

SCHERRER SPRING 2001 RELEASES

In addition to our usual Spring releases of Zinfandel, Chardonnay, Vin Gris, and Cabernet Sauvignon, our first Pinot Noirs are now finally available. With the seemingly constant addition of more bottlings, we plan to gradually (if not gracefully) reorganize our releases to better fit the wines' schedule. As you will read below, a few wines will be released a bit later in the year. Those being released now (listed below) will be open to taste and will be available for sale and/or pickup at the winery on **two consecutive weekends only**: March 31 & April 1, April 7 & 8. If you have any wines (futures or purchases from this offering) not picked up after April 8, you will be contacted to arrange shipment, as usual.

1999 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel: This is probably the tightest structured vintage we have had for this wine. It is most like 1997, but with less reliance on acidity and more on full, ripe tannins. Fortunately, it possesses some perfumes like the 1998. With such concentration, this wine had remained relatively closed during its usual gentle handling and minimal racking, thus it required more lengthy barrel aging. It was bottled without filtration weeks later than normal (just about in time for the open house). It has loosened up a bit, revealing plum, black pepper and blueberry flavors with a spicy cedar nuance. The release to restaurants and wine shops has been pushed back a couple of months when the wine will be more composed from any 'bottle shock'. No worry, this should ultimately be one of the most satisfying vintages of this wine. 1030 cases produced. **Release price: \$28 per bottle, 6-bottle limit.**

1999 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel: While the yield from this small plot was more plentiful than in 1998 and 2000 (still not very much), we really do not have enough to offer here. If you missed out on this wine during the futures offering and *must have* it, please call so we can try to dig out a couple of bottles for you. Anyway, this wine really typifies the 1999 vintage for our Zinfandels: more material than usual.

1999 Scherrer Vineyard 'Special Cuvée' Zinfandel: If some blending elements fight with the typical 'OMV' personality, but have their own story to tell, we listen. After the main harvest was in, we experimented with techniques with a few remaining tons of grapes. The fatigue of harvest gave birth to creative abandon here. Lots of whole

SCHERRER SPRING 2001 RELEASES

clusters, carbonic maceration, etc., resulted in some very exotic, generous, but headstrong barrels of Zinfandel. This is one of those 'Gobs of' wines. At bottling, it reminds me very much of the 1993 'Old & Mature' Zinfandel. 320 cases produced.

Release price: \$28 per bottle, 6-bottle limit.

1999 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay: Seeing how well the 1998 vintage of this developed with time, this Puligny of California will be released in a few months.

2000 Vin Gris: I have been astonished by how popular past vintages of this wine have become. Restaurants have gone nuts. Olives and seafood dishes with garlic and /or tomato cry out for this wine. Ignore the call if you can. We increased production of this as much as we could in 2000, so there might be enough to go around. I don't think the family will be able to continue consuming half anymore. It may even satisfy my good friend and helper Don, who should be sprouting pink olive branches from his ears soon due to his steady diet of olives and rosé during our recent trip to Southern France. 290 cases were produced. **Release price: \$16 per bottle, 18-bottle limit.**

1999 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay: For the same reasons that I preferred the 1998 Chardonnay to the 1997, this, our third vintage, is yet another step finer than before. Whole cluster pressing (like with sparkling wine) was stopped at very low juice yields, giving more fine elements and avoiding possible coarseness from the skin tissue. The 1999 vintage also gave us somewhat more spicy fruit. Strangely, this wine never really went through bottle sickness. It is the most seamless and generous Chardonnay we have produced from this vineyard. Previous vintages indicate how slowly and gracefully this unfinned, unfiltered style of Chardonnay ages. 300 cases were produced. **Release price: \$25 per bottle, 12-bottle limit.**

1998 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon: Anybody who does not believe a 1998 California Red could surpass the heights of 1997 needs to taste this wine. The debate will continue, no doubt, but I have little doubt about this wine. Come. Taste. Disagree if you can.

The vines were more generously shoot-thinned in 1998, and the fruit was harvested a couple of clicks later than in 1997. What we got from this was every advantage of

SCHERRER SPRING 2001 RELEASES

sunlight and time during the middle and later growing period. There is darker color, more aromatic, textural and structural material than the previous vintage. Later harvesting (from both a physiological and degree alcohol standpoint) lent flesh to this wine's ample frame. Fortunately, the cool conditions helped keep things from going over the top. This wine has showed a larger appetite for new oak than its predecessor. Like the 1997, there is lots of ripe Cabernet cassis fruit, chocolate, a hint of oak in just the right places, but also possesses a slight cedar tone woven through its entire fabric. The texture is still rather supple on the 'outside', yet exhibits ample structure for many years of bottle development (Reubens meets Schwarzenegger). Restaurants and wine shops get this in the summer. 400 cases were produced. **Release price: \$38 per bottle, 12-bottle limit.**

1999 'Big Brother' Pinot Noir and 1999 'Little Sister' Pinot Noir: Both of these wines were essentially born of a neighboring winery's clonal trial in the Russian River Valley. They did not have the red wine making experience to fully evaluate their trial and approached me with an offer impossible to refuse. We have all learned something from the process.

While the best Pinot Noir sites I had worked with in my past life at Dehlinger were primarily grown on the rare red clay outcroppings with AXR-1 as the rootstock, the vines that made up these 1999's were mostly grown on 3309C rootstock in the sandy Goldridge soil type. This is a common soil type in the area.

There were about 16 fermentation lots, mostly from the clonal trial. Blending these 1999 Pinot Noirs was a real challenge. First, there was no single fermentation lot that was a complete, balanced wine to start adding elements to (like a makeup artist would merely highlight the natural beauty of the subject). Second, having no previous experience with these clones in these sites made it less certain to predict how they would marry and develop over time. It soon became apparent that there were two distinct flavor profiles and balances that otherwise fought in a single blend. Hence, the two Russian River Wines. 'Little Sister' is a prettier, more zippy, red-fruited expression of the Pinot Noir, and 'Big Brother' has a more dark-fruited, brooding and mysterious side, as though pretending to originate from the clay. Both wines exhibit their goldridge origin, nonetheless. Their names describe their personality tones rather than sheer size. While they will not require aging in order to be enjoyed, they

SCHERRER SPRING 2001 RELEASES

will probably age quite well. About 240 cases of each of these were produced.

Release price: \$35 per bottle, 6-bottle limit each.

Concerning the 2000 vintage: The Zinfandel bloom was long and set was uneven. Then, the growing season was oddly punctuated by extreme heat spells. While the Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay seemed to take it in stride, the Zinfandel vines had had pretty much enough of this by the end of harvest. The crop just seemed to evaporate with each passing day. In mid-August there was probably about 2 tons per acre of ripe Zin...with about an equal amount of pink and green berries on the same cluster, a varietal tendency. To avoid the unripe berries sneaking into the fermenter, we waited to harvest several weeks when these sour, pinkish berries finally became dead ripe. But the rest were now raisins. Fortunately, most of these raisins are removed in our specially modified destemmer, so what we got in the tank was essentially generous, ripe fruit (what little there was left). I am pleased with the result, and the 15+% alcohol Zins are remarkably balanced, soft, and generous. Blending should be fun.

The 2000 Pinot Noirs should surpass the 1999's in quality, but definitely not in quantity. The 2000 Chardonnays are doing well. While very early in their development, the 2000 Cabernet Sauvignons seem to be at least on par with 1997, if not much more successful. Generous alcohol levels and a cold winter have led to the slowest malolactic fermentations I have seen in over a decade with all varieties. Slowly evolving CO₂ during this period helps protect the wine without SO₂ additions, allowing fuller expression and integration of the wines' components early in life. There will be more detailed discussion of the vintage with the summer futures offering of the 2000 Zinfandels.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of our wine. It has made all the difference.