

# FOOD & WINE

Inspiration served daily



## Tasting Room

BY RAY ISLE,  
WINE EDITOR

### Aspen Recap 2: Burger Bonanza Wines

BY RAY ISLE, WINE EDITOR

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The [2009 Food & Wine Classic in Aspen](#) wrapped up this past Sunday, but I figured I'd blog about one or two highlights from it anyway. One of them, not to blow my own horn, was the slightly crazy blind-burger-pairing-old-world-vs.-new-world-wine-smackdown that I ran as one of my seminars on Friday.

What I did was pick three pairs of wines, one from Europe and one from the U.S. in each case, and pair them with a series of mini-burgers prepared by [Ryan Hardy](#), the immensely talented young chef at [Montagna at the Little Nell](#). The audience—more than 120 people; the room was jammed—tasted each pair of wines with the appropriate burger, then voted on which wine worked best. It was a hoot, unsurprisingly, helped along substantially by the insanely good burgers.

The winners? With a crabcake slider served with a tarragon aioli, the fave wine was from Italy: the [2007 Nino Negri Ca'Brione \(\\$35\)](#), a lightly honeyed, spicy, richly citrusy blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Incrocia Manzoni (a hybrid of Pinot Blanc and Riesling), and, even weirder, a small proportion of Nebbiolo fermented without its skins so the juice remains white. White Nebbiolo, you bet. Regardless, it was a lovely wine, and if you happen to be serving crabcakes with a tarragon aioli, go for it.

With chef Hardy's spicy lamb burgers (made with the homemade lamb-fennel-red pepper sausage he created for Montagna), the triumphant wine was a nifty southern-Rhône-inspired red from Napa Valley's [Elyse Winery, the 2005 C'est Si Bon \(\\$28\)](#). I tasted this wine for the first time about a year ago and was impressed with the way it balanced its luscious cherry-raspberry fruit and silky texture against a fairly firm, albeit ripe, core of tannins.

Finally, the burger that broke the tie was Hardy's version of the classic In-N-Out Burger Double-Double (double meat, double cheese, of course). The top wine here was the [2007 Trinchero Napa Valley Central Park West Cabernet Sauvignon \(\\$35ish\)](#), which hasn't even been released yet. It's part of a new line of primarily single-vinyard wines Trinchero is doing, made by new winemaker Mario Monticelli (formerly Philippe Melka's assistant at a number of high-end & hi and cassis fruit w tannins, and imp

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steal for the price, too.

So the result? American wines: better with burgers. All this rigorous scientific research is good for the soul, you know.

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