



HAWK WATCH

MAY 2022

Ok, admit it. You look at your weather app almost daily. Sometimes multiple times during the day. Why? We live in Southern California which has the most consistent weather in the nation! And yet we look at our app to discover if it's going to be 74 degrees or 75 degrees today, completely sunny or almost completely sunny. Right? Well up here in the mountains, things aren't quite that simple, especially this time of year. Several times each day during the months of April and May we open our weather app to see if the weather looks "safe" or "scary".

The morning of May 3rd began like any other day. The cats woke me up at 5:00 am, right on schedule. I tell them to leave me alone as I try to sleep at least an hour or two more. So, at 5:05am I'm up, wide awake feeding the cats. The first thing I do is grab my phone and look at the trusty weather app. Ahhhh, the next 7 days look great, highs in the 70's and lows in the mid-40's. Perfect! The vineyard is lush and green with a terrific crop load. I'm more than enthusiastic. But then I remember that my app shows an 8-day forecast. As I swipe to the left to look at day-8, I'm horrified: High 58 Low 30. Low 30??? Oh, no below freezing. No, no, no, no, no this must be wrong. By now the cats have finished their gram of wet food they were starving for and are now having a treat meltdown. So, treats it is. Then back to the app. I just sit and stare at the number 30 trying to convince myself that it could easily change over the next 7 days. Not to worry. But I do anyway. As I move through the next 3-4 days of beautiful weather, I continually check the app to discover if the forecast has changed for day-8. Nope, not yet. Still a low of 30. Then on day-5 I'm rewarded for my patience with a revised low on day-8 of 32. I can handle that. That's ok! The grapes can survive that for an hour or so. On day 6 the forecast has changed little still showing a low of 32. Finally, we arrive on day-7. As I look at the weather app (at 5:15 am of course as the cats chase treats in the dark...) I see that there HAS been a change! Come on warmer temps!!! I scroll down to look at the low and it has changed!! TO 28 DEGREES! I'm so screwed! I essentially spend the balance of the day wandering around like a zombie knowing there is absolutely nothing I can do about it. Recall the last newsletter when I mentioned the saying, "Do something about something you can do something about?" I hated that saying that day. The feeling of helplessness is indescribable. I go to bed at my regular time that evening, but don't sleep. Of course, having a pile of hot cats draped over me certainly doesn't help matters. I flip and flop and finally fall asleep. I'm woken up at 5:00 am again (by you know who) and look at the weather station in the kitchen... the glowing display shows 38 degrees. We did it! We dodged the bullet! At about 8:00 am I head out to the vineyard with confidence that we survived the night. Um, not so... 30% of the vines have been completely devastated. All the leaves and fruit are wilting and dying. The vines themselves will survive, but the fruit is a complete loss. The sea of beautiful green has turned to a sea of hideous brown. To make matters worse, this scenario repeats itself a week later and we lose another 30%. Harvest 2022 was going to be a great harvest! The fruit that survived will be wonderful I'm sure, but there will be precious little of it. Fortunately, we have great relationships with several exceptional grape growers locally, so we'll be fine. This whole experience reminds me of another saying my "farmers-daughter" mother is fond of reminding me of, "Suck it up buttercup. Farming is not for the feint of heart!" And all along I thought Mother Nature was my harshest critic! So, as we cruise thru the remainder of May with hopes high, we are reminded yet again to never take anything for granted because it can be snatched away at a moment's notice. If I remember (which is never a given these days...) I'll give you an update on the vineyard in August. Until then, happy sipping (and farming) one and all! And please excuse our brown, leafless but not lifeless vineyard... Mike & Lisa

Pic of the Quarter!



Sometimes the moment is perfect; the lighting, the shadows, the composition are all working together. That's when you need to have that camera ready. Fortunately I had mine and snapped this picture of a couple enjoying a bottle of wine with our daily sunset. Who are these folks? I have no idea. But this image defines Hawk Watch Winery in my book. Soft and squishy, east breazy...

Zena & Zoro Mouser Blog



Zena: "LOL, mom and dad took Zoro to their house to live because he was getting old and frail, but he ate all their other cats' food so he had to come back to the winery."

Wine Club Selections

Mixed Club

(Grandfathered Original Club Members)

2018 Petite Sirah
2018 Smoking Gopher
2020 Sequoia

Reds Club

2018 Petite Sirah
2018 Smoking Gopher
2018 Hypnotica

2020 Sequoia

We always refer to this little gem of a rose' as the "perfect Thanksgiving turkey wine". So, what can we say about it in May? Well, as Spring wanes and summer is knocking at the door, our Grenache Rose' is ripe and ready for the picnic season! Imagine sitting under a shady tree on a warm afternoon sipping on a glass of Sequoia with your favorite charcuterie plate at your side. Yum! Our 2020 Grenache rose' is just the wine for the occasion! Affectionately named "Sequoia" after our beloved house cat of the same name, this is our first completely dry rose of Grenache. The wine shows beautiful notes of watermelon, strawberry, bright cherry, and raspberry. It's crisp acidity and lingering fruit forward palate is a wonderful compliment to summertime activity (especially picnics...) Enjoy now or hold for no more than 2-3 years. 94 cases produced.

2018 Petite Sirah

Trust me, there's nothing "petite" about Petite Sirah. In fact, just the opposite is true. Petite Sirah is most often, heavy, rich, ripe, inky and tannic. As such, it has tremendous aging potential. Our estate Petite Sirah vineyard has been in full production for 8 years and the quality of the fruit is amazing. People often ask what the difference between Syrah and Petite Sirah are, and why "Syrah" is spelled differently. First of all, there is a relationship between Petite Sirah and Syrah. Petite Sirah (also called "Durif" after the scientist that created this hybrid grape variety) is a cross of Syrah and a relatively obscure grape called "Peloursin". Both grapes originated in the Northern Rhone region of France. Why are they spelled differently? The jury is still out on that one. To be certain, Petite Sirah is not a "little" Syrah as the name might suggest. In fact, just the opposite is true. Petite Sirah can be a monster wine with an earthy, leathery, smoky character and luscious dark fruit in the palate. Our new 2018 Petite Sirah is all that, and more! Enjoy now, or cellar for 8-10+ years. 86 cases produced.

2018 Smoking Gopher

The second release of our whimsical Bordeaux blend has changed dramatically since it was bottled. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Zinfandel, the wine was initially heavily focused on savory spices which is understandable considering more than half the blend is Cab Sauvignon and Cab Franc. A small amount of Merlot helped to elevate the fruit. Since going to bottle however the Zinfandel element has roared to the foreground pulling even more ripe fruit forward. Now the wine is much more balanced with fruit and spice having an equal presentation. Most of our reds are easily paired with grilled meats and savory dishes and our Smoking Gopher is no exception. Bring on the summer barbeque!! Enjoy now or hold for 4-6 years. 53 cases produced.

2018 Hypnotica

I love this wine. The blend is almost always 50/50 Syrah and Zinfandel. It sounds simple enough to make (...it's 50/50, how hard could it be, right?), but what happens throughout the 24 months of barrel aging is a tad more complicated if we're going to be able to strike that unique balance of fruit, earth and spice that make Hypnotica what it is. We don't grow Zinfandel up here in the mountains. With our elevation and uncertain summer weather, Zin struggles to ripen evenly. So, we source it from two vineyards in Temecula that grow spectacular fruit. Our estate Syrah fruit is used primarily for our varietal Syrah wine and our Cold Fusion Rhone blend. That leaves precious little estate Syrah for Hypnotica. I typically source Syrah from one of three small, unique vineyards in the Temecula valley for the blend. Selecting which vineyard to source fruit from is the first challenge. Following that is the oak selection for each of the varieties (which is quite different between the two). Syrah loves French oak, with medium+ and heavy toast levels. Zinfandel prefers American oak with a medium toast level. Finding the right balance is tough, especially with the variables you would expect one growing season to the next. It's a fun wine to experiment with, but when all is said and done we always seem to return to 50/50. Enjoy now or hold for 3-5 years. 71 cases produced.

