SCHERRER
WINERY

A Third of a Century

My last *newsletter* pondered whether time is an ingredient or a factor in wine production. Here are more of my musings focusing more on time as a factor rather than an ingredient. It's an interesting thing to look at one's lifetime in terms of fractions of a century rather than years. Looking at my paternal family's 1.25 century history in Alexander Valley and my maternal family's 1.5 century history in Napa Valley puts this into perspective. It makes our little over a third of a century of making wine under our own label seem fairly brief. I never imagined in 1991 when we started that this amount of time would seem to pass so quickly.

Working with parts of our family's vineyard that have been alive for a century plus, for half a century and for a third of a century, it makes me think of how we don't really own land. Instead, it owns us. With the exception of the vines planted since the 1970's, all the people who built the barns, planted the vines and trees are no longer with us, but the land and the stuff on it are still there. Over the past 5 years of doing both the viticultural and winemaking side of things, I've been trying to more fully unify the consequences of everything we do in the production of these grapes and the vinification of the wines from them. Besides our own vineyard, I feel lucky to have been able to work with some of the same vineyards throughout Sonoma County for decades. Working with the same vines for many years is essential to understanding the long-term consequences of choices made throughout the process because that one variable is constant. If only a winemaker's career could last as long as some of these vines... Until then, all one can do is their best work, try to be transparent and make that information accessible to others.

Late last Winter, our son Ryan began cleaning up in some of the old barn buildings, looking to make more space among the ancient tools and 'things' for us to work more efficiently. Having logical places to store things so that multiple people (him and me) can quickly find stuff the other guy used last will help us not feel so far behind in our work. He pulled out lots of old tools questioning their raison d'etre. It was a great opportunity to share my recollections of seeing my grandfather do things when I was very small. From the draw knife, tree grafting tools, to the sulfur bellows, the rusty old (still functional) steelyard scale, scythes, misery whips (two-man crosscut saws), a nearly mummified saddle, to the significantly unevenly worn pitchfork, there were artifacts of farming struggle like our own private museum. When Ryan put the unevenly worn pitchfork in the pile to throw away, I said 'let's keep that as a reminder of how many hours one of our ancestors used it in order to wear down those tines on one side so much more than the other side. It's kind of broken-in for a righty now anyway.' When Ryan recently cut into a large digger pine that fell across the deer fence he reveled at the speed the brand-new chain on the chainsaw chewed through the freshly fallen

softwood. He can ponder how many minutes, calories and callouses the old 'misery whip' would have needed for two of us to do the same job. Sometime, when I have extra time, I'll bring it out for us to experience a bit of the past.

Last spring, both Ryan and my mom lobbied heavily for us to invest in an under-the-row tiller so we could discontinue using herbicide under the vine rows (strip spray). It required a lot of Ryan's time to relocate drip hoses and wires higher off the ground to avoid getting tangled up in the machine when it oscillated beneath the wire and around the vine trunks. But our satisfaction of seeing soil fertility in that small swath rebound over this past year is palpable. We are still considering how to tend the vines and soil in a sustainable way without going broke in the process. Many years ago, before we used trellis wires, we would cultivate in two directions and hand hoe around the bases of the vines. Initially it was horses that pulled the plow, followed by the spring-tooth harrow. Years later the D-2 tractor arrived, leaving the single tree and double tree that connected the horses together and to the cultivation equipment hanging on the wall in the barn with the wooden handles of the plows parked outside under the old hay rake, slowly dissolving back into the environment. As a kid, I used to pick up the occasional horseshoe that fell off long ago, buried for decades, finally brought to the surface by more recent soil cultivation. We don't find many horseshoes now, but I still use the D-2 tractor in the old vineyard. While its track rollers are quite worn, everything else, especially the main diesel engine and pony motor, are in fantastic shape (that's a whole separate newsletter subject right there). But with the advent of trellis wires, cultivation had to change and various kinds of herbicide became a cost-effective and convenient tool for decades. Now we are looking to permanently phase that out. Just like refining our wine style over the past third century, we are refining our farming practices for the next century and try to be transparent and authentic.

I think that authenticity and accessibility is something the wine industry in general has failed to widely embrace during the last half century. I've seen more wineries put effort into the pretense and as opposed to what is actually going into the bottle. I also think that the 'younger generations' have a great nose for sniffing out inauthenticity and are prone to turn their backs on things that reek of artifice. To me, this is a healthy awareness and I am encouraged by the 'youngers' that gravitate to us in pursuit of authenticity. As small and under the radar as we are, I'm not sure how to get our message out to those looking for exactly what we have been about for a long time. We are so busy just doing it, there's little energy left to advertise it.

Quick update on recent 2025 vintage: While there will be more information on the 2025 vintage this summer when we offer Zinfandel Futures, I'd like to address the usual questions about the past vintage. It was a lovely vintage where everything fell right into place. At pressing, I felt that our Cabernet Sauvignons in particular were especially favored. As you've probably heard, the general grape market was startlingly soft. After being informed last Spring by the winery we had sold a significant portion of our grapes to for nearly half a century that they were not renewing our contract, at the 11th hour we managed to sell nearly all of the fruit above our own capacity to a new winery out of the area. We are hopeful that we may someday count the duration of that relationship in fractions of a century as well.

Open House – One weekend only

As we have for the past third century, we are happy to host our annual Spring Open House again this year. We will be open only one long weekend, **April 17, 18 and 19 from 10-5 each day.** 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 can arrange pickup by appointment, just call or send an email and we'll find a time that works. 707-823-8980 *info@scherrerwinery.com*

New Releases

2024 Scherrer Vineyard 'Old & Mature Vines' Zinfandel, Alexander Valley
The growing season was about as near perfect as one could ask for. Crop level was decent, and being Zinfandel, it had the archetypical varied levels of development and ripeness within the same cluster. However, there was a somewhat wider swath of ripeness in 2024, giving it a wider range of character. We harvested right in the middle of September which is about our long-term historical average time to harvest. This range of harvest dates between vintages is rather wide, though. Some years we start at the end of August while a few vintages have taken until October arrives. I worry less about the date and more about the flavor of the fruit.

Due to the variation in ripeness within clusters, this wine has very nice multi-faceted fruit aromas of red and black berries, with slight loamy and peppery nuances that make my mouth water in anticipation of the flavor and balance. There's also fresh bread crust and red zinger tea to further support the necessary non-fruit notes. After a bottle is open a few days, the structure really opens up showing more plush texture, suggesting where this is headed in a few years.

The entry and middle palate is refreshingly medium-bodied, with a buoyancy that floats along the entire palate, flinging flavors that echo the aromas. This wine checks all the boxes for me: Personality true to origin, age worthy and food-friendly while managing to be delicious. 580 cases produced. *$44 per bottle, $24 per half bottle and $90 per magnum (magnums are in burgundy bottles.... because life is complicated)*

2024 Scherrer Vineyard 'Shale Terrace' Zinfandel, Alexander Valley
This small block of vineyard has been a conundrum, an inspiration, a challenge to explain, a joy to work with and an amazing teacher. As a winemaker, I've learned to surrender expectations and embrace the reality and destiny of the material coming from the site. With apparently minor changes in soil, the character of this wine is highly unique, defying the typical description of Zinfandel. It presents more Pinot Noir facets than Zinfandel. It truly is 100% Zinfandel, though, folks.

Red fruits, watermelon, red cherry, rhubarb pie, stone fruits, etc. are served up on the aroma. On the mouth, more savory, toasted grain notes appear on top of the aromatic echoes. By day 2 of an open bottle, the gorgeous stone fruit facet steps toward center stage. While the alcohol level is above 14%, it presents as a much lighter version, which I find fascinating. This site

totally transcends the stereotype of Zinfandel in a way that Château Rayas transcends the stereotype of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Despite a couple years' of rebuilding vine structure, replacing decaying portions of permanent wood, the crop level was lower than anticipated due to cluster size being a bit lighter than they looked while on the vine. 120 cases produced. *$44 per bottle.*

2025 Dry Rosé, Sonoma County
Our family drinks more of this, more often than any of our other wines. It is perfect in so many instances: We use it for getting into the groove to cook dinner, accompanying something to eat before the main course is done, becoming the main beverage focus for the entire meal, or cleansing the palate after the main meal is consumed. It is the most versatile wine we make.

This year the blend is 64% Grenache, and 18% each Zinfandel and Syrah, similar to the past few vintages. One is greeted by the aromas of red cherry, maraschino cherry, watermelon, fresh plum and candied apple. On the mouth, typical bright, mouth-watering acidity and a reprise of aromas complete the circle. It finishes clean and crisp, inviting another sip, glass...or bottle. It is perfect with sauteed ling cod, Greek style olives, oven roasted potatoes (or potato chips), or a lawn mower that is cooling down before being put away. Again, our extended family has a glass or two of this pretty much every day. 254 cases produced. *$26 per bottle.*

2023 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay, Russian River Valley
I want to write lyrics about this wine to an Eagles song something like: 'I like the way your sparkling aromas lay, along your angles and your rounds, and I want to sip you as the daylight fades to night, with your crisp green apples all around.' 2023 was a special vintage where malic acid levels were unusually high due to cooler than typical temperatures when this organic acid would have been more thoroughly respired in the grape. As a result, the wine would not naturally undergo malolactic fermentation and so retains an uncommonly high level of tartness. I revel in this juxtaposition of circumstances.

Fresh, crisp, vibrant pomme fruit notes greet the nose, yielding a little to the very complex nuances that a couple years on yeast lees bring to offset the pure fruit notes. By mouth, the wine is super salivary, almost like our rosé. I love Chablis but long ago gave up the idea of finding a place locally that could render something akin to that unique and historical place for this Chardonnay. This vintage gives me a suggestion of this sensibility in Russian River Valley in a special vintage that we may not see again in a very long time. 80 cases produced. *$54 per bottle*

2022 High Slopes Pinot Noir
As a counterpoint to the Helfer 2023 Chardonnay special situation, this is a very positive outcome from an opposite kind of vintage. You may remember the epic Labor Day heat spell that we faced in 2022. Our other RRV blocks in Green Valley to the north were just ripe enough to harvest prior to the heat so they did not have endure that extreme weather just as the grape berries were most fragile. However, the high slopes area is on the very southern edge of the RRV AVA and was not anywhere near ripe (nor yet fragile) so it was left to hang through it all. This site is just about as coastally influenced as the Platt Vineyard I had worked with for nearly 20 years, so I felt comfortable waiting it out. This paid off and the only consequence of this

was a little more generosity on the palate than usual, which is a lovely twist on this compelling site.

Black cherry pie about 20 minutes out of the oven with the crust cooled but the filling still super aromatic. Black tea with iodine notes as well and some perfumes like grapes in bloom. The mouth is generous, with lift provided by necessary balancing structural acidity and tannin. This reflects the somewhat warmer nights in that area during the post-Labor Day period in that the tannins are slightly more resolved than we might see in the coolest seasons. There is a good, long savory/fruit interaction on the very long finish. 105 cases produced *$75 per bottle.*

2021 Huntsman Red

In 2011 I was given the opportunity to work with a block of Kick Ranch Grenache that was not achieving the sugar level desired by the current buyer. Not being overly concerned with numbers and more concerned with flavor and texture, I was happy to work with this block in a vintage that was very challenging to ripen later varieties like Grenache. I explored combining Grenache and Syrah as has been done in the Southern Rhone for generations in challenging vintages, allowing these two varieties to unite in a complimentary way. In 'easy' vintages, they work well together too. I did not invent this, I merely channeled well-established common sense from another area into my own backyard. We had a good series of exploring this with Kick Ranch as the Grenache portion till 2019.

In 2021, the Huntsman is all new sources of the Grenache and Syrah. The Grenache is from Provisor Vineyard in Dry Creek Valley while the Syrah is from McCoy Vineyard atop a mountain near Kick Ranch. The Grenache was on the very early side of the ripeness window, while the Syrah was on the later side, kind of reverse of what I had experienced in the past with other vineyards. Together, they remind me of the mid-1980's Southern Rhone wines such as Sablet and Gigondas that I became smitten by over a third of a century ago.

Dusty, lusty and generous, this shows some of the ripeness that these aforementioned Southern Rhone wines. The Syrah portion brings both the higher tones to the aroma like panforte and lower tones like dark fruits, while the Grenache brings some non-fruit elements like petrichor, dust from a dirt road and structural integrity, quite a role-reversal of these two varieties for me. Since this is a rather different gestalt from the past, I'm pricing it below what I have already established. 153 cases produced. $34 per New Release Sampler Pack

New Release Sampler

In our continued effort to bring the open house tasting to you, one bottle of each of the above New Release wines (except the Shale Terrace Zin due to limited supply) at 15% discount for one each of the 5 new wines or 20% off for 2 of each wine 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. 5 bottles, Special offer ~~$233~~ $198 for 5 or ~~$466~~ $373 for 10 bottles.

*Free shipping on sampler packs only. Ground shipping will be weather dependent; **if needed, we'll be happy to store the wine for you and ship in the fall when temperatures are wine friendly again all along the route. Just let us know.** If you'd like your wine sooner, but the weather is hot, we still receive special discounted pricing from FedEx on Priority overnight

that we pass through to you. We regularly subsidize the shipping we charge. Our ground shipping rates (below) are even further below our actual costs, which are rising rapidly right now.

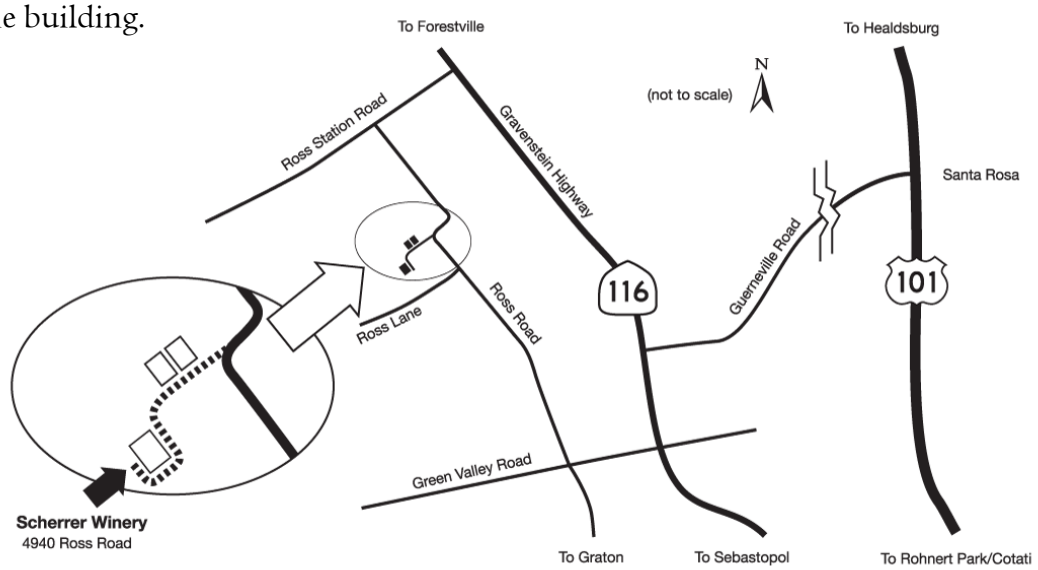
Recent Releases

The 2024 Rosé ($26) released last spring is absolutely in prime form. Last year at this time I was drinking the 2023 (still am, still available as well) waiting for the newest vintage to settle in. I could see a comparison of the last 3 vintages to see how these develop. Both the 2017 and 2018 Russian River Valley Pinot Noirs ($54) are really singing now. Zinfandoodle v 18.9 is available and rocking ($24). The 2018 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel ($44) continues to revel in its prime phase of convergence of its parts. We have refined this rare style of Zinfandel over the past 3 decades. The 2027 Kick Grenache ($42) is also at a very fine point in its early development. Our 2018 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon ($72) is approaching a tenth of a century from the vintage and beginning to really show how this style of this fine variety hits its stride. We have recently opened nearly 20 year old bottles only to be struck at how young they present.

I certainly appreciate your continued support as we navigate these increasingly turbulent times. It has been instrumental to our history and is truly essential to our future. Thank you.

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.



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	$28/box
GLS 2-Day to AZ, ID, NV, OR, WA and parts of NM	$34/box
Ground to AZ, CA, NM, NV or OR	$42/box
Ground to CO, ID, MT, WA or WY	$53/box
Ground to AL, DC, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, MN, MO, NC, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, VT or WI	$65/box
FedEx Priority Air to above states plus: HI higher	$122/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.

April 2025

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
2025 Dry Rosé (Grenache, Zinfandel & Syrah)	$26 / bottle		
2023 Helfer Vineyard Chardonnay	$54 / bottle		
2022 'High Slopes' Pinot Noir	$75 / bottle		
2024 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel	$44 / bottle		
	$24 / half bottle		
	$90 / magnum		
2024 Shale Terrace Zinfandel (limit 6)	$44 / bottle		
2021 Huntsman Red	$34 / bottle		
New Release Sampler Single (one each above except Shale, 15% discount)	~~$233~~ $198 / 5 pack		
New Release Sampler Double (two each above except Shale, 20% discount)	~~$466~~ $373 / 10 pack		
		Subtotal	

Other Current Releases	Price	Quantity	Amount
2023 or 2024 Dry Rosé (Grenache, Zinfandel & Syrah)	$26 / bottle		
2018 Russian River Pinot Noir	$54 / bottle		
2018 Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel	$42/ bottle		
Zinfandoodle v.18.9	$24/ bottle		
2018 Scherrer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon	$72/ 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%	
Sales Tax: Pick up 9.25% Shipping: AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, 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*