

HAWK WATCH

You know, each year I vow to prepare better for harvest making sure our crush equipment is tested and operating properly, tanks are cleaned, additional barrels and racks are ordered, the lab is organized and stocked, and I have all my supplies I need to hit the deck running when the first grapes start rolling in. Then Mother Nature throws us a curve with a warmer than usual Spring and ripens our grapes a week or two earlier than normal. Once again, I am not ready. Ugh! Both Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier grapes came in last weekend (August 18th), so harvest is officially underway... ready or not! This year we will be crushing more fruit than ever before (30 tons), and thus far we are noticing that the quality of the fruit is very, very good.

This quarter we have a couple new arrivals to the Hawk Watch tasting room, our 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon and our newest Zinfandel, "Tinderbox". We're very excited about each of these new arrivals, and although both are a bit young right now they have huge aging potential and will develop gracefully in bottle for years to come. Check out the short rib recipe below with Tinderbox. Oh my! In addition to the two new releases in your wine club this month, a couple new arrivals will also be gracing our tasting bar in the coming months. Our first and possibly only Dry Sherry was barrel aged for 3 ½ years in a traditional "solera" (a stack of wine barrels placed outside in the sun for several years to allow the wine to maderize or "bake"). The solera technique turns the wine a deep golden color, caramelizes the sugars and creates a rich nuttiness in the nose and palate. Yum! Secondly, we will be introducing our inaugural port, "Scorpius" in a couple months. Made from a blend of 67% Grenache and 23% Syrah, the wine was barrel aged for 4 years in neutral French oak barrels and bottled on August 10th. Many of you purchased futures of our port and we will be releasing it in mid-October for pick up. We are truly looking forward to harvest this year as always. but where we are going to stack 72 additional wine barrels is a mystery to me! However, we will achieve the 2,000 case production mark this year and that is a serious and exciting milestone for us!

LET HARVEST 2013 BEGIN!!!

Zena & Zoro's Mouser Blog

Wow, we need to seriously rest up before harvest. We're not getting any younger, you know. We turned 9 years old this year! 30 tons of grapes, 72 barrels? Are you kidding me? We get exhausted just thinking about it! So many bins to sniff, so many barrels to jump on, so many bees to chase.... better rest up...



Tinderbox Braised Short Ribs

Ingredients

2 tablespoons canola oil
Six 5-inch-long beef short ribs
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground pepper
2 cups chopped onions
1 1/2 cups chopped carrots
Two 8-ounce packages baby portobello mushrooms, quartered
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
2 cups Tinderbox Zinfandel
1 tablespoon tomato paste
Four 5-inch sprigs fresh rosemary

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.

Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Sprinkle the short ribs with the salt and pepper and sear in the hot oil on all sides until well browned, 8-10 minutes. Remove the short ribs from the pan. Add the onions, carrots and mushrooms to the drippings in the pan. Cook until the mushrooms have released their liquid, about 7 minutes. Sprinkle in the flour and stir until smooth. Stir in the chicken broth, Tinderbox, tomato paste and rosemary sprigs. Cook over high heat, stirring frequently, until reduced by half, about 10 minutes. Arrange the short ribs in the vegetable mixture, cover and bake until the meat is tender, about 2 1/2 hours.

So, what does 30 tons of 2013 grapes look like?

*Cabernet Franc - 2 tons
Grenache - 2 tons
Malbec - 2.5 tons
Petite Verdot - 2 tons
Zinfandel - 3 tons
Merlot - 2.5 tons
Viognier - 1 ton
Cab Sauvignon - 5 tons
Orange Muscat - 1 ton
Petite Sirah - 2 tons
Sauvignon Blanc - 1 ton
Syrah - 6.5 tons*

2012 Voltage

Historically we've named our estate Sauvignon Blanc "Vortex", however in August 2012 as you may recall we found ourselves picking our Sauvignon Blanc grapes during a raging wildfire on the hills directly behind our winery. The fire was actually started by a series of lightning strikes during a summer thunderstorm and hence the name "Voltage". Ripe with notes of green apple, Meyer lemon and lime our 2012 Sauvignon Blanc displays notes of fresh herbs and minerals in the nose with lively citrus elements and crisp acidity on the palate. A perfect wine for summer sipping or sitting and watching a thunderstorm... minus the fire! - 62 cases produced.

2010 Cabernet Sauvignon

A decade ago I vowed never to make Cabernet Sauvignon because Napa had the market cornered on this noble varietal. But after we cautiously introduced our first Cab in 2007, I came to realize that there was room for other styles of Cabernet Sauvignon besides the standard Napa model. Simply put, Southern California is hot and Napa is cool (usually). So, to expect a cool weather Napa Cab profile in the resulting wines in our neck of the woods is completely unreasonable. What our climate does allow us to achieve however is intense, rich fruit supported by gorgeous aromas of baked cherry pie, spice and hint of bell pepper. Oak selection is absolutely critical. American oak barrels sourced from Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Missouri work wonders on hot climate Cab. In a nutshell, Southern California Cabs don't mess around. They are the quintessential "let me know when the steaks are ready" wines. Our 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon is no exception. It opens with spicy, toasty notes of cigar box, bell pepper, and ripe green olive. A rich mid-palate adds weight and complexity to the wine while contributing elements of cardamom, cinnamon and spice with a hint of vanilla. - 121 cases produced.

PIC OF THE QUARTER!



Wine Club Selections

Mixed Club

2012 Voltage
2010 Cabernet Sauvignon
"Tinderbox"

Reds Only

2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (2)
"Tinderbox"

Tinderbox

As far as I'm concerned you can go one of two ways with Zinfandel; big, bold and aggressive or soft, elegant and sophisticated. In the past we have gone the big, bold route for certain. However, for Tinderbox we wanted to take our Zinfandel in a slightly different direction. If handled properly in the cellar, and with a little more French oak than we typically use with Zinfandel, the resulting wine can retain all the flavor and aroma components we absolutely love about Zin (fruit forward, meaty, earthy) yet be soft, complex and graceful. Tinderbox is just such a wine. The nose offers smoky, earthy aromas of rich, dark spice, cedar and black tea followed by a palate of wild cherry, black licorice and earthy notes of dried plum, and a hint of vanilla and toasted oak on the finish. - 94 cases produced.



Wine club member Bjorn Lunde (right) samples a bottle of Hawk Watch Syrah in Norway while visiting his brother and family. Add another country to our list!