



WINE CLUB

HAWK WATCH

AUGUST 2019

Harvest 2019 is nearly here and this year we're more excited than every! We have a new employee, Nickie Wilson who has been helping in the vineyard and tasting room and will be working on the crush pad when the time comes next month. Our crop load looks to be the largest ever, our entire Tannat vineyard has finally come on line and is producing tremendously, the quality of the fruit looks amazing and we'll likely crush a record 26 tons (about 70 barrels) of red grapes this year! That's crazy! Where am I going to put 70 more barrels!?? Who knows! But we'll find room, I'm sure...

The growing season this year has been crazy thus far. With the heavy winter and spring rains (40+ inches) we experienced incredible early season growth. Typically, we begin watering the vineyard in early to mid-May, but because of the ground water stores we didn't begin watering until a month later in mid-June! A full aquifer is a happy aquifer! Some of the Syrah vines in the lower parts of our vineyard have actually found their own water source and are growing well with no additional water. I've removed their drip emitters and they continue to grow well. So, in a way we're dry farming a dozen or so vines. Who knew we could do that in the high desert! It is a known fact however that a mature grapevine's tap root can reach 100 feet or more, and the top of our aquifer is roughly 80 feet underground so...

This quarter for your wine club we're releasing our 2015 Syrah. We've finally gotten to the point where we can give our wines a full year or more of bottle age before release. That's a big deal, since that allows us to monitor when the wines are ready and release them accordingly rather than feeling compelled to release wines early to fill a gap on our tasting menu. It's a great position to be in, but it took us 11 years to get there! We're also putting the last of our 2014 Cold Fusion and 2015 Cab Franc/Merlot into your club package this month. Both of these wines are really hitting on all cylinders now and we wanted to make sure you each got a bottle before they were gone. And finally, Solo Barrique...oh, this is a doozy. Our 2016 Solo Barrique Cabernet Sauvignon from Rolling Hills Vineyard is in a word, magical. You have to taste it to fully understand what I mean. Just don't wait too long, because it will likely go fast.

Happy Harvest 2019 everyone!
Mike & Lisa

Pic of the Quarter!



On a recent trip through the San Juan Islands in Northern Washington state, wine club members Debbie and Randy Wessels snapped this picture of a crustacean beastie getting ready to be enjoyed with a bottle of 2014 Inversion. An excellent pairing indeed!

Zena & Zoro's Mouser Blog



Alright, who is this "Nickie" person? Word on the street is that she's a new employee. I thought WE were the only employees! Well, we'll just see how good she is at catching micel

Wine Club Selections

Mixed Club (Grandfathered Original Club Members)

- 2018 Sauvignon Blanc
- 2014 Cold Fusion
- 2015 Cab Franc / Merlot

Reds Club

- 2014 Cold Fusion
- 2015 Cab Franc / Merlot
- 2015 Syrah

2014 Cold Fusion

This wine is one of my favorites to make. Although it doesn't fall neatly into the GSM category (Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre) since I often prefer Petite Sirah over Mourvedre for the third component, the wine is incredibly complex. It seems that each time I try this wine it tastes a little different than the last time. I love wines that gracefully evolve in bottle. When first released this was a fruit bomb with bright notes of cherry and strawberry (compliments of the Grenache), but as the wine has evolved the Syrah and Petite Sirah have stepped up to the plate to introduce their classic, hot climate roasted, meaty elements with a little char from the Petite Sirah specifically, making the wine much more balanced. Layers of black cherry, coffee, vanilla and coconut combine to make a wine that is round and soft on the palate with ample fruit and acidity to pair with just about any dish. Of course, the best pairing has (and always will be) with a glass! Enjoy now or hold for 4-5 years. - 98 cases produced

2016 Solo Barrique Cabernet Sauvignon

Surrounding Leoness Cellars' stunning tasting room in Temecula is a beautiful old vineyard known as Rolling Hills. Planted over 20 years ago, the vineyard has been known to produce some of the best Cabernet Sauvignon fruit in the region. (When I worked at Leoness from 2005 - 2010, Tim Kramer (the winemaker) and I worked with this fruit every harvest and it never failed to impress. The vineyard is planted to a couple very highly regarded, exotic clones of Cabernet Sauvignon that offer intense Cab varietal character, solid color, and aromas and flavors that are absolutely incredible. With just the right oak profile during barrel aging (of course that's a proprietary secret...) the resulting wine can be nothing short of spectacular. Very few people have access to this coveted fruit, and I am grateful to Leoness for freeing up enough in 2016 for me to make a single barrel of Rolling Hills Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine opens up with intense color and density. The nose is ripe with black currant, dark fruit, concentrated aromas of licorice and fennel. The palate is luscious, full and round with more ripe fruit, soft tannins and a long, silky finish. Enjoy now or hold for 8-10 years. - Only 22 cases produced (1 barrel)

2015 Cabernet Franc / Merlot

We're almost sold out of this wonderful blend of Cabernet Franc and Merlot, so we wanted to make sure we get a bottle in your hands before it's gone! Unlike a Meritage blend, which typically includes Cabernet Sauvignon with the mix, Cabernet Franc and Merlot can play off each perfectly in certain years. Cabernet Franc lends itself primarily to the spicy, savory end of the scale, while Merlot normally falls more on the fruit forward side. The blend doesn't always work well, but with certain vintages it can be spectacular. This is the case with our 2015. Initially when bottled in February 2018 the Cabernet Franc element was slightly more dominant with notes of clove, cut cedar and baking spices making the wine a bit angular and edgy. Recently however, the Merlot element has stepped forward to provide the perfect fruity backbone to balance the blend. The wine is now soft and elegant on the palate and has achieved a nice symmetry between the two varieties. Enjoy now, or hold for 5-7 years. - 96 cases produced.

2015 Syrah

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past 11 years, you probably are aware that Syrah is our favorite. I absolutely love Syrah's diversity of flavors, aromas, and complexities; from the bright, elegant cool region Syrah's of Monterey to the fruit forward, well-structured, complex Syrah's of temperate Paso Robles to the massive, robust, meaty Syrah's of hot Southern California, Syrah takes on many forms. And we just love that diversity! Because of our climate and growing conditions (aka "terroir"), and the fact that although our vineyard lies in the mountains at nearly 3,300 feet in elevation, we're only 25 miles as the crow flies from the floor of the Anza Borrego Desert. What this means is that we have perfect conditions for grow Syrah. Our elevation provides cool nights even in the heat of summer, critical for growing quality grapes, and our proximity to the desert provides us with adequate heat to ripen the grapes fully while retaining natural acidity and intense color. Our 2015 is all this, and more. Roasted, meaty notes of barbeque are met by dark, ripe fruit on the palate with a hint of cocoa and vanilla. This Syrah is very age worthy, so don't be concerned about laying it down for a while. Enjoy now, or hold for 6-8 years. 123 cases produced.

2018 Sauvignon Blanc

Summertime, summertime, sum, sum, summertime...
Nuf said.... :)

Hey, why is my cork leaking?

Well, summer is officially here and you know what that means.... HEAT! Excessive heat can cause corks to push up through the capsule and leak. On a balmy 90 degree day, the interior of your car or trunk can reach temperatures in excess of 140 degrees! Quickly! Even temperatures in the 80's can have an adverse affect on your precious cargo, so pay attention to your house temperature too. Also, when wine tasting it's best to either keep your wine bottles in a cooler, or better yet bring them into our tasting room while you're visiting. Be kind to your wine!