

SCHERRER SPRING 2003 RELEASES

We are pleased to announce another spring wine release. You are invited to our annual spring **open house on the weekends of April 5&6, 12&13, 2003 from 10AM to 5 PM**. Everything listed here will be open for tasting, whether already sold out or not. You may pick up any wines ordered now or from last August's futures offering at this event or we will schedule them for shipment, as usual.

Over the past several years, we have been working very hard to increase the amounts and types of wines we produce because 1) it is hard to turn down an interesting vineyard, 2) we need to produce enough wine to entirely support our family, and 3) we have looked forward to holding back a small proportion of some of the wines, if possible, to offer at a later date with at least *some* bottle development (just like the 'good old days'). These were hard to do during the '90's when uncommitted grapes were generally scarce and cash-flow demands of a new enterprise were unavoidable. Over the last few years, we have made some progress by delaying release dates on some small lot wines and holding back a few cases of Zinfandel, Cabernet and Chardonnay throughout the year for people new to us. We hope to expand this into holding back small amounts of Pinot Noir in the future as well. Our wines age uncommonly well, and we are proud to illustrate this.

During this past recession we have seen many restaurants and related businesses having had a difficult time. Fortunately, we have seen an overall increase in demand each year for our wines direct from the winery. At the open houses and on the telephone, many of you have related the reasons for this: value, consistency, age worthiness, etc. We appreciate the feedback as much as your interest in and support of our wines and hope to continue to earn a place in your cellar and table for many years.

2001 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel: Serious Pinot Noir and red Burgundy fans seem to appreciate this style of Zinfandel more than they do the 'super-ripe' style currently in fashion. The texture and complexity of our wines from Dad's vineyard are appealing and versatile both in youth as well as with maturity. At bottling this February, the 2001 vintage seemed very much like the 1999 vintage with densely-packed dark fruit. But I think this wine has even greater promise for the future. For those new to our wines, I would suggest consuming bottles of the generous 2000 'OMV' (some is still available) while allowing this profound 2001 to blossom. Those of you with past vintages in the cellar can enjoy the developing wines all the way back to 1991 (our first) during this time. (Note: due to the variability in the sealing properties of the type of corks used for our 1991 and 1992's, I would suggest drinking these before any become 'museum pieces.' In 1993, we switched to a more gentle cork treatment which preserves the exterior cork cellular structure for more consistent long-term sealing properties.) Our Old & Mature Zinfandels age and develop consistently well and really do reward patience (or forgetfulness). This wine is a perfect example of this. 1500 cases produced. **Release price: \$28 per bottle, 24 bottle limit. Half bottles (\$15) and magnums (\$58) also available.**

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2001 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel: Our allocation of this sold out during the futures offering last August. However, it will be poured at the open house. 200 cases produced.

2001 Vin Gris: This versatile bone-dry rosé of Pinot Noir and Zinfandel is made in a southern-French style. It can be enjoyed on its own on a warm afternoon, or used quite well with seafood or pastas and pizza (foods with tomatoes, olive oil, garlic and salt). In past years we bottled this wine just before the open house, scarcely allowing time for adequate development in its old, neutral barrels. We have also realized that this wine really improves in the bottle for a couple of years. At home, we are still drinking the 1999 ourselves. So we held onto some of the 2001 to offer again, also allowing us time to bottle the 2002 version whenever it is ready. In a very recent article in *The San Francisco Chronicle*, John Lancaster (sommelier at Boulevard Restaurant) named traditional dry rosés 'the most unjustly overlooked wine type.' We are doing our part to help change this. 380 cases were produced. **\$14 per bottle, 24 bottle limit.**

2001 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay: Professionals who have tasted through the cellar consistently remark as to the finesse, integration, complexity and 'minerality' that this Alexander Valley benchland Chardonnay possesses. Pressing very lightly to only take the finest juice, barrel fermentation followed by aging on the lees until just before bottling make the most of this fine fruit. Bottling without filtration or fining really preserves 'the good stuff', the colloidal material that replenishes flavor and youthfulness, over the years. This also allows the wine to walk that tightrope of delicacy vs. fullness. We plan to show the 2000 vintage (also still available) at the open house as well, to illustrate the virtues this style with a little bottle development. Someday, we should bring out a few bottles of the 1997, which is amazingly youthful and complex. 270 cases were produced. **Release price: \$25 per bottle, 24 bottle limit. Half bottles (\$13) and some magnums (\$50) also available.**

2000 Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon: This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from the Scherrer Vineyard speaks more of the Alexander Valley region and less of the specific site than the unique Scherrer Vineyard bottling (released in the fall), hence the regional designation. The 2000 vintage is slightly more open and forward than the 1999 vintage, but is still definitely a serious wine. The grapes developed very slowly in 2000, causing us to wait many days longer than Dad's other grape customers to finally schedule picking. This allowed the full development of the typical cassis, plummy, classically varietal flavors. The finish is very long, rich, mouth-watering, friendly and engaging. This regional designate is definitely in the 'House Style' and stands up well beside our past 'Alexander Valley' and 'Scherrer Vineyard' Cabernet Sauvignons. The 1999 vintage has 'buried' many wines at twice the price. 320 cases were produced. **Release price: \$30 per bottle, 12 bottle limit.**

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2001 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir: With the sudden change from warm & dry weather to cool & foggy patterns in September, most Pinot Noir grapes in this region accumulated sugar very slowly in 2001. This allowed us to pick based on flavor and tannin ripeness without being worried about excessive alcohol in the resulting wine. Because of the long period of moisture on the fruit, not surprisingly, potentially destructive molds began to attack some of the grapes. Therefore, strict sorting of fruit and judicious, yet decisive use of SO₂ at the destemmer (as in Burgundy) were essential to making superior quality Russian River Valley Pinot Noir in 2001. I was delighted during its entire time in barrel. It is very much like the 2000 version of this bottling except better balanced with less alcohol and ultimately smoother texture. While it will drink well soon after release, this is still a serious wine that will reward some bottle age. The accelerating interest in our Pinot Noirs has rather caught us by surprise. Fortunately, we were able to procure a larger area from the same vineyards as well as a new one so we can offer everybody more this year, and maybe have a couple of cases to show off next year too. Nearly 900 cases were produced. **Release price: \$35 per bottle, 24 bottle limit. Half bottles (\$18) also available.**

More on Growth: As most of you are aware, during this past year, Judi has taken over more and more of the business side of our winery operations. While there have been some of the expected growing pains, we find an appreciation for what each other brings to the mix and continue to refine and improve what we do. She has been replacing my old homemade data systems, and wonders how I found time to do all this stuff over the past decade. While giving up detailed knowledge of the administrative end of the winery has been a bit hard for me, I have been thrilled to be able to focus more on winemaking, which is why I got into this in the first place. More attention has also been needed to figure out how to make all these wines in the very limited space we have available.

The 2002 vintage: For most of the growing season, I couldn't have ordered up superior weather patterns. Yet, due to the two heat spells early in the harvest season, I think we were 'robbed' of another vintage rivaling 1994 in the normally cool Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast. This heat tended to arrest physiological ripening and began shriveling the unacclimated red grapes, causing us to harvest a few days sooner than we would have otherwise liked in some vineyard blocks. However, we were not robbed completely. The resulting wines from these cool regions seem overall about on par with the previous three vintages, so even though we saw potentially 'ideal' conditions slip away, we are still smiling...broadly. On the other hand, Dad's vineyard in Alexander Valley enjoyed total climatic success. His Chardonnay was harvested the day before the September heat began so the delicate nuanced perfumes were captured. The Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon (heat-desiring varieties) were already acclimated to the warm conditions of Alexander Valley. I have not seen better material there.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of our wine.