

## Seen that before

The 2024 growing season started off quite favorably, with a second year in a row of ample winter rains to thoroughly replenish the soil moisture. The vines look great. They have been subject to a couple of well-timed heat spells, early enough in the season to temper the newly developing leaves to those conditions. Bloom time weather was relatively favorable, albeit cool causing a longer bloom period than usual county-wide. The crop level looks better in some places that last year came out quite light, while the areas that yielded well last year look a little lighter this year. It looks like a nice balancing act for 2024 so far. There have been a few small fires here and there which are of no far reaching viticultural consequence except unfortunately to some limited impact on a few vineyards (and structures, of course) right adjacent to them. Cal Fire has been as keen as a hungry snake on a rodent in suppressing these.

2023, the previous vintage, was about as ideal as one could ask for from a quality standpoint. Flavors developed in advance of typical composition giving us flavorful wines at moderate 'chemical' ripeness levels. Those of us who have been around a while have seen this before and understand that juice chemistry doesn't define everything. Those of you who have our 2023 Rosé have a good example of how delicious this vintage is. The 2023 Zinfandels demonstrate this within our more restrained style. I'm delighted to see another vintage like this and look forward to showing these wines as well as a couple lovely Pinot Noirs from Green Valley of Russian River Valley plus a pretty and seductive Syrah at our upcoming Open House.

The past three years, I have been spending pretty much any 'spare time' (whatever that is) rebuilding/retraining permanent parts of the trellised vines in our vineyard that, over time, became infected by Eutypa. This naturally occurring fungus spreads in the winter when rainfall triggers spore release from infected plants. And since pruning happens in the winter, any open cuts during a wet period can be exposed to infection. If left to grow inside the vine, it will ultimately kill it. The rebuilding process begins (year 0) with selecting a new shoot growing near the ground and allowing it to grow rather than remove it (the usual practice of removing unnecessary shoots). This shoot gets trained upward and after a few years is ready to become the replacement trunk. Once there is a healthy shoot to replace the trunk and the old horizontal cordon (year 1 or 2), the cordon is cut away from the plant a bit longer than the final cut will be during the winter before the normal pruning occurs. The dormant 1-year old shoot is then tied to the trellis to grow shoots and fruit the following season (essentially, a cane-pruned portion of the vine). That summer, the long stub of the old cordon is cut again two diameters away from the final planned cut to remove any possibly infected wood from the previous cut. This happens at a time when rainfall is unlikely which would initiate new spore release from infected plants. Then, the following summer (year 2 or 3), this stub is cut again nearly flush to the healthy part of the plant. These summer cuts become uninfected with some weeks so that following early winter rains and spore releases pose no risk to the now

rebuilt plant. The fungus moves slowly but surely, so by roguing out infected parts of the permanent wood every year, both sources of new spores are eliminated and healthy above ground parts of the plant are maintained. It's something that I'm working really hard not to see again.

## Events and Shipping

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**Winery Events:** We'll be hosting an Open House **August 2,3 and 4 from 10-5**. We'll be pouring our new releases and I'll pull a blend of the delicious 2023 Zinfandel barrel samples for you to check out the futures offering. We will have a complimentary food plate and will have seating available outside, this should allow for less congestion inside where the wines will be poured.

**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 a lot more (see above), 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.

**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 for a quick pickup. 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)!** Once again, their rates for this early day overnight delivery service are incredible for those who cannot wait for cooler temps later this year. Priority Overnight, **just \$120/case** through the end of October (Hawaii slightly more).

## Region

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It's hard to believe it's already been 4 years! We are thrilled to have been a part of Region since the beginning in the summer of 2020. Initially, they were acting as agents of the two dozen wineries there. But they have evolved into a retailer model which gives them more flexibility and options to serve their customers. Fortunately, we are a very solid part of their new model and are very happy to continue with our events there.

**Scherrer will be featured the week of August 7-13 Wednesday to Tuesday.** 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. Rather than a 'formal' wine dinner, this summer we will have fun food pairing of 6 wines and 6 bites on August 7 ([menu and tickets](#)). People keep asking, and yes, my good friend Michael Jordan, MS will be there for Wednesday special tasting and through the weekend for some duo guitar work. I can't wait.

**Pickup at Region August 7-13.** 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.

## Zinfandel Futures

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As I mentioned above, 2023 was about as ideal a growing season in the North Coast as one could ask for. We got a later start than in more recent years which put bloom time a little later in the spring when temperatures are more even and favorable for successful bloom in the vineyards. This also pushed harvest time back a few weeks when the possibility of heat spells right at harvest is much lower. This gives us more time to decide when to harvest, to actually get the work done in a timely manner, and it gives the plants ample time for great flavor development without pushing their physiology into overdrive. We can work with other situations for sure, and the wines are lovely. However, more sites and more producers can do well under these optimal conditions. The trend for 2023: Good flavors, bright acidity, good structural tannin profiles for the reds, etc. It's hard to ask for more.

### **2023 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel Futures**

For those new to us, this is our flagship wine made from vines planted by my grandfather in 1912 as well as vines he, my dad and I planted in the 1970's, hence the name 'Old & Mature Vines.' The style is rather restrained for the variety and it is damn near 100% Zinfandel. Many old vineyards were interplanted with other varieties like Petite Sirah, Carignane, and more. These other varieties are later ripening, more tannic, darker fruited and can take the wine to a different place if they were a significant portion of the mix. Not better or worse, just different. Ours is not significantly influenced by these elements. The first vintage under our label was 1991, which I still have some of and to date, I've only opened 1 bottle that was past it's window. These have aged well beyond my early expectations, by decades, actually. Now my expectations include a longer service life.

There's one thing about the 2023 vintage that could catch a winemaker by surprise, it was the high level of malic (apple) acid in the ripe grape. Because of the cool season, and tasting the grapes along the way, it became apparent to me that there were going to be higher than average levels of malic acid. This would later 'soften' by 50% after being converted to the softer lactic (think milk) acid during malolactic fermentation. Another way to think of it is why non-malolactic Chardonnays tend toward more apple notes while many lower acid versions, that still also undergo malolactic fermentation, have a buttery note. It's more complicated than that, but you get the point. If I did not foresee this softening effect being more significant, we could have ended up in barrel with a wine at this point in time that seems rather 'flat'. So, I was looking for a more tart situation than usual at harvest. I am thrilled as the wine has settled into a perfect spot post malolactic fermentation. The last cool growing season where this was similar was 2005. In Alexander Valley, 1991 was another one as was 1980. On the Mendocino Coast I saw it in 1985, where malic acid levels were even higher than tartaric acid (very rare, indeed). In those days I sent a lot of things out for laboratory analysis. Now with years of experience, I just pay attention to the growing season, the vines' way of growing and taste the grapes and almost never send anything out for analysis. Seen that before and it's far easier this way.

In this wine, there is a perfect juxtaposition of fruit and non-fruit aromas: Blackberry, red raspberry on one side with fresh loam and hibiscus tea on the other. The flavors by mouth follow aromas well with the overall balance riding that fine line between unctuous and juicy (that salivary response to a wine's acidity). Structurally, this should age amazingly well. The tannic support is appropriate and set up to resolve at a rate in accord with flavor development

over time in the bottle. About 620 cases to be produced. Estimated release price: \$42 per bottle. Futures price: \$310 per case to be released April 2025.

### **2023 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel Futures**

This is a highly unique site on a small portion of our family vineyard where there is very little clay and lots of fractured shale. The roots penetrate very deeply in search of water and nutrients and find them in abundance early in the season which make the vines grow rapidly at that portion of the season. However, later in the season, the vines get the message that the supply is limited they change gears to slow down to make it through the season. Bottom line: There is a very different flavor profile with this fruit, unlike anything I have seen anywhere else. Since it is unusual and limited, it has become a sought after item. We make sure that some of this available to those interested in experiencing this lovely unicorn of a wine.

As usual, there is the herbal/fruity thing with stone fruit notes on the aroma. Textural and energetic (similar to 'juicy') flavors by mouth follow the nose closely. Those who love Shale Terrace will find this to be one of the most compelling examples of this unique expression of Zinfandel.

Due to some structural rebuilding (such as described earlier) in this 50-year-old vineyard block, the crop level was a bit shy of recent levels. The good news is that now this block is well-rebuilt and looking very good for 2024. 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 31 will be processed first in the order they are received while the futures allocation lasts. 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 31 deadline.

And not to fear, we hold back a bit 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 120 cases to be produced. Release price \$42 /bottle. Futures price: \$310 per case to be released April 2025

## **New Releases**

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### **New Release Sampler Pack**

In our continued effort to bring the Open House tasting to you, we will be offering 15% off and free ground shipping\* on a special Sampler pack of two bottles of each of the following New Release wines. 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 ~~\$344~~ \$292

\*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 for those anxious to taste them.

### **2020 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir**

As I wrote last year, this wine is from a single block of clonal material imported from a 'fancy' vineyard in Burgundy and has pretty much anything one could ask for in Pinot Noir. It makes up an important core of our Russian River Valley bottling, fortunately not every barrel is always

necessary, allowing me to bottle some to celebrate this very special match of a rare clone to this favorable site. If I could only make one Pinot Noir, it would be this one.

Beets, rhubarb, Herbs de Provence and a high toned perfume on the nose. Flavors follow nose, with great continuity, texture and grace, it is pretty, mouth-watering with a very long finish that echoes aromas and flavors. Antonio Galloni wrote “The 2020 Pinot Noir Hallberg Vineyard is pretty and effusive right out of the gate. Crushed red berry fruit, spice, cedar, pipe tobacco and dried flowers are some of the many notes that waft from the glass. 91 points.” 68 cases produced. *\$80 per bottle.*

### **2019 Sasha Syrah**

Sasha is the name of a small fermentation tank long ago that always seemed to make pretty wine, regardless of the variety. I decided to use this name for a Syrah that shows the prettier side of this fantastic variety that lends itself to many styles depending on where it is grown and when it is harvested. These are grapes that are usually farmed for Rosé production but were diverted to red wine this vintage as it showed good tannin development while retaining some red fruit and olive notes.

Hibiscus tea, spices and perfumes like one of those stores that opens just for the holidays and then closes in January [Where’s that on the *UCD wine aroma wheel?*]. Mouthfeel is like a rich Pinot Noir, textural, resolved tannins [nearly 4 years in barrel can do that], but definitely not wimpy.

One of the things I’m impressed about with Syrah is that new oak seems (to me) to be unnecessary, if not a detractor of the core fruit. It can be a complete package as it comes off the vine. With all due apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, I am compelled to channel a mere vapor of one of her great works: Syrah how do I love thee? Let me count the ways: As a Rosé component or solo, you have the structure and presence to support others incapable of their own complete monologue. I love thee as the darker-fruited and layering component as a red wine with Grenache and others-your polyamory is welcome here. And while that polyamorous relationship as a Rosé with the same varieties continues, I love thee all the more. I love thee as a stand-alone, profound, complex, essentially immortal, glacially-aging red wine that is both self-complete and mysterious while attainable. You are in rare company. I love thee alone as a lighter, red-fruited red [Sasha] that could have as easily become rosé, both stunningly fresh in youth and satisfying with age. You channel your Northern Rhone heritage with natural facility. God-willing, I shall love you after my death while you live on in bottles for others to enjoy for the ages. 60 cases produced. *\$40 per bottle.*

### **2021 Gunsalus Vineyard Pinot Noir**

As those who purchased futures on the 2021 Russian River Valley bottling probably now know quite well, 2021 was a very expressive vintage for Pinot Noir in Sonoma County. Glen and Pamela Gunsalus have farmed this site for over 20 years and have worked together shoulder to shoulder with an uncommon dedication which I appreciate, being in touch with every aspect of their vineyard. Having worked with several of the different clonal/rootstock combinations, I have settled into this one that suits my purposes perfectly.

Beets, loam, peony on the nose. With air, some cola notes arise a bit, morphing into more of a sassafras expression. Just the aroma makes one salivate. The mouth has a gorgeous texture yet the quite juicy acidity keeps the commuter train of these flavors moving. The savoriness of this wine is more apparent on the mouth than the nose with the juicy acidity keeping things

fresh well after most flavors have echoed their last goodbyes. Structurally, this is built for a much longer term than its youthful deliciousness suggests. 66 cases produced. *\$52 per bottle*

## Very Recent Releases

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The 2023 Dry Rosé (\$26) has settled into a very fine groove this Summer, which could be our finest rosé yet. I find myself reaching for the lovely 2017 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$52) more often these days as it has settled into its early sweet zone. The 2018 Old & Mature Vine Zin (\$42) has just about been in that magical spot for 6 or 8 months. The recently released 2019 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$72), while quite young for us, is showing amazing promise. Antonio Galloni wrote “a classic Scherrer wine. Deep, powerful and quite virile, the 2019 packs an intense punch of dark fruit and complicating savory/earthy note into its medium-bodied frame.”

The recently released 2021 Scherrer Vineyard (\$44) and Helfer Vineyard Chardonnays (\$52) are already in a lovely place right now. Antonio Galloni agreed, gave both 94 points describing the Helfer as “a deep, super complex offering...especially savory, mineral style for RRV” and the Scherrer Vineyard he commented “a gorgeous, exotic personality”. Pick your vineyard (or do both). 2016 Sasha Syrah (\$40) continues to illustrate what a couple of years in the bottle can do to harmonize the lovely facets of this red-fruited style of Syrah that I love so much if you didn't get the hint earlier.

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
<b>Pick up</b> is available at the Winery during events or by appointment.	NC
<b>GLS Ground Delivery</b> (recommended) to CA	\$27/box
<b>GLS 2-Day</b> to AZ, ID, NV, OR, WA and parts of NM	\$33/box
<b>Ground</b> to AZ, CA, NM, NV or OR	\$40/box
<b>Ground</b> to CO, ID, MT, WA or WY	\$51/box
<b>Ground</b> 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
<b>FedEx 2-day Air</b> to above states plus: HI higher	\$170.50/box
<b>FedEx Summer Priority Overnight</b> to any above state (HI higher) May - October	\$120/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](http://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 2025	Price (cases only)	Quantity	Amount
2023 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel	\$310 / case		
2023 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel	\$310 limit 1 case		
2023 Zin Half & Half Split Case (6-OMV, 6-Shale)	\$310 limit 1 case		
<b>Futures Subtotal</b>			
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:			
<b>Deadlines:</b> July 31 for Shale First Crack August 31 for all futures orders unless sold out			<b>Futures Total</b>

New Releases	Price	Quantity	Amount
2020 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$80 / bottle		
2019 'Sasha' Syrah	\$40 / bottle		
2021 Gunsalus Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$52 / bottle		
New Release Sampler (two each, 15% discount)	\$292/ 6 bottle pack		
<b>New Releases Wines Subtotal</b>			
Discount for orders that will total 12 or more bottles (Futures & New Release Sampler build toward discount but are not additionally discounted)		-10%	< >
<b>Wines Total</b>			
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:			
			<b>Total</b>

Payment:  Visa / MasterCard  American Express  Check

Card #	Expires:	Security Code
Signature:		Date: