

Dan Berger's Vintage Experiences

The Weekly Wine Commentary

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Best U.S. Wine Makers

Since 1989 I have identified one person as my Wine Maker of the Year. The list of the years is impressive, but over time I began to realize the problems with this system.

For example, if I were to name a “wine maker of the year” for 2005, it would be based on the wines I tasted of this person’s portfolio in 2005. But *all* of those wines were made in 2004, 2003, and perhaps even earlier.

Moreover, in the past I have given “wine maker of the year” honors to many persons who continue to warrant such praise, such as Jim Clendenen, Gary Farrell, Chuck Ortman, and Jim Klein. The fact that they don’t get re-honored, even though warranted, is merely another of the flaws in the awarding of such honors.

And finally I realize there was a major hitch in the process: I collect candidates’ names over many months, yet still might forget a few, which is where you all come in.

So this year we begin a new feature, a list of superb wine makers who, we believe, have added to the fine wine scene, but who may not have received proper recognition in some circles. A few of these names may be familiar to you, and some have been mentioned here before.



Miro Tcholakov: Deep, complex reds are his forte at Trentadue, which has been revitalized in his tenure.