

# Tasting Monterey

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

## COMING EVENTS

**Friday, April 1, 2011**  
**First Fridays Art Walk**

A Taste of Monterey  
Old Town Salinas  
5:00pm-8:00pm\*  
Stop by A Taste of Monterey  
in Old Town Salinas on your  
journey through the First Fridays  
Art Walk. Enjoy art from a  
featured local artist, while we  
stay open later!

**Thursday, April 28, 2011**  
**Thirsty Thursdays**

A Taste of Monterey  
Old Town Salinas  
5:00pm-7:00pm\*  
Join us on the last Thursday  
of every month from 5pm to  
7pm. A Taste of Monterey,  
Oldtown Salinas is keeping its  
doors open later and offering  
special wine by the glass prices.  
Featured Winemaker, local food  
products and 30% off wine  
and gifts (discount for club  
members only).

**Friday, April 29, 2011**  
**Last Fridays Wine Bar**

A Taste of Monterey  
Cannery Row  
6:00pm-9:00pm\*  
Join us on the last Friday of  
every month from 6pm to 9pm.  
A Taste of Monterey, Cannery  
Row is keeping its doors open  
later and offering special wine  
by the glass prices. Start your  
weekend off with a relaxing  
view and a glass of Monterey's  
finest.

\* No new tastings after 5:45pm

## APRIL REFERRALS



Refer a friend to the Monterey  
Wine Club and after they join you  
get a \$20.00 Gift Card!

# SANGIO, SANGIO... SANGIOVESE!

**B**ene, bene...let's talk some Sangiovese! Sangiovese, or "Sangio" for short, is an intriguing grape variety not only for its history, but also because of its diversified use in winemaking. The grape has been around for awhile- it is suspected of having been a common varietal of winemaking for the Etruscans in Central Italy (for the non-historically inclined, that means pre-Roman times). I would venture to guess that you've heard of Sangiovese before, although perhaps without realizing it.



You see, Sangiovese is the primary grape for Italian Chianti wines...and I'll bet many of you of the baby boomer generation had a straw-bottomed bottle that you turned into a candle holder in the 70's!

So, here we have this ancient grape varietal that conjures up images of multi-colored wax cascading down the sides of a wide bottle, a connection to Chianti, possibly some vague association with wines known as "Super Tuscans," and an increasing popularity in the States for our own homegrown varietal Sangiovese. It's clear that this grape with the Latin name of "the blood of Jove" deserves some attention. *Andiamo!*

Sangiovese vines thrive on sloped terrain in hot and dry climates in soils with high concentrations of limestone- for those of you fortunate enough to have traveled in the Tuscany region of Italy, we'll mention that the majority of the vines you saw covering the rolling fields there are planted with our subject grape variety. Even though Sangiovese can be compared to Cabernet Sauvignon, in that each provide the backbone to two well-known wines: Chianti and Bordeaux, the two grapes share little else in common. Sangio is not a survivor grape; it is thin-skinned, late to ripen and mature, and will easily rot in conditions that are too damp.

Vintners that have worked with Sangiovese will tell you that despite its long-established presence in the world, it's actually not the easiest varietal for winemaking. The grape presents the challenge of offering high acidity, yet is light in body characteristics. Because of these qualities, winemakers have traditionally applied methods to strengthen the wine either through blending it with other grapes or extending its exposure to oak during the process.

As for blending, Chianti itself is an Italian style using Sangiovese. Sangio provides the dominant base of the wine, but it is combined with other red varietals such as Colorino, Mammolo, Canaiolo or Cilieggiolo; or white varietals such as Malvasia and Trebbiano. Blending Sangio with Bordeaux varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot produces "Super Tuscan" wines, which continue to gain more and more favor in Italy and California.

Where Sangiovese is grown and how it is produced will have drastic results of either gentle or assertive wines, although a prevailing characteristic of all is a touch of bitterness to their finish. Berry flavors such as strawberry, blueberry and bitter cherry combined with floral and plum notes are common. In general, Californian Sangiovese tends to be bolder than its Italian cousin, which is likely attributable to extended exposure to sunlight. Vanilla, oak and spice are also common- but these are imparted from heavy oaking of the wine.

It is uncontested that Sangiovese's true home is in Italy, as it is the country's most widely planted red grape varietal with over 250,000 acres, representing ten percent of all vineyards in Italy. Although it is prolific in Tuscany, the grape is grown throughout the country's different wine growing regions and is also known by the names of Brunello and Morellino, amongst others. Even though Italian winemakers tend to primarily produce blended Sangio wines, there are Italian varietal wine versions of Sangiovese as well.



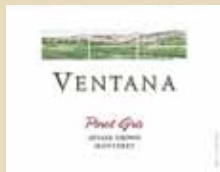
And, if you've ever wondered why Italian cuisine from complex pasta creations to basic pizzas are regularly paired with Chianti, the answer is that the high acidity and low tannins in Sangiovese present a lovely match to tomato-based sauces. *Magnifico!*

It is believed that Italian immigrants first introduced Sangio plantings to California in the late 1800's, and although there was some surge of

*Continued Inside*

# MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

## VENTANA VINEYARDS - 2009 Pinot Gris



The distinction of their white wines lies in freshness. The winery is lucky to be located on the same property as the vineyard, so that when the grapes are brought in from the field they are directly pressed and then pumped into chilling tanks. Ventana grows the Pinot Gris in an area of their Arroyo Seco vineyard that is very gravelly, with little soil. This makes the vines struggle for water and results in small berries with intense flavor. After gentle pressing, the juice settles for 36-48 hours. The next step was to rack the juice into tanks where they fermented under cool conditions. Fermentation lasted 4 weeks for optimum fresh flavors.

Ventana's Pinot Gris shows a beautiful, light golden hue. It has an enticing delicate aroma of orange blossoms that delights the senses. Rich rounded and full bodied, flavors of lime and orange first greet the palate followed by crisp apple then complemented with spicy pear on the medium to dry finish.

**Accolades:** Gold - 2010 Los Angeles International Wine Competition | Silver - 2010 Critics Challenge Wine Competition | Gold - California State Fair Wine Competition | Silver - Critics Challenge | Bronze - Orange County Fair Wine Competition

100% Pinot Gris

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2011

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

## DE TIERRA VINEYARDS - 2006 Merlot



De Tierra's estate Merlot is grown deep in Corral de Tierra at the foot of Mount Toro, between the Santa Lucia Highlands and Carmel Valley, in what John Steinbeck called "the pastures of heaven". The vineyard is organically farmed to accentuate the terroir of this most unusual area. The Merlot was fermented in small open top fermentors, and it was punched down three times a day to manage the tannins while extracting intense color and flavors. The wine was aged 22 months in 100% Hungarian oak barrels to heighten the lush mouth-feel and bordeaux character. An additional 12 months in the bottle has resulted in a wine of velvety tannins and complex fruit.

The wine has classic bordeaux aromas of hard spices, cedar and blackberry that joins with vanilla and smoky oak following behind. Full and intense in the mouth, rich fruit flavors are carried by balancing acidity that keeps this wine focused and produces a lush finish. With lengthy oak aging, this wine is drinking quite well, but it's structure and intensity would indicate many years of enjoyment to come.

**Accolades:** Gold - 2010 Los Angeles International Wine Competition | Silver - 2010 Organic and Biodynamic Wine Competition | Bronze - 2010 Dallas Morning News | Bronze - San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

100% Merlot

14.1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2012

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

## DE TIERRA VINEYARDS - 2009 Vindegard Chardonnay (Club Blanc)



The "Vindegard" Chardonnay is cold barrel fermented in neutral French oak and stainless steel barrels to accentuate and retain the beautiful high toned qualities of Chardonnay. The wine is aged nine months in barrel with lees stirring used to heighten the lush mouth-feel and add complexities unusual to this style. Minimal malolactic fermentation allows for retention of the rich and flavorful acid structure that makes this wine both delicious and refreshing.

This pale, straw colored wine has an inviting nose that promises a clean and well balanced taste. There are ripe pear and stone fruit notes at the front of the pallet, followed by honeydew melon in the mid-pallet, along with soft pineapple acid notes that lead gently along to a clean finish. This wine is well balanced with a comfortable harmony between the nose and the mouth.

**Accolades:** New release

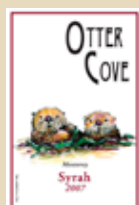
100% Chardonnay

14.1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2011

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

## OTTER COVE - 2007 Syrah (Club Red)



Otter Cove produce wines with Monterey County grapes. They pride themselves with quality products at a great price. They are a local group of wine makers and consultants seeking to bring great joy to others by producing what nature gave them. They can't think of a better way to share stories, dinner, tastings, laughter, love and romance than over a bottle of wine.

The grapes for this Syrah are from the newer vines up into the Arroyo Seco Canyon, just north of the Arroyo Seco River. The wine was aged using French oak with micro oxygenation, for 20 months. You'll get blackberries, cherry cola, smoky aroma, deep ruby color with a clean finish. A well balanced wine, from start to finish, that will pair well with ribs, chicken, pizzas, cheeses and fruits, barbecues, milk chocolates and wild mushrooms.

**Accolades:** Not submitted to competitions

100% Syrah

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2013

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

Cover Article Continued



interest in the grape in the 1980's, it has only been in recent years that Sangiovese wines have experienced an increased demand as winemakers and the wine-consuming public expand their epicurean interests. There are significant plantings of Sangiovese in Napa, San Luis Obispo, Amador and El Dorado Counties these days. Sangio is not a major varietal in Monterey County, but the grape is certainly present- it's not surprising that the Chalone appellation offers ideal terroir for Sangiovese. San Antonio Valley and Arroyo Seco are two other AVAs in Monterey County where we are seeing more Sangiovese. Plantings of Sangio are also sprouting up more frequently in areas of Washington State. Worldwide, Sangiovese is grown in Australia, South Africa and Argentina.

We hope this little introduction to the vino of the Etruscans has swirled your interest in Sangiovese. A Taste of Monterey is pleased to offer several superb Monterey County Sangiovese and Sangio-based wines. Stay tuned for our upcoming wine club member event, "Sangiovese in your Face-se", which will be announced soon via our Email Newsletter, The Grapevine Online. Who knows...maybe you'll walk away speaking some Italian. *Ciao!*

*Bryce Ternet*

Contributing author for A Taste of Monterey and is the author of three books. See [www.mbryceter.net](http://www.mbryceter.net) for more.

## RECIPE

### GRILLED ARTICHOKE BRUSCHETTA *with Pesto Aioli*

*This creative recipe replaces the toast traditionally used in a bruschetta with a grilled artichoke. Don't be daunted by the number of steps; the end result is delicious!*

#### Basic Artichoke Preparation

- 1 gal water
- 12 fl oz red wine vinegar
- 1 bulb garlic (split)
- 1 pinch oregano dried
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- salt to taste

*Bring water to a boil with the vinegar, garlic, oregano, oil and salt. Using a sharp serrated knife remove the top inch from the choke. Using a pair of scissors, trim just the thorns from the leaves. When the water reaches a boil place all of the artichokes in, cover and cook for approx 35 minutes. Remove from the cooking liquid and place on a tray upside down to drain and cool. Using a medium spoon remove the center leaves and the inedible "furry" choke from the center, taking care not to damage the heart.*

#### Tomato "Bruschetta"

- 4 large tomatoes, seeded and diced
- 1/4 red onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1/8 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 6 leaves basil, finely shredded
- salt and pepper

*Combine ingredients.*

*Note: Do not add salt unless you plan on serving right away.*



#### Pesto

- 2 cups dried basil leaves
- 1/2 cup parmesan, grated
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1/3 cup pinenuts, toasted
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- salt and pepper to taste

*Using a food processor, lightly pulse the pinenuts and garlic. Add the basil and pulse. Add the cheese and pulse. Gradually add the oil & lemon and run until all is incorporated. Check seasoning. Makes one cup of pesto. This recipe will leave you with extra pesto; it will keep for a week well covered in the fridge.*

#### Pesto Aioli

- 2 egg yolks
- 1 lemon, juiced, fresh
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 cup olive oil (not strong virgin oil)
- 1/4 cup pesto (see above)
- salt and pepper to taste

*Using a food processor, pulse the egg, lemon and garlic, do not over mix or air will get incorporated and throw off the texture. With the machine running gradually, add all of the oil. Gently pulse in the pesto. Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary.*

#### To Serve

*Split the artichoke in half, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place on a hot grill for approx 3-5 mins until hot. Serve topped with the tomato mixture and a small dish of the pesto aioli.*

Courtesy of: Chef Tony Baker



No Corkage Fee Program Participant!

## A YEAR In the Vineyard



Continuing from last month with our Year in the Vineyard segment, it's now time to return to the vines to see what's happening out there in mid-spring.

As you'll recall, last month we discussed how in early spring we had the first signs of green sprouting in the vineyards with bud break. These days, the bud break of Monterey County's vineyards is in full stride, and the rows of vineyards have transformed into rows of brilliant green as far as the eye can see. After, on average, four weeks of limited growth, the buds are now dramatically sprouting into shoots at a rate of an inch a day...that's some fast growth!



Vineyard managers are carefully watching the progression of the bud break and anxiously awaiting the next stage of the process: flowering. Due to our fortuitous growing season in Monterey County, some vineyards may already be showing signs of flowering, but we'll hold off on discussing this event in further detail until next month when it will likely be occurring universally throughout the County's vineyards.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

In order to better serve our members, we need to receive any new info and changes regarding your status (i.e., change of address, new credit card number, etc.) by the 20th of each month.

PLEASE NOTIFY US BY CALLING  
(888) 646-5446.

Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

**PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:**

A Taste of Monterey  
Attn: Elaine Hewett  
127 Main Street  
Salinas, CA 93901  
(888) 646-5446 Ext. 13  
club@tastemonterey.com

**CLUB SAVINGS**

Remember, as a Club Member, you receive a 15% discount on all purchases (20% for Quattro and Cellar members) and a weekly complimentary tasting.

**NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Elaine Hewett - Club Manager  
Robyn Rauh - Executive Editor  
Ken Rauh - Creative Director  
Bryce Ternet - Contributing Editor

**VISIT US ONLINE**

WWW.TASTEMONTEREY.COM

**MIX & MATCH**

ANY OF THE CURRENT OR PREVIOUS CLUB WINES TO RECEIVE **25% OFF 12 BOTTLES** OR **20% OFF 6**

APRIL SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 06/30/2011	REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
	Ventana Vineyards 2009 Pinot Gris		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
	De Tierra Vineyards 2006 Merlot		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
	De Tierra Vineyards 2009 Vindegard Chardonnay		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
	Otter Cove 2007 Syrah		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
MARCH SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 05/31/2011			
	Graff Family Vineyards 2007 Viognier		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Mission Trail Vineyards 2006 Tusca		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
	Cima Collina 2008 Sauvignon Blanc		\$17.00	\$12.75	\$13.60
	Cima Collina 2005 Hilltop Red		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
FEBRUARY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 04/30/2011			
	Yosemite View 2008 Chardonnay		\$14.00	\$10.50	\$11.20
	Cru 2007 Vineyard Montage Pinot Noir		\$23.00	\$17.25	\$18.40
	Muirwood 2009 Reserve Zanetta Vineyard Chardonnay		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
	Pierce Ranch Vineyards 2006 Tourbillon		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB		PRICES EXPIRE 05/31/2011			
	Cobblestone 2007 Chardonnay		\$29.00	\$21.75	\$23.20
	San Saba 2006 Pinot Noir		\$35.00	\$26.25	\$28.00
	Pelerin 2007 Les Violettes Syrah		\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80
	Mission Trail Vineyards 2004 Zinfandel		\$38.00	\$28.50	\$30.40

TO ORDER, CALL TOLL-FREE: 888-646-5446

\*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.