

CELEBRATING
20⁰⁰/₂₀
YEARS

ZINSTITUTION

Where There's Smoke...

As I write this in mid-October, we have JUST received our last load of grapes for the NH wines this vintage. And true to style, 2020 has thrown us PLENTY of curveballs to fight off. The August/September heatwave was a big one. And I can say without doubt the most challenging aspect of this harvest was dealing with potentially lower acidity as a result of that heatwave. Fortunately this wasn't my first rodeo and it became apparent very early in August that we were gonna have to keep an eye on those acids. We knew we had no wiggle room to let things hang a little bit longer. That it was going to be important to get blocks picked before the acids dropped right through the floor. The beauty of working with mostly the same vineyards over many years is that we know how these blocks progress and can kind of predict how they will be affected by these kinds of extreme heat waves.

Obviously the most important wine to get into balance is the Sauvignon Blanc, because one of its primary attributes is acidity. But the same goes for the reds. In fact it is supremely important to keep an eye on these as well. NOBODY wants a flabby Zinfandel. And so it was a constant battle between picking early enough to keep acids intact, picking late enough for flavors to develop, and knowing when we would have to add a little bit of acidity back into the wines. To add complexity to the situation, we had lots of challenges securing picking crews in order to get these wines picked when we wanted them picked.

Finally, the question EVERYONE has been asking me this year has been about "Smoke Taint". You'll read many reports discussing the almost total loss of the 2020 Napa and Sonoma red wine harvest. Certainly the tragedies of this year's fire season on these two all-important regions, along with others like Santa Cruz Mtns region, is a big blow

to the industry. And although we had quite a bit of smoke here in Calaveras for 5-6 weeks, the smoke we had was primarily from other fires throughout the state. Some of the most recent research done on the concept of "Smoke Taint" has focused on the specific volatile compounds that are responsible for the problems that some regions experienced. Turns out that most likely, the compounds that are responsible for the problems tend to dissipate within 6 or so hours. Almost all of the smoke we had here was at least a day old. This factor alone may have spared us from suffering the same fate as our friends to the west. We still have samples to send out to make sure, but I'm pretty sensitive to smoke taint and after having received all of our fruit this year I have yet to detect a single instance of it. If that changes, we'll certainly let you know!!

Now onto the good stuff...I'm really happy to share with you the wines in this Club Shipment. During normal years, some of my most favorite moments are spent with many of you at Club events, opening super special Library wines and tasting how they have changed over the years. We are really missing this this year and so we wanted to atleast get those Library wines into your hands, so that you can have those moments over the next few months. We will be there in spirit with you as you open the '10 Frank Herbert, the '11 Donner Party, the '12 Shake Ridge, the '13 Big John, the '14 Roland Rosario and the '15 Foothill Zinfandel. Cheers to putting the challenges of 2020 in the past! Thank you always for your support.

Cheers!

Scott Klann

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2010 Frank Herbert Zinfandel

Appellation - El Dorado County

Aging/Cooperage - 16 months in new French oak

Alcohol - 14.8%

Tasting Notes – Black fruit and spicy anise aromas, classic Sierra Foothill peppery Zin aromas and flavors. The mouthfeel has a ‘sweet and supple’ character that focuses on the black fruit characters. The wine has a great mid-palate and sports some classic foothill black pepper characteristics. Finishes soft but long with a nutty aspect.

Scott's Notes - The Frank Herbert Vineyard is the fourth member of our Vineyard Select Series, now giving us two from Calaveras, one from Amador and one from El Dorado County. This El Dorado County “Old Vine” vineyard was planted in the early 1970s with what is believed to be the Deaver clone. The definition of “Old Vine” is generally accepted to be 35 years or older. When I was first starting out in the wine biz (early 90s), I kept hearing about this vineyard and the wonderful wines it produced. It is such a pleasure to now be making wine from it. This is one of the more renowned vineyards of the Sierra Foothills and is now owned by winemaker and good friend Marco Cappelli.



2011 Donner Party Zinfandel

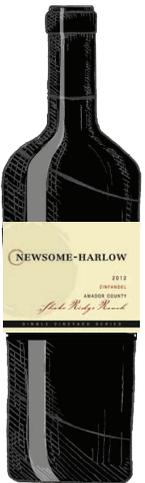
Appellation - Calaveras County

Aging/Cooperage - 16 months in new French oak

Alcohol - 14.7%

Tasting Notes - Deep black fruit and spice aromas. The flavors are ultra-strong blackberries, black cherry, anise and clove with a very earthy component. This is one big Zin with broad mouthfeel and spicy leathery characters. The tannins are subdued due to the very cool vintage. The wine finishes with long dark blackberry and plummy characters

Scott's Notes - In addition to this Zinfandel, we also source Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc and Petite Sirah from this vineyard, making it one of our most important partners. Vineyard manager Steve Collum farms this vineyard now for the Dalton family after Jim passed away late 2010. Steve uses only sustainable agricultural practices. The vineyard is also currently undergoing a third-party organic certification program.



2012 Shake Ridge Zinfandel

Appellation - Amador County

Aging/Cooperage - 16 months in 30% new French oak & 70% neutral French oak barrels

Alcohol - 14.7%

Tasting Notes - Strong black pepper aromas with raspberry and red currants. The flavors mirror these aromas and the wine is medium to full-bodied with lots of structure. Showing Sierra Foothill peppery characters, it finishes long with darker berry flavors.

Scott's Notes - Ann Kraemer's Shake Ridge Ranch is one of the most impressive examples of viticulture in the Sierra Foothills region as each block is farmed with care and attention to detail. The fruit is harvested under headlamps and arrives at the winery in pristine condition. The resulting wine conveys these efforts.



2013 Big John Zinfandel

Appellation - Calaveras County

Aging/Cooperage - 18 months in three-year old French oak

Alcohol - 14.7%

Tasting Notes - Strong raspberry and plum aromas combine with brambly flavors. Also deep plum flavors and spicy tones. This classic Sierra Foothills style Zin finishes long & spicy with black pepper and lingering plum flavors.

Scott's Notes - Traditionally, yields are kept quite low in this vineyard...just under 3 tons/acre. As the vineyard has aged and the roots have grown and spread, the consistent plum characters have become so prevalent in this classic Sierra Foothills Zin.



2014 Roland Rosario Zinfandel

Appellation - Calaveras County

Aging/Cooperage - 16 months in new French oak

Alcohol - 14.9%

Tasting Notes - Deep black fruit and spice aromas. The flavors are ultra-strong blackberries, black cherry, anise and clove with a very earthy component. This is one big Zin with broad mouthfeel and spicy leathery characters. The tannins are subdued due to the very cool vintage. The wine finishes with long dark blackberry and plummy characters

Scott's Notes - We've been making wine off this vineyard for just a couple of years now and it appears to be a pretty neat site. Nestled into the very first foothill slopes that rise out of the eastern end of the valley just north of Copperopolis, the site gets pretty intense diurnal wind shifts keeping it quite dry and mitigating the valley heat



2015 Foothill Zinfandel

Appellation - Sierra Foothills

Aging/Cooperage - 18 months in 15% new American oak

Alcohol - 14.6%

Tasting Notes - Deep raspberry and plum aromas with a touch of herbaceous characters combine with a slight chocolate aroma. The flavors mirror the raspberries and add a spicy component of nutmeg. This juicy Zinfandel finishes firm and fruity with lingering dark berry flavors and a peppery spiciness.

Scott's Notes - This juicy blend of three different Foothill Zin vineyards is a classic example of what the Sierra Foothills climate and soils can produce.