

### **Whenever you are ready...**

One thing that raising children has taught us so far is that people are not always ready for the same thing at the same chronological point in their lives. This resonates with our experience with wines. Harvest dates, time on skins for red wines, vary with site and vintage. Some of them are ready to bottle sooner than others. Certain bottled wines hit their strides relatively early, some a bit later, and others...take many years to become charming in a most pleasant, complex, and sometimes astonishing way.

While they can show very well young, our style of winemaking rewards some additional time in the bottle. We are fortunate to be able to 1) refine this style without compromise in order to satisfy mundane, yet unavoidable business realities (cash flow), 2) relieve some of your angst over opening that 'last' bottle of a recent release and 3) provide reasonably developed wines to restaurants and wine shops. To make this all happen, we offer our youngest wines (as well as Zinfandel futures) to you first so that we may hold off on releasing these same wines to restaurants and wine shops who need those bottles 'ready to go' immediately upon receipt. This is kind of a two-phase release. To the delight of many, it has often been possible for us to dig up replacements of recent releases in response to an inquiry. Although, as demand has increased dramatically this year, the time period these may be available will probably decrease.

You are invited to our annual spring **open house weekends March 31, April 1, 2 and April 7-9 from 10AM to 5 PM each day** at the winery, 4940 Ross Rd., Sebastopol CA. You can find a map at [www.scherrerwinery.com/map](http://www.scherrerwinery.com/map). The phone number at the building is 707.824.1933. We will continue doing Fridays as it seems to spread out attendance, making the experience more enjoyable for all. Everything listed below will be open for tasting, whether already sold out or not. You may pick up any new wines ordered now and/or Zinfandel futures offered last August, or we will schedule them for shipment.

**Good Marks for food:** I'm afraid that the days of bread and cheese alone are far behind, thanks to the culinary contributions of Mark and Tracey Berkner to our events during 2004 - 2005. Since they are focusing all their attention now on opening their new restaurant, 'Taste', in Plymouth, CA they have been unable to return (you can see the progress at [www.restauranttaste.com](http://www.restauranttaste.com)). Of course, once they raised the bar on our expectations of the food scene, there was no going back. Fortunately, another Mark - Malicki - provided a wonderful array of edibles at the November open house. We are happy to say he's joining us again.

**2004 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel:** Somehow, the Zinfandel seemed to enjoy both the moderate growing season, as well as the hot, dry spell right at harvest (usually not considered to be a good thing). What excites me about this vintage of Zinfandel, is that it has both the generosity of a

**Whenever you are ready...**

relatively 'big' Zinfandel, while maintaining enough restraint (from alcohol and 'cooked' jamminess) and core structure (acidity and 'good' tannins) to age well and compliment food. It shows red, black and blue fruit aromas, peppercorns, along with a mild earthiness, kind of like comfort food for the nose. While it is built for a longer-haul, the tannins melt quite readily at this early stage with a bit of food.

In my opinion, it *is* possible to have too much of a good thing. On a recent sales trip, someone told me that our Zins were not 'big' enough for their clientele who are accustomed to something akin to dry Port. My offhand response was "when you are ready to be seduced rather than raped, give a call." Of course, I had a Groucho Marx delivery in mind rather than Mae West. But either way, it works. (Groucho would have been talking about wine, but one of his brothers would have probably been talking to Mae.) 900 cases produced. **Release price: \$28 per bottle. Half bottles (\$15) and magnums (\$58) also available.**

**2004 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel:** Like the OMV which grows in a clay-dominated soil, this small vineyard block performed well too. Bottled a few weeks earlier than the OMV above, this is my favorite vintage of this wine to date. Of course, the signature stone fruit character is there, but there is also white pepper, red raspberry, and a background toastiness, all coming together as well. It suggests Pinot Noir in many ways, especially the texture, after several years. 220 cases produced. We budgeted most for the futures offering last August preferring to have a reasonable 'cushion' of extras. But if I don't break a lot of bottles at the (currently temperamental) labeling machine just before the open house, we will have some available for sale (\$24). This and any other limited wines will be noted on the order form just so you know they may sell out quickly. No other quantity limits seem to make sense this time.

**2005 Vin Gris:** This is our classic blend of Pinot Noir and Zinfandel taken from fermentation tanks prior to fermentation, then barrel fermented in neutral barrels. This years' wine found its sweet spot at a slightly higher level of Pinot Noir. It is crisp, bone-dry and refreshing with rose-petal and strawberry notes. We will have this bottled just in time for the open house. 350 cases produced. **\$14 per bottle.**

**2005 Vin Gris of Zinfandel:** We had one barrel of Zinfandel rosé that was not needed for the above wine. It is definitely a stand-alone beauty with more of a pink grapefruit character on the nose. 22 cases. **\$14 per bottle**

**2003 Fort Ross Vineyard 'High Slopes' Pinot Noir:** Decreased yields due to somewhat erratic bloomtime weather conditions have led to even higher levels of concentration here than we saw from the 'High Slopes' in 2002. I believe that Pinot Noir's first requirement is to be graceful at reasonable maturity, yet this wine's tight structure and great concentration will reward the patient. The impatient can splash-decant it to glimpse a view of what the future holds. This should be a very long-lived wine. Red

**Whenever you are ready...**

and black fruits, iodine (this is good), and a touch of saffras are the theme here. 150 cases produced. **Release price: \$45 per bottle. Half bottles (limited) also available (\$23).**

**2003 Vin Rouge:** Vinifying small lots from particular sites year after year, one comes to know and expect certain personalities or profiles as a standard by which successive vintages are compared to. We have the fortunate position of fermenting very small batches, then assembling them in a deliberate way during ageing, and finally bottling according to the wines' own schedule *whenever they are ready*. Sometimes we have fermentation lots that do not fit the typical profile because of variations in the vintage character. That was the case with the recent 'Zinfandoodle' where we combined two different vintages of Zinfandel that fought the usual harmony of the OMV. In 2003 we had some Cab lots from my dad's vineyard that did not fit perfectly into either of our Cabernet Sauvignon bottlings, but were delightful as a separate bottling. Calling it simply 'Vin Rouge' (red wine) does not begin to do it justice, but those of you who scored on the 2000 Vin Rouge already understand. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, 100% Scherrer vineyard. 200 cases produced. **\$25/bottle**

**Recent releases worthy of note:** The **2001 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$42)** has just begun to hit its stride after nearly two years in bottle. It received some pretty high praise by the Wine Enthusiast last November (93 points) which probably signals the very beginning of its approachability. I still advocate more cellar ageing for this wine to reach its potential. Nonetheless, having somehow run across a number of open bottles, I can report that it *is* pretty tasty at the dinner table these days, especially with decanting. So you may begin seeing it in restaurants now.

The **2002 Old & Mature Zinfandel (\$28)** has just come into its own as well, also two years after bottling. It is difficult dealing with the general public perception that Zins don't age, when your own *need* a couple of years in bottle to start off, then develop gracefully for quite a few more. We poured some 1995 OMV Zin from magnum at our November open house, only to have our library allocation sold out in about 90 minutes once people saw what it had become. Due to increased call for magnums on most of our wines, we plan to increase the number of those bottled slightly in the future. The April 2006 Food & Wine issue will evidently mention our 2002 OMV Zinfandel (in 750 mL) quite favorably in their Zinfandel report. Mr. Tanzer had a pretty tight bead on this wine almost a year earlier, giving it 90 points and speaking to its structure, restraint and youthfulness.

The **2002 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$35)** has received its share of good press as well. It was Burghound's first domestic 'wine of the month' last May, which I consider quite a compliment, since Mr. Meadows is such an authority on Burgundy and holds Pinot Noir wines to pretty high standards. The **2002 'Laguna' Pinot Noir (\$35)** has not been overlooked either (93 pts, Wine Enthusiast). During recent travels around the country, much to my surprise, I have discovered our wines have quite a solid

**Whenever you are ready...**

reputation among Master Sommeliers, whose understanding of the wines of the world and their use in food service are tested by rigorous written and daunting blind-tasting examinations. While we do not make wines designed to win beauty contests, it is heartening to know some critics and wine service professionals understand and appreciate our efforts.

**The recent 2005 vintage:** According to the headlines, first there were supposedly no grapes (areas that bloomed during ‘unfavorable’ spring weather), then it became a bumper crop (areas that bloomed later, under ‘more favorable’ conditions for pollinization). As the holidays approached, we heard about how ‘perfect’ the vintage was. Perfect? Well, we had a total harvest very close to what we had planned for and the different vineyards were ready to come to the winery in an orderly fashion. We were also able to harvest based on flavors and development rather than being pushed by unfavorable weather, pests, or super-high sugar levels. But perfect? No such thing. However, I *am* very pleased with the young wines, some of which are just finishing up malolactic fermentations. Preliminary blending trials show much promise for all varieties which makes it a very, good vintage indeed.

**Direct shipping changes:** As you may have heard in the news, many of the old roadblocks in the way of interstate commerce have fallen. While we benefit very much from this increased ability to get our wines to many more people, you are the real winner here. You have much more freedom to choose between the increasing number different wines as well as the carrier, and their level of service. We appreciate your support of our wines. Thank you.



<b>Shipping Information. An adult signature is required upon delivery.</b>	750 mL	Half Bottle	Magnum
<b>Delivery</b> to most greater San Francisco Bay Area Residents (including Sacramento area)	\$18/box (full or partial)		
<b>UPS</b> to CA Residents	\$3.00 or \$30/case	\$1.5/bottle	\$6/bottle
<b>UPS</b> to CO, ID, OR, NM or WA	\$3.50 or \$35/case	\$1.75/bottle	\$7/bottle
<b>UPS</b> to IA, IL, MO, NE, TX or WI	\$4.00 or \$40/case	\$2.00/bottle	\$8/bottle
<b>FedEx 2-day</b> to states above plus: GA, D.C., LA, MN, NC, ND, NV, NY, OH, WV, WY or VA	\$6.00 or \$60/case	\$3.00/bottle	\$12/bottle
<b>DHL overnight</b> to any above state plus: Hawaii and Alaska please call Delivery to an address with liquor license: All states	\$7.00 or \$70/case	\$3.50/bottle	\$14/bottle

Note: We are happy to report on the ever expanding shipping progress, though we are now also having to expand our reporting and tax payments to the vairous states. We are required to report shipments and pay sales and/or excise tax to many of the "new" states and many past reciprocal states (i.e., Washington) are now looking to change their policies to collect their share of taxes as well.