

1983 may yield exceptional wines

Washington winemakers are looking forward to the new year, which they expect to mark the release of exceptional 1983 wines.

Rob Griffin, winemaker at Preston Wine Cellars, who has seen seven years of Washington vintages, said drier whites like sauvignon blanc and chardonnay should be outstanding.

He said the 1983 rieslings look good, but perhaps not quite as good as 1982, which was an exceptional vintage for riesling.

"The muscat looks good and overall acids were high," Griffin said.

Chenin blanc wines for 1983 should be tart, light and fruity, he said.

"The 1983 vintage is certainly a good year, and whether it will be a great year only time will tell," Griffin said.

Many of these wines will be released this spring, with some



Bob Woehler

coming later in the year.

1984 also will mark the April debut of the much-heralded Opus One, the new California red wine creation of Robert Mondavi and Baron Philippe de Rothschild.

The long-awaited marriage of two of the world's greatest red wine-making firms is expected to produce a classic American wine similar to some of the great Bordeaux wines of France.

The wine, a blend of cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc, has been produced in very small quantities by Lucien Sionneau, Rothschild's winemaker, and Timothy Mondavi.

The label features blue ink profiles of Baron Rothschild and Robert Mondavi, the vintage 1979, and simple statement, "A Napa Valley red table wine," along with the signatures of the two winemakers.

Don't expect to find Opus One at your corner grocery store.

It will be expensive. All that Mondavi officials are saying is that it will probably be in the \$50 to \$100 range.

Initial distribution will be only in California, New York, Texas, Illinois, Florida, Massachusetts and the District of Columbia.

Plans call for introductory tastings for invited guests in San Francisco and New York in February.

MORE ABOUT WINE

It's not too early to start thinking about the wine festivals of 1984.

The second annual Greater Pasco Chamber of Commerce Winter Wine Fair is scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m. March 3 at the Red Lion Motor Inn.

The wine fair will feature Washington wines, music and special hors d'oeuvres.

For further details, contact Kathy Balcom at 586-4165.

Another winter wine festival is scheduled Feb. 18 in Wenatchee at the Wenatchee Convention Center.

Invitations have been sent to 50 wineries and the \$13.50 tickets can be obtained from the Wenatchee Area Visitor and Convention Bureau, P.O. Box 850, 35 N. Chelan, Wenatchee, 98801.

Tickets purchased after Feb. 10 will cost \$15.

