



c.a.v.e.

courtship and vigilant enology

Spring 2012

Green is groovy. I hear it everywhere I go these days, that green is groovy. If you're green, then you are groovy, too. And who doesn't want to be groovy after all? Well, I don't know about that, but I can tell you if you're a vineyard, then you definitely want to be green. And if you're a green vineyard this time of year, then indeed you are groovy as all get out.

The vineyards where Pech Merle gets their grapes (and every one else's for that matter) started getting green (and groovy!) back in March when the buds broke after the chill of winter was gone. This typically happens around the 15th to the 20th of March just in time for spring to bust loose. Spring through early summer is the "green" season for grapes, and by this I mean they put on all of their vegetative growth - leaves, canes and clusters. Around June 1 the clusters have formed many mature grape flowers. Then bloom takes place where each tiny flower pollinates itself (technically they are wind pollinated) and a grape berry will develop.



Pech Merle Laguna de Santa Rosa Pinot Noir grapes are in abundant supply this year and groovin' in the sun.

As summer passes through July and into August the magic happens in the vineyard and veraison takes place - the grapes turn from green to red (or black as we say in the industry). White grapes undergo veraison, too, turning from green to light green as the berries swell, soften, and ultimately turn to yellow/gold as they ripen, and the sugar levels rise as harvest nears.

As you probably know by now, the last two vintages in the North Coast have been on the shy side in terms of yield with last years harvest being down over 10%. No self-respecting vineyard is going to stand for that any longer, insisting they be as groovy as possible. This year just might get so groovy we will all burst with delight! All of the vineyards I have been in seem to have a big crop with lots of clusters and lots of berries on those clusters (check out our facebook page photos). It is inspirational to see just how big everything is. The leaves are big, the canes are long, and the clusters are huge, sometimes double clustered with wings on the side. Zinfandel seems to be the groove-king so far with the biggest crop I have seen in a long time. Our two premium Dry Creek Zin vineyards, Cuccio and Treborce, are looking absolutely superb with a hefty crop, super vineyard management, and perfectly on track to produce a sure-fire groovy vintage - think terrific!

Keep your fingers crossed that Mother Nature will get the "let's be groovy" bug, too, and cooperate in a way she has been loath to do these past two years by not raining until at least Halloween. Anticipation is running high with all of these good vibes shooting around, so I remain positive and excited about the coming veraison and harvest. We are in the groove as pickin' time nears and the winery gets ready for winemaking season once again. All I can say is: Groovy Baby!



Cheers!

John Pepe

John Pepe, Winemaker