

Mixing it up

One of the things I love about Sonoma County is the complexity created by the wrinkled nature of our landscape with its myriad of soil pockets and differing effects of the Pacific Ocean fog. In a given vintage, even in a relatively small vineyard the size of my Dad's, the same variety can express itself quite differently. This gives me the opportunity to combine like-minded elements to echo, harmonize and to draw out personality traits that are unique to the region if not to the specific site...or perhaps draw them out into multiple distinct pictures if that seems the best end. Sometimes this happens within one property, but often the best results arise with a combination of sites. Mixing it up to some degree is often exactly what it takes to bring out the best expression of an area.

Some vintages may have more local consistency, but due to larger scale weather events like heat or rain that affect the general area, we greatly benefit from having a broader canvas to work with. The 2011 vintage was a great example of this. The vineyards that ripened normally before the rains made lovely, typical wines. Our Zinfandels, Chardonnays and Russian River Valley Pinot Noir fall into this category. Those sites that ripen later in the season made really nice but rather different wines than they normally do. In those cases, careful handling both in the vineyard and in the earliest stages at the winery created sound wines with stunningly gorgeous aromatics, lighter body and higher acidity than usual. We were fortunate to have been able to capitalize on their best aspects bringing out the beauty of wines by blending within or between appellations and on either side of the rain's onset to get things just right.

Speaking of larger scale weather events, California's drought is very much on everyone's minds. Despite the 60% of average rainfall, the vineyards on well-drained soils of sufficient depth (pretty much everything we work with) started out the year with soil moisture at full-capacity. The vines look great. Although the crop size in the Zinfandel and much of the Russian River Valley Pinot Noir appear to be a bit smaller with tinier berries and lighter clusters, it is very encouraging to see such happy plants in general. I wish it was the same for all farmers of different crops through the state.

Open House

On **August 1st, 2nd and 3rd**, from **10 AM to 5 PM** we are pleased to have our summer open house with barreled Zinfandel available for tasting and futures purchase, as well as some new offerings of recently bottled wines. The winery address is 4940 Ross Road, Sebastopol, 95472. If you get lost, the telephone number at the building itself is 707-824-1933.

Zinfandel Futures

2013 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel Futures

The 2013 vintage in Sonoma County gave us wines with about everything one could ask for: great aromatics, good structure, savory-ness and richness of fruit flavor. The Scherrer vineyard epitomizes this, especially with the Zinfandel. Even with healthy (yet not excessive) yields, the plants were in good balance and fruit ripened at about a perfect rate as far as I'm concerned. Flavors (progression and intermixing of red, blue and black fruits) and the components of structure (acidity and tannin) evolved in wonderful synchronicity on the vine. There is good concentration of material in the wine's core, yet the exterior remains inviting – a good thing for extending the 'happy-drinking window.'

This combination of synchronicity reminds me very much of the 1997 Zinfandel vintage. There is a happy inter mixing of blueberry, raspberry and blackberry with a nice background nuance of pie crust and a hint of earthiness like digging in the garden. While a bit more fruit-forward than the 2012, it has great, juicy acidity and just enough tannin to counterbalance its generosity. About 1200 cases produced. *Estimated release price: \$36 per bottle. Futures price: \$270 per case.*

2013 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel Futures

Even though I have been working with this small parcel since 1996, I am still struck by how differently it expresses Zinfandel in this low-clay soil. Typically much more about stone-fruit than black fruit, more recent vintages have seemed to show some of the traditional Zinfandel elements as well. This year there is still a hint of the nectarine skin, but there is a bit more of a plummy side to it. It still has that full texture and that minerally sensation on the finish. Again, this reminds me quite a bit of the 1997 vintage as well.

While we typically sell out of this well before the open house, we had a slightly higher crop level than 2012 (10% more) so we might just have some left. If you think you are interested, be sure and place your order well before the open house. If you change your mind after you've tried it at the open house, not a problem, just let us know. If you've not ordered any Shale before and would like to, be sure and submit your "Wish List" order, we take them in the order received after the "First Crack" has passed for those that have purchased in the past. About 220 cases produced. *Estimated release price: \$36 per bottle. Futures price: \$270 per case*

Summer Releases

2010 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir

This is a rather elegant expression of this special vineyard just in sight of the ocean. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have selected the clones for the initial planting, knowing that this site was "on the fringe" climate wise and that any given year could be very different from the next. This is one of those cases where having an array of plant material allows the winemaker everything needed within one property. 'Swan,' 'Pommard,' '828,' and 'Calera' seem to have a sweet spot here in either warmer or cooler vintages. Since we get both kinds even so close to the sea, it made sense to have an array like this available. The characteristics that one clone usually shows in the cooler vintages ends up being displayed instead by another clone in a rare warmer vintage. This just tells me that these characteristics are the site being expressed through a happy plant. Like the OMV Zinfandel, not everything goes into it – just what needs to.

The 2010 has not only red and blue fruits, but it also has some interesting savory notes as well. Even though the clonal mixture that was optimum this year was very different, it reminds me very much of the 2008 vintage except that it is a little mellower in its youth as it has begun to present itself in a unified way rather than a sum of parts at this early stage. Pinot Noir's strength is its subtlety. 100 cases produced. *\$75 per bottle, \$160 per magnum.*

2011 Sonoma County Pinot Noir

While primarily from the Green Valley and Russian River Valley, this really reflects the crisper side of the region in this very cool season. It is a careful blend of both pre-rain and post rain material that compliment and support each other. I love having this flexibility to achieve balance without manipulating the wines. The aromatics are very powerful and geared toward perfumes and higher-notes rather than dark fruits. Very mouth-watering, it is fantastic at the table and is perfect with salmon. It takes the attractive sides of the 2008 vintage of this to a whole new level. Yes, I'd look forward to another vintage like this if that is in the weather cards. 360 cases produced *\$36 per bottle*

2012 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay

What a kind growing season that was. Nothing much to punctuate the way the seasons unfolded to the next one. Happy vines making happy wine. While only a slight touch richer than the racy 2011 vintage, I have been harvesting this earlier than just a few years ago because I value that raciness that the acidity brings. So one could extrapolate between the 2010 and 2011 vintages and come up with a very good estimate of this wine. There's a nice balance of perky citrus notes and apples, complicated toasty, nutty notes and a long, graceful mouth-watering finish. 140 cases produced *\$36 per bottle, \$20 per half bottle, \$78 per magnum*

Reflections on Recent Wines

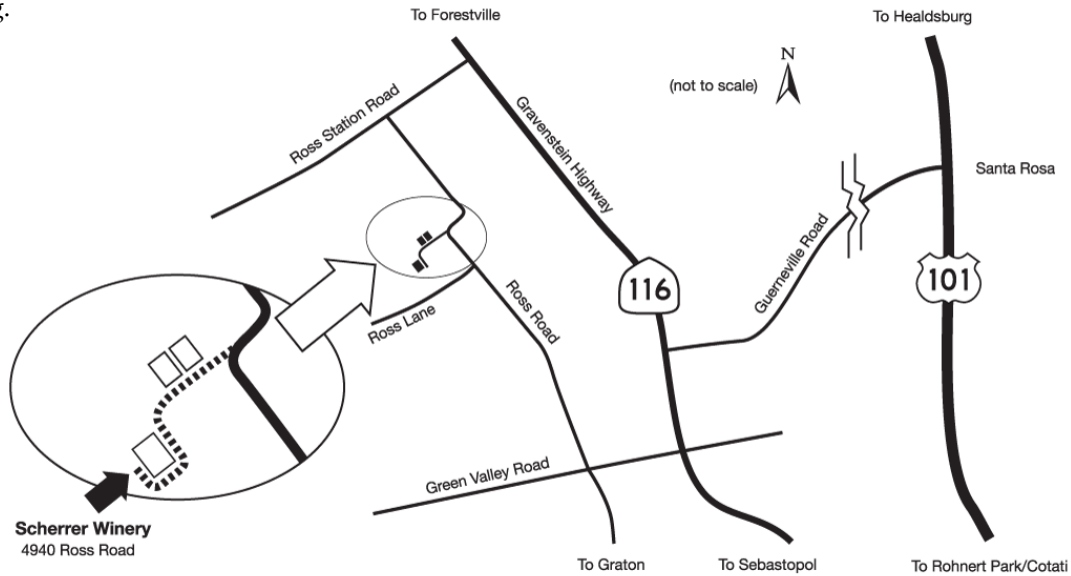
The 2008 Platt vineyard Pinot Noir (\$75) is continuing to impress visitors at the winery. We made more 2013 Dry Rosé (\$22) than ever so don't be bashful about filling the case (or case-plus for ground shipments) with more of that. The 2009 Sonoma County Pinot Noir (\$35) enjoying its recent debut in restaurants and wine shops as is the 2010 Russian River Valley bottling (\$46). The mellow 2006 Scherrer Cabernet Sauvignon (\$62) is more firmly embedded in its happy spot for current drinking. The 'new to the trade' 2009 Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$38) is also showing quite well when you are in the mood for youth.

Again, thanks for your continued support. It allows us the creative freedom to do what we love. I am unable to fully communicate this in such a small space.



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. While it's tempting to zip along now that our neighbors have paved it, children may be playing nearby and there are a couple of blind corners around buildings. The entrance and our gravel parking area are on the west side, so don't hesitate to drive clockwise around to the other side of the building.



Shipping Information

We will be happy to ship your order to any of the following states when weather is wine friendly.

An adult Signature is required upon delivery.

	Case	Case Plus	Half Case
	12 x 750's 6 x mags	12 to 15 x 750's	6 x 750's 12 x Half Bottles 3 x mags
GSO Delivery to CA residents (recommended), NV and AZ (if you visited within the last 12 months)	\$20/box	\$24/box	\$14/box
UPS to CA residents	\$30/box	\$32/box	\$18/box
UPS to CO, ID, OR, MT, NM, NV or WA	\$36/box	\$38/box	\$22/box
UPS to AL, DC, FL, IA, IL, IN, GA, KS, LA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, SC, TN, TX, VA, WI or WY	\$48/box	\$50/box	\$28/box
FedEx 2-day to above states plus: FL, HI	\$96/box	\$108/box	\$54/box
Overnight to any above state. Delivery to any state address with liquor license. HI or Alaska higher	\$124/box	\$136/box	\$72/box

