



WINE CLUB

HAWK WATCH

FEBRUARY 2019

As I write this, we're experiencing one of the wettest winters on record. Thus far in the first 6 weeks of the year we've received over 16" of rain; 12" of which fell over the last 3 days! Some folks visiting our tasting room this past weekend asked how that much rain affects the vineyard. We get this question a lot during the winter as do most wineries, I'm sure. My go-to short answer is that the vines are dormant, so there's no real affect. But then I thought, well that's not entirely true. I shouldn't assume that the couple is asking about only negative effects on the vineyard. So, I formulated a new answer! Truth is, winter rains are crucial to the health of the vineyard. Since we're located in such an arid climate, natural salts (mostly sodium) accumulate in the soil making growing conditions difficult for the vines. Don't confuse this with "stressing" the vines to produce high quality fruit. That's a different animal all together. Salt accumulation in the soil is poisonous to plants, and can cause burned leaves, reduction in fruit quality, and in extreme cases, vine death. Winter rains help "rinse" or "cleanse" the soil of accumulated salts and keep the soil from compacting so that plant roots can access nutrients when they begin to come out of dormancy in the spring. During periods of drought this becomes a major concern. The optimal soil pH for grapevines in roughly 6.0-6.5 (slightly acidic - 7.0 is neutral). As salts accumulate in the soil, the soil becomes more alkaline making the uptake of soil nutrients difficult, or impossible. Why don't we irrigate in the winter when there's insufficient rains to cleanse the soil? Well, we actually do sometimes, but there's a catch. The pH of our well water is 7.4 (slightly alkaline), so without acidifying our irrigation water we're really making matters worse by irrigating during the winter. Sounds crazy, but it's true. Ever notice when you visit our tasting room the large white plastic tank full of some liquid next to our irrigation controller? Well, that tank is full of a sulfuric acid-based solution that is metered and injected into our irrigation water to lower our water pH. So, our irrigation water pH is reduced to about 6.2 which, when dripped onto the vineyard, lowers our soil pH! The downside of course is having to use our precious ground water resources during dormancy to keep our vineyard healthy and happy. So, do I enjoy having to fill in all the pot holes and crevasses in our driveway after a hard rain? NO SIR! But, winter rain is vital to the life of our vines, so I need to take one for the team once in a while. As always, thanks for being members of our extended wine club family, and keep those questions coming. And let's keep the rain falling!

Mike & Lisa

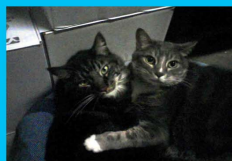
PIC OF THE QUARTER!

Wine club member, Ron Stewart recently visited the Canary Islands and brought his favorite Hawk Watch wine along for the ride! Keep those pix coming!



Canary Islands

Zena & Zoro's Mouser Blog



Ya' know what the best part about all this rain is? The field mice seek refuge in our winery....Mmmmmm tasty field mice....

Wine Club Selections

Mixed Club
(Original grandfathered members)

2017 Sequoia
2015 Cabernet Sauvignon
2014 Syrah

Reds Only

2015 Cabernet Sauvignon
2014 Syrah
2014 Inversion

2015 Cabernet Sauvignon

To be quite honest, I'm not a huge Cab drinker. I mean, I love a good Cab, but there are so many other varietal wines and blends I would pick for a glass of wine before I would think of Cab Sauv. Thanks Napa for ruining Cab for me! All kidding aside, Napa is all about Cabernet Sauvignon (on the red side) and rightfully so! Many Napa wineries produce incredible Cabernet Sauvignon, and I can see why certain Napa Cabs have achieved cult wine status, much like Pinot Noir from Oregon. The greatest difference I can see (besides obviously the terroir) between Napa and other wine regions when it comes to Cab is science. Both in the vineyard and in the winery, science is key to creating a bottle of wine that meets or exceeds what the consumer is looking for. It's up to the winemaker to decide which style of Cab to make. Napa Cabs are often made in style that allows them to peak 20+ years after bottling. That's the winemaker's choice, and doesn't happen by accident. The beauty of Southern California is that we have great growing conditions for virtually any grape variety, including Cabernet Sauvignon. Our decision (and subsequent wine-making style) is to make wines that are very drinkable early, yet have 8-10 years of aging potential. Our 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon is one of these wines. Earth and spice rule here with notes of green olive, cherry and cedar on the palate. Firm tannins add structure and a solid backbone that will allow the wine to age gracefully for 8-10 years. 106 cases produced

2017 Sequoia

I always refer to this little gem of a rose' as the "perfect Thanksgiving turkey wine" or "a wonderful hot summer day, cheese and crackers under a shady oak tree wine". So, what can I say it's perfect for/vith in February!?? Hmm.....A hot tub! As winter is still chilling us to the bone, I find myself soaking in our hot tub often. Being submerged in 103 degree bubbling water, sipping on a cool glass of rose' is absolutely amazing! It's as if the wine pairs with the hot tub! Our 2017 Grenache rose' (affectionately named Sequoia after our beloved house cat of the same name) is a near-dry rose (0.9% sugar) that shows beautiful notes of watermelon, bright cherry, raspberry and blackberry. It's crisp acidity and lingering fruit forward palate is a wonderful compliment to, well a hot tub! 99 cases produced

2014 Syrah

I love Syrah! Earthy, grungy, smoky, notes of grilled meat and bacon.....yup, I certainly do love Syrah. The neatest thing about Syrah is that it picks up certain flavors and aromas based largely upon soil, climate, and environmental factors (aka "terroir") like no other grape. Cool climate Syrah is typically fruit forward and ripe with bracing acidity. Warm weather Syrah often has softer acidity, more rounded palate with more earthy, spicy notes. The beauty of being 3,200 feet in elevation, 30 miles off the floor of the Anza Borrego desert and 30 miles from the Pacific Ocean is that we are blessed with both cool and warm weather conditions. Our Syrah's are typically packed with dark fruit and spice with a pronounced earthy, smoky character on the palate. It is an excellent food wine, especially when it comes to grilled meats and barbeque! 124 cases produced

2014 Inversion

It's always interesting to compare tasting notes on a wine that was released nearly 2 years ago with how the wine tastes now. Our 2014 Inversion was bottled in March 2017 and released in August of the same year. Back then, I commented on how the Petit Verdot element (40%) of the blend was a stand out offering grippy tannins, structure and a solid framework for the Cabernet Sauvignon (40%) and Merlot (20%) to bond to. The wine was nice albeit a bit course in August 2017 when released, but now is really coming together. The edginess of the Petit Verdot tannins has softened considerably and the Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot have poked through to the foreground a bit more. The resulting wine is soft and elegant with ample, rich black fruit and spice on the palate. Lot's of aging potential here; 8-10 years with proper storage. 120 cases produced

2015 Solo Barrique Syrah

When we started our Solo Barrique program last Fall, one thing was for certain; there would definitely be a Syrah in the mix. That being said, 2015 was an epic year for our small estate Syrah vineyard. Mother Nature cooperated with us (for a change...) and we were able to push our sugar levels higher than normal especially in our Syrah block. What that meant for my wine making style, is the possibility of creating a big, ripe, juicy, fruit bomb wine with soft, silky tannins, incredible structure and complexity and long age-ability. I must have guessed right with my barrel selection and cellar protocol for this single barrel because the resulting wine pushes all my Syrah buttons. If you're a member of our Solo Barrique add-on program, lucky you! You will really enjoy this wine. If you aren't part of our add-on program, you can still taste and purchase our latest release as a wine club member, assuming we have it available. These bottles sell out quickly. Only 24 cases produced (1 barrel)

Save these dates!

Library Wine & Cheese Pairing - March 30th
11th Anniversary Party - April 27th
2nd Quarter Wine Club Pick Up - May 18th
Memorial Day Dollar Dogs - May 27th