



HAWK WATCH

MAY 2018

I can't believe we're experiencing early bud break again this year! The weather in February was a carbon copy of February 2017; hot, temperatures in the 80's and no rain. The perfect recipe for the vineyard to rise from dormancy early. And that it did! Bud break was at least 2 weeks ahead of schedule, and like 2017 we avoided late frosts in April and May. That all sounds fine and good, except it really is a doubled edged sword. Early bud break also usually means early harvest, so instead of having 12 weeks to prepare for the first fruit of harvest, we only have 10 weeks. Although that still sounds like a lot of time, when you have a vineyard that's growing aggressively and demands a lot of attention, that 10 weeks passes very quickly. So, we're at the leading edge of the mad run up to harvest 2018! The inputs we've made to the vineyard through our irrigation system have begun paying off in spades. Our vines are LOADED with fruit. So much so, that in the case of Grenache and our new Tannat plantings we'll likely have to drop some fruit (cut it off to keep the crop load in balance with the canopy); a practice that we've never had to employ since we planted the vineyard! We typically shoot for 20-30 grape clusters per vine, but in the case of the Grenache and Tannat we're hanging an average of 50! Thank you Crop Protection Services, Temecula for your advice and guidance!

One thing you might notice when you drive onto our property is our vineyard and how manicured it looks (in general....for now!). After losing our vineyard worker one week before harvest last year (I'm still mad about that btw...), I vowed that this year I would spend much more time in the vineyard to ensure the vines are well cared for, weeds are kept to a minimum, weak vines are removed and replaced, and the vineyard in general is healthy and happy. As a one-man show it's no small order to care for 4,500 grapevines by yourself, but for us to continue to improve our wines, a healthy, well cared for vineyard is absolutely critical. So, what I'm really saying here is that if you don't see me in and around the tasting room this summer, it's most likely because I'm buried in the vineyard somewhere. So, I'm kind of apologizing in advance for being conspicuously absent! We have a lot of very cool stuff coming up this year including our Summer Concert Series, Sip into Summer Wine Sale, Memorial Day Dollar Dogs, Chili Throwdown, Summer Blues Concert, and a few other "secrets" I can't divulge! So, head down and full steam ahead because harvest 2018 will be here before we know it! - Mike & Lisa

PIC OF THE QUARTER!



Mike's sister Julia and her son Gunner pose for a quick selfie with a bottle of our 2013 Petite Sirah on board Disney Cruise Lines on their way to the Caribbean! Notice the array of princesses in the background! They had a blast!

Zena and Zoro's Mouser Blog

Word on the street is that there may be a new line of Hawk Watch single-barrel wines getting ready for release.... It's really more of a rumor, but we did see the bottling



truck here a few weeks ago, so who knows.... A new label, new bottle, a new design completely! That better not mean more wine cases getting in our way. We barely have enough room in this building as it is! Well, if the rumor is true, there better be some treats in it for us...

Wine Club Selections

Mixed Club

2017 Sequoia
2014 Cabernet Sauvignon
2014 Syrah

Reds Only

2014 Cabernet Sauvignon
2014 Syrah
2013 Petite Sirah

2014 Cabernet Sauvignon

You may have noticed that for the past several months our most recent Cabernet Sauvignon release has been off the menu. When we released it last year we were concerned that we had not given the wine enough time to mature in bottle, and that the wine was still a little “green”. This is not an uncommon practice especially with wines that are meant to age for an extended period. After a few months on the tasting bar however, we noticed that the wine was not softening as quickly as we had hoped, so we decided to remove it from the tasting menu and let it rest for a while longer. That decision has paid off handsomely! After 15 months in bottle the tannins have really begun to soften, the edginess of the palate has become more rounded and lush, and the “greenness” has all but disappeared. When a wine goes through this type of transformation it reminds me that wine is a living thing; it evolves and matures over time. It’s as though our Cabernet Sauvignon has gotten past “the terrible 2’s” and is now entering elementary school as a well-behaved toddler. I can hardly wait for graduation! Enjoy now or hold for 6-8 years. - 120 cases produced

2014 Syrah

Shiraz? Syrah? As I mentioned in our August 2017 newsletter, when we released our 2014 “Shiraz” we intentionally held onto our 2014 “Syrah” for later release hoping that the differences in vineyards and winemaking style would become more evident with a little bottle age. If you have a 2014 Shiraz in your wine portfolio, it’s an interesting experience to taste these two wines side by side. One is more fruit driven with notes of blackberry and anise, with a hint of mocha and caramel while the other leans more toward grungy earth, barbeque, leather and smoke. Since everyone’s nose and palate is different, I won’t tell you which is which. Do you have a favorite? Enjoy now or hold for another 5-7 years. - 124 cases produced.

2013 Petite Sirah

Ever heard of Inland Empire Magazine? If you’ve lived in Southern California for any length of time, the answer is probably, yes. The magazine is well circulated and is owned by Don Lorenzi, the owner of Lorenzi Winery in Temecula. Each year the magazine sponsors a wine competition to discover the best wines in the Inland Empire (IE). Invitations go out to most, if not all of the Temecula wineries and a few wineries outside of the Temecula AVA, including a handful from San Diego County. This year we got the invitation to participate. Now, I always get nervous when competing against the likes of Leoness, South Coast, Wilson Creek, and some of the mega-wineries in Temecula. They have access to unimaginable equipment, facilities and resources that I can only dream of! But, with a leap of faith we decided to enter our 2013 Petite Sirah in the competition. With fingers crossed and an incredible amount of patience (it took 4 months to get the results...) we finally were told how we fared. GOLD MEDAL! We are so proud of this accomplishment as this is the 2nd vintage from our estate Petite Sirah vineyard and is a variety that holds special meaning to us as it was our love of Petite Sirah that prompted us to consider starting a winery! It is for this reason that we are including a bottle in our May wine club. We’re running dangerously low on this wine and we wanted to make certain that our wine club members received a bottle of our latest success before it sells out. We also received a gold medal for our 2013 Tinderbox but that’s a story for another day... Enjoy now or hold for 6-7 years. - 116 cases produced

2017 Sequoia

Did you know that rose’ wines are the fastest growing segment of the American wine market? For the last several years rose’ and blush wines have continually gained market share at an unprecedented rate. Enter our 2017 Sequoia! Although many folks enjoy a rose’ wine that has a hint of residual sweetness, the real serious rose’ drinkers (and yes, rose’s are serious wines!) prefer dry or nearly dry versions. We have historically left about 2% residual sugar in our rose’, but this year we are moving that number down to just under 1%. By doing so, we actually make construction of this wine more challenging. Why? Well, residual sugar has the effect of elevating the fruit components of the wine, making the fruit stand out more on the palate. Without that residual sugar we, have to employ other means to achieve the same effect. That often means using a different yeast stain, changing our fermentation temperature and using enzymes specially designed to help pull fruit aromas from the wine. Drier rose’s tend to be a little more food friendly too, so they typically appeal to a broader audience. Is Sequoia still my go-to summer sipper? Absolutely! A bit lighter in color (think, salmon pink) our 2017 Sequoia is ripe with luscious notes of strawberry, rose petals and watermelon in the nose with strawberry elements following through on the palate with additional hints of Bing cherry. Enjoy now or hold for 2-3 years. - 99 cases produced.