



CHALK HILL

WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER - MAY 2012 ISSUE #120



LETTER FROM THE WINEMAKER

The most fun wines to make at Chalk Hill are our red blends. Each one is like a vinous puzzle with hundreds of pieces that have to fit together perfectly to create a complete and coherent picture. But, for me, the wine that presents the biggest challenge and the greatest opportunity every vintage is Chardonnay. From a winemaking perspective, Chardonnay is a blank slate. It's the grape that gives the winemaker the best chance to express their vision and personality. Every decision from harvest to bottling has a huge impact on the flavor, balance and style of the wine.

Every year puts its own spin on our fruit. In the fall, the first major decision is when to harvest. We look at the sugar and acid in the fruit, but I always decide to pick based on taste. This shapes the basic character of the wine. Once the grapes are pressed, the juice goes into barrels – the next big decision. We use all French oak from many different coopers. The trick is to match the barrel with the juice to show off the fruit, add complexity, flavor and structure to the wine. Think of it as a winery spice cabinet!

After the fermentation is done, we decide how often to stir the lees. Early on we stir every two weeks and taste each lot. When the wines are creamy and harmonious, we'll back off to once a month. Once we're happy with the flavors, texture and richness, the wine will come out of barrels for blending. The last step is settling and bottling. Every part of the process shapes the personality of our Chardonnays. It's exciting each year to see that progression from simple white juice to rich, complex, luxurious nectar.

Our 2010 Estate Chardonnay, a new release included in this shipment, is a good example of the marriage of vineyard, vintage and winemaking. It is both concentrated and elegant, and definitely Chalk Hill Chardonnay. This shipment also includes our 2009 Clara's Vineyard, a beautiful single vineyard red blend, dense and luscious. And for something completely different, we offer you our 2010 Viognier, a perfumed, floral and creamy white.

Thank you for being loyal Chalk Hill friends. Come visit us soon.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bishop Forbes
Director of Winemaking

WINE SHIPMENT

2010 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

TASTING

FOR CHARDONNAY, ONE OF THE MOST NOTEWORTHY TRAITS IS CONCENTRATION. WHILE DISPLAYING A BIT MORE ELEGANCE THAN RECENT VINTAGES, OUR 2010 CHARDONNAY IS STILL WONDERFULLY INTENSE AND POWERFUL WITH NOTES OF BAKED APPLE, HAZELNUTS, LEMON PEEL, NUTMEG, BRIOCHE AND CREAM.

FERMENTATION / BARREL

100% NATIVE YEAST FERMENTATION IN FRENCH OAK WITH REGULAR BÂTONNAGE, 100% MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION
Cooperage FRENCH OAK, 40% NEW
Barrel Aging 11 MONTHS

HARVEST

Harvest Dates OCTOBER 12-21, 2010
Average Yields 2.7 TONS/ACRE
Average Brix at Harvest 25.1°

WINE

Blend 100% CHARDONNAY
Bottling Date JANUARY 2012, UNFINED AND UNFILTERED
pH 3.68 *TA* 5.2 G/L *Alcohol* 14.9%

RETAIL PRICE - \$48 CLUB PRICE - \$38.40

2010 ESTATE VIOGNIER

TASTING

AROMATICALLY OUR 2010 VIOGNIER IS PACKED WITH TANGERINE PEEL, ORANGE BLOSSOMS, WHITE PEACHES, PINE SAP AND A DASH OF SLATE. IN ADDITION TO ALL OF THE ABOVE, THE PALATE POSSESSES UNDERTONES OF CARAMEL APPLE AND HAZELNUT. THE FINISH IS INTENSE, FLAVORFUL AND SURPRISINGLY ELEGANT.

HARVEST

Harvest Dates OCTOBER 27, 2010
Average Yields 2.2 TONS/ACRE
Average Brix at Harvest 25.2°

FERMENTATION / BARREL

CULTURED YEAST FERMENTATION IN NEUTRAL BARRELS WITH REGULAR BÂTONNAGE NO MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION
Cooperage NEUTRAL FRENCH OAK
Barrel Aging 9 MONTHS

WINE

Blend 100% VIOGNIER
Bottling Date AUGUST 25, 2011
pH 3.69 *TA* 6.4 G/L *Alcohol* 15.5%

RETAIL PRICE - \$45 CLUB PRICE - \$36

2009 ESTATE CLARA'S VINEYARD

TASTING

DEEP IN COLOR, OUR 2009 CLARA'S VINEYARD DELIVERS WILD AROMAS RANGING FROM BLACK CHERRIES, DRIED ROSES AND PEPPERCORNS TO SMOKED MEAT AND LAVENDER. THE PALATE IS INCREDIBLY DENSE WITH NOTES OF CHOCOLATE, BLACKBERRY JAM AND VANILLA. THIS IS A HEDONISTICALLY RICH WINE THAT MATCHES UP BEAUTIFULLY WITH HEARTY FOODS SUCH AS GRILLED STEAK OR LAMB.

HARVEST

Harvest Dates OCTOBER 10-25, 2009
Average Yields 1.7 TONS/ACRE
Average Brix at Harvest 26.6°

RETAIL PRICE - \$85 CLUB PRICE - \$68

FERMENTATION / BARREL

100% MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION WITH BÂTONNAGE
Cooperage 100% FRENCH OAK, 67% NEW
Barrel Aging 20 MONTHS

WINE

Blend 55% CABERNET SAUVIGNON, 21% PETIT VERDOT, 20% MALBEC, 4% SYRAH
Bottling Date JUNE 23, 2011, UNFINED AND UNFILTERED
pH 3.87 *TA* 5.6 G/L *Alcohol* 15.6%

REORDER

2010 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

Retail Price \$48 Club Price \$38.40 Reorder Price \$33.60

2010 ESTATE VIOGNIER

Retail Price \$45 Club Price \$36 Reorder Price \$31.50

2009 ESTATE CLARA'S VINEYARD

Retail Price \$85 Club Price \$68 Reorder Price \$59.50

Orders can be full or mixed cases; offer expires June 21, 2012. To order, please contact us at (707) 838-4306, or wineclub@chalkhill.com.



EVENTS

— CHALK HILL ESTATE DEBUT POLO MATCH —

\$150 PER PERSON - We are delighted to offer a special event the day before the dinner. Please join us to enjoy a professional polo match brought to you by Wine Country Trail Rides and Chalk Hill Estate. The evening will feature hors d'oeuvres crafted by the estate culinary team and wines from the Foley Family Wines portfolio.

The Estate Pavilion - Friday, August 24th, 2012 at 5pm. To make your polo event reservation please contact Carey Tatman at ctatman@foleyfamilywines.com or 707-657-4947.

SAVE THE DATE - CHALK HILL ESTATE
7TH ANNUAL WINEMAKER DINNER

AUGUST 25TH, 2012 - Reception begins at 6 pm and the Dinner starts at 7pm. Invitations will be mailed to your residential address on file.



For reservations and pricing please contact the Tasting Room at (707) 657-4837 or conciierge@chalkhill.com



FOOD AND WINE PAIRING

Recipe by Executive Chef Didier Ageorges - Pair with Chalk Hill Estate Viognier

PAN SEARED ROYAL SWEET SCALLOPS

Avacado, citrus and olive oil emulsion. Blood orange reduction, ginger crunch - Serves 4

Ingredients:

8 scallops	1 grapefruit	large piece of ginger
1 pomelo	3 oz extra virgin olive oil	2 cups frying oil
2 blood oranges	juice of a lemon	salt to taste
2 navel oranges	2 avocados	pepper to taste

Peel the pomelo, blood oranges, navel oranges and grapefruit and cut into eight segments. Set aside a few citrus segments of each and press the remaining segments for juice and combine all juices except blood orange and reduce by half. Reduce blood orange juice to syrup consistency (decor).

Peel avocado and cut in small cubes, season with salt, pepper and lemon juice.

Peel ginger and cut in “Julienne” (Angel hair), fry over medium heat until golden. Salt and set aside.

To finish: Sear the scallops over high heat to obtain a nice golden-brown char making sure to not overcook it.

Reheat the citrus juice and blend with extra virgin olive oil. Season to taste.

Place two scallops on a warm plate, with the citrus segments and avocado. Pour the citrus and olive oil emulsion. Using a small spoon place few drops of blood orange syrup. Place the crunchy ginger on top of the scallops.

Et voila!!

Bon appétit. Didier

PS: Feel free to substitute any kind of citrus to make your own interpretation of this recipe (Meyer lemon, Buddha’s hand etc etc.).

A VIEW FROM THE VINEYARD

A new season has begun in our Estate vineyards. The vines have awoken from their winter dormancy, an event we refer to as “bud break”. This is the first of several growth stages which mark milestones on the long road to the harvest of 2012.

Winter is a time of relative quiet and calm in the vineyards. In contrast the days after break become progressively busier and more exciting right up through harvest.

Here bud break typically occurs around the middle of March. At this point the tender new shoots of the vines are very susceptible to damage by frost. Warm daytime temperatures encourage growth but there is also a risk of the temperature dropping below freezing during the night. This threat lasts through the month of May and requires our constant vigilance to the task of protecting the vines. As little as 30 minutes below freezing can destroy the entire crop for that season.

Cold air is heavier than warm air. On a cold night the coldest air will flow down the hillsides and collect in the lowest areas. Most of our 400 acres of Estate vineyards are steep enough to not require frost protection. Only about 150 acres in the lower areas are susceptible. In these low areas our systems of wireless weather stations monitor the conditions and then alert us by phone when protection is required.

During this time a vineyard manager lives his life like an on call firefighter, ready to spring out of bed and respond to the alarm. It's exciting but can also be exhausting especially if you need to respond several nights in a row. Sleep deprivation can also make it difficult to attend to your regular day time duties during this busy time of the year.

Once out in the vineyard we have four large engines at three different locations that will need to be started and warmed up. These power the pumps of the sprinkler system that we use. But wait, how can running the sprinkler system prevent the vines from freezing?

Fortunately the laws of physics as they apply to water work in our favor. Water can exist in three different states or phases. These are liquid, solid, or as a vapor. To change water from one phase to another requires the addition or removal of heat. A drop of water turning to ice will give off heat as it turns colder. This is known as the “Heat of Fusion.”

When the air in the vineyard is below freezing and we sprinkle the vines with water, the drops will freeze when they land on the vines. This releases a just enough to keep the interface between the green vine tissue above freezing. This will protect the vines from damage as long as the sprinklers keep running until the temperature rises above freezing again. It can be an alarming sight to see your vines completely encased in clear cold ice, but have faith, they will be fine.

Mark Lingenfelder
Vice President of Vineyard Operations