

# HAWK WATCH

FEBRUARY 2017

How odd.... There's a strange liquid falling from the sky, and I'm not sure what it is... Could it be rain? I'm not exactly sure what rain looks like anymore, since it's been so long since I've seen any, but....WAIT, IT IS! It's actually raining!!! Yes, this winter we're finally getting some serious rain. Since mid-November we've gotten over 26" at Hawk Watch, and more is forecasted for the coming weeks. It's long overdue and so badly needed. Often in our tasting room we get the question, "Is the rain good or bad for the vines right now?" The answer? It's very, very good! Not because the vines are growing and need the water (they're dormant, hence the lack of leaves), and not because the rain will help with the drought conditions we've been experiencing, although with the rain we've had already this winter we're very optimistic. No, the main reason winter rain is so vital to a healthy vineyard is... salt. Yes, salt! When winter rains are scarce or don't come at all, natural salts in the soil begin to accumulate since there's no rain to leach the salts away. As the salts collect in the soil and the vine uptakes those salts with irrigation water in the spring, the vine struggles. Photosynthesis is hindered and ultimately the health of the vine suffers. One of the main results of this suffering is a drop in fruit (grape) yield. No grapes = no wine! This also explains to a degree why we source grapes from other local vineyards besides our own. Our yields have been down dramatically over the past 3 years (although quality has been excellent) so having other local vineyards to source grapes from is critical. So, let the winter and spring rains come!!

This quarter in your wine club we have a few "firsts" and one "last". Let's begin with the "firsts". We're including a bottle of our 2013 Estate Meritage in your wine club. This is an extremely small production of only 120 cases, and the first time we've made a Meritage from 100% estate grown fruit (see paragraph above for explanation). Next, we're including a bottle of our first ever Super Tuscan we call "Sangue Della Vita" or Blood of the Vine in Italian. This wine is not being released however as it is still pretty tight, and could definitely benefit from several additional months of bottle aging. So, consider this a preview! Finally it is with mixed emotions that we offer you the last of our Numbers Series wines, "Twelve-Thirteen-Fourteen". Long ago we decided that this series would run for 8 releases only. This is the 8th release, so it's time to say good bye. It's been a lot of fun assembling these blends each year, and I will miss that. But, it's probably good timing anyway since I'm having a hard time squeezing the numbers on the front label! So, keep the prayers and rain dances coming and let's keep our fingers crossed that Mother Nature is kind in 2017.

Mike &amp; Lisa



## PIC OF THE QUARTER!

Wine Club members Phil and Shelli Johnson got creative with a bottle of Tinderbox on their recent trip to Hawaii's Big Island. Smokin'!

## Zena & Zoro's Mouser Blog

Rain, rain, rain..... Ahhhhhh,  
nothing to do but nap.....the  
mousing can wait.....  
purrrrrrrfect.....



## Wine Club Selections

### Mixed Club

2016 Sequoia  
2013 Estate Meritage  
Twelve.Thirteen.Fourteen

### Reds Only

2013 Sangue Della Vita  
2013 Estate Meritage  
Twelve.Thirteen.Fourteen

## 2016 Sequoia

As most of you know by now, we're big animal lovers and although our world is obviously very cat-centric, we love all critters big and small. That's why each year we donate a portion of the proceeds from the sale of "Sequoia" to a no-kill animal shelter, "Living Free Animal Sanctuary" in Idyllwild, California. Sequoia is typically made with 100% Grenache grapes, and is our one and only rose'. In 2016 we added a splash of Orange Muscat to the blend to liven things up a bit, and to add additional floral aromas to the blend. Fresh and lively on the palate, the wine is crisp and refreshing with aromas and flavors of cherry, strawberry, watermelon and red raspberry. Just a hint of residual sugar allows the fruit to really pop and come to the foreground. Sequoia pairs well with a variety of soft and semi-soft cheeses and lighter fare. But it's an absolute must on a warm spring day or summer picnic! - 96 cases produced

## 2013 Sangue Della Vita

This is something very unusual for us. We're putting a bottle of wine in your wine club selections that we don't feel is quite ready for release. Sangue Della Vita (or "Blood of the Vine") was aged for 29 months in mostly neutral French oak, and has been aging in bottle for over a year. The tannins however still need a few more months to soften. A blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot the wine is ripe with dark, black fruits, leather, and robust, chewy tannins. If you decide you just can't wait until it's officially released to try it, please make sure you decant it for at least an hour prior to enjoying. - 72 cases produced

## 2013 Estate Meritage

Well, this is a first! Our first entirely "Estate" Meritage! Typically our small 5-acre vineyard doesn't produce enough fruit to warrant making a wine from exclusively estate grown fruit, but 2013 was the rare exception! After aging each component separately for 28 to 30 months in 75% French / 25% American oak, the wine was assembled and bottled in March, 2016. A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Cabernet Franc, 13% Merlot, and 12% Malbec our 2013 Estate Meritage is ripe and juicy on the palate with warm, rustic notes of leather, wood smoke, spiced plum and vanilla with flavors of cassis, huckleberry and black pepper on the palate. A hint of cinnamon on the long finish is framed by sticky tannins and a firm mouthfeel. Although drinkable upon opening, it is recommended that the wine be decanted for 30 - 45 minutes to allow for the flavors and aromas to develop fully. - 120 cases produced

## Twelve.Thirteen.Fourteen

Well, it's been a great ride but it's time to waive farewell to our Numbers Series! We vowed long ago that after 8 releases we'd retire the Numbers Series and move on. With the release of Twelve-Thirteen-Fourteen we've achieved that milestone and now, we officially retire the program. But, what a great way to finish up! One of the most diverse and complicated of our Numbers Series wines, Twelve-Thirteen-Fourteen is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, and Syrah. These five varieties meld seamlessly exploding with notes of dark chocolate, mocha, boysenberry, and licorice. The nose gives way to a creamy, silky texture with a round, soft mid-palate of vanilla and caramel finishing long and elegant. What a way to finish! - 149 cases produced.

## Tell Your Friends and Family!

For the first time in our 9-year history we are now able to open our wine club to everyone! No more waiting list (for now)!

If you know someone that might be interested in joining, please have them use this link to enroll:

<https://hawkwatchwinery.com/wine-club-invitation-sign-up>