

Ethanology October 18th, 2024.

Karen and Evan's Great Icelandic Adventure (2024).

Selection 1: Evan had an inspired cocktail (the *Icelandic Ego*) made from Icelandic Birkir Snaps (Birch Schnapps). Birch is one of the trees native to Iceland. We hope you enjoy this "distinct woody but fresh flavored Icelandic snaps, handcrafted from distilled grain spirit and infused with Icelandic birch handpicked in the spring". Each bottle contains its own branch!

For centuries Icelanders have used birch for its rejuvenating and invigorating benefits for the skin, hair and libido! The birch in this snaps comes from the forest of Hallormsstadur in the East Fjords of Iceland where the wood fairies Bergun and Gudony* use the trimmings of the birch trees to create the snaps to keep the forest sustainable; it was created specifically for the Dill Restaurant in Reykjavik. (<https://www.dillrestaurant.is/en/food-wine/>)

*Not true fairies; instead employees of the company

The Icelandic Ego:

1.5 ounces Birkir Snaps
1/3rd ounce Cointreau
1/2 ounce Lemon juice
1/2 ounce Honey syrup (2/3 honey - 1/3 hot water)
3 mint leaves

Selection 2: We present to you a showcase of Icelandic wines: The Null Set.

Selection 3. As section 2 was nil, we decided to go shopping for wines that were on the wine lists of three of the premier restaurants in Reykjavik. The hyperlinks are here:

1. The Fish Company. <https://www.fiskfelagid.is/vin>
2. Reykjavik Kitchen. <https://reykjavikkitchen.is/menu/drinks/>
3. Old Iceland Restaurant. <https://oldiceland.is/menu/>

We went to Total Wine and got help going on a treasure hunt to find three whites and three reds that were offered at one of the places listed above. We decided to taste in a reconstructionist order with the reds first followed by the more costly (and hopefully even more memorable) whites.

A. El Coto Rioja Crianza California 2021 \$12.99

Critic James Suckling gives this wine a rating of 90: Creamy oak spices and chocolate to the elegant berries and plums. Medium-bodied on the palate with a fluid core of red fruit followed by soft tannins and a juicy, medium-length finish with a hint of cream.

- B. JV Fleury Cotes du Rhone France 2021 \$14.39

A rich, supple red filled with cherry, spice and raspberry notes, this Grenache-based wine also carries aromas of lavender and white pepper. Perfect to serve with lighter red meats and pork or with your favorite stews.

- C. Ruffino Chianti Ris Ducale Tan Italy 2020 \$21.99

Ruby red. The bouquet is elegant, characterized by violet, cherries, wild berries and plums. Hints of spices like tobacco, clove and eucalipto. Riserva Ducale is balanced and constant with delicate tannins. The vibrant acidity, typical of Sangiovese's grapes, characterizes this wine. The finish is persistent, and a good structure completes the entire taste sensation.

- D. Antinori Sant Cristina Pino Grigio –Italy 2023 \$14.49

The ancient Antinori family is one of the oldest and most respected wine families in the world. Giovanni di Piero Antinori registered with the Guild of Winemakers in 1385. Production and sales of wine became increasingly important for the family and by the 16th century they were known to various clients outside Italy. Antinori introduced Pinot Grigio with the 2006 vintage. The nose offers delicate aromas and flavors of pear, white flower blossoms and citrus fruit. On the palate, it is soft and pleasing with a refreshing finish.

- E. Latour Pouilly Fuisse France 2022. \$43.99

James Suckling gives this wine a rating of 92. An instantly appealing Burgundian chardonnay that you don't have to be an expert to enjoy. Effusive nose of quince with delicate notes of candied orange peel and butterscotch. Stacks of fruit in the middle of the medium-bodied palate, then a wonderfully bright, stony finish. The excellent balance suggests this will develop well for a few years.

- F. J Mellot Sancerre Blanc France 2022 \$54.99

Pale gold in color with green hues, displaying a pronounced nose with blossom, followed by tropical fruit aromas of passion fruit and guava and citrus orange. Elegant balance between freshness and structure.