**A taste of Garagiste @ Spin the Bottle Wine Studio, Toluca Lake**

GARAGISTES – (gar-uh-zhē-stuh) n, Fr. – A term originally used in the Bordeaux region of France to denigrate renegade small-lot wine makers, sometimes working in their garage, who refused to follow the “rules.” Now a full-fledged movement responsible for making some of the best wine in the world. Who’s laughing now, Francois? Syn: Rule-breakers, pioneers, renegades, mavericks, driven by passion.

We were fortunate to be able to attend a teaser for The Garagiste Festival- Southern Exposure that will be held in Solvang on March 29 & 30.  The teaser event was held on Saturday, February 22 at Spin the Bottle Wine Studio in Toluca Lake.  The event was a sell out and we got lucky and were able to get tickets. Five Garagiste producers were pouring their wines.

Ascension Cellars- Erick Allen & Brian Sauls

DV8- Marc Simon and his wife, Dominique. They will soon be opening a tasting room in Santa Barbara.  They shared with us the trials and tribulations of trying to get the tasting room open.

Frequency is owned by brother and sister, Zac & Almond Wasserman and was started in 2010. Almond had worked one harvest with a winemaker until  Zac was able to  joined her to make their wines. With limited experience, they started Frequency and continue to learn as they go. Almond lives in Burbank and works in the entertainment business.

Larner Vineyard and Winery

Michael Larner is the winemaker and all of the wines are made from his Estate vineyard in Ballard Canyon.  His family founded the vineyards in 1999 and the 1st release of Larner wine was 2009 vintage. Michael has a MS from UC Davis in Viticulture and Enology. He has also apprenticed with winemakers in France, Italy and California. His passion is Rhone style wines and they grow on their estate vineyard Grenache, Syrah, Mouvedre, Viognier and a small amount of Malvasia Bianca.

Turiya is owned by Angela Soleno. One fateful day, with the help of the restaurant’s somellier, she chose a glass of wine in a small Italian restaurant in Carmel and the rest is history. At that point she fell in love with the "lively red fluid" that she had in her glass. She soon made a decision to change her life and follow her new passion for wine. As a single mother of two, working two jobs, she enrolled in college to learn more about Viticulture and Enology. She is now the owner and winemaker for Turiya. Her wines are sold by allocation only.

We got a chance to speak with the winemakers and taste their wines. Each has their own, unique story. We enjoyed all of the wines. Most of the wines were Rhone varietals. The tasting was very crowded so we didn't have the chance to make tasting notes. If we had to pick a favorite winery we would have to say it was Larner.  Judging from the crowd around his table, I would say that others would agree.

.  We are sure this is going to be a great event based on what we tasted at the teaser event.  You can get more information on the Garagiste Festival by visiting: www.garagistefestival.com. We send a big thank you to Doug at Spin the Bottle Wine Studio for hosting this event and allowing us to attend!