

The Value of Time & Timing

Time: We are all born with an unknown amount of “time-wealth” that we trade for other forms of wealth. It’s strange to consider making “purchases” with an asset that one has little idea of how much they actually have to spend. One can only hope that there is more! **Timing:** This is where the true value of the time spent and the amount of time left to spend can be assessed. Leaving a building, just before the earthquake levels it, is of greater value than planning to leave it an hour later! In this case, the timing determines the amount of time left to spend. Similarly, timing of harvesting determines the outcome of the wine, especially when conditions become extreme.

We’ve all been facing significant challenges of late (due to weather, viruses and disruption of infrastructure that we used to take for granted). Of course, what it takes to overcome or at least to adapt to these various challenges is probably on most of our minds. As I am just coming off the new vintage harvest marathon, I’m reflecting that due to extreme weather over a short period near harvest, both the 2022 and 2004 vintages had that same theme where time and timing were critical to a successful outcome. And as we’ve been bottling and releasing finished wines from 2020 this year, I’m also seeing where both heat and fire/smoke/time-of-exposure to reactive volatiles were assessed and imaginable issues avoided. I truly appreciate the value of the time I’ve invested in selecting a path through each of these events, much of which was contrary to ‘conventional wisdom’ at the time. We have all learned a great deal recently.

What was shaping up to be a fantastic, cool-ish finish to the 2022 growing season was punctuated by a historic week-long heat wave beginning Labor Day weekend. It became a dance of timing: The stage of the ripening process and the increasing fragility of the grapes as they become more advanced determines the severity of the ravages that heat can play during that vulnerable period. To accurately describe a vintage like this we must talk about all three parts of it: *pre-heat* vs. *during heat* vs. *the post-heat* and how they differ according to the variety, trellis system, location, etc. I think it deserves a detailed discussion.

Pre-heat: It was gorgeous weather for the month of August, and with a smaller than normal crop due to erratic bloomtime weather, the vines were having an easy time of developing the fruit despite limited seasonal rainfall. All of our Zinfandel, Chardonnay and 90% of our Pinot Noir were harvested under these lovely conditions at modest sugar levels. These wines have tremendous verve, concentration and balance. They are truly exciting wines at this early stage.

During-heat: Because the forecasted intensity and duration of this heat wave was growing each day, those growers with the experience and means mobilized to harvest as soon as grapes were ready before significant sunburning and/or dehydration occurred. Our Syrah, Grenache and a tiny portion of Pinot Noir still on the vine were in this slice of the harvest. The first two varieties are hardier and they survived well, thankfully showing more savory facets from

harvesting on their early side. The Pinot Noir that was part of this slice was not at all ready to go before the heat and needed about another normal week to reach its potential. To my relief, the extra days of heat gave it what it needed to ripen and the only consequence was some overall dehydration – no raisiny or cooked character at all which would have become apparent at the end of fermentation and pressing. Another day or two of excessive exposure may have changed that. Thank goodness for being able to harvest before things get too advanced.

Post- heat: For us, the primary fruit that had to stay out in the field past that hot week was our Cabernet Sauvignon. It had not been anywhere near ready to pick and was in good shape: no water stress in the root zone and vascular connections between berry and stem were intact. Having some leaf canopy protection for the fruit from the late afternoon sun was a huge factor in success/survival of the fruit as well. Having a well-established vineyard in Alexander Valley, when planting the Cab in the early 90's, my late father had stuck to the old 'California Sprawl' trellis which has two catch wires about a foot above the fruiting wire. This trellis system supports shoots in a way that provides a semi-open "umbrella" of overhead and side leaf protection for the fruit while allowing it to hang freely below in a mixture of freckled shade and sunlight. This trellis system is perfect for the area and is important for success during late-season heat spells. [The other system that has been utilized by most plantings in the last 30 years is a vertical system that maximizes solar intensity to the fruit zone. It works very well in cool, damp places with varieties that are very prone to rot. My father always looked 'funny' at these trellis systems, questioning what would happen to that fruit when it would get really hot just before or during harvest.] So, I am pleased how we were able to weather the weather pretty well this year with that 'old' system. Thanks, Dad.

Looking at our Cabernet Sauvignon fruit in 2022 reminds me very much of what we had in 2004, another harvest with a hot spell just as the grapes were approaching maturity. With the passing of time, I know now that it made a really classic, well-aging Cabernet Sauvignon. While the water status of the vines in 2004 was more parched, there was some defoliation in the fruit protecting layer of the canopy and the fruit was more exposed to afternoon sun. So while 2004 had slightly less severe air temperatures than 2022, they resulted in similar fruit temperatures both vintages. The idea of time and timing was a central theme to the Fall 2004 newsletter as well [*It's all a Matter of Timing*]. Considering the similarities between the vintages, I naturally had to circle back with the chance to illustrate the difference between levels of success under these extreme conditions.

We also had some great validation of our approach to the general 2020 Vintage. During that vintage, different methods of smoke exposure assessment and risk aversion caused a huge schism between winemakers' opinions, many of whom simply skipped the vintage altogether and derided any producers that would attempt the vintage as having "low standards". Rather than punching them in the nose, I'd rather they blind taste the wines we made in the vintage without their knowledge that it was a 2020. My own approach to 2020 was to assess whether or not a given site had *significant* exposure to fresh reactive smoke, using small-scale 'bucket fermentations' ahead of harvest. Importantly I did this while paying attention to any eye burning sensation *while frequently visiting the different sites*. It's those reactive volatile phenols that cause most of the eye burning sensation, so common sense suggests paying attention to this sensory data. So far, it looks like it worked and I've been very pleased with the wines bottled so far. In the most recent review of our wines, Antonio Galloni wrote 'The 2020 Zinfandel Old & Mature Vines Scherrer Vineyard [bottled 7 months ago] is fabulous. Soaring aromatics and bright, punchy fruit make a strong first impression. Deep and Sumptuous,

with tons of varietal character, the Old & Mature Vines delivers the goods...94 points.' The more elegant 2020 Shale Terrace Zin and 2020 Dry Rose each got 91 points with glowing descriptions of their typical characteristics. One can see that time and timing (along with topography, wind direction *and also spending the time to be present for observation and then make informed choices*) are important even when dealing with the potential of significant smoke exposure.

Open Houses resuming.

Due to the many changing factors involved in Covid-19 consequences to society, we think we can responsibly resume hosting some form of open house this November. Please plan on joining us **November 18, 19 and 20 from 10-5**. The winery is located at 4940 Ross Rd. Sebastopol CA. [This map](#) will help, we're not well marked or easy to find.

Curbside pickup is always available, we're here most days. Just call (707) 823-8980 or [email](#) and we'll make sure one of us is here and will be happy to bring your wine out to your car. The winery address is 4940 Ross Road, Sebastopol, 95472.

Futures

2021 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir Futures

As I wrote last year, the 2021 Vintage was an unusually high acid, low pH year for the most part. A composite blend from barrels one year into aging is really exciting. Sweet red beets, black raspberry, boysenberry and freshly tilled loam greet the nose. The mouth is very lively with great, smooth progression and a reprise of the aromas in flavor by mouth. It is juicy, lively and seamless at this early stage.

Futures \$396 per case (full cases only, \$33/bottle). Estimated release price \$54. Offer available until December 31, 2022 or until the futures allocation sells out. Futures Release date November 2023, general retail release date November 2024. About 360 cases to be produced

2020 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir Futures Release Notes

I have just bottled this wine after 25 months in barrel. I have learned that longer time in barrel is better. So I delayed the bottling which makes sense for the wine.

As discussed above, I paid obsessive attention to where the fresh, reactive smoke was laying in close to the ground and tried to make level-headed guesses as to where the safest bets were vs. the riskiest ones were, both for grower and winery. By mutual agreement with the growers, we left some things out in the fields while harvesting most or all in other sites. But at least everything we brought in has succeeded beyond my expectations.

Blue fruits, black fruits and some freshly tilled loam greet the nose on this freshly-bottled beauty. It's rather like the 2015 vintage with a smoother feel at a similar age. There is a mildly savory/salty-ish hint and the slightest touch of vanilla, all of which are partly derived from the proportion of new barrels that makes it very interesting at this early stage: Fruit and non-fruit in balance. There is great length, grace and continuity which are very important attributes of Pinot Noir. 215 cases produced Available for retail sale Fall 2023. Futures buyers get it way ahead of that.

New Releases

New Release Sampler Pack

In our continued effort to bring the Open House tasting to you, we are offering a Sampler pack of one bottle of each of the following New Release wines (except the Gewürztraminer, which is too limited) 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. It is possible to purchase multiple samplers, by the way as many have. *6 bottles, Special offer \$309 \$263*

2013 Sonoma County Gewürztraminer

This is not a typo! This is a unicorn. Bottled this past August after 9 winters in stainless steel barrels. This is the final edition of a project I inherited from a good friend, Tom Klassen (now winemaker at Patz & Hall Winery). I invited him to move the project to my winery a dozen years ago when his previous hosting winery condition changed. His original plan was to ferment and age in 2 old wooden and 2 stainless steel barrels to stretch out the wine's dimension with oxygen transfer differences and then bottle with 11 months age. Unfortunately, the Gewürztraminer sales project fizzled when Tom's day job took all his time and I later inherited/adopted the unlabeled bottled wines from the 10/11 and 2012 vintages which I hope many of you remember were released under my label in 2020. Well, this is a different twist on that theme as most of the aging occurred *before* bottling! So, we have a freshly bottled, well-aged unicorn of a wine that is even beyond Tom's original vision of 'terpenoid grape variety goodness.' I am delighted to have been a part of this as a supportive character in previous editions and eventually the editor of the final cut.

This 2013 has tons of classic Lychee on the nose! Some lemon-lime and hint of honey show up along with a subtle umami/non-fruit element to balance this incredible fruit. It's like the genie cannot wait to get out of the bottle after being contained in stainless steel barrels for nearly a decade! This defies conventional wisdom and makes me question what is actually wisdom.

It has good body and perfectly balancing acidity as Tom intended (wondering why he was invited in initially?). Absolutely bone-dry, it is versatile with food (especially Thanksgiving fare) or just as a refreshing, exotic prelude to the meal. Just two stainless steel barrels were produced. Nobody else I know of will go out to make a delicious wine on purpose this way, as amazing as it is. Only 45 cases produced *\$22 per bottle, limit 6 (sorry about that)*.

2021 Dry Rosé of Syrah

We don't always make a varietal Syrah Rosé. Only in the vintages where I have more of this component needed for the blended one, am I able to select out the barrels that will reach perfect balance with another 5 months in barrel. The extra time fills out the 'rounds' to match the 'angles' this variety possesses as a Rosé. This talk of 'extra time in barrel thru the summer' is not something you hear from most Rosé producers!

Pretty, Santa Rosa plum, with bright, juicy acidity (indicative of the 2021 vintage) this is great with fresh oysters. After several days open, the wine is a bit rounder and more like previous vintages when I can make it. Still, it is quite mouth-watering as a serious Rosé should be. 93 cases produced *\$24 per bottle*.

2020 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay

This vineyard breaks all the ‘conventional wisdom’ rules about the variety in the Alexander Valley. There’s much more to the story that I’ll share at another time. Lemon curd with a twist of lime zest on the nose. Despite nearly 2 full years in barrel on yeast lees, it is energetic, bright and light on its feet. The acidic core and sense of minerality keep this train on the tracks. The acidity is incisive but not jarring-like trombones vs baritones or French horns in an orchestra. After 1 week open, it is absolutely gorgeous and focused.

Over a decade ago, my friend, Tom Klassen (the father of the Gewürztraminer project above) persuaded me to approach the Chardonnays without inoculation, a recommendation that I am quite grateful for. Indigenous/uninoculated alcoholic and malolactic fermentations take well over 1 year to complete in many cases. This long period of biological activity helps ‘feather in’ the proportion of new French oak and yeast lees which act as the non-fruit balancing notes. It requires essentially double the time and space than the usual method used by most wineries. But again, time is an important ingredient. Just 117 cases produced *\$44 per bottle, \$23 for half bottle, \$90 per magnum*

2019 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

Plums, roses, fresh compost on the nose surround a core of mixed-colored fruits with a hint of mushroom broth that is haunting and compelling. It is still quite influenced by pretty, youthful fermentation aromas that typically tone down a few years in bottle. It is medium-bodied, with good structure and a mouth-watering middle palate. In fact, the finish is so long and graceful, it makes one take another sip before the wine’s presence slowly fades like a very long ending to a western movie where the guy on the horse rides off into the sunset for what seems like an eternity while every grip, best, second best and worst boy is named in the rolling credits. In short, the wine is still quite young and very enjoyable and promising. 1010 cases produced *\$52 per bottle, \$27 per half bottle, \$106 per magnum*

2018 ‘High Slopes’ Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

This is from a site at the furthest southern edge of the Russian River Valley AVA where the coastal influence is strongest. It causes a challenge to the vines in the Spring while they are trying to bloom due to cold temperatures that inhibit full pollination giving smaller berries and very low yields. This foggy, wind-swept location is on the leeward side of the hillside so it is protected just enough to actually succeed ripening on a reliable basis. Due to the small berry size, the concentration of the red wine is significant.

Orange zest and peonies first greet the nose. As usual for this bottling, it is quite concentrated and full of verve, spicy, iodine-like notes which arise to balance the concentrated dark and red fruits like high voltage alternating current. It has a firm structure and very mouth-watering finish.

Antonio Galloni’s take on the wine: ‘The 2018 Pinot Noir High Slopes stands out in this range with its dark, dense fruit and imposing structure. Black Cherry, plum, lavender, cloves, incense, and leather convey brooding intensity...95 Points’ 94 cases produced *\$75 per bottle*.

2019 Kick Ranch Grenache

Since Kick ranch has been on a rotating replant schedule, some of the blocks I have worked with were uprooted and replanted to a slightly different configuration over the years. This block was replaced after the 2019 vintage, so it will be our last Kick Ranch Grenache for a while at least. No worries, I have been exploring other sites for this useful variety.

Bees wax, rose hips, maraschino cherry, red rooibos tea on the nose. Gently chewy tannins that smoothen out to a long, mouth-watering finish. Aged in 500 L puncheon for 32 months.

Unlike many Grenache wines, I fully destem this in order to minimize any distracting stem tannins. However, with the modified destemmer I have, and the nature of the variety I am able to obtain a huge proportion of whole berries after destemming. This allows the wine to show lots of carbonic maceration characteristics without any stem flavor baggage. 52 cases produced \$42 per bottle.

2018 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

All of our Cabernet Sauvignons originate from the family vineyard. However, the soils and rootstocks vary so it is not surprising to end up with a couple different expressions of the grape in the area. We bottle part with only the 'Alexander Valley' designation and the rest with the Vineyard designation. This is the part that expresses the site more perfectly.

Delicate cassis notes, mincemeat, forest floor and plums greet the nose. Initially fleshy, the palate becomes centered, with juiciness from the moderate acidity reigning in the herd. Less of the spices show on the mouth and more of the dark fruit and freshly tanned leather appear. Tasting a bottle three days since first pulling the cork, the aromas really opened up to reveal fennel, cassis and black fruits which are quite persistent. Bottled this past summer, it promises a very long life as classic versions of this variety should. 150 cases produced \$72 per bottle, \$38 per Half bottles, \$146 per magnum

Library Releases

We have found that time is very kind to our wines. It's not just that they hang onto their fruit with time, but they actually *gain* many layers on top of that. Be on the lookout for the library releases which will go live on *our website* on Saturday November 12 at 9 am Pacific. You'll receive an e-mail that morning as a reminder. Despite the small amount of space devoted to it here, it is a significant focus of ours. There aren't many wineries that are willing to commit and invest into holding back wines for years to slowly bring them back to offer them for sale. Again, since positive development with age is so central to our style, it is important to illustrate it rather than simply talk about it.

Very Recent Releases

The 2016 Huntsman (\$38) is showing so well right now it would be a shame to ignore it. We still have some of the 2017 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$68) which has opened up nicely this summer in spite of its long-term future in the cellar. On cue, the 2017 Old & Mature Vines Zin (\$40) is showing spectacularly at this point just as the 2016 did a year ago

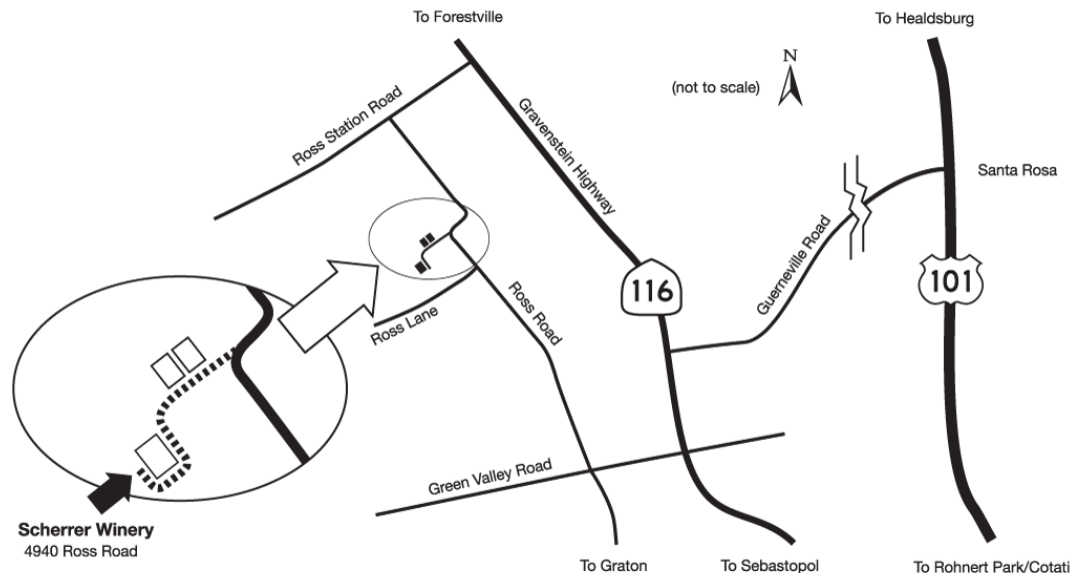
The 2018 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir recently got a lot of love from Antonio Galloni. 'The 2018 Pinot Noir Platt Vineyard is the best wine I have ever tasted from Fred Scherrer. It possesses tremendous fruit intensity, depth and structure, all in a style that captures the natural inner sweetness of this site, but married with Scherrer's old-school style. Succulent black cherry, plum, lavender, menthol and spice are all front and center. What a wine! 96 points.' Matched with the 2018 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir (\$75, AG 94), 2018 Gunsalus Vineyard Pinot Noir (\$48, AG 94) and the newly released 2018 High Slopes Pinot Noir, would make for a nice tasting

party or holiday gift to compare great sites from a very nice vintage. Anyone who needs to understand what we are doing should consider this combination pack idea.

Again, thanks for your continued support. Seeing what many other small wineries went through with the shift in markets as a result of COVID-19, we are truly grateful for your support over the years. Without it, I doubt we would still be here. Your support also 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 is 707-824-1933. Please drive slowly down the driveway. The entrance and our gravel parking area are on the west side, so please 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. 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 Overnight to any above state. HI higher | \$240/box |

| 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 November 2023 | Price (cases only) | Quantity | Amount |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|--------|
| 2021 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir | \$396 / 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 <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping method and cost: | | | |
| <u>Deadline</u> : December 31, 2022 | | Futures Total | |

| New Releases | Price | Quantity | Amount |
|--|----------------------|----------|--------|
| 2021 Dry Rosé of Syrah | \$24 / bottle | | |
| 2020 Scherrer Vineyard Chardonnay | \$44 / bottle | | |
| | \$23 / half bottle | | |
| | \$90 / magnum | | |
| 2019 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir | \$52 / bottle | | |
| | \$27 / half bottle | | |
| | \$106 / magnum | | |
| 2018 'High Slopes' Pinot Noir | \$75 / bottle | | |
| 2019 Kick Ranch Grenache | \$42 / bottle | | |
| 2018 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon | \$72 / bottle | | |
| | \$38 / half bottle | | |
| | \$146 / magnum | | |
| New Release Sampler (one each above, 15% discount) | \$263/ 6 bottle pack | | |
| 2013 Gewürztraminer (limit 6) | \$22 / bottle | | |
| Subtotal | | | |
| Discount on wine for total of 12 or more bottles (sampler & futures builds toward the discount but are not further discounted) | | -10% | |
| 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 <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping method and cost: | | | |
| Total | | | |

Payment: Visa / MasterCard American Express Check

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| Card # | Expires: | Security Code |
| Signature: | Date: | |