



CHALK HILL

WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2011 ISSUE #117

Greetings From Chalk Hill,

The 2011 harvest began later than usual. We've had cool temperatures for much of the growing season and while that's perfect for people, it's not so ideal for grapes. A cold, rainy spring and chilly summer has us running about a month behind normal. We began to pick the Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc at the end of September. Keep your fingers crossed for great grapes and no rain!

In addition to harvest, we've been finishing up on our white blends from 2010 my first complete vintage from start to finish. The 2010 Sauvignon Blanc has gone to bottle, followed by Pinot Gris and a couple of wines for the club, Sauvignon Blanc Clone 378 and Viognier. More on those two wines at a later date. Overall the wines are exceptional - very aromatic, rich and concentrated, with a tad more structure and elegance than some previous vintages. The 2010 vintage was a crazy one, but the wines are beautiful.

This year we have interns from France, Belgium and New Zealand to work with us for the vintage. They come through a great exchange program, and it is definitely that - an exchange. Even though I've been making wine for many years, I still learn new things from our interns. We get the benefit of their education and experience at other wineries and they learn how we grow grapes and make wine in California. Our experiment list for harvest includes barrel trials where we compare different coopers, forests and toasting methods, new yeast strains, and color and flavor extraction in red wines. The interns will be working with our cellar crew on all of these projects in addition to our "regular" winemaking.

Before I go, I'd like to say a few words about this current shipment.

The 2009 Estate Chardonnay is classic Chalk Hill. Barrel fermentation in French oak, 35% of which was new, was followed by extended barrel aging with frequent lees stirring. All of this attention to detail and hard work by our dedicated cellar crew gives a wine that is rich, flavorful and harmonious. Think apple pie topped with almond whipped cream!

The 2008 Estate Syrah is a massive wine, packed with flavors of smoked meat, plum jam, bittersweet chocolate and black pepper. The fruit is grown on a western-facing rocky site at our Estate West vineyard, chosen specifically for Syrah. This is definitely one wine to pair with grilled meat and strong-flavored cheeses.

Our 2008 Estate Red is a worthy successor to the highly regarded inaugural 2007 blend. The very warm 2008 vintage produced a small, concentrated crop, resulting in big flavors, broad tannins and beautiful color. This blend showcases the vintage and what it produced. There is a bit less Cabernet and a bit more Malbec than in the 2007. The remainder of the blend includes Merlot, Petit Verdot, Carmenera, and a little Syrah. This is a big, dark luscious wine that really shows off the geology, topography and climate of our estate.

Thanks for all your support of Chalk Hill Winery. I hope to see you here sometime soon. The fall is a perfect time of the year to visit our corner of Sonoma County.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bishop Forbes
Director of Winemaking

WINE SHIPMENT

2009 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

TASTING

OUR 2009 CHARDONNAY IS RICH, CONCENTRATED AND STRUCTURED. THE AROMAS AND FLAVORS FEATURE WHITE PEACH, GOLDEN DELICIOUS APPLES, VANILLA AND CRÈME BRÛLÉE. THE PALATE IS RICH AND CONCENTRATED WITH SPICE AND TOASTED OAK WHILE FINE NATURAL ACIDITY KEEPS THE WINE IN BALANCE.

HARVEST

Harvest Dates SEPTEMBER 21 - OCTOBER 11, 2009

Average Yields 2.9 TONS/ACRE

Average Brix at Harvest 25.0°

FERMENTATION / BARREL

100% NATIVE YEAST FERMENTATION IN BARREL

100% MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION WITH BI-WEEKLY BÂTONNAGE

Cooperage 100% FRENCH OAK, 35% NEW

Barrel Aging 13 MONTHS

WINE

Blend 100% CHARDONNAY

Bottling Date DECEMBER 2010, UNFILTERED

pH 3.74 *TA* 5.2 G/L *Alcohol* 14.9%

Cellaring 5 YEARS

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

2008 ESTATE SYRAH

TASTING

INKY AND DENSE, OUR 2008 SYRAH IS SATURATED WITH BLACKBERRIES, PLUMS, LEATHER, PEPPER AND SMOKED MEAT. THE TEXTURE IS FAT AND JUICY WITH FIRM TANNINS ADDING STRUCTURE TO THE FINISH. THIS LARGE-FRAMED WINE IS EXOTIC, SPICY AND INCREDIBLY SATISFYING.

HARVEST

Harvest Dates SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 17, 2008

Average Yields 1.7 TONS/ACRE

Average Brix at Harvest 27.8°

FERMENTATION / BARREL

Cooperage 100% FRENCH OAK, 70% NEW

Barrel Aging 19 MONTHS

WINE

Blend 100% SYRAH

Bottling Date JUNE 11, 2010

pH 4.01 *TA* 5.5 G/L *Alcohol* 16.9%

Production 314 CASES

RETAIL PRICE - \$60 CLUB PRICE - \$48

2008 ESTATE RED

TASTING

DEEP, DARK AND DENSE, OUR 2008 ESTATE RED HAS A COMPELLING BOUQUET PACKED WITH CHERRIES, CASSIS, BLACKBERRIES AND CARDAMOM. THE PALATE IS LUSH AND CONCENTRATED WITH LAYERS OF BLACKBERRIES, BLUEBERRIES, HAZELNUT AND COCOA. THE SUPPORTING TANNINS ARE NICELY CONCEALED BY THE LUSH, OPULENT TEXTURE. WHILE IT SHOWS SURPRISINGLY WELL NOW, THIS WINE WILL ONLY GET BETTER WITH TIME.

FERMENTATION / BARREL

Cooperage 100% MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION WITH BÂTONNAGE

Cellaring 100% FRENCH OAK, 54% NEW

Barrel Aging 20 MONTHS

RETAIL PRICE - \$70 CLUB PRICE - \$56

HARVEST

Harvest Dates SEPTEMBER 8 - OCTOBER 30, 2008

Average Yields 1.67 TONS/ACRE

Average Brix at Harvest 27.8°

WINE

Blend 47% CABERNET SAUVIGNON, 28% MALBEC
15% MERLOT, 6% PETIT VERDOT, 2% SYRAH, 2% CARMÉNÈRE

Bottling Date MARCH 2010

pH 3.96 *TA* 5.2 G/L *Alcohol* 15.6%

REORDER

2009 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

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

2008 ESTATE SYRAH

Retail Price \$60 Club Price \$48 Reorder Price \$42.00

2008 ESTATE RED

Retail Price \$70 Club Price \$56 Reorder Price \$49

Orders can be full or mixed cases; offer expires November 10, 2011. To order, please contact us at (707) 838-4306, or wineclub@chalkhill.com.



ESTATE LUNCHEONS

Enjoy a luncheon with friends and family at Chalk Hill Estate. Your experience will begin with a driving tour around the estate. You will then arrive at the Pavilion – a magnificent conservatory offering panoramic views of the Chalk Hill valley. There you will enjoy a decadent meal expertly paired with Chalk Hill wines along with many fresh foods from the culinary garden, prepared by Executive Chef, Didier Ageorges. This is a delightful wine country experience.

Available by appointment Monday through Friday. Pricing starts at \$175 per person, with a minimum party of four persons

ESTATE VINEYARD TRAIL RIDES

Chalk Hill Estate equestrian tours are offered daily at the estate by wine Country Trail Rides at 9am, 11:30am, and 2pm. Guests depart on horseback approximately 30 minutes after arrival and spend 90 minutes in the vineyard on horseback.

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

EVENTS

TOURS AND TASTINGS

We are delighted offer a variety of ways to experience Chalk Hill Estate and look forward to having you as our guest. Inquiries may be directed to the tasting room at (707) 657-4837 or concierge@chalkhill.com.

ESTATE TOUR

1.5 HOURS, \$30 PER PERSON - Your tour will begin with a discussion of the varied terroir of our 1300-acre estate, the Chalk Hill appellation, and our unique history and approach to viticulture. You'll explore our hillside vineyards and park and participate in a lively exchange on winemaking and wine appreciation. This tour includes tastings of our current wines.

Available by appointment Monday through Saturday at 11 am and 1 pm. Add an artisan cheese flight for an additional \$15 per person.

CULINARY TOUR

2.5 HOURS, STARTING AT \$75 PER PERSON - Your afternoon will begin by touring the culinary garden where organically-farmed produce is the inspiration for Executive Chef Didier Ageorges' culinary artistry. Following a brief excursion through the vineyards, you will arrive at the Pavilion – a conservatory overlooking the equestrian center with panoramic views of the Chalk Hill valley. There, you will enjoy a sit-down tasting of our wines paired with several small plates prepared by Chef Didier.

Available by appointment Thursday & Friday at 2:00 pm. If you have a party of six or more, we can accommodate this by appointment Monday through Friday.

CHEESE AND WINE PAIRING

1 HOUR, \$40 PER PERSON - Enjoy a guided wine tasting featuring artisan cheeses specifically selected to pair with our estate and estate vineyard selection wines.

Available daily by appointment. May be added to the 'Estate Tour' for an additional \$15 per person.

WINERY TASTING

1 HOUR, \$10 PER PERSON - Meet at our winery tasting room to experience our estate wines and learn about the history, terroir and new release wines of Chalk Hill Estate.

Available daily from 10 am to 4 pm. Walk-in, or by appointment. Reservations are highly recommended for groups of six or more.



Photo by Brittany Langford

FOOD AND WINE PAIRING

Recipe by Executive Chef Didier Ageorges - Pair with 2008 Chalk Hill Estate Red

BOUNTIFUL SUMMER MEATLOAF

Serves 10 as a main course

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|------------------------------------|--|
| 2 cups day old bread, crumbled | 2 cups onion |
| 1 ¼ cup milk | 2 tablespoons garlic |
| ¼ cup mustard | 2 red bell peppers, roasted, peeled & seeded |
| ½ cup ketchup | 2 pounds ground meat |
| ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes | 3 eggs |
| 1 teaspoon oregano | 2 cups grilled zucchini, chopped |
| 1 tablespoon salt | 2 cups sautéed eggplant |
| 1 teaspoon black pepper | ½ cup of oven dried tomatoes, chopped |
| 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce | |

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, combine bread, milk, mustard, ketchup, spices, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Let bread crumbs soak up the liquid for 15 minutes.

Chop by hand onion, garlic, and grilled vegetables until you have small pieces. Combine soaked bread crumbs with minced vegetables. Add ground meat and eggs. Squeeze and fold by hand until combined.

Grease two loaf pans and place half of mixture into each. Cover each meat loaf with greased aluminum foil so they won't stick.

Bake for 50 minutes, covered. Remove foil and finish baking uncovered for 20 minutes. Internal temperature should reach 160 degrees and the outside of the loaf will be toasty. Let cool 1 hour.

Serve the meatloaf with tomato concassé and pair with Chalk Hill Estate Red.

"Bon Appetit"

THE DIVERSITY OF OUR TERROIR

Have you ever wondered how our single-vineyard Chalk Hill Estate can be so successful with cool-climate grapes (Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris) and later-ripening, warm-climate grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot, Syrah)?

Chalk Hill is one of the most unique properties in California. We are located in a transitional area with the cool Russian River Valley to the west (perfect for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir) and the warmer Alexander Valley to the east (known for the Bordeaux varieties). Because of our location and the great diversity of our topography it's as if we have two separate Estates on one piece of property. The localized, or meso-climate, of each site is determined by a number of factors.

As the total elevation change on the Estate is only about 400 feet from bottom to top, we don't see a significant difference in temperature due to altitude alone. But, over the years we have found that our highest ridges do tend to be quite cool since they are directly exposed to the chilly winds off the Pacific Ocean to the west. For example, our Windy Ridge block at the top of the property produces some of our best Sauvignon Blanc. Also, north-facing, east facing, and low-lying sites that don't receive direct sun exposure are quite cool and perfectly suited for all of our white varieties.

GROWING WARM-CLIMATE GRAPES AT CHALK HILL

All of our red grape vineyards are planted on hillside sites with slopes of up to 30%. As the aspect becomes more southerly and the inclination becomes steeper, there is an increase in how much solar radiation is absorbed by the site. The steeper, south and west facing blocks are much warmer than their north or east-facing neighbors. These sites are a bit too warm to make great white wines, but just warm enough for the Bordeaux red varieties

THE SOIL EFFECT

The final determinate as to which grapes will be planted to specific blocks is soil. For red varieties our Estate West features very rocky, well-draining, volcanic soils that produce beautiful Cabernet Sauvignon with well-tempered tannins. On the east side of Chalk Hill Road, surrounding the winery we have a high percentage of shallow, clay soils that accentuate structure and backbone. Softer, less tannic varieties like Merlot and Malbec thrive on these sites. For the white varieties low vigor varieties like Chardonnay and Pinot Gris are best suited to our deeper more fertile soils. Sauvignon blanc, which is a very vigorous variety is planted on rockier and less fertile sites to temper or tone down its tendency towards excessive vigor.

Investigating the diversity of the dozens of individual vineyard blocks at Chalk Hill Estate has been a 30 year adventure for me. Attempting to understand our terroir has been professionally and intellectually stimulating. This process is ongoing and I continue to learn new things and gain a deeper respect for this great estate each season. I hope to share more about Chalk Hill Estate with all of you soon.

Mark Lingenfelder
Vice President of Vineyard Operations

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