

‘When less is more’

It is interesting that in the English language our term for producing wine implies a very active role on the part of the people involved. I remember when studying French in college, I was frustrated by the lack of literal translation of the English word ‘winemaker.’ There were French terms that translated to ‘manager’, ‘cellar master,’ ‘grower,’ ‘enologist,’ etc. But the direct translation of our term remained elusive.

As the years passed, I began to understand that for me, winemaking is more about providing the right conditions for my desired outcome rather than ‘acting upon’ or ‘adding to’ the grape material. Lately, I have refined the way I go about things even more to allow the reds, rosés and of course, Chardonnays to remain on initial lees in barrel for the entire time between pressing and bottling. (The one exception is the Zinfandel where I make the actual blend before showing the barrels at the futures offering). The parts of the process I have refined are those prior to going to barrel: harvest timing, extraction/maceration strategy, pressing considerations, levels of solids, barrel choices, etc. Besides using less electricity, water and physical wear on my part, more importantly the wines really seem to respond positively to this. With a third vintage of Pinot Noir going to bottle this summer, I am pretty confident that this will continue as my long-term stylistic gestalt.

Open House

We will have this large and diverse set of new releases to show at the April open house. The dates are: **March 31, April 1-2, and April 7-9 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 2015 Zinfandel futures offering at this event or we will schedule them for shipment.

New Releases:

2015 Scherrer Vineyard ‘Old & Mature Vines’ Zinfandel

A very nice mixture of red, black and blue fruits is still on the forefront yet anchored/balanced by fresh loam and savory nuances. On the mouth it gently takes over command in a very sneaky way. It is a ‘plushly’ textured middle-weight wine with lots of flavor. Bright acidity gives just enough of an upward trajectory to the finish. My favorite part is a sense of transparency to the flavors: Nothing too assertive, everything in its place taking turns shining, for a moment. What it may lack in quantity due to the lower crop is made up for in quality and grace. About 540 cases produced.
\$38 per bottle, \$21 per half bottle, \$80 per magnum

2015 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel

Still showing that stone-fruit/earthy thing it did last summer, this has hardly budged a bit in the months it has been in barrel. What it has gained over this time is a plum blossom perfume that is very attractive and offsets the stony-earthy side of its personality. It is very mouth-watering and if you listen hard you can hear it speak its name from the mountain tops: 'I am Shale Terrace. Hear me roar!'

In an instance of where more is better, I was pleasantly surprised as I was putting the final blend together that there is slightly more Shale Terrace this year than I expected when we made the futures offering. So for the first time in quite a while, there is a small amount of Shale Terrace available for retail. About 144 cases produced. *\$38 per bottle*

2016 Dry Rosé, Sonoma County

As usual in our spring Rosé of Syrah and Kick Ranch Grenache, the percentage of Grenache is just on the upper end of our typical range of 30-40%. I regularly re-evaluate the blend as I get most of the barrels blended. What I am looking for is a perfect balance of high-toned nuance vs. richness lending itself to a more slender presentation. Delicate aromas of guava and a perfume like cotton-candy give way to a brisk acidity, slender but firm core of red fruit, mineral texture and plum skin. If you liked the 2015 vintage, you will love this 2016. I wish we could make more of this. But I cannot bring myself to compromise the spell this casts. 320 cases produced. *\$22 per bottle*

2013 King Vineyard Pinot Noir, RRV

Both the soils and the nuance of climate vary somewhat from the vineyards that make up our Russian River Valley blend. When I began working with this site, it was a surprise that it did not fit perfectly in that blend. Now, I revel in its uniqueness, thinking of it as 'a different kind of good.'

All from what is called 'Pommard' clone (a long-time workhorse in this region), it has a fuller body and more dark and earthy tones than our Russian River Valley bottling. As I said last year, it gains its 'angles' side of the balance equation more from tannin and a little less from acidity than the more westerly sites in the Russian River area making this wine a perfect companion for lamb or even beef. Another example of less being more, this was also racked zero times from the time it was barreled after pressing until bottling. The extra time on yeast lees really envelops any edges to the substantial tannins this clone/site possesses. More of the savory, Gevery-like characteristics are here as a result. Dark fruits, fresh earth, savory/saline notes and a long finish are in store. It drinks really well at the moment and should do so for another 5-10 years perhaps. *\$46 per bottle.*

2013 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

I feel fortunate to have been invited to work with this vineyard since its early development over 15 years ago. With the multiple clones and vineyard blocks I have been vinifying, there are multiple expressions of each fermentation lot. What I have seen is a real classy, polished subtlety and transparency that is quite compelling. While the site is in an overall very cool location, in sight of the Pacific Ocean, it can still be subject to significant warm periods at harvest. Being capable of harvesting quickly is a real asset so that the fruit can become perfectly ripe, retaining nuance and layers rather than leaning toward goopy dark fruits which result from over ripe fruit.

As another example of remaining on the lees the entire time in barrel, this wine enjoys a perfect level of non-fruit to balance the beautiful red and blue fruits in the aromas. Texturally, it possesses enough of the 'rounds' (glycerol and mannoproteins) to balance the 'angles' (tannin and especially,

acidity). Taking the example of King, above as Gevery-like, Platt is more of a Volnay in its presentation of restrained energy and gentle persistence. Aromas of tree blossom perfume, red and blue fruits plus a little rained-on concrete aroma begin the journey. They follow through gracefully and as they weave in and out of center stage with each other so does the acidity and body of the wine take turns as well. The wine transitions very gracefully to the finish which ends up on an important upward note due to welcome gentle acidity getting the last word in. 300 cases produced. *\$70 per bottle, \$142 per magnum.*

2014 Kick Ranch Grenache

Working with Grenache has been a fun learning process for me since 2011. I find that it 'plays well' with Syrah as a red *and* a pink wine. In some vintages, such as 2013 it is perfect alone as a red wine. 2012 welcomed a substantial amount of Syrah, while this 2014 was spot-on with a very modest amount. I love the interplay of perfumes that these varieties have. In fact, it seems that just a slight touch of Syrah can sometimes accentuate the perfumes already in the pure Grenache. Here is a fine example of this. Another example of their interplay at more equivalent proportions is our 'Huntsman' blend - 2013 will be released later this year.

The first couple of vintages of our Grenache have been very well received. Honestly, I have a hard time picking a favorite. Considering what kind of food will accompany the wine is really what pushes the decision as to which vintage to reach for. As a stand-alone, the 2014 is difficult to pass by. Fresh red and Maraschino cherries, warm boysenberry aromas are really enticing. The mouth is greeted with a warm embrace of richness that curls over and reveals the substantial structure and dark fruit characteristics like a gently curling ocean wave. This wine should age a very long time if you can bury it. 180 cases produced. *\$38 per bottle.*

2013 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

Another example of less being more, this is the first vintage of Cabernet Sauvignon that I did not rack at all during its 2 ½ year rest in barrel. I have slowly nudged in this direction with the Cabs over the years. But in 2013, I decided to go the distance with this variety, the Syrah and the Pinot Noirs as well. Essentially, we gain a more interesting texture and body to balance the firm structure when the wines are young. This vintage, as well as the 2012, are unusually approachable in their youth yet have the guts to age a very long time.

Last August, I was able to show Robert Parker a few of our wines for the first time in 19 years. I was pleasantly surprised at how highly he rated the 2012 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (95 pts), a mark usually reserved for more flamboyant and rich wines. Actually, he liked *all the wines I brought*. I am glad that he recognizes balance and longevity in a different style than much of the public seems to feel he is limited to. I'd give him a 98+ for that. I see the 2013 as having a little more non-fruit component than the 2012 and a more profound level of what I call 'mystery' - the things you can't quite put your finger on yet find attractive.

Herbal, cassis, dark fruits and a touch of red fruit on the nose set this apart from the over-ripe 'chocolate milkshake' style* so often encountered these days. For a wine with such energetic aromas, the body is fairly full and envelops the substantial tannin and acidity just enough at this point to allow a nice echo of the aromas with an additional layer of fresh loam and dark fruit. I think this will age and develop extremely well. 170 cases produced. *\$60 per bottle, \$32 per half bottle, \$124 per magnum.*

*"Chocolate Milkshake Wine" is yummy when young, soon melts, and finally turns sour like a milkshake will.

Very Recent Releases

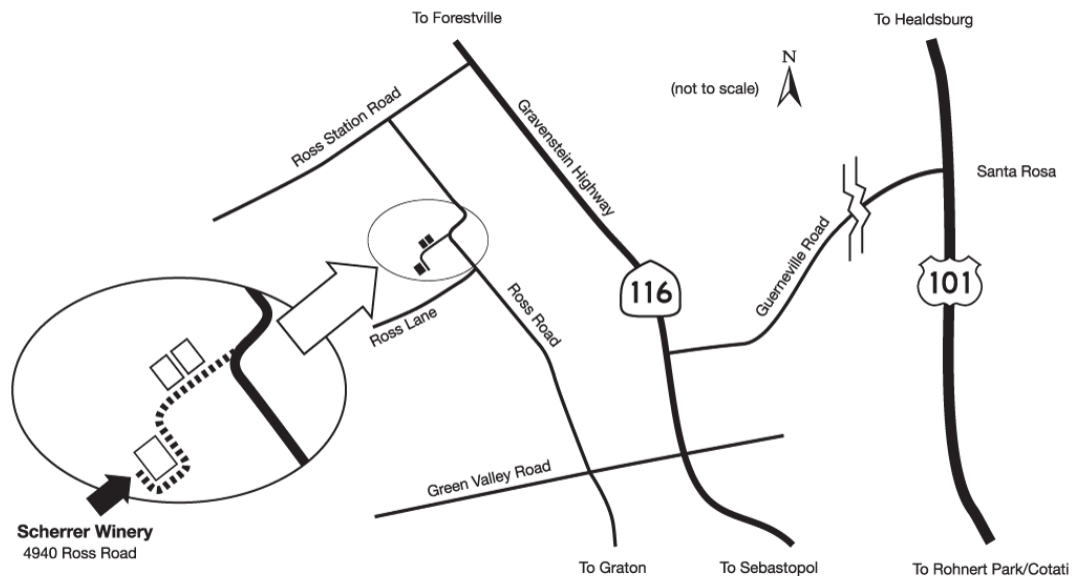
Over the past year the 2011 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$46) and during the past few months the slightly more structured 2012 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$48) has been showing really well. The Scherrer 2014 Chardonnay (\$40) has really hit its stride as well (WS 92 pts). 2012 Big Brother PN (\$55) is a nice contrast to the 2012 Platt's (\$68) more elegant, coastal expression. The 2009 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$67) continues to rock with no sign of substantial change since last year. As impressive as the newly released 2014 Kick Grenache is, the 2013 (\$36) is absolutely stunning and on point. So is the 2013 OMV Zinfandel (\$36). This Spring, the Wine Spectator included us in an article outlining 30 wineries worldwide making a diverse set of wines - all of high quality. Looking at the above list and what is offered here I take it for granted that we do lots of things the best we can. It's nice to receive some validation from that direction. Yet it is your validation that keeps it happening. Thank you.



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

<p>We will be happy to ship your order to any of the following states when weather is wine friendly.</p>	<p>Case: 12 x 750 mL 24 x 375 mL 6 x 1.5 L</p>	<p>Per bottle (750 mL equivalent)</p>
<p><u>Pick up</u> is available during Winery Open House events or by appointment</p>	<p>NC</p>	
<p><u>Golden State Overnight</u> (recommended) to CA, NV and AZ</p>	<p>\$21/box</p>	<p>\$1.75</p>
<p><u>Ground</u> to CA, AZ</p>	<p>\$30/box</p>	<p>\$2.5</p>
<p><u>Ground</u> to CO, ID, OR, MT, NM, NV or WA</p>	<p>\$36/box</p>	<p>\$3</p>
<p><u>Ground</u> to AL, DC, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WI</p>	<p>\$48/box</p>	<p>\$4</p>
<p><u>FedEx 2-day</u> to above states plus: HI, AK</p>	<p>\$120/box</p>	<p>\$10</p>
<p><u>Overnight</u> to any above state. Delivery to any address with liquor license.</p>	<p>\$168/box</p>	<p>\$14</p>