

2001 Scherrer Zinfandel Futures Offering & Fall Releases

We are pleased to announce the Scherrer Winery fall releases and 2001 Zinfandel futures offering and barrel tasting. Somehow, it doesn't seem like a decade has passed since our first Zinfandel futures offering. Yet the changes that have occurred could have hardly taken less time than that. We look back at this project's history and evolution with great appreciation for the support we have received during the past decade. Thank you.

If you can, please come and taste our 2001 Zinfandel barrel samples and the fall release wines for yourself at our eleventh annual **barrel tasting, August 3 & 4, 2002 from 10 to 5**. As usual, this is not advertised to the general public. Only those on our mailing list and their guests are invited to this 'private party.' Those of you who made it to the April open house know floor space at the winery is being consumed more and more by barrels. Because the barrel tasting is only one weekend, it should make the place look as cozy as the first Saturday of the open house last April.

If you expect to take any bottles of our released wines home with you from the open house, please plan protection for your wine from the possibility of high temperatures. An ice chest or at least a styrofoam shipping container would be a good idea. Anyone with extra used shippers may bring them to share.

The young 2001 wines: As you may recall from the April newsletter, I summarized the 2001 vintage as a season of contrasts. At the end of June, I have just finished racking and blending most of these wines for the first time and can better see what the finished wines will be like. The Zinfandels have a nearly 'electric' quality to them. The 2001 Chardonnays follow suit. As for the Cabernet Sauvignon from my father's vineyard, I have never seen better material. A new source of coastal Pinot Noir has spectacular promise and the Russian River Pinot Noir blend, due to both its high quality and ample quantity will bring smiles to all our faces at release next year. So, despite the unusual growing season with all its unique challenges, with wines like these I'd welcome another vintage like 2001 any time.

The 2001 Zinfandels: I cannot remember my father's Zinfandel fruit being better to work with than in 2001. Assessing 2001 Zinfandel blending trials prior to racking and blending has been one of the highlights of our household dinnertime this spring. Not only should a wine taste good alone, it must provide interest and support to the meal. (It also rationalizes my bringing home blending trials to have with dinner.) Most of the Zinfandel fermentation lots were exciting, complete wines on their own that one could be proud to bottle separately. While not particularly built on angular acidity or tannin, there is definitely something there that holds these Zins together well, like a magic trick. The magic is fine, balanced fruit. Even wine yeast strain researchers and coopers who have tasted through the cellar this spring have requested samples from various yeast strain and barrel trials for them to use in their technical and sales presentations. As tempting as it was to bottle the separate lots on their own, the 'Old & Mature' blend has eclipsed the sum of the components, as usual. Focused and structured yet also plump and delicious, this should be a very popular wine. The Shale Terrace with its precise, lively character continues to be 'on a roll.' It's too bad we don't have more of it.

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FUTURES

2001 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel futures: For the most part, this wine has some of the characters from the recent 'odd' vintages: a great electric focus of slightly jammy fruit (1995), raspberries, boysenberries, blueberries (1997), a foundation of meaty, brooding bass notes (1999), and a buffering textural suavity that wraps around it all (1996 and 2000). Seeing how well the older of these 'mostly odd vintages' have developed indicates good things for the 2001's future as well. *Estimated retail at release: \$28 per bottle. Futures price: \$225 per case. Released April 2003*

2001 Shale Terrace Zinfandel futures: Once again this is very limited in production, and possesses the usual perfume, red fruits and balance that has made it so popular over the last half-dozen years. This wine is only offered 'first crack' to those who usually order some. *Estimated retail at release in few stores that get some: \$24 per bottle. Futures price: \$195 per case. Released April 2003*

FALL RELEASES

2000 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay: The 1999 Helfer Chardonnay was a 'ringer' in a Burgundy lovers' blind tasting last spring. It was voted #1 in a group of 8 white Burgundies costing as much as \$250. The 2000 Helfer Chardonnay is richer, more generous and slightly more 'Californian' than the mineral and complex 1999 but still retains the typical star-fruit character and complexity that sets it apart from most other California Chardonnays. 60 cases produced. *\$35 per bottle. Available now.*

2000 Helfer Vineyard Pinot Noir: While I consider this vineyard more of a Chardonnay site, it can produce fine Pinot Noir as well. Ginger, honey, and 'surmaturité' aromas, with open structured, lightly herbal, orange peel notes make this a good match with grilled salmon. While not built for the long-term, I expect it to fully return to its pre-bottling seductive state by the end of the year. 44 cases produced. Another 'first crack' wine. *\$30 per bottle. Available now.*

2000 Hirsch Vineyard Pinot Noir: Truly a wine for the long run, unlike the 1999 vintage, this is not a 'diaphanous' wine at all. Small yields with tiny berries drove David Hirsch crazy (and myself as well), but made a very special wine indeed. It displays the quintessential 'true' Sonoma Coast character of red and black fruits, rose hips and sassafras, centered and focused with mouth-watering acidity, great structure, continuity and length. Like many 1993 red Burgundies, this is a wine that both demands and will reward cellaring. 110 cases produced. 'first crack' *\$45 per bottle. Available now.*

1999 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon: Everyone seemed to love the forward 1999 *Alexander Valley* bottling released this spring. Now, here is the unique expression of my father's vineyard: less herbal, more fruit-focused and structured, broody and mysterious. Had I encountered Cabernet Sauvignon like this many years ago, I would have more of this variety in my cellar. Don't be fooled by the fact that it tastes good now. It should age a long time. I am also pleased to have found the types of barrels that fit this material perfectly. It has absolutely digested and incorporated its 75% new oak during its 30 month barrel aging, confirming that there is a lot of wine in this wine. 300 cases produced. *\$40 per bottle. Available now.*

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We appreciate the continued positive feedback and inquiries as to the availability of our Spring releases. The good news is that there are still a few bottles of 2001 Vin Gris, 2000 'Old & Mature' Zinfandel, 2000 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay available in 750 mL. Please feel free to 'wish list' any requests for magnums or half bottles that may lurk about the winery. The wines you were initially offered last Spring are just now being offered to stores and restaurants. We can also help guide you to a location nearer to you that may now have these wines.

With wines like 'Old and Mature' Zinfandel futures, there has been plenty available, so limits and allocations have been unnecessary. On the other hand, Shale Terrace and the small production bottled wines are more difficult to distribute and still have everyone happy. (The quantities must meet the needs of both this direct offering and our commitment to the wine trade for selected restaurants and wine shops.) Therefore, we have had to limit the 'first crack' at the Shale Terrace and these Pinot Noirs to those who have a tradition of ordering those wines. After the 'first crack' deadline, we will begin to process 'wish list' requests. **We will process 'first crack' and then later 'wish list' requests in the order they are received as long as supplies last. The deadline for 'first crack' orders is July 29, 2002, a few days before the open house.** Then we will know what (if anything) is available at the open house. Limits for 'first crack' are a balancing act between offering a reasonable quantity to traditional patrons and hopefully having some left for some 'wish lists' to be fulfilled.

Please feel free to put whatever you want on the 'wish list' (not a Genie Joke). Although it is a short dialogue, we hope to fulfill the most desire while creating the least disappointment. While most small wineries do not allow for tasting all the wines, especially rare ones, we feel it is important for you to be able to taste all the wines at the open house (sold out or not) so that you can better judge when to open your first bottle or just to better understand the house style for future reference.

The fall releases will be available as of the August open house. Shipments of the fall releases will be made sometime later, when weather will be kinder to the wine. This year, Judi will be handling these logistics, so the wine should ship a bit earlier to the most northern areas than it did last fall.

The 2001 Zinfandels will be released in the spring of 2003. We can only set up futures purchases for either: 1) pickup at our two open house weekends on April 5&6, 12&13 or 2) shipping to the legal or 'reciprocal states' listed on the order form. If you live in a 'shipping-challenged' state, and set up your futures purchase for pick-up, you can find a 'legal' destination between now and April, then have it shipped. Alternatively, you can have someone you trust come pick the wine up and hold it or somehow find a way to get it to you.

The 2002 growing season so far: A cold, rainy weather system that moved into the area during the late May bloom was not nearly as devastating here as the news reports made it out to be. For the most part, from what I have seen in Sonoma County, it interrupted pollinization to a degree that should yield slightly looser clusters with smaller berries containing fewer seeds. Aside from any unevenness in development it might cause in varieties blooming at that time, it should become a net plus for quality.