

The Price of Freedom

Every year, it seems I am either immersed in writing, folding or mailing a newsletter on or around the fourth of July, giving little more than superficial thought to what this national holiday means. Due to various experiences in our family this past year, the choices we make and their long-term consequences have moved to a more prominent position in my own thoughts. I reflect on my self-employment, the creative freedom it allows and the cost as it exacts time from my kids. These reflections inspired me to look back at the winery history...particularly for the many of you who are relatively new to us.

In the mid-1970's, due to a normal teenage interest in alcoholic beverages, my family allowed me to make some wine from the family vineyard and beer at home (under adult supervision, of course). This led to a UC Davis degree as well as concurrent work at a local winery doing the dirtiest and most menial jobs imaginable. In the mid-1980's good friends at Duxoup Wine Works (think Marx Brothers for the pronunciation) inspired me to try my hand at my own label so I negotiated cellar space in lieu of a raise by my then-current employer, Greenwood Ridge Vineyards in Anderson Valley (I got a raise anyway). Greenwood Ridge was supportive of my project and decided to have some Scherrer Zinfandel produced for their label as well. Unfortunately, I had a poor business plan and during the first year I realized I was not yet ready for this project. Greenwood Ridge continues to make a small amount of Scherrer Vineyard Zinfandel to this day.

Enter Dehlinger Winery in the late 1980's. Tom Dehlinger was very supportive of my long-term plans and challenged me to develop a solid business plan, facilitating an important entry into my own project. In return, his winery received my heart and soul for a decade. The final key element in our getting started was from my parents. They allowed me to delay paying them for their fine grapes until we began getting cash flow from our wine sales. In 1997, we were ready to make the move to a facility of our own. In anticipation of this, we were able to add Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay to supplement the Zinfandel we were producing, all from my father's vineyard in Alexander Valley. Dehlinger supported this transition of my focus, allowing me to produce these additional wines in his facility and we parted very amicably after that vintage.

And so after the harvest of 1997, I moved our operation to a corner of an apple packing shed-turned-winery, finally leasing the entire building three years ago. During this past decade, our production grew from just the three varietals from Scherrer Vineyard, to now typically a dozen wines, nearly half of which are Pinot Noir. Total production is now 4000 to 5000 cases. My good friend, Don Bliss helped me whenever I needed a hand (or a finger to dial 911 in the unlikely event of a forklift mistake) throughout this period until he sold his fine vineyard and moved back to his native Texas a little over a year ago. Since then, I have been able to impose on a handful of friends and customers when I have needed help, but still continue to work at the winery pretty much alone most of the year. Judi, my wife, has handled administrative and compliance for the winery for over 5 years, keeping me out of trouble with bureaucrats and making sure we are able to conform with the complex and changing direct shipping laws. And then there's the organization of so many systems...

Because we make so many different bottlings now, it is difficult to decide just what schedule to offer them for sale through this newsletter. We usually offer wines here well ahead of any commercial release to wine shops and restaurants since most of you know what you want and are cellaring these wines for yourselves according to your own tastes. Some of you who have been with us for years may note that we have altered

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our 'typical' release schedule a bit this year. And for good reason. With the exception of Zinfandel futures picked up each spring shortly after their bottling, I think we need to allow slightly more time in bottle for some of the other wines before we offer them here. They will all eventually make it, but holding onto them is the price we pay for making age-worthy wines.

Open House: Barrel samples of our new 2006 Zinfandel futures offering and our fall releases will be available at our annual **Open House and Barrel tasting, August 3, 4 and 5 from 10 to 5** at the production facility, **4940 Ross Road, Sebastopol (707-824-1933)**. As usual, this is not advertised to the general public. Only those of you on our mailing list and their guests are invited to this 'private party.' The least crowded times to come should be on Friday, and early in the day on Sunday. Bring an ice chest or at least a styrofoam shipping container for bottles you plan to take home. Otherwise, we will wait until October-November for shipments.

FUTURES

2006 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel futures: This rich and seductive wine came from a Zinfandel vintage that I was initially concerned would be very tannic from tasting the grapes before harvest. Since acidity and tannins work synergistically on our mouth to give 'angularity', I chose to wait for both acidity and tannins to 'soften' a bit more on the vine before harvesting. Fortunately, sugar levels did not soar, and the gamble paid off. After fermentation, I was careful to press only as thoroughly as each wine lot required in order to obtain balance between the angles and the 'round' things. The resulting wine is thickly textured, but not at all cloying. There is sufficient structure to carry the 'core' of this wine on a straight path, supporting the red, black and blue fruit patches of its journey. It seems more generous, substantial and 'tangible' than the personally compelling 2005 vintage I have been excited about as well. Same fruit, slightly different posture. It's more reminiscent of the 2004 without being a carbon-copy. Remember those? About 1000 cases to be produced. *Estimated retail at release: \$30 per bottle. Futures price: \$235 per case. Futures released April 2007*

2006 Shale Terrace Zinfandel futures: Normally, I try not to talk up this bottling, as there is not much of it made and I want to make sure that people who always buy this are protected ('wish-list' orders are normally all filled, though). At the risk of causing a run on this, I must admit this vintage of Shale Terrace is my favorite since the 1999 vintage from this block, and may very well exceed that benchmark. Very mildly earthy, still with a hint of that 'stone fruit' thing, this has that flinty texture that is essentially unheard of in California Zinfandels. About 180 cases to be produced. *Estimated retail at release: \$26 per bottle. Futures price: \$205 per case. Futures released April 2007*

FALL RELEASES (all three with the new label)

2004 Fort Ross 'High Slopes' Pinot Noir: *Good news:* This is the most concentrated and long-lived 'High Slopes' we have made. Black and red fruits are buried within the taut structure of both integrated acidity and ripe tannins. The yields were extremely small, and while typical for this site, it was about half the level of the already 'short' 2003 vintage. It was aged in barrel for a full 24 months before bottling in mid-September 2006. *Bad news:* It is our last vintage from this fine vineyard. Fate saved the best for last. Cellar this wine like red Burgundy. 70 cases produced \$60 per bottle. Half bottles \$32.

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2005 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay: After 17 months in barrel, this wine soaked up all the good stuff imaginable from the yeast lees, giving it a well-stuffed initial impression. Typical of our Chardonnays, I expect great development in bottle over the next few years. However, it is quite impressive at this point, even if not yet perfectly aged. There are minerally tones that play tag with the floral and toasty nuances on the initial aromas. Once in the mouth, it transforms into a star fruit-infused crème brûlée finish with enough acidity and mineral-feel to keep things very interesting. 196 cases produced. *\$25 per bottle. Half bottles \$13. Magnums \$52*

Zinfandoodle version 4.5: This is a new non-vintage Zinfandel bottling from vintages 2004 and 2005 that did not fit perfectly into the 'Old & Mature Vines' bottling. We did this in 2005 with 'leftovers' from the 2002/2003 vintage when we first introduced Zinfandoodle. I really wanted to call this new release 'Zindows 4.5' but did not think Microsoft would find the same humor in it as me (Bill, give a call when you have time). Actually, if you were to blend the OMV and Shale Terrace Zinfandels, you would get something that has both ripe black fruit as well as that stone fruit thing...but the textures would clash. Zinfandoodle has these elements, but without the clash. Go figure. Local restaurants were anxious to get this on their lists this spring, so we let them have some early. It is going fast, so we felt we had better offer this here in case that accelerates. Very smooth and inviting, it is terribly under priced, but what can you do with a non-vintage wine that is not Champagne or Port? 400 cases produced. *\$18 per bottle.*

The fall releases will be available for pick up at the August open house. If you schedule pick-up for your wine and are not able to make it we will make arrangements to ship the wine to you and the shipping costs will be added to your invoice. Shipments of all releases will vary depending on when the weather in your area will be kinder to the wine.

The November 'Library' open house: Some of our new releases will likely include the 2004 Cabernet Sauvignons, probably the 2005 Sonoma County Pinot Noir, 2005 Helfer Chardonnay, etc. Plus, we will do our yearly reassessment of our library and offer a few bottles of selected older vintages and magnums.

So far, the initial conditions of the growing season in Sonoma county is...as usual...diverse. Generally, the clusters are smaller and looser than normal, but it all depends on location, variety and timing of bloom with the vagaries of springtime weather. It should be an earlier vintage than we have had lately, which offers more choices at harvest.

Pruning the mailing list: In order to reduce clutter in people's mailboxes and to make room for people new to us, we will make another pruning of our mailing list. If we have not heard from you in three years, but you wish to continue getting the mailer, please let us know so we can continue to keep in touch. Any order placed within three years or an email to info@scherrerwinery.com will do the trick.

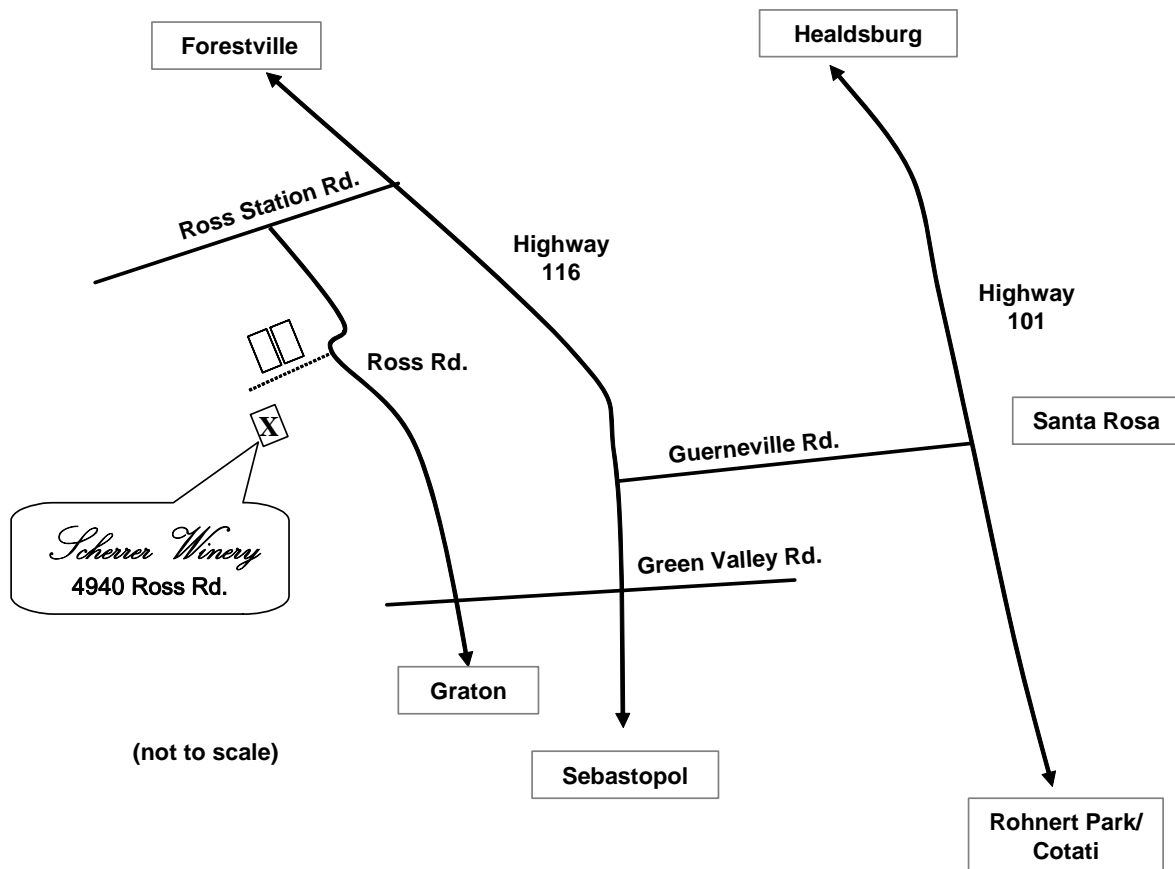
Thanks for your continued support. It allows us the creative freedom to do what we love.



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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 is 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 upon delivery.

	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: GA, D.C., FL, LA, MI, MN, NC, ND, NH, NV, NY, OH, WV, WY or VA	\$6.00 or \$64/case	\$3.00/bottle	\$12/bottle
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