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Ampelos Wines' biodynamic brilliance Part 2

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The Ampelos "Rho" Pinot Noir is a big, lush wine, with concentrated aromas and flavors.

Patricia Decker

And what sensory delights do these wines hold? Here are a few highlights from a recent tasting:

The **2013 Ampelos "Phi" Viognier** is a stunner, juicy and mineral, with peach and apricot fruit, and a touch of tropical pineapple sorbet. It is unoaked, cold fermented in stainless steel, and vivid in it's personality in the glass.



The **2010 Ampelos “Lambda” Pinot Noir** is distinctive, infused with black cherry, smoke, spice, and earth, complex and balanced, especially reflective of the land from which it sprang. This is consistently one of my favorite Pinots from Ampelos, a great value for a well-made **Pinot Noir**.



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The **2009 Ampelos “Rho” Pinot Noir** is concentrated, crafted from the best barrels of the vintage and aged for almost 3 years, a brooding, masculine **wine** that is lush, with notes of currants, pepper, and smoky oak. This wine is a big boy, powerful and commanding, definitely a special occasion bottle.

The **2010 Ampelos “Delta” Grenache** is smooth, lots of raspberry and strawberry fruit, light floral notes, a touch of spice, black pepper, and French oak, and a finish that lingers. This is a very delicious wine, one sip leads to another, and pretty soon, the glass is empty.

The **Ampelos 2010 “Syrache” Syrah/Grenache** blend is delightful, an easy favorite of many, combining the black pepper spice and chocolate notes from Syrah, and the rich cherry, blackberry, and plum fruit from **Grenache**. A cool climate wine, it’s balance and acidity compliments many foods.

The **2010 Ampelos “Gamma” Syrah** is all cool climate, black and blue fruit, cherry cola, cracked pepper, and hint of chocolate. This is a complex wine, well balanced and mineral, smooth and intense, with good acidity and a long finish.

I discovered Ampelos through the amazing palate of Hatfield’s former sommelier, Peter Birmingham, who poured a Syrah to pair with fish. My husband and I thought he was crazy, but it was one of the most memorable food and wine matches of our life. Determined to seek them out, a trek to their Lompoc Ghetto tasting room was a revelation. Here, perfectly cellared wines, released only when ready to enjoy, were poured. Tasting notes and descriptors were of a love affair, masculine and feminine, wines whose presence jumped out of the glass, and created an intense sensory experience. We were smitten, and we are not alone. When actor Kurt Russell decided it was time to put a lifelong love of wine to work, he chose Ampelos to help him launch his own **Gogi** brand of wines.

These limited release wines are not available at your local wine shop, but you can purchase them **online** or travel to Lompoc to taste and purchase the most recent releases, ranging from \$25-45 a bottle. Membership in their wine club, **Filos**, offers a 15% discount, but has a

waiting list. Patience will be rewarded, as openings occur on a regular basis. This velvet rope is one that you will be glad to have lined up for.

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