

# Tasting Monterey

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

## COMING EVENTS

**Friday, Dec 27, 2013**  
**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. Sample our new food menu prepared by AquaTerra.



## Hours

A Taste of Monterey Cannery Row  
 Sun-Wed 11am-7pm  
 Thu-Sat 11am-8pm  
 No new tastings after 6:00pm

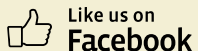
## DECEMBER REFERRALS



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



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## Sweetness in Wine



I have a French friend who consistently tells me while we sip some of Monterey's finest wines that California wines always taste "fruity" to him. This results in a normal routine of me defending California wines and referencing certain past notable international wine tasting events in the face of Gallic stubbornness. But this ongoing argument (or, discussion) does bring up a good point. After all, we all know some wines really are sweet. But my French friend isn't actually referring to a type of wine anyone would consider sweet, such as a dessert wine, but to our bold California red wines. (And, of course, I love pointing out that some of France's most famous wines are, in fact, sweet wines...but more on that later.) So this does appear to be an opportune occasion to breach the subject.

Where does the effect of sweetness originate in wine anyway? The first answer (sugar) is correct, but it's not the whole answer and even sugar content in wine is different than may be initially pictured. For instance, you'll not see a winemaker dumping sugar into a barrel sugar is naturally occurring in the grapes themselves. Other factors that come into play in the wine sweetness game include alcohol content, acidity, tannins, and time of harvest. But let's start with some basics.

In tasting rooms you'll often hear a server mention a wine's residual sugar content. If you're the quiet type that hasn't asked for the non wine-geek explanation, you've likely assumed, and correctly assumed, that residual sugar content has something to do with wine's sweetness. Residual sugar refers to the sugar remaining after a wine's fermentation stops, or is stopping. It is measured in grams of sugar per liter of wine, abbreviated as g/l or g/L. Even with dry wines, it's rare to find a wine with a residual sugar less than 1 g/L, due to the inability to ferment certain types of sugars. For illustrative purposes, wines are normally considered sweet when they are over 45 g/L, with some wines actually in the mid to high hundred levels of residual sugar.

So how is it possible to have that much sugar and not taste like kids' grape juice? The answer is that winemakers know what they're doing! Through winemaking techniques, they know how to balance a wine's acidity level to counteract potential over-sweetness.

For example, acids give wines their characteristic crisp, slightly tart taste. Alcohol, sugars, minerals, and other components moderate the sourness of acids and give wine balance. Some acids are naturally present in the base ingredients of wine, while others are byproducts of fermentation. Winemakers know how to use and balance these factors.



*Continued Inside*



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# MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

## RYDER - 2012 Syrah



The grapes for this wine were sourced from two of Ryder's estate vineyards in Monterey County. The southern property is the warmer site, producing a Syrah that is lush with ripe, fleshy fruit. Ryder's other Syrah vineyard is in a cooler climate zone, which results in a subtle spiciness and greater depth and concentration. The 2011 Ryder Estate Syrah is jam-packed with ripe black fruit and a hint of white pepper. It is a well-balanced wine with a supple, lingering finish and notes of mocha and toast.

100% Syrah

770 Cases Produced

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2018

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

## CRAFTWORK - 2012 Chardonnay



Monterey County is known for its long growing season, but the 2010 harvest came even later than normal. Cool summer temperatures delayed the vines by about two weeks and Craftwork allowed the fruit to hang until late September to take advantage of the warm Indian Summer conditions that finally kicked in.

Aromas of pineapple and pear are followed by a lively blend of tropical fruit and citrus flavors. This Chardonnay strikes the perfect balance of a rich, creamy palate with firm acidity. It is a versatile wine with food, pairing particularly well with grilled seafood, roast chicken, pasta in cream sauce or shrimp scampi. Lush and complex, it is sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

100% Chardonnay

850 Cases Produced

13.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2016

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

## CRAFTWORK - 2011 Pinot Noir (Club Red)



The 2011 growing season was even longer than most in Monterey County. Cool summer temperatures delayed the vines by about two weeks and resulted in lower yields and longer hang-time. Warm weather in late September and October ripened the fruit and the grapes achieved full phenolic ripeness due to the lighter, concentrated crop.

An elegant and stylish wine, with aromas of strawberries and vivid red fruit flavors balanced with subtle spice and a delicate mineral note. The silky texture leads into a long, layered finish. The Craftwork Pinot Noir is a graceful and balanced offering that is the ultimate food wine. It pairs beautifully with grilled salmon, roast duck, pork tenderloin or soft-ripened cheeses.

100% Pinot Noir

850 Cases Produced

13.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

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

## HOLMAN RANCH - 2011 Chardonnay (Club Blanc)



Located at the northeastern tip of the Carmel Valley Appellation, the family-owned Holman Ranch resides approximately 12 miles inland from the Pacific Coast.

The estate-grown wine varietals are planted on approximately 19 acres of undulating terrain. The wines produced are unfinned and crafted to deliver the true varietal of the grape from harvest to bottle. The climate and terroir of the appellation has played a critical part in the success of their wines. The warmth of the inland valley coupled with the cooling marine layer has established itself as an ideal microclimate for the production of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Their Burgundy clones have thrived from the perfect blend of ideal climate, southern exposure and thin rocky soils.

This rich, yet crisp Chardonnay, has all of the elements of old world styling. The hints of brown grass and cinnamon on the nose are quickly followed by a bright finish with notes of toasted nuts and warm brioche. Completely balanced and medium bodied, this Chardonnay is perfect with or without your favorite meal.

100% Chardonnay

320 Cases Produced

12.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

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



## Cover Article Continued

But even if a winemaker is able to balance sugars and acid levels, another factor that can result in wine tasting sweet is alcohol content. Getting back to my French ami, he does have a valid point in some regards in that the alcohol content of our California wine is generally higher than their French counterparts. This may not be obvious if you compare a random Cabernet Sauvignon from California to one from France the next time you're grocery shopping. But, keep in mind: many of the French wines imported to the U.S. are crafted for the U.S. market. Thus, they are not always necessarily a genuine example of French wine. Does having a high alcohol content automatically result in a sweet wine? Absolutely not. Can it encourage the impression of a wine's sweetness? Absolutely.

And then there are the grapes themselves, as different varietals do have differing levels of natural sugar content. This explains why it's common to see white varietal wines such as Riesling, Gewurztraminer, or Chenin Blanc, in a sweet-tasting form. And even French winemakers do this with wines such as Vouvray. Although, again - those crafty winemakers know how to make these varietals in dry-tasting forms as well.

So we've covered how a wine can taste sweet due to both acidity and alcohol levels, but another factor is whether a wine is produced in sparkling form or not. (And within the sparkling category, you'll see French terms often used describing the level of sweetness: sec, demisec, and doux - from driest to sweetest.) We often use the same terms here in the States for our sparklings.

Does sweetness automatically equal a less-quality wine? Absolutely not. In fact, some of the most expensive wines in the world are sweet wines, such as ice wines and late harvest wines. But returning to the impression of California red wines having some sweetness? Okay, okay, mon ami - I'll give you that some of our red wines do have a sweet taste to them on their finish with our relatively higher alcohol content. But that isn't necessarily a bad thing when considering all factors involved. After all, a basic biological fact of Californian versus French vineyards is that our vineyards receive more heat and sunshine, which naturally results in higher alcohol content in end wines. So... *touché*.

**Bryce Ternet** - contributing editor and author of the recently released: "The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula." See <http://www.mbryceternet.com/> for more.



## RECIPE

### Holiday Turkey with Cherry Stuffing

#### INGREDIENTS

1	turkey (10 to 12 pounds)
3/4 cup	chopped celery
1/3 cup	chopped onion
2 tablespoons	butter
3/4 teaspoon	dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon	poultry seasoning
5 cups	seasoned stuffing cubes
3/4 cup	golden raisins
3/4 cup	chicken broth
1 can (14-1/2 ounces)	pitted tart cherries, drained
2 tablespoons	vegetable oil



#### DIRECTIONS

In a saucepan, sauté celery and onion in butter until tender. Stir in thyme and poultry seasoning. In a large bowl, combine stuffing, raisins and celery mixture. Add broth and cherries; toss to mix.

Loosely stuff turkey just before baking. Skewer openings; tie drumsticks together. Place the turkey, breast side up, on a rack in a roasting pan. Brush with oil.

Bake, uncovered, at 325° for 4 to 4-1/2 hours or until a meat thermometer reads 180° for the turkey and 165° for the stuffing. Baste occasionally with pan drippings. Cover loosely with foil if turkey browns too quickly.

Cover and let stand for 20 minutes before removing the stuffing and carving the turkey. If desired, thicken pan drippings for gravy. Yield: 10-12 servings (6 cups stuffing).

Note: The stuffing may be prepared as directed and baked separately in a greased 2-qt baking dish. Cover and bake at 325° for 50-60 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes longer or until lightly browned.

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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  
700 Cannery Row, Ste. KK  
Monterey, CA 93940  
(888) 646-5446 ext. 13  
club@tastemonterey.com

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

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