

The Problem is...

Opinions on labels seem to be like faces: everyone has one. And over the past few years we have heard an increasing number of 'suggestions' from customers that our label does not do justice to the wine in the bottle. Since our first vintage, we have downplayed our own name, subordinating it to the varietal or type of wine in the bottle as that was the information we felt was most relevant to the wine inside the bottle. At least, it was in our early days. Enter Cogito Creative Works: I could not resist their unsolicited proposal to redesign our label. So after sixteen vintages under the same basic design, we were finally persuaded to consider a stronger brand image, an elegant, uncluttered design and most of all, a style that represents the quality of wine in the bottle. And sorry, there are still no cute animals on the label.

Of course, this isn't as simple a process as you might imagine. In addition to the difficult process of defining what you want your label to communicate as to what is inside the bottle, wine labels also have many requirements. There are very strict rules for what must appear on the label, what must not, as well as how prominent various things may be. The US government reviews each label to assure their regulations are met. Additionally, many states have their own 'label approval' or registration processes (and usually, related fees). There are also international rules on wine labeling which happen to conflict with our Federal rules.

So after many months, I am happy to say that as I write this, we are about to go to print with these new labels. Since this newsletter is too low-tech to include examples here, you can see for yourself from a link on our homepage www.scherrerwinery.com. Our main-line wines will have the main style, with a second, related style for fun stuff like Zinfandoodle, and Dry Rosé (or the wine previously known as ~~Prince, or, I mean~~ Vin Gris). While our kids initially reacted to the change as though their dad might be getting a face transplant (there's an idea), they agreed that it truly is a 'better' label for our wine. I hope you will agree as well (about the label).

Open House and New Releases:

Because of holiday considerations, coordination with other wineries' events, as well as the uncertainty of printing schedules for the new label design, we will have our Spring open house later than the usual first weekend of April. We will be open the two weekends following Easter: **April 13, 14, 15, and 20, 21, and 22 from 10AM to 5 PM each day**. You may pick up any wines ordered now or from last August's Zinfandel futures offering at this event or we will schedule them for shipment. The winery address is **4940 Ross Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472** and the telephone is 707-824-1933 (not at Tiller Lane). A map is included at the end of the newsletter.

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2005 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel: I write this about a week before racking and bottling these Zinfandels, so I should reserve a bit of my enthusiasm for this stuff. However, composite blends of the different barrel types are blowing me away. The wine is both spicy and fruity, with many layers: Red, blue and black fruits, minerality and earthiness that make me anxious to bottle it so I can conveniently take some home. I keep reminding myself that pushing the bottling date out as far as possible is a very good thing for our Zinfandels. 890 cases produced. **Current release price: \$30 per bottle, 24 bottle limit. Half bottles (\$16) and magnums (\$62) also available.**

2005 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel: With a suave texture, and compared to the OMV above, less dark fruits, more stone fruit and earthiness, I am consistently amazed that this vineyard block is physically so close to the OMV blocks. Size (of barrels) may matter, but soil matters more! I used to age a proportion of Shale Terrace Zinfandels in 500L puncheons, but I find that the normal 228L barrels coupled with minimal racking allow perfectly good expression of the stone-fruit signature of this area as well. 220 cases produced. **Current release price: \$25 per bottle**

2006 Dry Rosé (wine previously known as Vin Gris) After nine vintages of this wine, we finally realized that English speakers have a difficult time with the name, so we chose a more pronounceable and descriptive name. Scheduled for bottling just before the open house, I think it is much like the 2005 Vin Gris (Rosé) at this point with its bright acidity, guava and pink grapefruit flavors. New label, different name, same kind of wine. I'd suggest getting some of each, to see what a year in the bottle does for this dry rosé. 220 cases were produced. **\$14 per bottle.**

Numerous other wines have been bottled so recently, I have decided to hold them back until August or November. There are so many recent releases still available that are drinking beautifully, I cannot see letting more brand new wines out the door so prematurely.

Recent releases worthy of note:

Just upon the eve of its release to wine shops and restaurants, the **2002 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$42)** has begun showing itself well enough to rival its predecessor...which is saying a lot. In *The Wine Advocate* issue 168, Mr. Parker wrote: 'The brilliant **2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Scherrer Vineyard Estate** is one of the finest Cabernets produced in this section of Sonoma' [90]. The newly released **2004 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$36)** was identified in the March 2007 issue of *Food & Wine* as one of the top 27 bottles (why that number?) in Ray Isle's article 'Best American Pinot Noir' where he was looking to identify 'amazing value' at different prices. Right now, I think the **2004 Sonoma County Pinot Noir (\$30)** is the steal of the year.

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The **2003 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (sold out)** has received its share of good press. Hosted on erobertparker.com, the Executive Wine Seminars group reported on their blind tasting where the **2002 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (sold out)** was included as by far the least expensive wine in a large blind tasting of formidable company. For what it is worth, it came out number two (by only a tiny margin) to the Rochioli West Block Pinot Noir. To have our wine included, let alone to show so well in such a respectable group brings us quite a smile.

The **2003 Old & Mature Zinfandel (\$28)** will just begin to see restaurant lists as we close in on the last of the **2002** vintage. In last years' *California Grapevine Vol.32, No.2*, Editor Nick Ponomareff had picked both the **2003 OMV** as well as the **2003 Shale Terrace Zinfandel (\$24)** as his personal top two wines from a flight of nine 2003 Zinfandels. While he was out-voted by other members of the panel who were probably looking for 'bigger' wines, those of you who are familiar with his palate, know how consistent he is. Interestingly, ours were the only two with alcohol levels (well) below 15%. I think these 2003's are quintessential 'food zins.' The 2004 zins are no slouch, either. They are just pretty young and bold still. Their time will come soon.

During the past year, we have found our wines selling out faster than before. I have mixed feelings about this, as our wines show their best with a couple of years' bottle time. I have been happy to offer wines on this mailer well ahead of 'general' release, so that you may have an opportunity to come 'back to the well' so to speak, if/when you find yourself drinking them up faster than anticipated. Realizing how much this is appreciated, we will try to continue this as much as possible going forward.

The recent 2006 vintage: Another late, cool vintage found those with patience and without greed rewarded. We saw a somewhat higher underlying botrytis (rot) pressure than in recent vintages. Fortunately, I was able to staff the sorting table with more hands than normal, so we could sift thru the grapes thoroughly in order to assure that sound fruit would make it to the tanks. Malolactic fermentations are running slower than usual as well, partly due to the relatively cold winter we experienced and partly due to a light hand on the thermostat in the cellar. In the end, I am pleased with the vintage overall, and feel that we have made some important advances in our winemaking during the past two vintages that allow us to work with unusual conditions. You are just seeing the beginning of this.

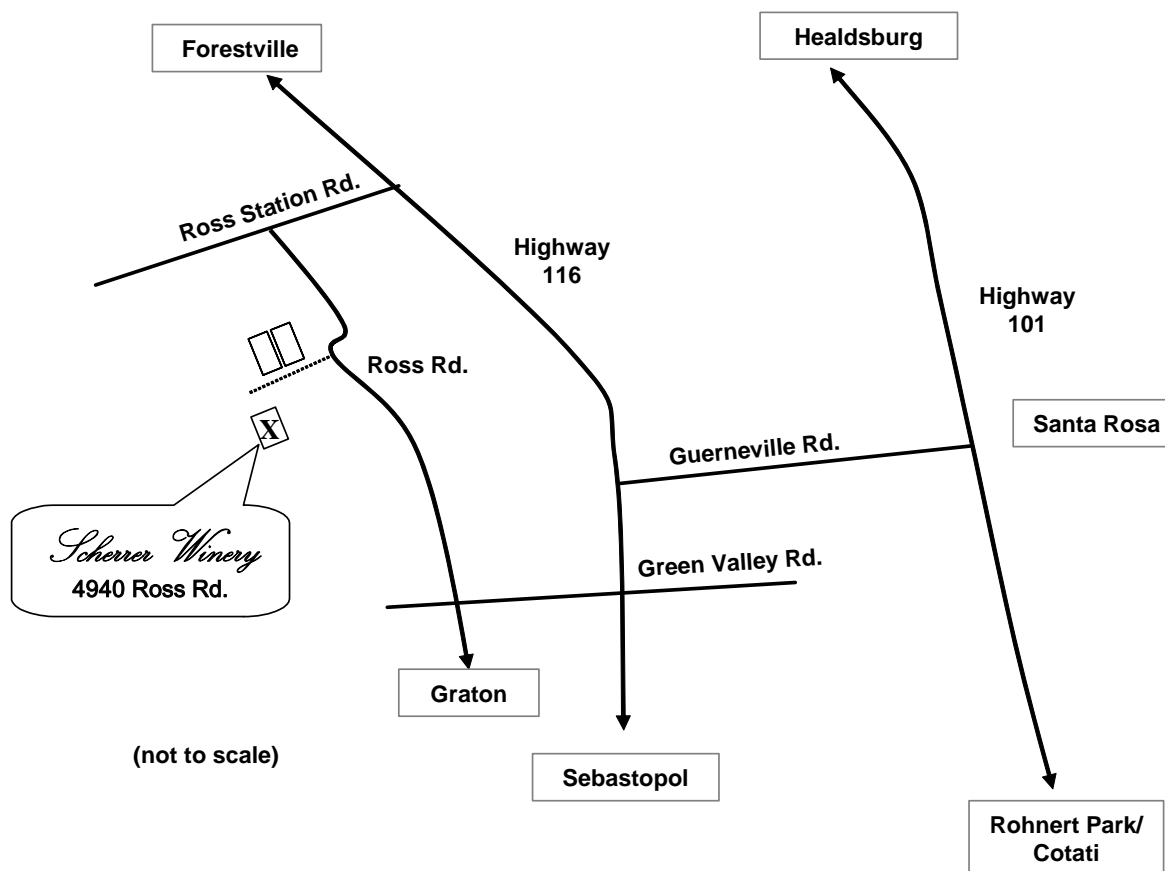
I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with wines from some really nice vineyards in Sonoma County. While it is a lot of work –most of which is could easily be labeled 'drudgery' - it is fairly easy to get up in the morning each day to have another go at it. Without your support none of this would be possible.



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Directions: Below is a map of the area local to the winery. **The winery address is 4940 Ross Road, Sebastopol.** If you get lost, the telephone number at the building itself is (707) 824-1933.

Please drive slowly down the driveway. Children (including our own) will be playing nearby. **The entrance is around the back on the west side of the building.** Parking on the west side on the gravel will now be closer to the entrance, so don't hesitate to drive clockwise around to the other side of the building.



Shipping Information. An adult signature is required.

	750 mL	Half Bottle	Magnum
Delivery to most greater San Francisco Bay Area Residents (including Sacramento area)	\$20/box (full or partial)		
UPS to CA Residents	\$3.00 or \$30/case	\$1.5/bottle	\$6/bottle
UPS to CO, ID, OR, NM or WA	\$3.50 or \$36/case	\$1.75/bottle	\$7/bottle
UPS to IA, IL, MO, NE, TX or WI	\$4.00 or \$42/case	\$2.00/bottle	\$8/bottle
FedEx 2-day to states above plus: FL, GA, D.C., LA, MI, MN, NC, ND, NH, NV, NY, OH, WV, WY or VA	\$6.00 or \$64/case	\$3.00/bottle	\$12/bottle
Fed Ex overnight 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