

‘Quantum Theory of Style’

Those of us old enough to drink wine have seen at least one significant change in the most popular style in clothing, hairstyles, music, etc. Many of us have seen several complete stylistic changes that seem to come full-circle. My own ‘flannel shirt and jeans uniform’ has now made three appearances at approximately 20 year intervals with different names. In the ‘70’s it was simply ‘worker’s wear.’ In the ‘90’s the Seattle Grunge Rock Scene brought it back accessorized by uncombed hair and infrequently shaven faces. The current manifestation is with full beards and/or well-waxed handlebar moustaches. Always the rebel, I chose to channel Zappa (who was brilliant) for the facial hair.

So it goes with wine. The most recent trend of the popular style inching toward higher alcohol/higher ripeness beginning in the 1990’s led to a natural and expected reaction of favoring lower alcohol/lower ripeness wines in certain quarters. However, rather than the pendulum gently swinging back thru the happy & balanced middle where we have been, it looks like a quantum leap from one extreme to the other. Interestingly, some of the very producers who were on the vanguard of the race to ripier and richer suddenly ‘saw the light’ and led the way to leaner and greener pastures certain that their [now current] viewpoint is the most “correct”.

Lemme ‘splain how my viewpoint evolved. Right after High School and concurrent with University studies, I worked at Field Stone Winery where Andre Tchelistcheff was our consultant for much of those years. He directed us to purchase and taste certain classic wines in order to have a frame of reference for our own work. We were not charged to copy those wines. Instead, we were subliminally inspired by them, seeing the different expressions of the vinifera varieties we were working with in different locations. It took me years to fully understand this message (some of us move slowly). But the experience did a lot to calibrate my palate even without my realizing it at the time.

In most of California there is generally a fair bit of leeway in harvesting decisions that allow the wine to grow slightly plumper or slimmer. But the essential core character is determined by the site and the choice of plant material. It’s not about the wine maker pulling levers and twisting dials in order to sculpt the wine into any shape that might be the most marketable at the moment from whatever grape material that happens to be in the bucket. Winemaking is less about chisel work and more about polishing. At its best, it’s about understanding what the site, region and vintage have to offer and respecting those intrinsic qualities. For some of us, it’s also about gaining an understanding of how that respect is rewarded during the wines’ trajectory after bottling. This is a long-term proposition with little immediate external reward. And it is the major reason I have invested so much in our library program. You can talk all you want about whatcha got. Sometimes you just gotta show it.

Open House

We will have this large and diverse set of new releases to show at the April open house. The dates are: **April 8 - 10, and April 15 - 17 from 10 am to 5 pm each day.** Everything listed below will be open for tasting, whether already sold out or not. You may pick up any wines ordered now or from last August's 2014 Zinfandel futures offering at this event or we will schedule them for shipment.

New Releases

2014 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel

When considering the quality of a vineyard site, one important thing I look for is good soil drainage. It is pretty much a universal quality of the top vineyard sites in the world (with a very few exceptions in certain vintages). As I said last year in context of the low rainfall years, these well drained sites soak the water deep into the soil profile making very efficient use of what rainfall there is. The flip side to this is that in wetter years, excess rainfall is able to move through more quickly and allow oxygen into in the root zone. In short, these well drained sites are less affected by extreme conditions. It's not rocket science, it's more common sense. Vineyards like my father's that have stood the test of time tend to have these characteristics.

When I wrote about this wine for the Futures offering last summer, I was very excited about its potential. Upon re-evaluating this wine on the way to the bottling tank and at bottling, my enthusiasm has only grown stronger. These well established vines on well-drained soil are in perfect balance with the environment, producing no more fruit than they can bring to maturity in a given year (sometimes less). In dry years the grapes have amazing concentration and structure to deliver great pleasure over many, many years. Not only did this vintage lend itself to our stylistic pocket of relative restraint and balance of elements, but it has sufficient 'juicy, up-front fruit' to allow earlier term enjoyment, especially with foods that pair well with wines having good structure.

Antonio Galloni recently visited and tasted thru the lineup. I'll let him describe his take on the wine from barrel prior to bottling: "The 2014 Zinfandel Old & Mature Vines Scherrer Vineyard is a wine with tremendous potential. The flavors are bright, focused and wonderfully nuanced throughout. Hints of lavender, violet and plum add further complexity, but it is the total package that really impresses here. (91-94 points)" What it may lack in quantity is made up for it in concentration. 493.5 cases produced *\$38 per bottle, \$21 half bottles, \$80 magnums.*

2014 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel

Often, I describe this parcel as Zinfandel that wanted to be Pinot Noir. While it still demonstrates its signature stone fruit perfume, there is a haunting rich Pinot Noir-like character to the mid palate and finish. Some recent vintages have demonstrated more of a dark bramble berry nuance. But this vintage is more about the Zinfandel that dresses up like Pinot Noir and looks pretty good doing so. 190 cases produced. *Sold out on futures (it figures).*

2015 Dry Rosé, Sonoma County

This is our continued work with Grenache and Syrah in the pink form. Percentages may vary, being 30-40% Grenache but style and roles of varieties remain consistent. This vintage was 36% Grenache. The trick is to find the proper proportions of the two varieties and the magic is that neither one dominates. The Grenache brings high-toned perfumes and laser-beam acidity that complement the Syrah's plummy broader expression. I am not looking for something that is super floral or fruity. Rather, I am looking for something that is just understated enough to keep out of the way of whatever you have decided to eat with it. Like a duet singing in harmony, the main melody line

should be dominant.

As usual, bitter, salty foods, the pink seafoods, tomato/garlic based preparations are the melody that this rosé best harmonizes with in its youth. Maybe due to the drier year, this vintage is slightly more assertive and concentrated than the past couple of years. But it is still 'in the pocket.' 220 cases produced. *\$22 per bottle.*

2012 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

Our style of Cabernet Sauvignon is rather latent, generally needing a period of years after bottling for the wine to achieve its varietal and regional destiny. However, there are certain vintages where a rather hedonistic youth leads to graceful maturity. This wine represents just that. I have abused young bottles over the course of days, sipping daily with food, watching its resilience to the slow oxygen exposure developing a fast and lasting friendship with this bottling.

Besides the typical cassis thing, I see a 'deciduous and fir forest underbrush after the first rains' along with a black fruit/sage interplay that makes for interesting and pleasant table-side company. Fruit vs. non-fruit elements are in perfect alignment with the balance of angles and rounds. It's important to stress here that to me, achieving dynamic tension, balance and hedonistic joy are important factors in great wine as much as it is in individual life and social government. Yes, this is truly special. 160 cases produced. *\$55 per bottle, \$28 per half bottle, \$114 per magnum.*

2012 King Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley

This site is in the Santa Rosa plain, between Sebastopol and Santa Rosa on a fairly clay-like soil in the Huichica series. It warms more slowly than the Goldridge soils in the Spring and tends toward ripeness in the later part of the season for this variety. The daytime peak temperatures during the summer are a bit higher than those closer to the ocean, but being harvested later, the temperatures around harvest are often cooler which is a very important stage for the personality of the vintage.

I find that this Pommard clone planted using more conventional techniques responds well to its situation, making a distinctly different statement for the variety in our overall region. It tends toward more earthy, lusty Gevrey-like expression. It gains its 'angles' side of the balance equation more from tannin and a little less from acidity than the more westerly sites making it a perfect companion for lamb or even beef. The texture is quite full and round yet still finishes with an upward trajectory and very and long echo of the upfront flavors. It is carefully farmed by my friend Lee Martinelli, Jr. and is owned by my good friends Ben and Carla King who are all a joy to work with. 340 cases produced. *\$46 per bottle.*

2012 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

Carrying on with the Burgundy comparisons as shorthand, this is more Côte de Beaune than Gevrey. Nice earth tones are there but also red cherry notes are integrated throughout. It floats effortlessly across the palate and makes itself comfortable there in its own gentle, graceful way. I am often asked how much whole cluster (entire clusters of grapes rather than destemmed) I use when vinifying our Pinot Noirs because of the herbal, spicy nuances they have. And the answer is always the same: 0%. This statement is often met with disbelief and questions. I used to be a big whole cluster advocate in the fermentation tanks in the 1990's. But with the sites I work with, I don't think it is as appropriate or will be successful in every vintage. I think it is possible to allow the fruit's intrinsic herbal, spicy notes and high toned perfumes to be expressed thru other means that have more to do with timing and nuances of conducting the fermentation than anything as potentially inappropriate or overpowering such as employing some whole clusters. 250 cases produced. *\$68 per bottle, \$140 per magnum*

2012 Calypso Vineyard Syrah, Green Valley

Admittedly, I love this variety when it expresses its best characteristics: Hedonism and nuance in equal measure. I have come to see 2012 as a very good vintage in Sonoma County overall, favoring the later, more tannic varieties a bit more when compared to vintages just before and following. Green and black olive nuances give way to seductive perfumes and haunting dark, tarry bass notes. The mouth is very full and round but reined in by appropriate acidity and tannin (structure). Not at all sweet, it is simply very round, full and engaging and in balance with its angular side. Aging for three years on its lees in older cooperage without racking gives the wine plenty of texture and subtle nuance without robbing its trust fund of oxygen appetite for the long-term proposition for its bottle voyage. Lavender, herbal and floral notes really gain with time in the glass as do those sneaky red fruit nuances that make us salivate. This site being a slightly warm pocket in a very cool region defines the parameters. As we have seen, not every vintage is warm enough or dry long enough into the fall to make this kind of wine. But we will gladly accept those rare vintages for the vintages where this is possible and make more rosé when it is extremely cool or the fall rains begin earlier than usual. 67 cases produced. *\$45 per bottle.*

Very Recent Releases

The benefit of my system of staggered release between the mailing list and the wholesale trade is that you get to sample at the newest offerings here, with enough time to determine what you need more of knowing with our larger bottlings it will be around for a while before it disappears. Restaurants and wine shops get the benefit of my holding their wines until they begin to deliver what they promise. I get the benefit of not having to compromise my long-term stylistic vision simply to stay in business.

These past few months the 2011 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$46) and the Scherrer 2013 Chardonnay (\$38) have been showing really impressively the past few months. The 2011 Pinot Noir in particular proves that painting a vintage with broad strokes has its limitations and misses some very bright points. The lustier 2010 Big Brother Pinot Noir (\$55) is a nice contrast to the 2008 Platt's (\$85) more elegant, age-resolved, yet still tightly wound core. The last few cases of fall-released 2014 Dry rosé of Syrah (\$20) show this wine really in fine form. 2009 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$60) is still rather young and primary yet is elegant enough to be drinking perfectly at this early stage. For something more akin to the newly released 2012 with a bit of bottle time, I would suggest the 2010 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$58).

Just as it is hitting restaurants and wine shops, the 2013 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel (\$36) is presenting itself perfectly for this early stage: Mr. Galloni also describes this wine on his recent visit, tasted alongside the 2014. "The Zinfandel Old & Mature Vines Scherrer Vineyard is once again one of Fred Scherrer's most distinctive wines in 2013. A wine of real character and personality, the 2013 is endowed with superb depth. Leather, smoke, spice, dried herb and tobacco add an attractive savory element. (93 points)"

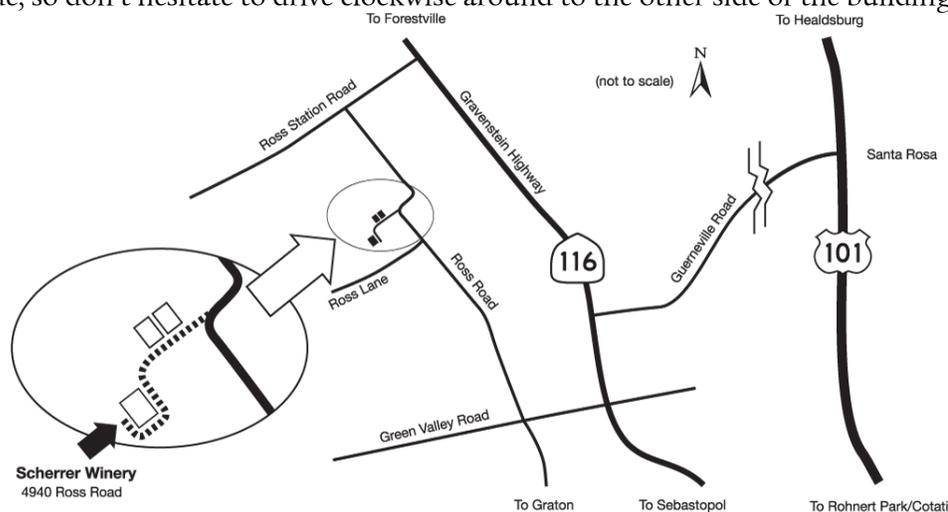
As always, thank you for your support. It is what allows me to do this, supports our family and the growers we work with.



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, 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.

	Case: 12 x 750 mL 24 x 375 mL 6 x 1.5 L	Per bottle (750 mL equivalent)
Pick up is available during Winery Open House events or by appointment	NC	
Golden State Overnight (recommended) to CA, NV and AZ	\$21/box	\$1.75
Ground to CA, AZ	\$30/box	\$2.5
Ground to CO, ID, OR, MT, NM, NV or WA	\$36/box	\$3
Ground to AL, DC, FL, IA, IL, IN, GA, KS, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, SC, TN, TX, VA, WI or WY	\$48/box	\$4
FedEx 2-day to above states plus: HI, AK	\$96/box	\$8
Overnight to any above state. Delivery to any address with liquor license.	\$144/box	\$12

MAILING	SHIPPING	
Name	Name	
Street	Company Name	Residential <input type="checkbox"/>
City, State, Zip Code	Street	
Daytime Phone	City, State, Zip Code	
e-mail:	Delivery Phone	
I am over 21, Date of Birth:	Shipping Notes	

New Releases	Price	Quantity	Amount
2015 Dry Rosé (Grenache & Syrah)	\$22 / bottle		
2014 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel	\$38 / bottle		
	\$21 / half bottle		
	\$80 / magnum		
2012 King Family Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$46 / bottle		
2012 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$68 / bottle		
	\$140 / magnum		
2012 Calypso Vineyard Syrah	\$45 / bottle		
2012 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon	\$55 / bottle		
	\$28 / half bottle		
	\$114 / magnum		
Some Current Wines	Price	Quantity	Amount
2014 Dry Rosé of Syrah	\$20 / bottle		
2013 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay	\$38 / bottle		
2011 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir	\$46 / bottle		
2010 Big Brother Pinot Noir	\$55 / bottle		
2013 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel	\$36 / bottle		
2009 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon	\$60 / bottle		
	Subtotal		
Discount on wine for total orders of 12 or more bottles		-10%	
	Subtotal		
Sales Tax: Pick up 8.25% Shipping: AZ, CA, DC, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, LA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI			%
Choose <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up at Open House or <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping method and cost:			
Total			

Payment: Visa / MasterCard American Express Check

Card #	Expires:	Security Code:
Signature:	Date:	