy, which appears prominently on our Main Page as well as on each store's home page. Simply stated, we believe this offering to be the single best wine value available in our market at the time it is offered. It appears because we have worked hard to find it and have bought deep in order to offer it. It is offered on a first come-first served and while-supply-lasts basis.

(2) The Newsletter, which will highlight items we are featuring as well as upcoming events and activities at the stores. You can check out the newsletter on the site of either store or subscribe to it electronically, in which case it will be emailed to you on the day it is released. This gives you the advantage of having “first crack” at some incredible liquor, wine and beer values.

Thank you for your time. We hope you find our efforts here to be of value.

BREW NEWS - Molly



We can rejoice once again knowing that our good friend Tom Porter has provided us with one of America's best tripels, Lake Louie Brother Tim's Tripel. I made a beeline for their stand at the Great Taste just so I could start my day with a tripel and a smile. How lucky are we to have these talented brewers just thirty minutes from us? The tripel is smooth and citrusy with a nice balance of sweetness. A must-have for you Belgian lovers.

As the nights cool down, the fall seasonals start arriving. Spicy, warming pumpkin beers will keep you happy as the leaves start to change. Staff favorites include:

- O'Fallon Pumpkin Beer smells and tastes like grandma's pumpkin pie with lovely nutmeg, cinnamon, and clove. They had to increase production this year to keep up with demand. Don't miss out!
- Dogfish Head Punkin is yet another superb offering from this renowned Delaware brewery with notes of caramel, brown sugar, and, of course, pumpkin.

- Buffalo Bill's Pumpkin Ale goes down easy with its gentle spice and smooth body. The beautiful packaging only hints at the tasty treat inside.
- The pioneers of craft breweries at Sierra Nevada have introduced two more luscious offerings. As with everything they brew, these beers are quaffable and worthy of their accolades.
- Their Unfiltered Wheat is a classic Californian. Light-bodied, pale, and refreshing with a hint of honeyed lemon. Their Brown Ale hits all the right notes. You can taste the roasted and caramelized malts in this medium-bodied beauty.

And the two most exciting bits of beer news:

- 1) Ale Asylum will soon have four different beers available in 6 packs. Worth the drive over to the east side, but now you can stop by here and take some home with you. Support these crazy locals!
- 2) Don't complain about the dropping temperatures because it's time to warm yourself by the fire. Behold, the return of Capital Brewery Autumnal Fire is upon us! This is the fall beer. In limited release.



“Water of life” – The Vodka Craze

Without a question, the hottest spirit around is vodka. When setting a bar for a party for customers or just planning

gatherings for friends, vodka is a staple on the shopping list and in drink menu. Vodka, a clear spirit, was first documented in the 14th century when it was called “zhizennia voda,” meaning

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“water of life”. It was eventually shrunk to “vodka” which translates to either “water,” “small water.”

Vodka is believed to have originated in the grain-growing region that now encompasses Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and Western Russia. However, today vodka is distilled in many countries including the United States. A common property of all vodkas is that they are neutralized as far as possible. This is often done by filtering it in a column still during distillation through charcoal or even lava rocks. The idea is to remove everything except pure water and pure alcohol from the liquid. As a result, vodka has a very neutral taste. The differences between the hundreds of vodkas available today exist within the quality of ingredients used, the number of times the liquid is distilled and flavors added.

Steve’s Liquor stores have a vast array of vodka from around the world that exemplify those differences including many from the U.S. A personal favorite of our staff is Hanger One made in California by a small craft distiller. A craft distiller uses an old-fashioned copper pot to hand-distill very small amounts of a complex and rich spirit. Hangar one uses only rare and expensive ingredients.

Be sure to check out 44° North huckleberry flavored vodka. This new product is an intriguing combination of Idaho potato vodka and Rocky Mountain spring water infused with all natural huckleberry, official fruit of the State of Idaho. From Poland, check out Ultimat which is made from potatoes, wheat, and rye blended for body, smoothness, flavor and complexity. The bottle is a handcrafted crystal decanter that you won’t want to toss in the trash.

Bring out the martini glasses and get taste testing! Let our staff help you select a great vodka for sipping straight up or great martini recipes for guaranteed fun cocktails with friends!

GREAT TASTE OF THE MIDWEST AT STEVE’S! – Jan, the Baroness of Beer

I hope you were able to get to the Great Taste of the Midwest. There were some amazing items, new and old and what a

glorious day! The weather only made the experience more enjoyable. But, if you couldn’t make it, you’re still in luck because Steve’s beer selection makes it possible to experience a Great Taste every day. I made some great finds and I’m happy to say that most are available at Steve’s. Starting with Illinois, the master brewers at **GOOSE ISLAND** have three fantastic Belgian style reserves, now available throughout the year. They’re all unique and delicious but PERE JACQUES is my personal favorite. It’s loaded with warm, rich toasty fruit notes, has a great mouth-feel and drinks best at 55 degrees. By the way, GOOSE ISLAND IPA is the only American made IPA that’s exported into England! From Indiana, those crazy brewers at **THREE FLOYDS** were keeping the crowds happy with their ALPHA KING, a vibrant, aromatic and regreshing IPA, loaded with hops and malt. KING ROBERT THE BRUCE was available for those not faint of heart. Befitting it’s name-sake, it’s a big and powerful Scotch Ale, possessing a fruity-malty nose with a rich, dense and complex mouth. Michigan’s **BELL’S BREWING** was there in full glory, with many waiting in line for a sip of their hop-monster, TWO HEARTED ALE, which never disappoints. If you love IPA’s and haven’t tried this yet you’re missing out on one of the best ever. **SUMMIT BREWING** of Minnesota proved to all that price doesn’t always indicate quality, as evidenced by their EXTRA PALE and just out: OKTOBERFEST. Wonderful beer at a great price! **O’FALLON BREWERY** in Missouri was pouring them all, seasonal or otherwise: WHEACH, a refreshing Peach Wheat Ale, SMOKED PORTER, simply one of the best domestic *Rauchbiers* made, and PUMPKIN, a beautifully balanced, lightly spiced beer, perfect for Fall. Last and certainly not least, the Wisconsin offerings. **CAPITAL BREWING** finally unleashed this year’s AUTUMNAL FIRE, a sort of Octoberfest meets Double Bock. Rich, strong and with a heady nose, you definitely don’t want to miss out on this one. The current seasonal, OKTOBERFEST, is as good as ever - enjoy it on these beautiful Fall evenings. Don’t know **HARBOR CITY** of Port Washington? If you like Fat Tire, you’ll love MILE ROCK AMBER. It’s slightly rich, lightly hopped and always refreshing. If you’re in the

mood for something richer, try one of their BROWN ALES, reminiscent of Abbey Doubles. Everybody’s friend, Tom Porter of **LAKE LOUIE** was very popular that day. He was pouring some of Wisconsin’s best: WARPED SPEED SCOTCH, a classic Scotch style, full of body, sweetness and flavor, PRAIRIE MOON FARMHOUSE ALE, an unfiltered Belgian style, brewed with orange peel and coriander, slightly higher alcohol content - big thirst-quenching quality!, and just out: BROTHER TIM’S TRIPPEL. Here’s a beer for the serious collector and worthy of some time in the cellar as well as being highly drinkable now, it’s based on Belgian Abbey styles. It has a spicy nose, and a delicate, fruity balance of malt, hops and yeast. Do you love stout? **SAND CREEK BREWING** had their OSCAR’S CHOCOLATE-OATMEAL STOUT out for the day, which won over many a stout fan. **SOUTH SHORE BREWING**’s HERBAL CREAM was a big hit and no surprise; it’s brewed with just enough oatmeal, herbs and white wheat to produce a creamy and refreshing ale. Finally, **TYRANENA**’s heavy hitters, BITTER WOMAN FROM HELL IPA and WHO’S YOU DADDY? Bourbon aged Porter, (available soon!) were enthusiastically received. Stop in and try one of these award-winning beers soon! The weather’s always good here at Steve’s. Cheers!



When Randy Wautlet leaves for Germany on March 17, he will once again travel in search of old vines.

Wautlet, manager of Steve’s Wine Market on

University Avenue and a partner in the firm, has been visiting some of the world’s leading wine regions for the past 12 years. One of the many prominent differences between the U.S. wine industry and those overseas is the general age of the vines.

“We hear a lot about 30- or 40-year-old California vines. Some of the vineyards make a big deal about it,” said Wautlet. “The oldest vine I’ve seen that still produces grapes is in Italy, and it’s more

than 300 years old.”

The older the grape vine, of course, the more mature the plant and the lighter the bunch yield. But under the right conditions, those older vines can produce more robust, more fully flavored wines that have a depth and strength difficult to match among younger vines. The lower yield often results in a greater concentration of flavors and character, which can result in rarer and sometimes more expensive wines.

Some of the oldest vines Wautlet's seen recently were the wine regions of northern Spain, a trip he took in February. Despite discovering vines more than 120 years old, Spanish vintners have no pretense about their craft, he said.

“Spain is an old, rocky country that looks tired and hard,” said Wautlet, who's visited vineyards in France, Italy, Germany, Austria and Australia. “But Spanish winemakers have a true passion for their craft. We felt genuinely welcomed by them.”

Traveling the world's vineyards is important for Wautlet, who began experiencing wine in the 1970s as a waiter at Whiteways, a fine French restaurant in La Crosse that attracted many fans of continental cooking, including former L'Etoile owner Odessa Piper. Traveling through wine country provides insights that are otherwise unavailable, he said.

“You can sell wine, but unless you've seen the soil it comes from and met the producers, you really don't know it,” the Green Bay native explained. “You learn things that none of the wine press are writing about when it comes to vines and vineyards.” Wine is everywhere in Spain, and the agricultural co-ops all sport large barrels where the locals come to fill their jugs. That's given even the most sophisticated travelers the sense that most Spanish wine is cheap table wine, something Wautlet said is only partly true.

Spanish wine is still economical, especially compared to wines from other countries. Spanish vineyards raise Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah grapes, but they also have their own varieties, such as the red, zesty Tempranillo and white, fully flavored Albarino. Some Spanish wine is inexpensive vin ordinaire, while others can be exceptional.

“Spain produces more wine than any other country,” said Wautlet. “Pair that with food like the local paellas, cured meats and mussels that are just 10 minutes out of the sea, and it can be outstanding.”

Here are some of Wautlet's picks from his recent visit:

The Burgans Albarino (\$12.99) has a greenish yellow hue and a nose that hints of ripe apples, peaches and tropical fruit. Well-balanced for a white wine and with a rich, mellow character, the Albarino goes well with shellfish and other seafood and chicken.

The 2005 Pazo Senorans (\$22.99) is another wine made from the tiny Albarino grape, thought to be an ancestor to Germany's Riesling grape. The resulting wine is inviting, with a fresh nose and good acidity. Look for stone fruits hitting the palate.

The 2004 Las Rocas (\$8.99) is made from Grenache vines 45 to 60 years old, then aged in French oak. The wine is well-balanced and mouth-filling, but not

over the top in its ripe flavors. The tannins are well-integrated, redolent of dark fruits with a long, slow finish.

For a step up, try the *Las Rocas V.V. (\$12.99)*, a product of 75-year-old Grenache vines that has been aged in the best barrels. Blackberries, black raspberries and minerals abound in this wine with its fine, long finish.

The Grenache takes charge in the *2005 Las Rocas Rose (\$8.99)* with a nose evident from 2 feet away. The wine has a wild salmon color, with hints of strawberry and watermelon, and a good acidity that works the palate.

The *2003 Los Planos (\$9.99)* is harvested entirely from a 30-year-old Syrah vine. The resulting wine, though lighter bodied, is rich and structured, with spice and black pepper on the palate.

The *2004 Ma Donis (\$12)* is a blend of 80 percent Grenache harvested from a 60-year-old vine and 20 percent syrah. The resulting wine is big, ripe and full-bodied with flavors of blueberries, black currant and minerals, with a great finish.