

Tasting Monterey

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



STORE HOURS

A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-7pm
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm*

Food service begins at
11:30am daily

*No new member tastings
after 6pm

JULY REFERRALS



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Let's Talk Acreage

Monterey County boasts over 1.6 million acres of crops, representing over \$3.8 billion in production value. Grape production accounts for 44,150 acres and over \$200 million in total value. This ranks grapes as the number 6 crop in Monterey County. It is interesting to note that not one grape grown in Monterey County is sold as a table grape or for juice... all grapes grown are wine grapes.

One of the most common questions asked at A Taste of Monterey is, "What is Monterey County known for?" in reference to wine. The answer you will hear is, "Chardonnay and Pinot Noir." You have no doubt heard several times that the unique climate in our region – with warm days and cool nights – creates a longer growing season, which is perfect for these two grapes in particular. Pinot Noir produces the best results in cool, fog-prone regions, such as the Santa Lucia Highlands and the Chalone areas of Monterey County. Chardonnay tends to lose acidity rapidly as the grapes reach ripeness. With little rain, an extended growing season and the ability for winemakers to easily regulate the amount of water the vines receive, the full concentration of the flavor of the grape can be achieved.



Let's explore what Monterey County grape growers are producing and where that puts them in relation to California's grape growers. I may have gotten a little number happy in this article, so please bear with me, but I am hoping that you find it as interesting as I did.

Chardonnay is the predominant grape grown, with acreage at 16,076 and comprising 36% of the total grape acreage. The production value stands at almost \$92 million. Not only is Monterey County the number one Chardonnay producer in all of California, but is also the number one Chardonnay grape producer in the country. I think it is definitely safe to say that Monterey County is known for its Chardonnay. You can find over 40 different Chardonnay labels at A Taste of Monterey.

Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

CIMA COLLINA - 2013 *Antle Pinot Noir*



It is a rare opportunity these days in California to make wine with an “old” Pinot Noir clone. At one time much of California Pinot Noir was produced from “old” clones that had made their way into California via suitcases owned by enthusiastic winemakers. These clones have been replaced over the past 15 years by newer clones that have been very widely planted across the state but with that replanting we fear we’ve lost a little history & diversity. So it is a great privilege (not to mention fun!) to offer this wine – made from a blend of “Swan” and “Chalone” clones – both suitcase clones brought from France by Dick Graff.

This wine is only now starting to open up upon its release and we anticipate further “blossoming” as it bottle ages. It is rich and spicy with a silky texture and offers notes of strawberry, cranberries, chaparral, star anise and leather.

100% Pinot Noir

14.3% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2024

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CAMBIATA - 2016 *Chardonnay*



Cambiata is not your average California winery. They are a little more unconventional and iconoclastic than our compatriots around the Golden State. The winery launched Cambiata in 2002 after making wines for other people for nearly two decades. Their intention was to make distinctive wines that go beyond the Franco triumvirate of Bordeaux, Burgundy and Rhone. Today, they are vinifying a handful of compelling wines from some of California’s scarcest grape varieties including Albariño, Tannat and Dornfelder. They also make limited quantities of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

Overall the 2016 growing season was perfect and we were able to harvest the fruit two weeks earlier than normal. Aromatically this wine is fresh and fruity with suggestions of lime blossoms, slate and vanilla. The palate is slightly creamy, balanced, refreshing and long.

100% Chardonnay

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

JOULLIAN - 2013 *Retro Rouge* (Club Red)



A few older (“mature”) barrels of Estate Zinfandel started checking out some nice young Merlot that was fraternizing with Cabernet Sauvignon while surreptitiously eyeing the chiseled and virile Cabernet Franc who was strutting his stuff in front of the precocious Muscat Hamburg. In the ensuing melee, they all became embroiled in such a tumultuous blend of aromatics, suppleness and unctuousness that the winemaking police were forced to incarcerate them together in deep, darkened glass confines sealed with large bark logs. The group was sentenced to 1-5 years, unless enlightened oenophiles manage to get them released early for good behavior.

Deep ruby color that continues all the way to the edges. Fresh plums, cola and rhubarb pop on the nose. It jumps back and forth between its Bordeaux and Zinfandel base. Soft and velvety at first, then a burst of dried fruit, leather and bright acidity through the finish. Somewhat waxy, lingering flavors of white pepper spice and black cherry. A wonderful, everyday drinker with or without food.

47% Zinfandel, 26% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon,

13.3% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

5% Cabernet Franc, 4% Muscat Hamburg

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

WRATH - 2017 *Sauvignon Blanc* (Club Blanc)



Wrath is proud to announce the release of EX wines, our updated label that replaces the Ex Anima series. With a name meaning “out of” in Latin, EX speaks to our focus on expressing the personality and characteristics of our Certified Sustainable (SIP) estate vineyard. We harvest

grapes at two different ripeness levels and then blend lots together to create a wine that encapsulates the best qualities of each lot. The 2017 EX Sauvignon Blanc is bright and vibrant with pronounced guava and gooseberries.

100% Sauvignon Blanc

13.0% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

Coming in second is the Pinot Noir grape at 14% of Monterey County's total grape acreage. The 6,023 acres create over \$48 million in production value. This places Monterey County as the second largest Pinot Noir grape producer in California, behind Sonoma County. A Taste of Monterey stocks around 30 different labels of Pinot Noir.



So where do the other grapes fall? Merlot places 3rd at 11% and Cabernet Sauvignon is 4th at 8%. Syrah (4%), Riesling (3%) and Pinot Grigio (3%) take 5th, 6th and 7th, respectively. Albariño and Valdiguie are the least abundant grape grown in the county, but provide the most bang for the buck; meaning that the average price per ton is higher than any other grape produced.

Now just because Monterey County is known for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, does not mean that the other wines produced are of inferior quality. Rest assured that each and every wine in inventory at A Taste of Monterey is tasted and approved before it is placed in our tasting rooms and on our website. With its' over 100 mile long wine country, Monterey County is able to grow many different varieties. So your membership in the wine club provides an excellent opportunity to discover the many tastes of Monterey.

RECIPE

Lime Chicken Soft Tacos

Ingredients

1 1/2	pounds skinless, boneless chicken breast meat
1/8 cup	red wine vinegar
1/2	lime, juiced
1 teaspoon	white sugar
1/2 teaspoon	salt
1/2 teaspoon	ground black pepper
2	green onions, chopped
2	cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon	dried oregano
10	(6 inch) flour tortillas
1	tomato, diced
1/4 cup	shredded lettuce
1/4 cup	shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1/4 cup	salsa



Directions

Saute chicken in a medium saucepan over medium high heat for about 20 minutes. Add vinegar, lime juice, sugar, salt, pepper, green onion, garlic and oregano. Simmer for an extra 10 minutes.

Heat an iron skillet over medium heat. Place a tortilla in the pan, warm, and turn over to heat the other side. Repeat with remaining tortillas. Serve lime chicken mixture in warm tortillas topped with tomato, lettuce, cheese and salsa.

VISITING Varietals



MUSCAT HAMBURG

Muscat Hamburg is a famous variety of a black-skinned grape which is used in the preparation of both wine making as well as a table grape.

Muscat Hamburg (or Black Muscat) is a red *Vitis vinifera* grape variety derived from the crossing of the Schiava Grossa and Muscat of Alexandria by R. Snow of Bedfordshire, England in 1850 according to the *Vitis International Variety Catalogue*. It is known under a variety of local names such as Golden Hamburg, and Black Hamburg in the US; Muscat de Hambourg (or Hamburg) in France; Moscato di Amburgo in Italy; and Muscat Gamburgskiy in Russia and former Soviet Union countries. Confusingly, Black Hamburg is also used as a synonym for its maternal parent. It is commonly produced as table wine but in California's Central Valley it has been used in the production of dessert wine. As a dessert wine it can be highly aromatic with a rich coloring. In the US it is grown in wine appellations in California, Virginia, Oregon, Texas, and Washington. In Canada, it is also found on Vancouver Island.[1]

In France, the grape is used chiefly as dessert grape including AOC varieties such as Muscat du Ventoux. In Eastern Europe, the grape produces a light, dry red wine. It is also starting to gain popularity as a table wine component in China.[2]

CHEESE

Varietals



HAVARTI

A rare luxury in the United States, Havarti is an interior-ripened cheese with a very creamy texture and, not surprisingly, a creamy, buttery flavor. It has a smooth surface with no rind and a springy, elastic, semi-firm texture which makes it ideal for slicing. The flesh is usually cream-colored to pale yellow, and heavily pocked with holes—small, irregular openings called "eyes." If eaten young, the cheese is often considered to be somewhat lacking in flavor but if allowed to age, the cheese attains a subtle, slightly acidic flavor which is delightful. Stronger varieties can be somewhat sharp, slightly resembling Swiss cheese. Typically, Havarti is aged about three months. When the cheese is older it becomes more salty and has a slight hazelnut flavor. At room temperature the cheese will soften quickly. Hanne Nielsen is the enterprising cheesemaker credited with inventing Havarti in the mid 1800s. The wife of a New Zealand farmer, Nielsen became interested in the art of cheesemaking and so she traveled throughout Europe to learn techniques and trade secrets. Upon her return to Denmark, Nielsen experimented with her newly acquired knowledge, producing many cheeses. Her finest creation was an original washed curd cheese she named "Havarthi," after her farm. The Havarti you're receiving is a direct descendent of Nielsen's creation—produced and aged to perfection based on the original recipe. Havarti is often used in place of stronger cheeses like Gouda and Emmentaler, when the taste of cheese is desired without a strong flavor. The cheese comes in low fat versions as well as an enriched full cream type, which tends to melt in the mouth. Enriched Havarti can sometimes be intensely cloying, with the heavy creamy texture, and should be used sparingly or in a strong dish which is capable of handling the heavy flavor. As with most semi-soft cheeses, Havarti will keep for at least two weeks stored in the least cold section of the refrigerator (usually the vegetable drawer). Once opened, carefully re-wrap Havarti with aluminum foil, plastic wrap or better yet, parchment paper.

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PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB		PRICES EXPIRE 08/31/2018		
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