

ARMIDA

WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023



Hello Armida Family!

Hey Wino's! Taking a break from the crush pad to write you a note, not that we've crushed much fruit yet. So far, I'm calling the 2023 harvest the "late and great one!" Last winter was unusually rainy and the wet soils delayed and then extended the bloom period. Veraison, depending on the grape type, began between late July and early August. Spring and summer were quite cool, allowing the grapes to mature slowly. Our first day of harvest this year was September 22nd, and at this time last year we were almost 80% done. As I write this today (October 2rd) we are barely half done! But I'm not complaining as the quality is superb due to the long hang time. If our fall weather continues to be warm and steady, this will indeed be a special harvest.



[CIRCA 1999]

The Lobster Feed was so much fun! Our sold-out crowd enjoyed spectacular weather and a delicious spread from the Napa Valley Lobster Company – whole lobsters, gulf shrimp, artichokes, potatoes, Cajun sausage links, vegetables and more! We dug deep and pulled out cases of the 2016 Gap's Crown Chardonnay. It's compelling fruit, lush mouthfeel and firm acidity were perfect with the lobster, at least most thought so!

I'm excited about the three new releases included in the October wine club shipment – 2020 Gap's Crown Chardonnay, 2020 Chalone Chardonnay and the 2021 Stuhlmuller Cabernet Sauvignon and can't wait to hear what you think about them. We've been sold out of the Stuhlmuller Cabernet for almost a year now, so it's big fun to have it back, one of our wine club exclusives. While I do enjoy brooding Napa Cabs with their dark fruit, heavy mouthfeel and plush tannins, Cabernets from Sonoma County take on a slightly leaner and more structured quality, with brighter fruit and nice "lift" from the acidity. I love these Sonoma Cabs, especially our Stuhlmuller Block 8! The strong diurnal temperature shift between day and night we enjoy in Sonoma County is more pronounced in the Alexander Valley, providing that vivid acidity that makes big, bold Cabernet more approachable and enjoyable.

As always, we thank you for your support, loyalty, and friendship! Ok, back to the crush pad. The Grenache from Chalone just came in...

Cheers!

Bruce

Featured Wines



2020 CHALONE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

Located on the west-side of Pinnacles National Park, this wine comes from one small block planted in 1960, at an elevation of 1,200 feet. The soil limestone and decomposed soil is unique to the Chalone area, and perfect for growing memorable Chardonnay. Lemon curd and apricot aromas preview the compelling palate of peaches, pears, and toasted brioche. Soil derived minerality gives the wine a slight dusty and flinty texture. The finish is reminiscent of biting into a fresh, crunchy Asian pear, with a fresh, vibrant acidity. The concentration and depth of flavors deliver an approachable wine in its youth, with the promise to gain complexity with extended bottle aging - up to 10 years. Stunning with roast chicken, lobster tail, crab legs, brined smoked turkey, or a savory tart!



2020 GAP'S CROWN VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

Gap's Crown vineyard is named after the weather phenomenon known as the Petaluma Wind Gap, one of the coolest and most unique microclimates in Sonoma County, where the cool climate locks in acidity and structure that supports the powerful core of fruit. The wine underwent full malolactic fermentation, transforming the shrill, sharp malic acids (think unripe green apples) into soft, sweet lactic acids (think milk and crème). Rich flavors and layered textures make this the perfect wine for dense fish, grilled veal chops, and late summer vegetables (red peppers, corn, squash).



2019 PARMALEE-HILL PINOT NOIR

Located just south of the town of Sonoma and planted in 1994, the vineyard is located only 10 miles from San Pablo Bay. - The marina influence of cooling afternoon winds results in Pinot Noir grapes with relatively thick skin, creating increased color and phenolics in the wine. This inimitable, challenging vineyard site displays the potential of Pinot Noir grown along the cool southern Sonoma Coast. The Parmelee-Hill Pinot Noir reveals scents of lavender, cherry, and caramelized plums. Slight savory hints suggest rosemary and sage notes balancing the fruit aromatics. The entry is silky soft and smooth, with flavors of strawberry pie and fruit Danish coating the palate. The wine finishes with the essence and texture of fresh raspberries



2019 MAPLE VINEYARDS ZINFANDEL

Our FLAGSHIP Zinfandel - Maple Vineyard is located on the northern bench of Dry Creek Road, by some called "the Rodeo Drive of Zinfandel." Truly old-vine Zin, the oldest block was planted in 1910, linking our current wines to the rich history and traditions of the early immigrants to Dry Creek Valley. The old vines aren't irrigated so the vines roots drive deep into the ground searching for moisture, stressing the vines, creating small grapes with big flavors - raspberry, blackberry, red plum and black cherry. The seductive finish isn't cloying and sweet, but rather refined, lush and succulent, and the integrated tannins and great balance of savory and spice will continue to gain in complexity over the next fifteen years. Hello BBQ!!!



90 PTS
Wine Spectator

2019 TINA'S BLOCK ZINFANDEL

Maple Vineyards contains 27 acres of exceptional head-trained zinfandel, on high bench land in the heart of Dry Creek Valley. Tina's Block, the oldest block in the vineyard, was planted in 1910 and sustainability farmed since then. This 2-acre parcel is currently claiming that the block was planted to all Zinfandel, but we know that Tina's Block is recently comprised of at least 20% mixed black varietals - Petite Sirah, Carignan, Cinsault, Mission, and Alicante Bouschet are inter-planted throughout the block giving this wine unique character and flavors. The sandy-loam riverbed soil is remarkably porous, allowing all nutrients and rains to reach down to the deep roots. A wine of substantial structure, blackberry and plum aromas mix with hints of anise, graham cracker and black current. Sweet raspberry pie, blackberry and juicy cranberry explode in the lush mouthfeel. The seductive ripe finish has a sandy textured note that has softened with age. Great now, will age for another ten years. This big wine requires big food! - If it's charred, sweet or spicy; think baby back ribs, brisket, spicy sausage, anything smoked or rubbed with a sweet or spicy marinade.

90 PTS
Wine Spectator



2019 "IL CAMPO" ESTATE RED WINE FIELD BLEND

We planted the six acres Il Campo ("the fields") in the late 1990's as a homage to the Italian immigrants who transformed Dry Creek Valley into a farming mecca of orchards, ranches, farms, and vineyards. Like them, we created our own field blend of Zinfandel, one of Petite Sirah, and a smattering of Carignan and Alicante Bouchet. Using sustainable farming techniques introduced to the Dry Creek Valley over 150 years ago, we've built a legacy vineyard with year-to-year variations the result of each vintage's unique growing conditions. While predominantly Zinfandel, the inclusion of Petite Sirah and mixed blacks creates a surprisingly complex wine with mocha, licorice and cedar aromas leading to flavors of cranberry, blackberry pie and dark plum. Bruce loves this wine with grilled steak, pulled pork sand's, brisket and charcuterie!



2019 GOLD MINE RANCH ZINFANDEL

Gold Mine Ranch's 3-acre vineyard was planted before the original owner was drafted into the service before World War I. Returning from war, the owner set out to discover precious metals on his property to craft jewelry. He burrowed two holes near the Zinfandel in search of gold, and henceforth the vineyard was known as "Gold Mine Ranch." Today, the century-old vineyard is dry-farmed and organically managed using techniques and farming traditions similar to those of the original owner. Gold Mine Ranch Zinfandel's sweet fruit, anise, peppercorn and cola aromatics are unmistakably "Gold Mine Ranch," as are it's boisterous cranberry, raspberry jam and blackberry flavors. The finish presents a clear sense of complexity and texture, indicating this wine will continue to improve with age for another ten years. 241 cases produced.



2021 STUHLMULLER VINEYARD BLOCK 8 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Block 8 sits on a 300-foot knoll that faces east, gazing upon Mount St. Helena. The vines are terraced in alluvial and bench land soil, sandy loam, gravel, and rocks, and facing such that most of the sun they receive is morning sun. This allows for longer hang time and gradual ripening, producing low yields of small, intensely flavored berries. The aromas are seductive, an intriguing blend of fruit and savory. The mouthfeel is soft and silky with a rush of black cherry, cinnamon, cocoa, and dried blueberry liqueur flavors. The Block 8 finishes with sandy tannins and a refreshing acidity. Drink now or for the next 20 years. Try with brisket, skirt steak or grilled pork loin!



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