

Tasting Monterey

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

COMING EVENTS

October 1-31, 2011
Fall Wine Sale
Members Only
 15% Off and Free Shipping Nationwide* on all case purchases
 *Restricted in some states
 www.tastemonterey.com or 888.646.5446

Friday, Oct 7, 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, Oct 27, 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 and 30% off wine and gifts (discount for club members only).

Friday, Oct 28, 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

MARVELOUS MOURVÈDRE

In my time behind the tasting bar at A Taste of Monterey, wine tasters often heard me say how much I loved Mourvèdre-based wines and that I was excited to be able to introduce the Graff Family Vineyards' Mourvèdre. Over the years, we've offered other wines that have had the varietal within them, such as in Rhône-style blends (e.g. Carmichael Sur le Pont), but no single wine in our arsenal more embodies the flourishing spirit of the varietal than the Graff Mourvèdre that was a wine club selection last month.

I've once heard Mourvèdre described as the ultimate grape varietal for producing red wine. The reasoning behind this claim was that of all varietals, Mourvèdre consistently results in wines offering all of the qualities and characteristics one hopes to discover in a bottle of red wine. Although this statement carried some embellishment with it, I can't say I disagree.

Dan Carlson, head winemaker for Talbott Vineyards, and also the vintner behind Graff's Mourvèdre, revealed to me some time back that he and a partner once hung a poster on a wall listing the 100 reasons they hated Mourvèdre. At the time, this blew my vino socks off, as I couldn't imagine a winemaker of such high esteem, especially one known for his mastery skills with notoriously difficult Pinot Noir, being intimidated by any grape varietal...but that was before I learned more about the mysterious varietal of Mourvèdre myself.

Like pretty much every grape varietal out there, Mourvèdre is known by a multitude of names around the world. With our Anglophone spelling and pronunciation of the varietal, the other three important ones to remember are the French Mourvèdre, which is actually pronounced with little or no emphasis on the final "re," and the Spanish names of Monastrell and Mataró.



Mourvèdre is grown extensively in its native homeland of Spain, but over time it has come to play an equally important role with French wines, which is why it is often labeled as a Rhône varietal rather than a Spanish one. The French named it Mourvèdre after the Spanish town of Murviedro. The grape would have likely have had an even more defined presence in French vineyards were it not for the fact that it was one of the hardest hit varietals during the infamous phylloxera epidemic in the late 19th century (the varietal is notoriously difficult to graft).

In France, it is one of the key varietals blended in the famed Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines, notably blended with Grenache and Syrah. The grape also is firmly imbedded in the Bandol coastal growing area of Provence where it is used to produce powerful red blends combined with Grenache and Cinsault, or even as an adored dry rosé.

The Aussies down under grow some as well and blend it into a popular "GSM" blend of Grenache, Shiraz (Syrah) and Mourvèdre. Here in the States, the grape is gaining popularity for both Rhône-style blends and as single varietal wines.

The varietal is believed to first have been planted in the U.S. in California's own Contra Costa County. The grape still grows there today and is even grown in Eastern Washington State vineyards. However, as in other select corners of the globe, the vine seems to be most pleased being grown in specialized locations near the sea; this only adds to the mystique of the grape. Sonoma County produces some notable Mourvèdre grapes, but Paso Robles undoubtedly offers ideal conditions for the famously fickle grape.

Monterey County has never had significant plantings of Mourvèdre, however the Graff Mourvèdre is evidence enough that it can be grown, and grown well, in the County. It is important to also keep in mind though that in order to truly coax Mourvèdre into its most majestic form, an attentive vineyard sage and a gifted winemaker are required.

A seasoned vineyard manager is needed as even when the picky vine finds a location to suit it; it is one of the latest varietals to ripen. The grape's love of the sun needs to be encouraged as long as possible in order for the fruit to fully develop into its potential. This results in the vine, fortunately, not being overly susceptible to damaging spring frosts, while, unfortunately, exposing it to inclement fall weather conditions that can be as equally detrimental.

Another likely, more annoying than destructive, element related to the vine is that its growth needs to be tamed in order to keep it from spreading out wildly- I wonder if this one made Dan's list...

Continued Inside

OCTOBER REFERRALS



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

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

LINE SHACK - 2009 *Petite Sirah*



Line Shack's vineyards are located in a high mountain valley within the southern portion of the Santa Lucia mountain range and adjacent to the west side of Paso Robles. Warm days followed by cool night enabled their fruit to achieve extended hang time which maximizes their true varietal characteristics. The grapes for this vintage were sourced from two vineyards. Pacific Valley has deep mineral and volcanic soils. Newell sits in shaley loam topsoil laced with chalk and limestone. After a 24 hour cold soak, they were fermented to dryness and aged in 2-3 year old French and American Oak for 18 months. Rich and robust in style, the deep color of the wine leads to full spicy and earthy flavors.

Aromas of red and black cherries and plums combine with white pepper, mocha leather and earth with full firm tannins.

100% Petite Sirah

14.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

JOULLIAN VINEYARDS - 2008 *Chardonnay*



Roger Rose (Arroyo Seco) and Mission Ranch (Arroyo Seco), plus Vina Monte Nero (Santa Lucia Highlands) emphasize white peach and round texture while SMD (Monterey), River Road and Sleepy Hollow (Santa Lucia Highlands) provide power, backbone and longevity to this supple concentrated and seamless blend.

All but 2 lots are barrel fermented with multiple yeast strains, which are stirred every 2 weeks for 2-4 months, and aged sur lie until bottling. Simultaneous yeast and malolactic fermentations are encouraged to minimize one-dimensional butterscotch flavors and maximize texture, while allowing the fruit to shine through. Only tight-grained French oak barrels are coopered from stave wood that is cured for 3 years.

This reduces overt "oakiness" while enhancing fruit, typicity and mouth feel. Two of the most aromatic musts were cold tank fermented to boost freshness and floral aspects of the blend. After a year of bottle age, the 2010 Monterey Chardonnay displays great aromatics, suppleness and length on the palate. Enjoy it today, or age it another 3-5 years in a cool cellar for added aromatics, richness and complexity.

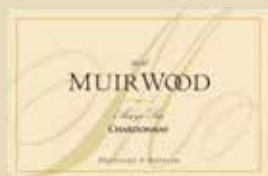
100% Chardonnay

13.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

MUIRWOOD VINEYARDS - 2010 *Chardonnay* (Club Blanc)



The Muirwood Chardonnay is handcrafted from grapes grown on their Zanetta Vineyard located in the Arroyo Seco appellation of Monterey County. Unique vineyard conditions, which extend the growing season, result in wines with bright acidity and generous tropical and citrus fruit flavors. Barrel fermentation and ten months sur lie aging enhance the complexity and depth of this memorable Chardonnay.

For the Muirwood collection, their winemaker selects the finest fruit, and then handcrafts the wine with extraordinary attention and care to produce distinctive wines with great nuance and depth.

100% Chardonnay

13.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

JOULLIAN VINEYARDS - 2007 *Sias Cuvée Zinfandel* (Club Red)



Dick Sias, co-founder of Joullian Vineyards, is considered the father of Zinfandel in Carmel Valley. In 1984, he supervised the planting of Carmel Valley's first Zinfandel vines at Joullian. They began with a non-heat-treated Amador County clone selected by Dr. Bioletti in 1917, and have since added pre-prohibition vineyard selections from Lytton Springs, Brandlin (Mt. Veeder), St. Peter's Church (Cloverdale) and Primitivo-3 (Puglia, Italy). For complexity, they also have small amounts of Petite Sirah (Lytton Springs), plus their Italian field crush varieties: Aleatico, Alicante Bouschet, Carignane and Black Grenache. Joullian's multiclonal approach in the vineyard continues to reap multidimensional benefits in the winery.

2007 was an exquisite "Zin Year" – and also yielded their finest Primitivo and Aleatico ever. Rhone-style co-fermentation with multiple yeast strains allowed Primitivo's juicy "berry" fruit and Aleatico's "aromatics" to create a Zinfandel blend of uncommon depth, balance and perfume.

84% Zinfandel, 7% Primitivo, 6.5% Petite Sirah, 2.5% Aleatico and other

14.8% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2014

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

As for winemaking, Mourvèdre produces strong, dark, tannic wines that are high in alcohol content and demand careful planning for aging. These characteristics alone could raise the blood pressure of any winemaker and if not conducted properly, one will end up with a wine that somehow tastes tangy and musty at the same time. Toss in the intangible factor that Mourvèdre carries with it an underlying personality trait of being unpredictable, and even experienced vintners may turn to another varietal.

Earthy, gamey, wild, mushrooms, musk, plums, smoky, slight licorice or Eucalyptus notes, hints of spice, leather...all combined with velvety rich berries in an intensely colored, deep wine: I present you a luscious glass of Mourvèdre.

This a grape varietal that screams to be allowed to open-up, and it has a reputation for vastly improving with age (allows time to soften those potentially harsh tannins). And, as for food pairing, this wine is perfectly complemented by equally gamey and earthy cuisine, so don't be afraid to go a little bolder with it.

As I'm imagining telling you the story of magnificent Mourvèdre in our tasting room, let me take this opportunity to remind you of a fantastic membership benefit that you may have forgotten. As one of our privileged wine club members, you have the opportunity to re-order any club wines within the previous three months and receive a whopping 25% off an order of 12 bottles or 20% off an order of 6 bottles. This can be done in either of our physical locations, over the phone, and is extremely easy to order on our website. That's an impressive discount allowing you to stock-up on some of our premier showcased wines...so what are you waiting for?

-Bryce Ternet

(Bryce Ternet is a contributing editor and is the author of three books.

Find him at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/M-Bryce-Ternet/124070024286223>)



A YEAR
In the Vineyard



The harvest is here! Often called the "crush" in the States and known as the "vendange" in France, the grape harvest is a special time. This is when all of the momentum in the vines and grapes, that has strengthened for months, comes to a head.

The harvest is a time of hope, anticipation, risk...and having spent two weeks myself doing the vendange in Burgundy, I can personally attest to how much hard work is involved in the process.

The timing of the harvest is determined by the ripeness of the grapes that is measured by sugar, acid and tannin levels. The decision on when to harvest a vineyard is decided upon by a vineyard manager or winemaker; it is a delicate skill of its own. When the grapes are picked can have monumental impacts on the future wine to be produced with them, as it is specific to both varietal and intended wine style.

Another factor to consider is if a vineyard is planted with early-ripening varietals that need to be harvested first; these include Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, and Chardonnay, among others. And, Mother Nature herself can play a domineering role...the threats of cold, rain, frost and even prolonged periods of heat can all result in harvest planning adjustments.

After the fruit is harvested, it moves to the crush stage where the first juice of the grapes is produced. So, the grapes are out there just waiting to be picked, and we're looking forward to the fantastic Monterey County wines to come!

RECIPE



Cajun Shrimp Appetizer

Serves: 1-2

Ingredients:

- 6 Shrimp, peeled, tail off
- 1 tsp. Fresh garlic, minced
- 2 oz. Clarified butter
- ½ tsp. Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 rounded tsp. Bubba Gump Pepper Cajun seasoning
- 1 pinch Parsley, chopped
- Lemon wedges
- Garlic bread



No Corkage Fee
Program Participant!



Method:

1. In sauté pan, melt butter.
2. Add shrimp, Cajun seasoning and Worcestershire sauce.
3. Over medium heat, cook shrimp to medium rare, stirring often. Do not overcook.
4. Garlic Bread- spread with butter and garlic until fully coated.
5. Cook garlic bread until golden brown and cut diagonally into 2 pieces. Place in serving platter on each side.
6. Pour shrimp into center of serving dish, garnishing with chopped parsley.
7. Place a lemon wedge on top of shrimp.



PRIVATE RESERVE
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(888) 646-5446

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

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MIX & MATCH

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

OCTOBER SELECTIONS		REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
	Line Shack 2009 Petite Sirah	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
	Joullian Vineyards 2008 Chardonnay	\$23.00	\$17.25	\$18.40
	Muirwood Vineyards 2010 Chardonnay	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
	Joullian Vineyards 2009 Sias Cuvée Zinfandel	\$26.00	\$19.50	\$20.80
SEPTEMBER SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 11/30/2011		
	Graff Family Vineyards 2008 Mourvèdre	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Carmichael Vintners 2010 Grigio e Bianco	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
	Graff Family Vineyards 2008 Pinot Blanc	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Carmichael Vintners 2008 Sur Le Pont	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
AUGUST SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 10/31/2011		
	Estancia Winery 2010 Sauvignon Blanc	\$15.00	\$11.25	\$12.00
	Pierce Ranch Vineyards 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Pierce Ranch Vineyards 2010 Albariño	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Parsonage Snosrap Cyrano 2009 Pinot Noir	\$24.00	\$18.00	\$19.20
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB		PRICES EXPIRE 11/30/2011		
	Michaud 2005 Chardonnay	\$38.00	\$28.50	\$30.40
	Estancia 2006 Reserve Pinot Noir	\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80
	Galante Vineyards 2005 Blackjack Cabernet Sauvignon	\$50.00	\$37.50	\$40.00

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

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