



# c.a.v.e.

courtship and vigilant enology

spring 2016

## February 2016 Bottling

Pech Merle has just finished our annual winter bottling. Good news! – The new 2015 vintage of Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier and Ivy Rosé are now in the bottle and ready to go. The wines are fresh and exciting and I am sure will be a big hit with all of our club members.

Getting young wines like these ready to bottle just five months after harvest is not only labor intensive but also technically precise. They have to be fermented, clarified, heat stabilized (so they don't haze if overheated, like if left in the car), cold stabilized (so they don't throw acid crystals if chilled for long periods), acid adjusted for proper balance, and sterile filtered for purity. Once all the other aspects of packaging are in place - labels, corks, bottles and trucking (no small detail) then the bottling commences. We are pleased with the results and are sure you will be, too.



## The New Vintage Begins

Every year I get excited with the anticipation of the impending new vintage and try to share some of that excitement with you. Again this year the vines are waking from dormancy early (but not as early last year) and beginning to leaf out. By March 1 many vineyards in Sonoma County had bud-break and green tissue showing from the small buds. Expectations are always high at this time of year because, naturally, we want to see an exceptional and excellent grape crop come in to the winery in the fall. Many things will happen between now and then affecting the crop, as is always the case with agriculture.

## Draught Update

As of this writing on Thursday, March 10 it is and has been raining in Sonoma County. We are expecting a very wet weekend with 2-5 inches of new rain over the next five days. So far this year we are well ahead of the last four years in terms of average rainfall to-date and all signs seem to indicate that, at least locally, the draught worries are easing. All three of the main water storage reservoirs serving Sonoma, Marin and Mendocino counties are considered full and we will not be rationing drinking water this year. However the new reality of life in California is that water needs to be carefully used every day and year around. On a larger scale the snow pack in the Sierra is near 100% of average for this date which bodes well for the rest of California especially the San Joaquin Valley and big agriculture there. Let's keep up the good work with water conservation and keep our fingers crossed that El Niño delivers the water we desperately need this year.

## A few words about my drinkability chart...

Please check out the updated drinkability chart to check aging progress of your cellared Pech Merle wines. Temper the chart with your personal preferences on wine age. Personally, I prefer most red wines on the young side because I love the youthful and vibrant fruit characters. As for the white and Rosé wines I will rate them as “drink” for three years from the vintage date after which time your own personal preferences can kick in.

The drinkability chart will come out with each spring wine club shipment mainly because that is when the new whites and Rosé are released. We thought about issuing the chart twice yearly but realized the wines do not change significantly to warrant the updated information.

*John Pepe*  
John Pepe, Winemaker

## Introducing Erin LaMoureaux

We are thrilled to announce the addition of our new Sales & Operations Director Erin LaMoureaux, who after courting for almost 5 years, finally agreed to get devoted.

This San Diego born girl is the perfect blend of “SoCal” and “NorCal” with roots at the beach and reverie in the vineyard. Growing up with the absence of wine in her house eventually reinforced the notion that a heart will in fact grow fonder. In time, the insatiable wanderlust she found driving through the vineyard roads in Central Coast relocated her to the splendor of Sonoma County. A graduate of Sonoma State, Erin has worked with established brands such as Robert Young Estate, Wilson Artisan Wineries and Martinelli in capacities that span from sales and wine club management to compliance and operations.

*“Living, working, playing and building my life in Northern California has been nothing short of a dream. Joining the Pech Merle Winery team wasn't by accident; you might even call it calculated. Almost five years ago, I met Bruce and Cheryl through a mutual friend, the day after I met my now husband Ethan, dubbing this a very good weekend in my life. I am privileged to be working with a crazy group of people I dearly love, for a winery whose wine I can't keep enough of in my cellar (read: wine rack in a closet) and to have a job that doesn't feel like a J.O.B., but makes me work harder than I ever have in the best way. Being the Sales & Operations Director for Pech Merle is an honor and I'm looking forward to all the adventures that will come with it.”*



**Pech Pups:** Margaux (Blue Heeler/ Border Collie) & Jax (Papillon)

**Favorite Varietal:** Anything well-balanced and complex. Really.

**Favorite Food:** Triple Crème Brie. Mexican Food. Burgers. Charcuterie

**Favorite Quote:** "I'm not here for a long time, I'm here for a good time."  
-George Strait