

Be careful what you ask for

In our Spring 2019 newsletter, I pretty much dared Nature to ‘bring it on’ regarding rainfall in our area. Well, this spring appeared to be the winter-that-didn’t-want-to-let-go. We had rainy conditions including a winter-style system come through in mid-later May just as some vineyards in Sonoma County began flowering. Fortunately, that was pretty much the end of those weather systems and temperatures warmed just enough to allow successful flowering in the majority of the sites I work with. There are still portions of vineyards that have very little crop. But from the way it looks at this point, we are generally looking at moderate crop levels with clusters that are like Goldilocks’ preference: Not too big, not too small...just about right.

One of the really positive consequences of this past wet winter was the opportunity it gave to perennial plants by wetting the rooting profile early and deep. You can see how splendidly happy they look right now at this mid-point in their growth cycle. Over the past four years my dad has been rebuilding/rejuvenating the structures of the oldest Zinfandel vines his father planted in 1912. The vineyard is looking great and we are lucky to have such a favorable year to see them almost turning back the clock a decade or three.

On June 1st my dad fell after working on the tractor all day, causing a hip fracture. Fortunately, after the installation of some “non-factory hardware”, he was on his feet within hours and home the day after that! Ever since, he’s been methodically working toward regaining what his 92-year-old body had been accomplishing with the daily work on the vineyard. After slightly more than a month, he was back on the tractor turning under the weeds that had sprouted as a result of the copious, late rains. May we all be as strong at 92.

Open House

On **August 2, 3, and 4 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

Last year we were able to show how well Zinfandel does in a warm, lusty vintage. This year we get to show how well it does in a more elegant, acidity-driven vintage. Overall, 2018 promises to give gorgeous wines with tremendous nerve and verve in a really sleek package. It’s quite exciting. Stay tuned for the other 2018 releases as they come out in the years to come.

2018 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel Futures

This vintage epitomizes what is unique about our family's site and our winery style. It is a mélange of colors of fruit: red, blue and some black. There are balancing non-fruit elements like freshly tilled loam and subtle barrel grain notes in a medium-bodied, acidity driven structure. Even at this very early stage there is great continuity coupled with surprising length of finish.

Tannins are cloaked in the rounder parts of this wine, which is saying a lot because it is not at all an overripe-sappy-sweet-soda-pop construction at all! During the latter part of vinification where the fermented stuff was still stewing on skins awaiting a pressing decision, the angles due to tannins seemed VERY firm. They are still there, but my how they have integrated into the fabric of the wine, creating a gently firm kernel of structure anchoring the flavors: All the range of red, blue and black fruits. It carries through like a well-pitched curling stone on really perfect ice. About 820 cases will be produced. *Estimated release price: \$40 per bottle. Futures price: \$296 per case.*

2018 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel Futures

More pomegranate and red fruits [with a streak of blackberry or is it black raspberry?] this year while the typical signature stone-fruit is taking more of a back seat. It's like plate tectonics have displaced this Alexander Valley bench to Chambolle, Burgundy. It absolutely floats on its structure like Pinot Noir is supposed to do at its best. Judi: "It's like the *'Little Sister'* of Zinfandel!" Fred: "It's my favorite Shale Terrace Zinfandel yet."

The Shale Terrace is a very small portion of the Scherrer Vineyard and has traditionally sold out on the futures offering. Like last year, we will not offer everything on futures, reserving a small portion to be available for retail on release.

Those that have purchased Shale Terrace in the past (even just a bottle) are given a "First Crack" opportunity to purchase futures and any orders received by July 28 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 List" futures order. All "Wish List" orders are processed in the order they were received after the "First Crack" July 28 deadline as supplies allow. If you have bought Shale from us before, we have your purchase history on file and will make sure you are put on the correct list. 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. About 160 cases to be produced *Release price \$40 per bottle. Futures price: \$296 per case*

New Releases

2016 Kick Ranch Grenache

High-toned red cherry, maraschino cherry, white pepper, olives on the nose - almost a meal in a glass as many food groups are represented. It's all feminine on the nose yet becomes a bit masculine on the mouth where the lusty, broad mouthfeel grows and envelops the palate without seizing it. It has a sense of transparency as though riding in a double-deck fully windowed railcar thru the countryside. Satisfying without being too challenging, on the second day after being open it shows more of the red fruit side and less of the meaty/olive facets. For another perspective, Antonio Galloni recently wrote: "Super-ripe red cherry, rose petal, mint and blood orange all run through this mid-weight, fruity Grenache that can be

enjoyed with minimal cellaring. Expressive floral and savory notes add closing shades of nuance. 92 points” Works for me. 57 cases produced *\$38 per bottle*.

2014 ‘Sasha’ Syrah, Russian River Valley

We produce this from portions of the Syrah blocks we work with that are prone to softer structure and more red fruits rather than profound structure and dark fruits. Often, these vines can produce great rosé wine when the season gets a later start and/or it is a higher rainfall year. Despite 2014 being a drought-affected vintage which can tend toward more concentration and darker tones, I felt some of the fruit we were farming for rosé might make delicious lighter-bodied red wine. I am delighted with how things worked out. Red fruits, some plum, rooibos tea, sandalwood on the nose, these perfumey/spicy elements are balanced by freshly tilled earth holding up the non-fruit side of the array. No need for any new oak introduction to accomplish this balancing act. On the mouth it is medium bodied (not unlike Shale Terrace Zinfandel) and is smoothly textured yet appropriately structured. It lingers just long enough on the palate with really good continuity and finish. It is like the perfect house guest: fun and interesting but leaves at about the right time. 80 cases produced. *\$36 per bottle*.

2015 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir

Gooseberry and warm-afternoon-picked blackberries on the nose, this laser-focused aroma remains equally focused on the palate. The bright mouth-watering acidity supports this centrally-loaded core of bright berry and mildly savory flavors which sees it begging for food. Even without food, its suave but appropriately supportive tannin is at the perfect level to satisfy whether or not the plate is empty.

Antonio Galloni (Vinous) was rather fond of it as well: “The 2015 Pinot Noir Hallberg Vineyard is one of the clear standouts in this range. Bright, floral and sensual, the Hallberg hits all the right notes. Rose petal, chalk, blood orange and mint are all woven together in an exquisite, beguiling wine loaded with class and personality. All the elements simply come together in this exquisite, nuanced wine. I loved it. 94 points”. Insert a comma between ‘blood’ and ‘orange’ and it sounds like a Voodoo-potion or something. But I like the punctuation and what it tastes like. Actually, I love this wine too. 70 cases produced. *\$75 per bottle*

2016 Sonoma County Pinot Noir

Having the luxury of working with a number of great sites in Sonoma County, it is relatively easy to combine just the right things to reflect the origins of the material, be it a single site, a neighborhood/zone within an AVA (American Viticultural Area), an AVA or even just a delicious wine that crosses AVA boundaries. This is the latter.

Pretty, bright red fruits, a note of vanillin, with slightly earthy/woody notes are on the nose initially. On the mouth it shows a mouthwatering, delicate little kernel of strawberry-rhubarb flavor that radiates throughout the long and graceful finish. Often overlooked because it is not too ‘exclusive’ it is the real sleeper of our Pinot Noir portfolio. I used to wish that folks in the restaurant trade would pay more attention to this wine. Now, it sells out a little faster than I’d prefer. Yep, be careful about what you wish for... 730 cases produced. *\$38 per bottle*

2015 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

Cassis/currant, spices like a freshly baked oatmeal cookie where both nutmeg and allspice are used. It lays broadly and evenly on the palate with savory, earthy, red fruits, dark fruits and baking spices all taking turns. According to Antonio Galloni in *Vinous* recently, “The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Scherrer Vineyard is laced with dark cherry, plum, chocolate, grilled herbs, menthol, licorice and smoke. Pliant and resonant in the glass, with terrific supporting structure, the 2015 Scherrer is a bit darker and more powerful than the straight [Alexander Valley] Cabernet, but the two wines aren't as differentiated as they can be, another signature of this freakish vintage. 93 points.”

In 2015 the bloomtime weather was a bit erratic giving a range of ripeness levels to berries on the same cluster, just as with our Zinfandels and Pinot Noirs from the vintage. It required a slightly different strategy to decide when to harvest and it paid off big time as shown with these other varieties as proof. I have been a proponent of *some level* of ripeness variability of red varieties for some time (Zinfandel trains one to embrace this for sure). Lately, I have heard from colleagues who work at bigger budget operations that use optical sorting machines after destemming that as a result of trials comparing the new tech with traditional hand sorting before the destemming machine they have turned down the sensitivity of the optical sorting in order to allow a bit more variability making the wines ‘more interesting.’ This is another example of getting too much of what you ask for: over-sorting.

Cabernet Sauvignon, I think, is less accepting of great ripeness variability due to the characteristics of the fruit itself than there is with, say Zinfandel or Pinot Noir. But again, I find that seeing some small level of variation is actually a plus, adding more ‘shading’ and layering to the fruit characters. We used to have multiple vintages of Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon available to restaurants and to you directly. At that time, I had hoped we would not have quite so many to choose from at one time. In the past two years, we have been cleaned out to the point of being ‘off the market’ for months awaiting the next vintage showing about what I think it should. I’ll be more careful what I wish for in the future. 160 cases produced. *\$66 per bottle, \$34 half bottles, \$134 magnums*

Very Recent Releases

The 2012 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$48) is still in play in restaurants and wine shops. It has been parked in this wonderful place for some time now. The 2014 Old & Mature Vine Zinfandel (\$38) still hasn’t gone to restaurants and wine shops yet, though it’s time is approaching as it is stunning at this point. Good ol’ Zinfandoodle 14.5 (\$22) has been a wonderful daily drinker for many folks including wedding receptions where really good wine at a modest price is the ticket.

The 2015 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay (\$50) has continued to grow even more impressive during it’s second year in bottle. Along with the 2016 vintage (\$50) released this past Spring and the few cases of 2014 (\$48) we still have on hand, there are three great choices.

A couple of our 2015 Pinot Noirs released in the Spring have gotten some very nice press worth noting here. 2015 Gunsalus (\$46) 93 pts from Galloni and 91 pts from California Grapevine; 2015 Platt (\$70) 92 pts from Galloni and 92 pts California Grapevine. Adding the newly released 2015 Hallberg would make a really nice trio to build a meal around or to make a really special gift for an Oenophile friend.

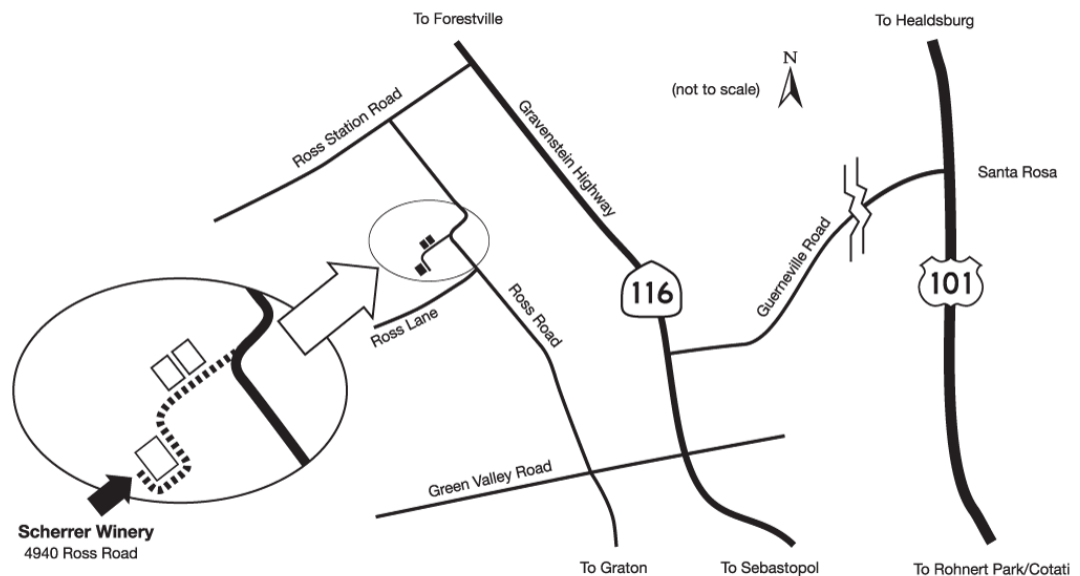
If you have already consumed your stash of our 2018 Dry Rosé (\$24) we still have some. It is just continuing to settle into its groove which should last a couple of years.

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, but still try anyway.



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.



WARNING: Drinking distilled spirits, beer, coolers, wine and other alcoholic beverages may increase cancer risk, and, during pregnancy, can cause birth defects. For more information go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov/alcohol.

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	\$21/box	\$1.75
Golden State 2-Day to AZ, ID, NV, OR, WA and parts of NM	\$24/box	\$2
Ground to CA, AZ	\$30/box	\$2.5
Ground to CO, ID, OR, MT, NM, NV, WA or WY	\$36/box	\$3
Ground 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
2-day Air to above states plus: HI & Alaska higher	\$120/box	\$10
Overnight 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 2020	Price (cases only)	Quantity	Amount
2018 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel	\$296 / case		
2018 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel	\$296 limit 1 case		
2018 Zin Futures Sampler (6-OMV, 6-Shale)	\$296 limit 1 case		
Futures Subtotal			
Sales Tax: Pick up 8.25% Shipping: AZ, CA, CO, 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 28 for Shale First Crack August 31 for all futures orders unless sold out		Futures Total	

New Releases	Price	Quantity	Amount
2016 Kick Ranch Grenache	\$38 / bottle		
2014 'Sasha' Russian River Syrah	\$36 / bottle		
2015 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$75 / bottle		
2016 Sonoma County Pinot Noir	\$38 / bottle		
2015 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon	\$66 / bottle		
	\$34 / half bottle		
	\$134 / magnum		
Current Wines Subtotal			
Discount for orders that will total 12 or more bottles (futures build toward discount but are not additionally discounted)		-10%	< >
Current Wines Total			
Sales Tax: Pick up 8.25% Shipping: AZ, CA, CO, 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
Signature:		Date: