



c.a.v.e.

courtship and vigilant enology

Fall 2012

If you have read any of my past newsletters, you couldn't help notice my sense of anticipation with the coming new vintage. From the time the vines are pruned in winter to the day harvest actually starts in September, we winemakers are filled with great expectations of the coming new vintage of wines. We watch as the new leaves emerge in the spring from their dormant sleep. We guess how much crop there will be after the bloom and fruit sets in June. Then we observe the grapes turning from green to red during veraison around August first.

We have planned our barrel purchases and placed those orders months in advance (usually by April). We have figured out our production plan, what yeasts and other fermentation supplies we need, and even scheduled our bottling dates for the new Rose' and Sauvignon Blanc that will be bottled first, typically in January of the following year. Finally, that day in September arrives with the first delivery of grapes and the biggest event of the vintage year begins, harvest and crush, lasting for weeks. This is when we all start to get giddy with real excitement.



Now, as I write this Fall Newsletter in the third week of October the harvest and crush is nearly over. We have crushed the last grapes for Pech Merle this season. I have only three lots of red grapes still in fermentation tanks waiting to be drained and pressed to barrels. There are two tanks of Sauvignon Blanc and one tank of Rose' slowly fermenting at 54°F to preserve all the delicate aromatics and fruit characteristics in the resulting wine. Activity in the cellar is finally on the down stroke. There is a gratifying sense of accomplishment as we tuck another vintage under our belts. Yet the giddiness continues to rise as I realize just how great this vintage may turn out to be. The flavor and aroma of the fruit is just fantastic!

This year, unlike the last two that experienced harvest rains and other issues, has been nearly ideal for a perfect vintage; a true California vintage. I have a sense our great expectations and jubilant anticipation will be richly rewarded. The fruit we received was fully ripe with excellent rich flavors and true expressions of their varietal character. The resulting wines appear even at this early stage to be very good or perhaps better still. I feel my excitement grow each day as I realize what has just taken place, and what has been accomplished with what Mother Nature has given us this year. Now, my sense of anticipation morphs into delight or even giddy delight! as I look forward to the next steps in the winemaking process: aging and finishing the new wines. Finally the best part of the whole experience comes: sharing the new wines with you and the whole world, the ultimate pleasure of the new vintage and I can't wait until that day arrives. Surprise, a new expectation is here!



Cheers!

John Pepe

John Pepe, Winemaker