

# HAWK WATCH

NOVEMBER 2021

Every time I sit down to write the newsletter, I can't help but feel like the narrator on the television show, "The Waltons". Early in the morning I spend a few hours putting pen to paper describing our quarterly trials and tribulations and lessons learned, but with a never-failing optimism for the future. I guess that's what operating this place is all about really. But the Waltons? Well, first we're on a mountain (or let's call it a hill), so that works. Next our ever-fickle Mother Nature throws us daily strikes and curveballs, kicks us when we're down, and celebrates with us when success knocks on our door. Sounds like a Waltons episode to me! I reference Mother Nature in most of my newsletters probably as a subconscious reminder that's she's large and in charge; she's the boss. As a 1970's commercial once proclaimed, "You can't fool Mother Nature". She can be our worst enemy and best friend all over the course of a couple hours. We learn lessons from her every day assuming we're not too over-confident to ignore them. Most importantly we are constantly reminded to focus our attention on what truly matters, and to not sweat the small stuff. I frequently am reminded of a saying I actually made up 35 years ago while I was in college; "Do something about something you can do something about". Time is precious and finite; don't waste it on things you have no control over. That's much easier said than done, of course. Worry and stress are part of being human. I will admit that it's very difficult to watch the thermometer dip below 32 degrees in mid-May when the leaves on the vines are verdant, happy, and green, and the baby grape clusters are just forming knowing that tomorrow they'll likely be dead and brown. I can't do anything about that really, so I do something about something I can do something about. I do have some degree of control over the wine in the cellar, so that's a good time to bury myself in the lab. It takes my mind off the impending disaster brewing 100 feet down the slope to the south. But alas, the next morning I arise and see that the frost was minor and short lived, and everyone survived with minimal damage. They (and I) will live to fight another day. It's the roller coaster ride of emotions that makes this so difficult, but at the same time it's what makes this lifestyle we have chosen so exhilarating and exciting. As the saying goes, "Never a dull moment!" I recall the days of sitting on the freeway at 5:30 am in the dark a mere 10 miles into my 140-mile round trip daily commute. That thought usually is enough to snap me out my funk and remind me of how much better life has been over the 18 years living and working the land out here. I wouldn't change it for all the tea in China (I'm not a tea fan really, but you get my point). As I close this overly philosophical tome I'll leave you all with something to ponder. Sinatra once sang, "I did it my way..." Well, did you? If not, there's no time like the present!

I truly hope you enjoy our November wine shipment this quarter. All three wines are new and one, our 2018 Cold Fusion is a pre-release! The other two we're releasing are our 2017 Mourvedre (our first ever!) and our 2018 Flick of the Wrist. Both are very interesting and complex wines that are sure to please. Have a terrific holiday season, be happy, be safe and give hugs to the ones you love!

Good night, John Boy....

Mike & Lisa

## Exclusive Zena Expose'!



What?! I'm Zena (former "Warrior Princess", now just "Princess"). I'm almost 18 years old, deaf, and partially blind, and yes, those are fur mats. Get over it... I'm lazy and fat and I don't care. In people years I'm 126 years old. So, how old are you?

## Pic of the Quarter!



After a long, busy weekend in the tasting room, Lisa and Nickie take a much needed break to watch the sunset. On any given day these two can do the work of 10 people with incredible coordination and precision.

It's like watching a choreographed dance. I try to stay out of their way. It's in my best interest....

## Wine Club Selections

### Mixed Club

(Grandfathered Original Club Members)

2018 Cold Fusion

2020 Viognier

2018 Flick of the Wrist

### Reds Club

2018 Cold Fusion

2017 Mourvedre

2018 Flick of the Wrist

## 2017 Mourvedre

In our 14-year history, this is the first full varietal Mourvedre we've ever released. Long ago we used to grow a small amount of Mourvedre as part of block-10 behind our parking area. The vines did extremely well; in fact, they did too well. The vines grew like weeds no matter how much I cut the water back. They produced huge leafy canopies with massive (and far too many) clusters. I found myself spending more time with that block than any other block in the vineyard. To grow quality Mourvedre up here you have to be in the vineyard constantly checking to make sure the vines aren't getting out of control. It's important to thin the canopy, reduce the number of clusters and pick leaves off around the clusters to encourage air circulation and to get better sun exposure on the fruit. After 3 years we simply couldn't keep up, so we grafted that block to Malbec. Fortunately, when I worked for Leoness I came to know the owner of Primina Vineyard in Temecula wine country. Some of the nicest Mourvedre I have ever seen grows there, and I am fortunate to be able to source fruit from that vineyard. Our 2017 is smokey, grungy and earthy, with fresh cut tobacco and red fruit in the nose and a long silky finish with a hint of vanilla. Enjoy now or hold for 5-7 years. 73 cases produced.

## 2020 Viognier

Since going to bottle last December, our 2020 Viognier has evolved beautifully. After nearly a year in bottle, the wine has really softened and is showing quite well. With a strong element of fresh honey in the nose and palate, the stone fruits (peaches, pears) are moving to the forefront combining with the tropical fruit notes of guava, pineapple that were so prevalent a year ago. It amazes me how wine does this. It truly is a living, evolving thing. There's one point I often need to remind people of, and that is that white wine is often chilled down to temperatures that are too cold to allow much of the aromas and flavors show themselves. I'm not a proponent of enjoying whites at cellar temperature (55-58 degrees), but lightly chilled instead (perhaps 48 -50 degrees). Just being 10 degrees above refrigerator temperature will help the wine to open up more quickly and completely, and it will be more enjoyable sooner. An added benefit to not chilling wines as much is the preventing the possible appearance of tartrates (natural acid crystals) forming in the bottle. We refer to these little guys as "wine diamonds". Fear not! They're harmless and are a natural part of winemaking. They're much likely to form when the wine is chilled too cold. Enjoy our Viognier now or hold for 2-3 years. 78 cases produced

## 2018 Cold Fusion

Our GMS blend is our most awarded wine with Wine Enthusiast scores consistently in the 90's. It seems like a simple blend (50% Grenache / 25% Syrah / 25% Mourvedre) and in a general sense it is. The tricky part is deciding which variety to highlight, which for us means either Syrah or Grenache. Over the years we've discovered that for our winemaking style Grenache needs to lead the pack. The beautiful ripe, red fruit and juicy cranberry and strawberry overtones are a perfect introduction, marrying nicely with Syrah's leathery, dark fruit elements, and Mourvedre's meaty, savory notes of clove, grilled meat, and barbeque. This wine is one of the most versatile wines we make and is easy to pair with a multitude of dishes. As I recall it's nearly a perfect match with holiday turkey, ham and cranberry sauce. Just sayin'... Enjoy now or hold for 4-6 years. 99 cases produced.

## 2018 Flick of the Wrist

It's always fun coming up with new and creative wine names. In fact, I keep a list of prospective names on my phone, so I don't forget them! Each name has a story, and "Flick of the Wrist" is no exception. When we sit down to assemble our full varietal and blended wines, our goal is always to finish the session with all the wine in all the barrels used with nothing left over. That's the goal, but rarely happens. Invariably we end up with half a barrel of this, and a quarter barrel of that left over. Reason being, when we have the perfect blend that's it, no more messing with it just to use up any leftover wine. So, we use what's left over to top up our other barrels as needed every 8 weeks. But 2018 was a bit different. After assembling our array of 2018 wines we had some partial barrels that, when blended together, resulted in a really interesting, very intriguing wine. And honestly, it was pretty damn good too! As I was experimenting with the blend percentages to make this rogue wine, I came upon what I thought was close to the perfect combination. I smelled the blend and thought, "Hmm, it's nice, but it's not quite there." Disappointed, I walked away for several hours (when blending it's important to do that periodically to re-register your nose and palate). When I returned, I sat down at my desk, picked up the glass and gave it a good swirl (aka a "flick of the wrist") to open it up, and WOW! What a difference a few hours meant. The meatiness and dried black fruit of the Tannat, and the ripe Bing cherry and blackberry elements of the Merlot worked perfectly together! And the rest is history! Enjoy now or hold for 6-8 years. 97 cases produced.



Please see the attached card describing our 2018 Solo Barrique Syrah and our estate Syrah vineyard!