



## No Smoke. No Mirrors.

There's a constant barrage of new (or rediscovered ancient) techniques that come into vogue, promising to do 'wonderful' things for better wines. And then, after you've added things, you can add other things to undo any excesses left over from the previous treatments. Instead of following these new and shiny things, over the years I have tried to streamline our winemaking process. Rather than simply introducing more steps, additives, manipulations, etc. to 'improve' only one aspect at a time, I have tried to stand back and focus on as much of the whole picture as I am capable of to refine the process. From simply whole-cluster pressing and fermenting the Chardonnays and rosés, to aging all the red wines on initial lees for the entire time in barrel, I am often finding that less (work/stuff) is more. When looking at the whole, the process is dictated by the needs of the material at hand. It's not an excuse to be lazy, the simpler processes only work when it's part of a comprehensive approach beginning with the grapes. This transparent, minimalist approach is also apparent in how we 'market' our wines as well. No smoke. No mirrors. Just being up front with the way we see things.

Speaking of smoke, a common question we have heard since last October's fires is how we were affected by the fires and smoke. Since all our grapes were in before the fires, the answer is easy: We are very fortunate to have not been affected from a wine quality standpoint. We never lost power at our winery and we were far enough from the smoke that intrusion into the building was a non-issue. We certainly were emotionally affected by this tragedy and how colleagues, friends and family needed to be evacuated, and in some cases lost their homes. Healing will take time. The consequences of inadequate coverage or unresponsive insurance companies and rebuilding issues are still quite with us all in the area. One take home lesson for us all is: check your homeowners' policy if you have one, to see that coverage limits are still high enough to replace even foundations which can be destroyed with an extremely hot fire. 'Replacement value' means nothing if the limit is below the cost to replace. When the smoke clears, this is not something you want to worry about.

## Open House

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On **August 3, 4 and 5 from 10 AM to 5 PM** we are pleased to have our summer open house with new offerings and barreled Zinfandel available for tasting and futures purchase. 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

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Last year, I wrote about idiosyncratic vintages due to variable bloom/set in the vineyards and how I reveled in the results when dealt with properly. 2015 brought some of this to the table as did 2016. For those who have tasted and/or consumed the young 2016 zins this past spring, the wines were quite compelling, with great texture, complexity and harmony. When one thinks about what seeds and skins offer to red wines as separate components, one can make harvest and fermentation/extraction choices that capitalize on the vintage characteristics yet produce balanced wines that still remain within the house style. In other words: The recipe must be adapted to the vintage. In 2017, there was a slightly more even set in the Zinfandel at Scherrer Vineyard, in general. With more seeds per ton of grapes, we let the natural tendency of the variety to provide some less-mature red-fruited elements while being careful not to let too much bitter material from the less mature seeds into the mix. Despite the differences in how it got there, the 2017 bears a strong resemblance to the 2016 OMV.

### **2017 Scherrer Vineyard ‘Old & Mature Vines’ Zinfandel Futures**

This growing season fits into our style nicely as there was little difficulty having a reasonable amount of fruit at the same level of ripeness. The balance of angles and rounds in the fruit were naturally there, so it was easy to coax everything into position. There were just less overall berries as well as being somewhat smaller than average without a large proportion of seedless berries. There are different ways to get a small crop, unfortunately.

The concentration and tones of the resulting wine are a lot like a repeat of 2016, despite the bloom time differences. Fresh plums, perfumes and a bit of blue fruit are in accord with fresh loam, spicy, sandalwood nuances and forest-like aromas. The angles and rounds are in balance, fruit and non-fruit are too. This reminds me of a picnic in a forest. There are clean woody smells, some fruit and sandwiches on the table or ground cloth spread out, everything is just right.

Again, despite the differences in how the crop was reduced, the consequence of less than ‘optimal’ bloom time weather yielded a small amount like 2016. About 530 cases will be produced. *Estimated release price: \$40 per bottle. Futures price: \$296 per case.*

### **2017 Scherrer Vineyard ‘Shale Terrace’ Zinfandel Futures**

The typical low yields at the Scherrer Vineyard continues. This wine has good verve despite the heat that arrived around harvest time because we were able to harvest before there was time for the heat to take things over the top. Being fortunate to work with several other Sonoma County growers, we have good relationships with several high-quality vineyard management companies that we can call upon to help harvest our grapes when everyone’s schedule gets impossibly tight. This logistical difficulty is a trend in our area that I do not see reversing any time soon.

Telltale stone fruit, and racy minerally palate with some interesting earthy notes are a comforting signature. It’s got good grip and texture for this mid-weight wine. I find that this wine likes to be ‘racked’ once in the middle of the time in barrel, lest the non-fruit elements become too dominant. It continues to be ‘the Zin that wants to look like Pinot Noir.’

Shale Terrace is a very small portion of the Scherrer Vineyard. It has traditionally been offered on Futures and regularly sells out. We have long struggled to find a balance in how to allocate this wine and about 20 years ago, developed a unique allocation system for futures that has been 'adopted' by a number of other wineries. Those that have purchased Shale Terrace in the past (even just a bottle) are given a "First Crack" opportunity and any orders received by July 30 will be processed first in the order they are received. Those that haven't purchased Shale Terrace yet and would like to can make "a wish" order. All "Wish List" orders are processed in the order they were received after the "First Crack" July 30 deadline as supplies allow. We have your purchase history on file and will make sure you are put on the correct list.

Importantly: Futures for Shale Terrace will be limited to allow a small portion to be available for retail on release. We started this change last year and means that there will be a little less available for futures. We are working hard to find a balance for those of you that have loved Shale and those of you that have longed for the chance to have that same opportunity. We ask that all of our past Shale fans to show a bit of restraint and leave a little Shale to share with those that are new. 110 cases to be produced *Release price \$40 /bottle. Futures price: \$296 per case*

## New Releases

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### **2015 Scherrer Vineyard 'The Hill' Zinfandel**

This vineyard block was planted in 1974 by my grandfather (who planted the old vines in 1912), my dad and help from a teenage Fred. I have been making wine from it for over 20 years now and it has found a home in both Old & Mature Vines and Zinfandoodle. It's only been in the past 4 vintages however that I have really understood how to work with it. I've realized it to be a truly special, compelling site worthy of individual bottling when quantities are sufficient to still give OMV and Zinfandoodle what they may require in a given vintage.

Situated on a steep south-facing slope with a very fluffy, quickly warming soil, it tends to bloom very early in the year when breezes can be powerful enough to cause few seeds to form. This gives a very high proportion of tiny berries that can easily dry up in a late season heat spell. The steep south-facing slope exacerbates this tendency because it is highly exposed to the elements, so it is important to harvest this block rather early compared to metrics others might use in different sites. My dad used to regularly tell me I needed to pick this block earlier. He was right. It just took me a while.

This block has a lot of blue fruit [which I find exciting in Zinfandel], beautiful perfumed aromatics, some red zinger tea, and with less of the darker, deeper tones of our Old & Mature Vines blend. These mid-range tones are different and really special. Like a cousin to 'The Shale Terrace', this is an unusual representation of Zinfandel compared to what is often expressed these days. Although I already make so many individual wines, this really demanded to be separate-and not just as a one-off.

Many people would think we would bottle this beautiful area separately all the time, as well as the Old vineyard planted in 1912 for some valid personality reasons as well as marketing reasons. We don't. We only do it when the situation is just right, and our normal wines are not compromised. I think they are special and they are the core of what we can bring to

people in pretty much any kind of vintage. For example, we bottled an old vine once-in-a-lifetime Centennial, a couple of ‘special cuvées’, a 100% varietal Cabernet Sauvignon ‘Vin Rouge’ that was a total sleeper, etc. because of the material at hand. I take these things seriously (as far as a winemaking perspective) and understand the consequences of one-offs or short runs of a popular item. No smoke. No mirrors. No hype. Just my honest opinion. 48 cases produced. *\$40 per bottle.*

### **2015 Kick Ranch Grenache**

Grenache became a part of our efforts in 2011 after my dad and I agreed that it should do well at the family property in Alexander Valley. It has been a real learning experience as it is a very different kind of vinifera variety than most of those we generally see. It seems to be a very cooperative variety regarding techniques of vinifying and blending with other varieties to stretch out each participants’ assets.

Like the 2013 Grenache with a bit more backbone, it has nice, sexy carbonic notes (from the whole berries that did not break open at destemming), fennel along with white pepper bring up the aromas. Inner mouth perfumes amid a pleasantly chewy texture that won’t end make this a pleasant and versatile wine for many types of food - pretty much anything a person would eat besides really tart foods like pickles or sweet things like ice cream. 85 cases produced *\$38 per bottle.*

### **2013 Calypso Vineyard Syrah**

The 2013 Calypso Syrah follows the compelling 2012 vintage very well. It possesses a somewhat more profound depth and structure, mirroring the differences in our Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignons from the same vintages. While Syrahs in this style are somewhat reticent in the very early days following bottling, this will very much reward long-term aging. I have seen this since my first experiences vinifying Syrah in the early 1990’s. I currently enjoy this young wine over several days’ exposure to air in an opened, re-corked bottle without protection from air exposure because it allows the wine to relax its modest grip on mid palate flavors a bit. These kinds of wine have significant legs.

Notes on day two of an opened bottle: With a lovely texture, it marries earthy, floral, fruity, meaty, the best part of ‘tarry’, and herbal notes like no other single variety I have seen yet on its own. On the palate there is an echoing of these aromas and a tremendous floral length. One of the things I love about Syrah is that it is complete without any influence of new oak barrels in the mix. You can use them. But the wine really doesn’t need them. I really should be better at explaining how special I think this site and vintage is.

68 cases produced. *\$45 per bottle.*

### **2014 Big Brother Pinot Noir**

I first bottled a ‘Big Brother’ Pinot Noir in 1999 as a Russian River Valley sibling to another bottling only made that year: 1999 ‘Little Sister.’ They were my attempt at describing each other while describing their own personalities at the same time. ‘Big Brother’ was like an early teenage male with great potential that is hanging back and not showing everything there is to offer. ‘Little Sister’ was his younger sister who was more transparent saying “here I am!” I didn’t have a similar situation wine-wise for a long time after that first vintage, so I quit thinking about using the pair of designations.

Then, in 2006, I began working with a small block of Pinot Noir on the Sonoma Coast near Annapolis where the character was very much like that 1999 Big Brother in that it was a bit

thicker, richer, darker-fruited version of the variety for the general region. Lacking a more apt description for the wine from Annapolis, 'Big Brother' returned as a Sonoma Coast wine with the 2006 vintage without any siblings to be compared to. More weighty, dark fruited and savory than other coastal Pinot Noir sites I have worked with, due to its construction it seems to satisfy Cabernet Sauvignon drinkers who are exploring Pinot Noir as well as experienced Pinot lovers. There has yet to be another 'Little Sister' to co-market.

Nice, dark fruits, fresh plum, some telltale savory/herbal notes are on the aroma. Very full, rich mouthfeel with surprising freshness despite the acidity taking a somewhat more subordinate role in holding up the structural duties. There is a seductive mid-palate plummy core that holds court among the other elements, somewhat like how the King Pinot Noirs from 2012 and 2013 have. In short, this wine is sexy, silky and ready for business. It really doesn't sound like a slam dunk for the original 'Big Brother' description any more. This idea has evolved a bit just as all brothers probably do.

It has been a joy to work with this site for just about a decade with Kirk Lokka farming it. He knew the site intimately and helped me to avoid the mistake of harvesting too late on this fast-maturing vineyard site. Unfortunately, in 2014 the vineyard ownership and farming changed (twice) during the months after this vintage. I ultimately felt that without the close alignment of goals, continuity and working relationship with the people farming the site it was time to move on. The current owners and I were equally happy to tear up the contract and go our separate ways. Enjoy the end of a beautiful era here with this 2014 Big Brother. It is one of my favorite vintages from the site. It is fitting to finish on a high note. 120 cases produced. *\$56 per bottle, \$120 per magnum, \$30 per half bottle*

#### **2014 Gunsalus Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Last year was the first offering of this wine as a vineyard designate which has been well-received, for example gaining some of the highest praise of our Pinot Noir's from Antonio Galloni of *Vinous* (93 points). Being a 2014, it shows a bit more sheer concentration and dark fruits while remaining quite lively and balanced. Don't let the modest price for this quality deceive you. It is probably another shortcoming on my part with 'the sellin' part.'

Red fruit and savory with rhubarb and red beet as a bridge, there is a very mouth-watering, inviting nose even when first opened. This wine has a solid kernel of structure which will benefit from either a day open right now or 1-2 years more bottle age. After those levels of work/ restraint/patience, it will become more open and succulent. As a contrast to 2014 'Big Brother', this wine relies more on acidity for its structure. If I was ever to call another wine currently in the cellar 'Little Sister' this would be it as it has many of the qualities of our 1999 'Little Sister' bottling. Interestingly, when those two 1999 siblings were released, Big Brother got most of the attention, including being Wine & Spirits Magazine's top domestic Pinot Noir of 2001. A vaguely similar condition may exist between the Coastal Big Brother and Green Valley Gunsalus here. I find that after a couple days' open the Gunsalus really settles into a fine groove while the 'Big Brother' is already quite apparent at first opening (unlike the 1999 Russian River Valley version). Regarding the 1999 'Little Sister,' after about 5-10 years, she grew up and everyone seemed to want to take her out on a date. I feel that way about this wine's future.

And for you that have not yet asked, it's pronounced "Gun-say-lus".

76 cases produced. *\$46 per bottle*

### 2015 Sonoma County Pinot Noir

Last year, I wrote about the exciting 2015 Pinot Noirs just being bottled. This is the first of those. It seems all the wines from the 2015 vintage have great *verve*. While in 2014, they showed *concentration* due in part, by the drought-type winter the vines experienced-there is a polished sense of strength and control not unlike a well-trained, mature dog. In 2015, however, there is a sense of energy that may be more like a puppy - great potential and the promise that it will grow into its feet perfectly.

On a newly opened bottle, there is a toasty nuance that disappears with hours to days of air exposure (which I find fascinating and unexplained). It plays in between the lines of plummy fruit, loamy earthiness and higher toned floral notes. It is an amalgamation of most sites I work with in varying proportion to balance all the elements. With air exposure and food, the red tones really move to the forefront. In my mind it's sort of a concert where Springsteen opens, Prince and Bowie follow, Annie Lennox joins, Aretha comes in as a special guest, and nobody leaves the stage between sets. Harmony, synergy and cooperation is what comes across from diverse elements here. I am extremely pleased with its trajectory and think it is a serious overachiever. 275 cases produced. *\$38 per bottle*

### 2014 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

To further underscore a unifying characteristic of the 2014 Vintage in Sonoma County of drought-winter, low yields and concentration, this wine showcases them all to a strength. It is beginning to reveal its layers after nearly 11 months in bottle and should continue to unfold slowly and surely over many years. Since I have gone to non-racking these wines as a goal, they are more reticent in the first year after bottling which will pay extreme dividends during all the years that follow. The wine critics will eventually understand this and factor that into their opinions of young wines made this way (or not). It is difficult for a critic to devote the time to watch an open bottle develop over days' time in order to estimate its resilience and longevity potential. You and I can do that on a certain scope. That said, Galloni gave it a rating of 93+ with a description that I'd agree with. So, there is hope.

This wine has all the elements for long-term development, which I think is the highest goal of the variety. It has inviting cassis, earthy/loamy notes punctuated by hints of red fruit which is really refreshing in Cabernet Sauvignon. A freshly opened bottle is appropriately firm on the palate, which is quickly resolved by serving it with food. For those of you with the patience to hold classically structured wines like this for 5-25 years, the dividends are significant.

160 cases produced. *\$64 per bottle, \$34 half bottles, \$130 magnums*

## Very Recent Releases

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The 2012 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$48) is really coming into its own and has been finding its way to restaurants and wine shops. Over the past year, our Scherrer Vineyard Cabs have caught on fire and have mostly sold out, ending the luxury of having multiple vintages available. There is a bit of the 2011 available (\$64). The 2014 Old & Mature Vine Zin (\$38) has predictably hit its stride. Both it and the 2013 (\$36) which is still enjoying its singular run in restaurants are drinking beautifully.

The 2015 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay has continued to grow more impressive in its youth.

It was recently listed in the group of 'elite' Chardonnays by the Wine Spectator (94 points). I think it and the 2014 in a side-by side comparison at this time would be a very close horse race with about even odds, both \$50 per bottle.

Huntsman, the Syrah/Grenache blend from 2013 (\$34), has been an interesting and surprising wine to most people who have seen it. The most common question I have had is 'No Mourvedre?' My response is that I see no reason to copy an idea that is now becoming a formula when the dual-varietal wine is so lovely and compelling. It presents itself somewhat like a larger framed Pinot Noir does, which is unusual for this genre. While I think producers who have been studying and refining these multiple varietal blends over generations are making some seriously impressive wines, I just happen to see another path with what we have in our backyard right now.

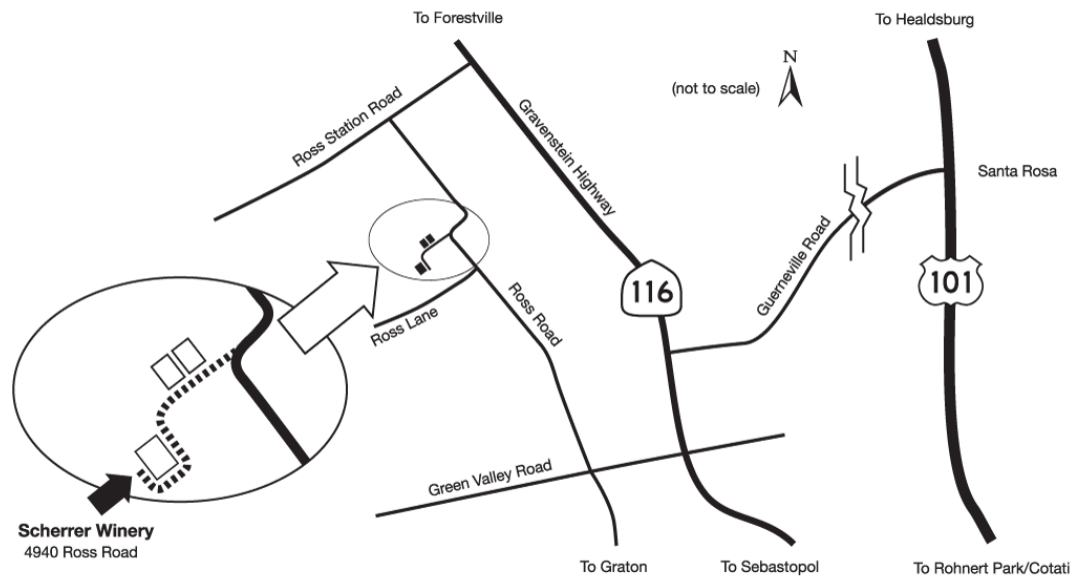
With the apparent glut of pink (simply for the sake of pink) wines suddenly appearing with ever earlier release dates, we still have some 2017 Dry Rosé (\$24) available. We spare no expense and do not compromise on this wine. I think rosé has an obligation to do more than simply obtain a certain color to fit a worthy niche. There are smoke and mirrors galore in this category of wine right now, for sure.

Again, thanks for your continued support. It allows us the creative freedom to do what we love and to support old and create potential new family legacies. As always, I am unable to fully communicate this in such a small space.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Julia", written in black ink.

## 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. 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:	Per bottle
	12 x 750 mL 24 x 375 mL 6 x 1.5 L	(750 mL equivalent)
<b>Pick up</b> is available during Winery Open House events or by appointment	NC	
Golden State Overnight (recommended) to CA	\$21/box	\$1.75
<b>Golden State 2-Day</b> to AZ, ID, NV, OR, WA and parts of NM	\$24/box	\$2
<b>Ground</b> to CA, AZ	\$30/box	\$2.5
<b>Ground</b> to CO, ID, OR, MT, NM, NV, WA or WY	\$36/box	\$3
<b>Ground</b> 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 or WI	\$48/box	\$4
<b>2-day Air</b> to above states plus: HI & Alaska higher	\$120/box	\$10
<b>Overnight</b> to any above state. Delivery to any state address with liquor license. HI or Alaska higher	\$168/box	\$14



**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	

Futures Wine - Released April 2019	Price (cases only)	Quantity	Amount
2017 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel	\$296 / case		
2017 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel	\$296 limit 1 case		
2017 Zin Futures Sampler (6-OMV, 6-Shale)	\$296 limit 1 case		
<b>Futures Subtotal</b>			
Sales Tax: Pick up 8.125% Shipping: AZ, CA, DC, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, LA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI, WY			%
Choose: <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up at Open House or <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping method and cost:			

Deadlines: July 30 for Shale First Crack  
August 31 for all futures orders unless sold out

**Futures Total**

New Releases	Price	Quantity	Amount
2015 "The Hill" Scherrer Vineyard Zinfandel	\$40 / bottle		
2015 Kick Ranch Grenache	\$38 / bottle		
2013 Calypso Vineyard Syrah	\$45 / bottle		
2014 'Big Brother' Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir	\$56 / bottle		
	\$30 / half bottle		
	\$120 / magnum		
2014 Gunsalus Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$46 / bottle		
2015 Sonoma County Pinot Noir	\$38 / bottle		
2014 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon	\$64 / bottle		
	\$34 / half bottle		
	\$130 / magnum		

**Current Wines Subtotal**

Discount for orders that will total 12 or more bottles  
(futures build toward discount but are not additionally discounted)

-10%

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**Current Wines Total**

Sales Tax: Pick up 8.125% Shipping: AZ, CA, DC, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, LA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI, WY	
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
I confirm I am at least 21 years of age.		Date of Birth:
Signature:		Date: