

The Long Game

Old vines, old barns, old tractors and old tools; they were designed with common sense and they still do what they were made for. Of course, there is always a place for a new way that supports the concepts that made the old ways timeless. But they must pass ‘the common sense test’ before throwing out or amending the proven. The old ways became timeless because they proved themselves over the long haul.

My father collected rainfall data every day in a manual gauge for over 40 years, dutifully walking out to the stake it was mounted on, reading the level and dumping and recording it on the calendar. In recent years, a remote thermometer in the shade and an electronic rain gauge on the roof of the house was added. After his passing, we have relied upon the electronic device as it stores the readings for many days and my mom can record rainfall without venturing across uneven ground to the old manual gauge: a transition that makes sense.

Last year I wrote about the very old springs which fed the farmhouse, built in 1853 on the family property in Alexander Valley. Despite the low rainfall last year, they looked very strong. Well, with a second low rainfall year they look just as strong. It is really time to re-develop them and collect the water they have offered for centuries. Seems like common sense.

As I wrote last year as well, stringing dry seasons together can be more problematic than just a single one. Looking at total rainfall relative to ‘normal’ or average, one would be quite concerned about the perennial plants. However, we got about 2 inches of rain at the vineyard in April which made a significant difference for our vines. They have grown a tad longer and a fair bit thicker than last year at this time. Comparing Santa Rosa data, we have had slightly more rainfall this past season than in the 2018/2019 season and approaching nearly double of what was had in 2020/2021 season. Granted, a large portion of this recent season came in late October and was less captured by soil per inch due to the massive runoff. But it still was a good soaking that provided a welcome start toward recharging available water to our perennial plants. Actually, the old Zinfandel which have survived without irrigation for 110 years look a bit better overall now than last year at this time.

Difficult weather this spring in the north coast with multiple frosts in lowest lying areas in the valley floors, erratic temperatures during bloom in May including some hail with an inch of precipitation made for a lighter crop in many instances. These temperature swings, especially when on the low side for several days, inhibit good pollination of the grape berries which directly affects the crop size. Consequently, while we were spared any of the frosts, our Zin and Chardonnay have a rather light crop in certain portions of blocks according to how sensitive they were in their bloom sequence. The later blooming Cabernet Sauvignon missed most of that unfavorable weather and looks like a good average and most of the Pinot Noir in RRV that we work with looks like a decent crop.

Cautiously returning to events

Winery Events: Our April outdoor Pickup weekend was a welcome chance to reconnect with some of you and gave us a chance to pour our new releases. We'll be hosting a new releases Open House **August 5, 6 and 7 from 10-5**. Depending on weather, might be outside again or a hybrid. We'll be pouring our new releases and I'll pull a blend of the 2021 Zinfandel barrel sample for you to check out the futures offering.

Appointments: While we have had many requests for tasting appointments, we are still unable to accommodate many just yet. Since I have been at the vineyard several days a week especially during the early and mid-growing season, there is even less time right now at the winery to do essential production work and harder yet to carve out time from that for visitors.

Curbside Winery Pickup. As always, please let us know when you'll be in the area and we'll do our best to meet you at the winery. The winery address is 4940 Ross Road, Sebastopol, 95472. If you get lost, the telephone number is 707-823-8980. Map is [here](#).

FedEx Priority Overnight summer promotion (includes Hawaii)! I suppose their air volume has subsided a bit because FedEx came out with an incredible deal for this service this summer. They must be playing a very long game, here. Priority Overnight **just \$100/case** through the end of October (Hawaii slightly more).

Region

We've been really pleased to be a part of *Region Wine Bar*, the multi-winery tasting room at the edge of the City of Sebastopol in The Barlow complex. There are 25 local wineries with 2 wines each dispensed from high-tech WineStation machines on one side of the space all year long. The other side has a Wine Bar that each winery hosts for a week twice a year to pour whatever they choose. They are open 7 days a week, reservations not required.

Scherrer will be featured the week of August 8-14. Judi and/or I will be on hand to help pour all week and would love to have a chance to connect. We will have 3 different flights available during the week. On August 10 - 12 from 6- 9, I will be playing guitar with good friend Michael Jordan (the Master Sommelier, not the basketball great) our **Unplugged and Uncorked** acoustic guitar duo. The February **Winemaker Dinner** was so successful we are doing TWO nights on *Monday August 8* and *Tuesday August 9* (links include full menu and tickets). We are hoping to keep the crowd size a little smaller than last time. *Jacob Philip Benning* will also be providing music those nights again. We hit it off so well last time jamming after dinner, he joined Michael Jordan and me in Phoenix for a couple of our gigs there.

Pickup at Region August 8-14. If you want to pick up any of your new or past orders when you're at Region, let us know in advance and we can have your wines ready. Again, **you'll need to let us know in advance** when you're planning on coming so we can have your wine packed up and ready as space is limited and the work required to move things in is huge.

Zinfandel Futures

The 2021 growing season was about as ideal as one could ask for (save for the rather low rainfall the previous winter). The wines have great verve and nerve, which I am quite excited about. Futures has been a great way for people to really understand the aging curve of our Zinfandels. For those new to us, our Zinfandel style is more restrained than the random bottle pulled off a shelf somewhere. They are a bit latent, but after a few years in bottle, the perfumes really come out. Not only do they hold up well, but they benefit from time in the bottle. The Old & Mature Vines back label states they should age gracefully for 5 to 10 years after the vintage, but I should revise that to 10 to 20 years after the vintage. This is all part of our long game.

2021 Scherrer Vineyard ‘Old & Mature Vines’ Zinfandel Futures

The growing season started out very dry, with rainfall essentially ending in April. It made for much easier soil cultivation work but we were a bit concerned about the vines making it through the season, especially the hundred year-plus old Zinfandel vines that don't have any supplemental irrigation. However, due to the soil type and the rootstock's tendency to explore the soil profile very deeply, these old vines made it just fine. And the remaining mature vines that do have supplemental drip irrigation available were grateful for a little help too. This is especially welcome to the vines after harvest when there is a flush of root growth and reserves for the next Spring are built up if there is sufficient soil moisture.

While I will fine-tune the blend if needed before bottling, the current iteration is much like the 2018 vintage with a tad more generosity. There is plenty of non-fruit to balance the fruit and good, deep, resolved tannic structure, though. Red plums, black raspberry, hibiscus tea, hints of rose hips and pie crust lead the aromas. It evenly engages the mouth, immediately initiating salivation and anticipation of another glass or another bite of food. The hibiscus and raspberry hide a serious dose of minerality that leaps out like from a Trojan Horse at night. In this case, the surprise is very welcome.

At harvest, I racked a part of our Zinfandel from pressing tank to barrel using a 25 year old Costco generator when the late October storm brought flooding and power outages. It is important to prepare for the unknown where possible even if on a tiny budget. Only about 500 cases will be produced. Estimated release price: *\$42 per bottle. Futures price: \$310 per case to be released April 2023.*

2021 Scherrer Vineyard ‘Shale Terrace’ Zinfandel Futures

The past few years the Shale Terrace bottling has really captured my heart. The stone fruit thing has always been a strange, consistent, lovely signature. But I am seeing a little more red raspberry lately. I'm not sure why as we are not really changing anything in the winemaking and I doubt the droughty conditions are the cause: 2014 was one such vintage and it was a bit more dark-fruited than usual. Despite the moderate pH, the acidity shows more than one would think. This is truly a rule-breaker site.

Besides the typical stone fruit/nectarine thing, there is Santa Rosa plum, red raspberry, hibiscus, with slight savory back notes emerging as well. But the thing about this wine is the perfumes! It takes to Burgundy-type barrels while the OMV seems to lean toward an affinity to Cognac and Bordeaux barrels, probably due to the different structural architecture they possess.

Because this is a limited production wine, we must manage what we're able to offer on futures. We have honored peoples' past support of this wine and give those that purchased Shale in the past (even just a bottle) 'first crack' and orders received by August 3 will be processed first in the order they are received while supplies last. Those who have not bought Shale before may place an order which will be placed on the 'wish list'. Those orders will be filled in the order they are received if there are futures still available after the first-crack August 3 deadline.

And not to fear, we also hold back some of the Shale from futures so we will have some available at release next April so those not in the 'first-crack' offering can have a few bottles. About 160 cases to be produced. *Release price \$42 /bottle. Futures price: \$310 per case to be released April 2023*

New Releases

New Release Sampler Pack

In our continued effort to bring the Open House tasting to you, we will be offering a special Sampler pack of one bottle of each of the following New Release wines at 15% discount and free ground shipping*. This offer is not on our regular public website. It is accessed only through [the link here](#) or the links provided on the email newsletter. You can also send in the attached order form or send us an email or give a call. 6 bottles, Special ~~\$300~~ \$255

*ground shipping will be weather dependent; if needed, we'll plan on storing the wine for you and ship when temperatures are wine friendly. The FedEx Priority Overnight Summer promotion for the 6-pack is \$50.

2019 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay

Planted in the early 1990's on lower vigor rootstock and very close spacing (one of the first planted this way in the area, actually), I have been working with this site since the late 1990's. Originally, I took the Chardonnay to get the Pinot Noir. The next year I took the Pinot Noir to get the Chardonnay, then finally convinced Don Helfer to graft most of his Pinot Noir to Chardonnay for us in the early 2000's.

Lemon marmalade, shortbread and a little petrichor greet the nose. On the mouth, initially rich and Puligny-like, with decent acidity it presents itself unlike typical CA Chardonnay. There is pear skin, Fuji apple flavors and a minerally finish. I think it is an exceptional Chardonnay site and have been really pleased to work with it continuously for more than 20 years. 125 cases produced. *\$50 per bottle.*

2019 Sonoma County Pinot Noir

Last year we thought 2018 was a very special vintage. Guess what? The 2019 is right up there in every way and possibly more in some instances. The first of our 2019 Pinots released, a vanguard of what is to come with the vintage, and like the 2018 Hallberg bottling, this was left through 3 winters in barrel (the most typical in our area is 1, maybe 2 winters in barrel for peoples' special lots). The yeast lees return much of what was taken from the grape during fermentation in a lovely way.

Orange zest, a slight hint of mulled wine spices give way to crushed plums and bing cherries on the nose. In the mouth there is an addition of sassafras. There is texture galore and nuanced non-fruit elements. To me it is the most compelling vintage of our Sonoma County Pinot Noir to date. 420 cases produced. *\$40 per bottle.*

2018 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir

One of my favorite bottlings, this has just about everything a person could ask for in Pinot Noir: grace, personality and mystery. A nose of beets, honeycomb, crushed red raspberries, hibiscus and ‘mystery.’ Smooth entry, savory/floral elements from the aromas alternate. There is essentially perfect continuity, texture in accord with structure and a gentle, long decrescendo to a slight, lightly toasted bread crust on the finish. 70 cases produced. *\$75 per bottle.*

2017 Huntsman Red

As a student of Grenache since 2011, I began exploring blends with Syrah, which I’ve worked with since the early 1990’s. There is a perfect synergy between these two diverse grapes. One holds down the darker, heavier side of the personality while the other brings levity and brightness. I’ve found that co-fermenting these two, finds a wine with better harmony and integration than simply taking the two vinified separately and then blending together. Fortunately, because of the climatic diversity in Sonoma County, we are able to harvest each of these two varieties at the same time at what I consider optimal ripeness for each allowing a co-ferment. If they were grown side-by-side the Syrah would ripen far earlier than the Grenache, and so in order to co-ferment, either the Syrah would be over-ripe or the Grenache would be under-ripe. I’ve spoken with a couple Châteauneuf-du-Pape producers who would be thrilled to have this situation.

Dried strawberry, black raspberry, roasted beet, red chard and a touch of Himalaya (local, wild) blackberry and mildly earthy aromas are the major facets of this highly complex wine. On the mouth it presents much like a burly-framed Pinot Noir, reminiscent of the 2010 Big Brother bottling at a similar age with just an extra phase of black pepper on the very long finish. I am really struck by the commonality of descriptors used for this wine and Pinot Noir. I have a good friend who was once a winery principal for decades comment on how nice the 2013 ‘Huntsman Pinot Noir based blend’ was. I took that as a large complement on the wine’s grace, balance and continuity. 129 cases produced. *\$40 per bottle*

2017 Calypso Vineyard Syrah

Lavender hints segue to aromas of blackberry cobbler, framing a savory core of green and black olive tapenade. Neither overtly fruity nor solidly savory, this walks that tightrope anchored to fruit and non-fruit elements. I love this variety which is capable of slowly aging for decades, gaining nuance and intrigue.

Highly salivary-genic, it’s structural fabric is nearly cloaked by its generous body [vs physical bodies being cloaked by fabric], this fine, small site has been farmed very intensively by Otis Holt. The compelling nature of the wine is a testament to a lucky confluence of site, people and shared vision. It is a highly selective confluence of the most profound parts of this site. 44 cases produced. *\$50 per bottle.*

2018 Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

My winemaking for this has evolved from a slightly traditional gestalt to more of a Burgundian approach of no racking at all until bottling after three (or more) years in barrel. It suits the fruit well and I think the wines are better for it as we don’t squander the material’s long term oxygen appetite by handling in the open air. Those of us with grey hair may not appreciate the value as much of collecting young wines with tremendous life-expectancy at this point in life. But I’m an optimist, hoping to see the long game play out beautifully.

Cassis, red cherry, cocoa, a hint of Levi Garrett chewing tobacco (don’t ask) are the aromas that filled the winery when I racked to the bottling tank after 45 months in barrel without

racking [most wineries are on the market by 24 months of harvest, mostly for archaic tax accounting reasons]. Bright, mouth-watering entry is followed by appropriately firm structural tannins. These carry through completely like a railcar carrying the flavors from aroma to the finish as they make their way slowly off into the horizon, always in sight but growing smaller all the time [while the credits roll by on the screen]. Not bombastic, nor diminutive, this rides right in the middle lane – not the flashiest, not the impenetrable-just the comfortable, glorious middle. 450 cases produced. *\$45 per bottle*

Very Recent Releases

I would be remiss if I did not mention how the 2021 Dry Rosé (\$26) has blossomed this summer. It's a real trade-off to keep it in barrel for its own good and still release it when the ground shipping weather is still moderate. There have been a number of people who recently ran out of this wine and happily supplies are still good so we've been putting the FedEx Priority Overnight promotion to good use! The 2015 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$50) has found its stride and appears to be running strongly for many more years. The 2017 Old & Mature Vine Zin (\$40) has reached that magical spot for our Zinfandels where baby fruit is playing in time with the latent perfumes that a few years in the bottle create.

The 2018 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay (\$40) is really beginning to shine as it enters the second year in bottle. The 2017 Kick Ranch Grenache (\$40) has gotten a lot of re-orders as people have tried it on for size.

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.



Shipping Information

We will be happy to ship your order to any of the following states when weather is wine friendly. We prefer FedEx for Ground, though UPS is available by request.	Case: 12 x 750 mL 24 x 375 mL 6 x 1.5 L
Pick up is available at the Winery during events or by appointment.	NC
GLS Ground Delivery (recommended) to CA	\$27/box
GLS 2-Day to AZ, ID, NV, OR, WA and parts of NM	\$33/box
Ground to CA, NM, NV or OR	\$36/box
Ground to AZ, CO, ID, MT, WA or WY	\$48/box
Ground to AL, DC, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, VT or WI	\$60/box
FedEx 2-day Air to above states plus: HI higher	\$168/box
FedEx Summer Priority Overnight to any above state. HI higher	\$100/box

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.

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 2023	Price (cases only)	Quantity	Amount
2021 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel	\$310 / case		
2021 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel	\$310 limit 1 case		
2021 Zin Half & Half Split Case (6-OMV, 6-Shale)	\$310 limit 1 case		
Futures Subtotal			
Sales Tax: Pick up 8.5% Shipping: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, VT, WA, WI, WY			%
Choose: <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up at Winery or <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping method and cost:			
Deadlines: August 3 for Shale First Crack August 31 for all futures orders unless sold out			Futures Total

New Releases	Price	Quantity	Amount
2019 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay	\$50 / bottle		
2019 Sonoma County Pinot Noir	\$40 / bottle		
2018 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$75 / bottle		
2017 Calypso Vineyard Syrah	\$50 / bottle		
2017 Huntsman Red Wine	\$40 / bottle		
2018 Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon	\$45 / bottle		
New Release Sampler (one each 750 mL, 15% discount)	\$255/ 6 bottle pack		
New Releases Wines Subtotal			
Discount for orders that will total 12 or more bottles (Futures & New Release Sampler build toward discount but are not additionally discounted)			-10% < >
Current Wines Total			
Sales Tax: Pick up 8.5% Shipping: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, VT, WA, WI, WY			
Choose: <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up at Winery or <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping method and cost:			
Total			

Payment: Visa / MasterCard American Express Check

Card #	Expires:	Security Code
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Signature:	Date:
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