



The Red Côtes Are Coming

as seen on...*Two Dogs, a Flamingo and a Bottle of Wine*

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Sorry for the pun, but we are still close to Independence Day here.

Very interesting wine last night from The Artisan Family of Wines, a Red Côte 2008 rose with a Suisun Valley appellation from California. From the picture above it's obvious this is not a pale style of wine as it is bright, transparent red. The folks at Artisan had prewarned me that there was some residual sugar in this wine and the label confirmed 1% sugar.

After a slight chill we pulled the cork and poured a small glass while dinner was getting underway. It was definitely a bright, electric red in the glass, almost like a good red pop. There were some strawberries and cherries and a little spice in the nose that gave it just a tiny hint of cinnamon. The wine was full flavored and the strawberries were out in force. The acid was good and sharp and at the end there was that slightly sweet taste. The folks at Artisan had suggested treating this wine more like a German Riesling than a dry, French rose and after a taste I could see where they were coming from. That meant it was time to adjust dinner.

Dinner was some chicken legs marinated in lemon juice and olive oil. Once the legs were out of the marinade onions and tomatoes were added. This is where the adjustment came in. I added two chopped, seeded habanero peppers. The chicken and veggies were scattered with some salt, lemon pepper and a few cumin seeds and popped into a hot oven for 35 minutes. When the chicken came out of the oven it was removed from the pan, the pan was placed on the stove top and some chicken stock was added to it. This was reduced and then poured over some basmati rice alongside the chicken legs.

Needless to say that there was some heat in this dish. Seeding the peppers reduced it greatly, but this was still a spicy bite. The wine passed its ultimate test with this dish. The residual sugar complimented the fruity heat from the habanero like they were made for each other. It seemed to accent the strawberry in the wine even more and cooled the mouth after the chicken and veggies. I admit to usually liking my rose's completely dry, but this meal and this wine proved there is a place for an off dry rose' with spicy food. And don't get me started on how well it went with a black raspberry shortcake for dessert. Good fit here too.

In the end this was a good wine and a good learning experience.