March 2023

SCHERRER
WINERY

Boom, bust and striving for stability

With the recent banking debacles in the world, it has become quite evident that the way we collectively avoid a perceived or revealed risk can become a self-fulfilling prophecy causing dominoes to fall back onto ourselves and/or others. Those of us engaged in short shelf-life agricultural products, like grapes and their conversion to more stable forms like wine, have had to grow accustomed to varied levels of risk. Be it the threat of or actual smoke damage from nearby wildfires, hail or rain at bloom or harvest, recession or pandemic effects on sales outlets, earthquakes, etc. Trying to mitigate the existential risks seems to be a given, to the extent possible. Of course, the long lead time to 'assemble' a bottle of wine from the planting of vines to finally selling the bottle, makes it nearly impossible to predict the change in conditions during that entire period. For example, I've got red wines that were first vinified the better part of a decade ago as current releases. Think of how much the world has changed in the past 7-8 years! The library releases just increase that boom-bust roller-coaster for us. One is left to ride the roller-coaster with hands in the air, leaning to and fro attempting to find some center of mass stability through it all. We appreciate your support in helping us navigate these waters as we have striven for stability for over three decades.

Rainfall in Northern California tends to come in boom-bust cycles of very wet or very dry winters, sometimes strung together, sometimes alternating, but usually varying significantly over time. Having adequate rainfall each year has always been important to farmers. In response to the questions I've received from many of you during the past couple years about how the vines handle the dry years, I have found myself discussing the effects of low rainfall winters on the grapevines we work with and the wines we produce. It comes down to this: On *well-drained soils,* established grapevines, planted with rootstocks that are both fairly tolerant to a dry root zone and are also capable of thoroughly exploring the soil profile, seem to be able to handle both the downsides of drought years and wetter winters. Provided the rainfall occurs during the 'dormant' season, it really doesn't make a large difference to the plant health if it's an above or below average rainfall year as long as the soil starts the season at or near 'field capacity' (moisture held by soil that has had gravity drain away any excess). What we do tend to see in drought vintages in these situations is more concentration of tannin and some flavors in the reds, while in the well-watered vintages we tend to see more perfume and delicacy. Plants don't read the news. They read the soil. Of course, mid or late season deluges are another story that we fortunately don't have to deal with that often. Importantly, the key point here is '*well-drained soils*' which mitigate the effects of these extremes in winter rainfall. This is

something I have always looked at when deciding to work with a new site. That and air drainage for frost mitigation. Together it is why hillside vineyards are typically where the best fruit comes from historically. Of course, there are exceptions, but it is still more often the case than not.

The supply chain of both new barrels and bottles has continued to be difficult this past year, more of a bust in supply than a boom. Fortunately, I hold an excess of new barrels over from the previous vintage because I need to have plenty of any given type. Why? Because they must be ordered in early Spring so they can be made and arrive in port before harvest. Since the vines have not bloomed yet, we do not know the size of the vintage nor what the true appetite of the wines will have for a given type of new barrel. So, to Judi's cash-flow consternation, I keep a fairly large bit of a barrel inventory into the next year to weather the uncertainty, ordering more than actually needed. What isn't used in a given year stores well and the surplus will be on hand at the beginning of harvest to take care of earlier wine lots if there are delays in receiving the upcoming year's new barrel order. This is how I mitigate the uncertainty of timely barrel deliveries due to port issues like we saw last year. The bottles are harder to deal with, though. Fortunately, I quit using capsules about two years ago, which allows more flexibility in small, but significant differences in neck diameter by not being constrained to what fits my custom-ordered capsules. We have been unable to get a continuous supply of the green claret bottles that the Zins and Cabs have gone into for decades, having to move to brown ('Antique Green', as the vendors call it) just to have something to bottle in when the wine is ready. I actually like the color now that I've had to look at thousands of these bottles. This is a small change relative to all that we've gone through these last few years. I think you all have your own personal stories on this theme.

Open House – One weekend only.

We are happy to be able to resume our typical Spring Open House this year. We will be open only one long weekend, **April 14-16 from 10-5 each day.** As in the fall, we will have food plates and seating available outside, this should allow for less congestion inside where the wines will be poured.

If you're unable to make that weekend, we have pickup by appointment, just call or drop an email and we'll find a time that works. 707-823-8980 *info@scherrerwinery.com*

New Releases

2021 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel, Alexander Valley

As it is further in the rear-view mirror, the 2021 vintage still looks like about an ideal season in most of our area. Despite the lower level of rainfall the previous winter, the vines looked good through the season and delivered nice, sound fruit with a high level of structure.

After racking the wine from barrels to the bottling tank, I find there's a dark, brooding side to this that has come more to the forefront since August, when the very youthful fruity side was more prominent. There are nice dark fruits going on and some spiciness that portend good things with time. This has an impressive level of concentration, as if our 2014 and 1999 OMV

vintages had a baby together. The texture is sufficiently thick to rise to the level of structure showing a bit of drought-type vintage concentration.

Distinctly claret-styled, there is a bit of black raspberry floating amid satsuma plum on the nose, counterbalanced by petrichor and redwood forest undertones to the aromas. While I guarantee there is practically no Petite Sirah or Carignane in this wine, the Zinfandel is definitely channeling some of those characteristics in a good way. This should be well-suited to more substantial table fare. 500 cases produced. *$44 per bottle, $24 per half bottle and $90 per magnum.*

2021 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel, Alexander Valley

This unique portion of our family vineyard is truly remarkable. No other Zinfandel I have ever tasted is like this. As I often say, it's the Zin that usually dresses up like Pinot Noir and looks really good that way. In a blind tasting in a flight of real Pinot Noirs, it will ultimately reveal that it is different. However, in a flight of Zinfandels it will make people wonder 'who slipped the Pinot Noir in?'

Planted in the early 1970's, I've been working with this small area since 1996. Over the years, I think I have come to understand it well and have tried to refine my approach to it while allowing vintages to speak. This shows its typical floral/herbal perfume of nectarine pit. At the time of bottling, there is also an intriguing echo of one of the spicy/fruity after-shaves they had at the barber shop when I was a kid, that's refreshing and complex (since I wasn't shaved, it was from across the room). There's a nice lift to the wine as it rolls over the palate. The salivary response is gentle, but certain with rhubarb and beets on the finish. Again, nobody bottles a Zinfandel of this kind that I'm aware of. 160 cases produced. *$44 per bottle.*

2022 Dry Rosé, Sonoma County

This is one of my favorite wines to drink at home. It is just so versatile and delicious that it is difficult not to have a bottle in the refrigerator at all times.

Depending upon the characteristics of the components, the basic proportion of this is usually around half Grenache, with the last half made up of Zinfandel and Syrah in some combination. In 2022 the optimal proportion was about 40% Grenache, 40% Syrah and 20% Zinfandel.

Smelling nearly like a rosé champagne base wine, there is also Santa Rosa plum, hibiscus, maraschino cherry, and a trace of honeysuckle greeting the nose. Very mouthwatering at the beginning, the salivary response just continues to build as the flavors by aroma cascade by. The highly vibrant acidity (for those chemistry folks, the pH is under 3.10) carries all the way through, while strawberry-rhubarb flavors emerge. Finally, the finish is very clean and refreshing, inviting another sip. This is the perfect wine for so many kinds of food due to its stalwart acidic structure. 260 cases produced. *$26 per bottle.*

2020 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay, Russian River Valley

Our style of Chardonnay is probably best described as middle of the spectrum with surprises. It is barrel fermented in a mixture of old and new French oak using our own indigenous microflora. It is aged on lees in barrel for an extraordinarily long time (23 months) and bottled without fining or filtration. The extended time on yeast lees gives remarkable texture and

fullness (surprise #1) which are balanced by the salivary-inducing acidity (surprise #2) necessary for that upward trajectory on the finish.

Green apple and d'anjou pear fruit aromas meld with the petrichor background initially. There's a tiny hint of vanillin that disappears quickly, replaced by petrichor and pomme fruit again. On the mouth, it is luxurious at first, then like an actor who slipped out of character briefly, it reigns itself back into character with a highly mouth-watering finish that invites another sip [if not repeated too recently]. A brief appearance of starfruit precedes the apple and pear flavors until the umami note rises up to help support the very subtle barrel presence for a long, graceful finish. A decade ago, this vineyard's 2010 vintage topped a blind tasting among the top names in California Chardonnay by experienced wine professionals. Here is a recap on a colleague's website: *https://www.rameywine.com/awards/executive-wine-seminars-tasting-californias-finest-chardonnays-2013/* It validates the site and our style, which I have worked hard to refine over the years. Production was only about half the usual amount this year. 58 cases produced. *$52 per bottle.*

2019 Gunsalus Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley

This is a ten-acre vineyard that I've worked with parts of since 2006. Glen and Pam Gunsalus are still highly involved in day-to-day operations, striving to provide the best fruit possible from this site, making it a joy to work together. They planted different rootstocks on the site according to soil conditions and sprinkled different clones of Pinot Noir here and there as though creating a decorative quilt. After working with several parts of this quilt, I have settled into one of these patches quite comfortably for the past 14 years or so providing what I am looking for in this section of the Russian River Valley.

Soaring floral perfumes at first lead to comforting red beets and cocoa powder. Rather full-bodied for a Pinot Noir from this neighborhood, it refuses to be heavy or stand still for a moment as it glides along effortlessly over the palate, which is a specialty of Pinot Noir. Flavors of beets, mincemeat, red zinger tea, appear as a very slow-motion explosion on the mid-palate. On the finish, there is a hibiscus note as its structural tannins weigh in just before the lively acidity drives the train off into the horizon. 70 cases produced *$50 per bottle.*

2019 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

Grateful for being invited to work with this site as it was being developed about 23 years ago, I gradually narrowed my focus into a narrow swath of this complex series of vineyard blocks perched in sight of the Pacific Ocean. Over the years there have been some changes in ownership and overall farming practices, yet I have always been able to have those practices customized to my own preferences.

Depending upon the clone, Platt has quite a bit of mysterious, earthy aromas on the front end followed up by sneaky, pervasive fruit and then more mystery. This vintage is no exception. There are some really nice notes of cola, cocoa, sandalwood and a red-black fruit vibe that keeps watch over the preceding flavors. Like the 2018 vintage, the finish seems to go on for days. Here, and above with the Gunsalus, we see the 2019 signature of significant structure underlying beautiful generosity in the Pinot Noirs from a couple different parts of Sonoma County that I am lucky to work with. Fortunately, the extended time in barrel on lees that I have increased another notch beginning with the 2018 vintage fits perfectly with this vintage especially well. 90 cases produced. *$80 per bottle*

2018 Syrah, Russian River Valley
Around 1980, I was introduced to Syrah in the form of Hermitage and Côte-Rôtie by Andre Tchelistcheff, who consulted at the winery I was working at for about 5 years. The idea was to give a frame of reference and inspiration to the young staff there for our work with their Petite Sirah. Several years later, my good friend Bill Mitchell shared many bottles of great northern Rhone wines and the hook was permanently set. In the early 1990's I obtained plant material and developed the Syrah program at my then employer. I have been making Syrah ever since either as single-varietal bottlings or as multi-varietal blends. This bottling is drawn from Calypso and Lolita vineyards, combined in the proportions that balance each other and shine most brightly.

The aromas of new potting soil, dark fruits, sandalwood, blue fruits and a tad of black pepper give way to a nice savory entry, mouth-watering uplift that occurs surprisingly early. That uplift continues on to a delightful black pepper finish that morphs into rooibos tea at the end. 65 cases produced. *$42 per bottle.*

New Release Sampler Pack
In our continued effort to bring the open house tasting to you, one bottle of each of the above New Release wines (except for Shale Terrace Zinfandel, which is too limited to offer this way) 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 an email or give a call. 6 bottles, Special offer ~~$294~~ $250

*ground shipping will be weather dependent; if needed, we'll plan on storing the wine for you and ship in the fall when temperatures are wine friendly. If you'd like your wine sooner, we will offer a discount for 2-day air on this as well.

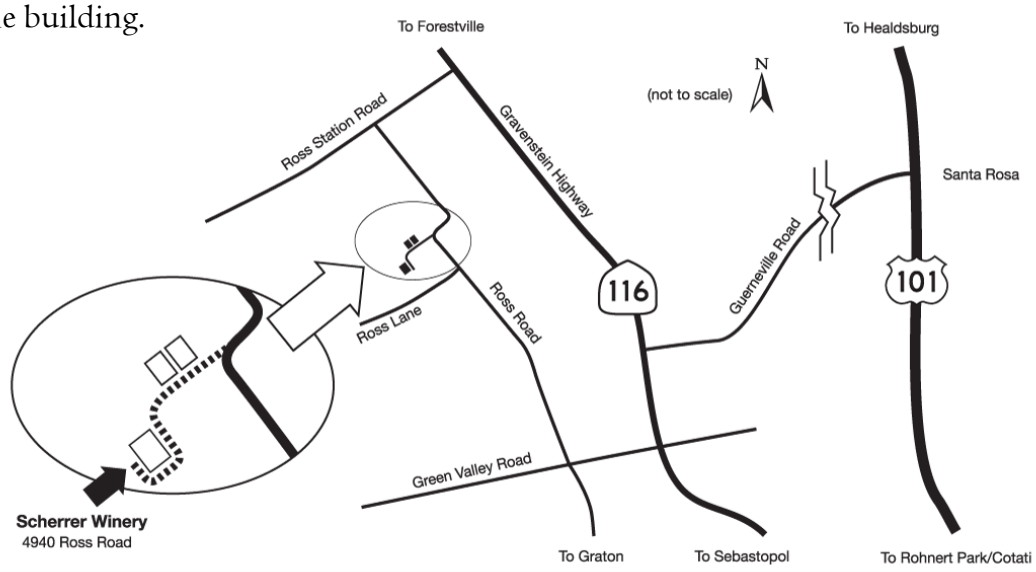
Recent Releases

If anyone wants to compare a Syrah-varietal rosé with our blended one, the 2021 Dry Rosé of Syrah released last fall is showing really well. I'd drink it this spring and summer while allowing the 2022 to settle into itself after its recent bottling. The 2015 and 2016 Russian River Valley Pinot Noirs are both showing really well. The 2017 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel is in a very happy place and totally worth re-stocking if you are out. Our 2019 Old & Mature Vines Zin recently got highlighted by Wine Spectator as an Editor's Pick (94 pts). Even at this pretty early stage in the wine's life, it is showing quite well as it did last summer when also given 94 points by Antonio Galloni. The 2018 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir received 96 points, the highest praise we have ever had from Antonio Galloni "The 2018 Pinot Noir Platt Vineyard is the best wine I have ever tasted from Fred Scherrer". The 2017 High Slopes Pinot Noir has slid into a very nice early groove as well. It is quite a study in concentration and verve and also received 94 points from Galloni. The 2014 Calypso Vineyard Syrah has also entered a lovely phase, having settled into a long-term trajectory that fine cooler climate Syrah does so well.

I certainly appreciate your continued support as we navigate these turbulent times.

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 707-823-8980. 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. 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 AZ, CA, NM, NV or OR	$40/box
Ground to CO, ID, MT, WA or WY	$51/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	$63/box
FedEx 2-day Air to above states plus: HI higher	$170.50/box
FedEx Summer Priority Overnight to any above state (HI higher) May - October	$120/box

April 2021

SCHERRER WINERY

MAILING	SHIPPING	
Name	Name	
Street	Company Name	Residential ☐
City, State, Zip Code	Street	
Daytime Phone	City, State, Zip Code	
e-mail:	Delivery Phone	
I am over 21, Date of Birth:	Shipping Notes	

New Releases	Price	Quantity	Amount
2022 Dry Rosé (Grenache, Zinfandel & Syrah)	$26 / bottle		
2020 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay	$52 / bottle		
2019 Gunsalus Vineyard Pinot Noir	$50 / bottle		
2019 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir	$80 / bottle		
2021 Shale Terrace Zinfandel	$44 / bottle		
2021 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel	$44 / bottle		
	$24 / half bottle		
	$90 / magnum		
2018 Russian River Syrah	$42 / bottle		
New Release Sampler (one each except Shale, 15% discount)	$ 250 / 6 bottle pack		
Some Current Wines	**Price**	**Quantity**	**Amount**
2021 Dry Rosé of Syrah	$24 / bottle		
2015 Russian River Pinot Noir	$50 / bottle		
2017 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel	$40 / bottle		
2019 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel	$42 / bottle		
2017 High Slopes Pinot Noir	$75 / bottle		
2014 Calypso Vineyard Syrah	$50 / bottle		
	Subtotal		
Discount on wine for total orders of 12 or more bottles (the sampler will build towards the discount, though will not be 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 ☐ Pick up at Winery or ☐ Shipping method and cost:			
		Total	

Payment: ☐ Visa / MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Check

Card #	Expires:	Security Code:
Signature:		Date:

Winery Office: 966 Tiller Lane, Sebastopol CA 95472 *info@scherrerwinery.com* *Ph/Fax (707)823-8980* *Winery: 4940 Ross Rd., Sebastopol CA 95472*