

# Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY

## STORE HOURS



A Taste of Monterey  
Cannery Row  
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm\*  
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm\*

Food service begins at  
11:30am daily

\*No new member tastings  
after 6pm

## JANUARY REFERRALS



Refer a friend to the  
Monterey Wine Club, and  
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# WINERIES *in Winter*



The long days of the harvest are over. Primary fermentation of the year's grapes is over and by now wines are being stored in steel tanks or wood barrels. The vines are dormant in the vineyard with the settling in of colder weather. It must be quiet in wineries this time of year in winter, right? Not really.

Although this is certainly not the busiest time of year for the wine making process, and wineries will cut back significantly on staff during this time, there are still crucial tasks which need to be conducted. Often you'll hear

that the first great ingredient in wine is to have great grapes. While this is undoubtedly true, another critical ingredient to quality is attention to detail. And it's during the slower winter season when detail oriented tasks play a key role for winemakers and cellar hands.

While the busy time of getting grapes harvested and wines through the initial fermentation stage is over, essentially turning the grapes into wine by starting alcohol fermentation, the new wines cannot be pushed aside and forgotten until the time for bottling. While in oak barrels or tanks, sediment from the wines drops to the bottom of the aging vessels. The tiny chemical changes occurring in the wines need to be monitored and there's an often overlooked task called "topping up" which is essential during this time.

Topping up is not the most glamorous task in a winery, but it is an essential one and one that has to happen continually at this time of year for any wine in oak barrels. Topping up is pretty much how it sounds - barrels are filled by pitcher-wielding cellar hands to account for evaporation that occurs. This loss of small amounts of wine is affectionately known as the Angel's Share of the wines.

Oak is porous, so small amounts of wine evaporate through the barrel staves, replaced by miniscule amounts of air. This introduction of oxygen through the oak into the wines is responsible for the imparting of specific flavors in wines, such as vanilla and tobacco. Red wines in oak also absorb tannins from the wood. While the introduction of small amounts of oxygen is viewed as a beneficial component of the winemaking process, too much evaporation in the barrels could have devastating effects on the wine. This is where topping up comes into play.

The actual wine juice used for topping off is typically not the highest quality and is often a field blend of various varietals. But the percentage of this added wine in the barrels is not enough to substantially contribute to the overall character of the wine in the barrel.



Another task often conducted during this time is the "racking" of red wines. This is done by pumping from one barrel to another, briefly adding more oxygen to the wines and also discarding the fallen sediment, including lees (dead yeast cells).

How about in the vineyards themselves? Al-

though the vines are essentially dormant at this time, vineyard managers are not completely idle. Many will plant, spread, and maintain cover crops between their vines. Typical cover crops used are mustard, clover, *Continued Inside*

# MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

## PUMA ROAD - 2012 *Vigna Monte Nero Vineyard Chardonnay*



Puma Road's single vineyard chardonnay is grown in the Vigna Monte Nero in the heart of the Santa Lucia Highlands. The region is internationally recognized for producing exquisite chardonnays. The mild weather, ocean breezes, and consistent fog creates the moderate environment in which this varietal thrives. The hand harvested fruit is aged for 10 months in 40% new French oak and 60% neutral oak. The nose delivers fruit, vanilla, and butter, while the palate experiences caramel, citrus, and pear.

Featuring the dark fruit, subtle spice and earthiness of Mourvèdre, the bright, ripe raspberry fruit of Grenache, and the jamminess and lushness of Syrah, this captivating blend is a balance of delightful flavors.

100% Chardonnay

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2017

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## GIFFT - 2014 *Red Blend*



Giffit's 2014 Red Blend was created to be an easy-drinking red, one that pairs well with a wide variety of food but is also pleasing to drink all on its own. Coming up with the final blend, comprised of 6 different varietals, was like a wonderful experiment, with plenty of mixing, discussion, adjustments and lots and lots of tasting. The result is an oh-so-smooth and oh-so-flavorful red blend, with a core of red fruit that carries through from beginning to end. While it certainly falls in the category of "easy-drinking red", the complexity, balance and lushness make it a wine for casual drinkers and serious wine-lovers alike.

The 2014 vintage of Giffit Red Blend is comprised of 6 different varietals, blended to showcase the fully-integrated bright fruit character of each component. With aromas of blackberry and ripe plum and loads of black fruit on the palate, it exhibits a smooth, silky mouthfeel on a medium-bodied, soft round frame with a touch of vanilla and sweet oak.

53% Merlot, 17% Petite Sirah, 16% Syrah,

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

8% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Muscat Canelli, 2% Gewürztraminer

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## BERNARDUS - 2014 *Pinot Noir* (Club Red)



The Bernardus Monterey Pinot Noir grapes are primarily from the Griva Vineyard in the Arroyo Seco appellation of Monterey County. They care for their Monterey Pinot Noir a bit differently than their other Pinots in order to produce a wine that accentuates its fresh, fruity qualities. They divide these grapes into several fermentation tanks and ferment at cooler temperatures which helps protect their inherent fruity flavors. They then age the wines in older, neutral French oak tanks and barrels so the resulting wine truly expresses the style of this vineyard.

The Bernardus 2014 Monterey Pinot Noir shows a bright, ruby red color with excellent clarity. On the nose we find intense, spicy aromas of red cherries and strawberries. On the palate, the refreshing flavors of bright red berry fruits, accented by subtle spicy notes, fill the mouth and linger on a crisp finish. Bernardus feels this wine is an excellent match with a wide variety of dishes.

100% Pinot Noir

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## GIFFT - 2015 *Rosé* (Club Blanc)



Giffit's 2015 Pinot Noir Rosé hails from the Scheid family's estate vineyards in Monterey County. The Monterey region is renowned for the longest growing season in California due to the strong maritime influence of Monterey Bay. Cooling winds sweep through the vineyards each day, allowing extra "hang time". Increased hang time leads to more intense flavor development and enhanced depth and richness of fruit.

The 2015 vintage of Giffit Pinot Noir Rosé is irresistible with fragrant notes of freshly picked summer berries and rose petal. Raspberry, strawberry and nectarine sweep the palate rounded with bright acidity and a crisp, refreshing finish.

100% Pinot Noir

12.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2017

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So



Cover Article Continued



and various beans. Cover crops are used for various reasons. They may be planted on the hillside slopes of vineyards to help prevent and control erosion. They may be mowed and mulched to use as a source of nitrogen to enrich soils. Or they may actually be planted to compete for water with surrounding vines in an attempt to de-vigorate overly prolific vines.

Back at the winery, there are still other requirements often addressed during this time of year. Sometimes it may be difficult to picture, but wineries are businesses like any other, and administrative tasks are not forgiven. Just as much as anywhere else,

wineries need to stay on top of their business affairs. These affairs also include winery specific requirements, such as reporting to various regulatory entities on their operations.

And so, despite initial appearances, winter is not a time of total leisure in the wine-making business. Whether in the vineyards or in the cellar rooms, there are always tasks to be done contributing to the overall end goal of a creating a great bottle of wine.

*'Bryce Ternet' - is a contributing editor and is the author of: "The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula."*

## RECIPE

### Roast Beef

#### Ingredients

2½ lbs.	boneless rump roast (round roast or sirloin tip will work)
1-2 tbsp.	olive oil
2-3	garlic cloves, sliced
½ cup	water
½ cup	beef stock
1 tsp.	kosher salt
1 tsp.	ground black pepper
1 tsp.	dried thyme
1 tsp.	dried basil
1 tsp.	dried tarragon
1 tsp.	dried rosemary



#### Directions

Heat oven to 375 degrees.

Make several (8-10) small incisions (about ¼ to ½ inch deep) around the meat and then insert a slice of garlic into each. Place the roast, fat side up, on a rack over a roasting pan. Pour water and beef broth into the pan (not over the roast) to very lightly cover the bottom of the roasting pan.

Rub the roast with olive oil until coated. Sprinkle salt, pepper and herbs all over the roast and spread to evenly coat with your hands.

Place in the oven and roast for 45 minutes (or until temperature in the deepest part of the roast registers 125 degrees). Do not open the oven during these 45 minutes to baste or check on the roast.

After 45 minutes, reduce heat to 250 degrees and cook an additional 10-20 minutes, or until thermometer reads 135 degrees. Remove from oven and let rest 10 minutes. While it is resting, it will continue to raise in temperature to 145 degrees.

Remove the slices of garlic, if desired. Slice across the grain in very thin slices.

## VISITING Varietals



### MUSCAT CANELLI

**Pronunciation:** MOOS-cah Ca-NELL-ee

The first mention of wine in modern literature occurred in the Book of Genesis's story of Noah's Ark. After the Ark landed on Mount Ararat, one of Noah's first acts was to plant a vineyard. The most likely grape: a Muscat. Muscat is a group of similar grape varieties (200 in all) in which the most familiar are Muscat Ottonel, Muscat of Alexandria, and Muscat Canelli. It is thought that Muscat Canelli probably originated around the Mediterranean and it spread from there. The Greeks brought cuttings with them to the Crimea, the Romans and Phoenicians took it to Europe and even the Egyptians sent cuttings as far south as present day South Africa.

Today Muscat Canelli is cultivated throughout the world; it is known as Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains ('Muscat with small berries') in France, Moscato di Canelli in Italy where it is used to make Asti Spumante and semi-sparkling Moscato d'Asti, Muskateller in Germany, and Muscat Lunel in Hungary. In the United States, Muscat Canelli is primarily grown on the west coast.

## CHEESE

## Varietals



## MANCHEGO

**Pronunciation:** mahn-CHAY-goh

The Manchego is produced in the La Mancha region of Spain, which is also home to Don Quixote. It is made from unpasteurized sheep's milk. It is one of the popular cheeses from Spain. It also comes under the PDO guidelines.

The traditional use of grass molds leaves a distinctive, characteristic zig-zag pattern on the Manchego cheese. Authentic Manchego is only made from the Manchego sheep's milk. Manchego cheese is made from both pasteurized and unpasteurized milk. The farmhouse version is produced from unpasteurized milk while the industrial version is produced from pasteurized milk.

The rind is inedible with a distinctive, traditional herringbone basket weave pattern, pressed on it. A typical ear wheat pattern is pressed onto the top and bottom wheels of the cheese. There are specific differences in Manchego cheeses, depending on their aging period.

Semi Curado - Young Manchego cheese aged around 3 months are supple and moist. The flavor is fruity, grass, hay with a tangy note.

Curado - Manchego cheese aged for 6 months acquires a caramel and nutty flavor. It has distinct acidity.

Viejo - Manchego cheese aged for a year becomes crumbly in texture while the interior of the cheese acquires a butterscotch color. It has a sweet, lingering taste.
















Manchego cheeses are best paired with a sherry. Cheeses similar to Manchego are called 'Machego like cheeses', but the producers cannot legally name the cheese as Manchego.

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