

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S QUARTERLY 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

SUMMER REFERRALS



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TERROIR... *A Sense of Place*



In past articles, we've covered various aspects of where grapes are grown having direct implications on wines eventually made from those grapes. These factors include climate, geology, topography, geography, and other plants growing in the general vicinity of a vine. When you are sipping on a glass of wine, it can be possible to have your senses taste the place where the wine has originated. This is tasting terroir (pronounced *terwahr*). And, this doesn't just occur for wines (although it is arguably more pronounced) but for other agricultural prod-

ucts that have distinct regional and sub-regional characteristics as well.

This regional and sub-regional classification movement of agricultural products (e.g. wine, cheese, ham, peppers, cherries, etc.) is recognized as having begun in France and since quickly spread out into Europe and subsequently around the globe. It continues to expand every year, as a desire to distinguish local products with unique characteristics also widens its reach. With wine, this categorization is displayed and conveyed through the French classification system of Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC), which we find reflected in our own Agricultural American Viticulture Area (AVA) system.

Terroir is loosely translated as a "sense of place" or as the sum influence a local environment has on an agricultural product. The base premise is that the land from which grapes are grown imparts specific characteristics on wines that are uniquely qualified to that specific region or sub-region. Although popularized and officially regulated by the French, the concept of recognizing regional characteristics for wines goes all the way back to Ancient Greece (for those who didn't pay attention in history class – that was a long time before even the Roman Empire...yeah, that's a long time ago!)

In France, however, the concept began in the region of Burgundy, where centuries ago monks (who owned all of the vineyards for some time) began developing the system of distinguishing terroir. It's still reflected there today, not only through the general regional AOC of Bourgogne, then more distinctly through a village designation such as Pommard, but then even more definitively through designation of specific Premier Cru vineyard and Grand Cru vineyards; the latter of which can refer to a single row in a vineyard!



As with most things, we humans can manipulate terroir elements in wine. For instance, the initial decision of which grape varietal to plant in a vineyard

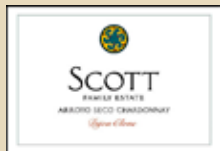
will have huge implications as different varietals will develop more fully in certain conditions. Although less noticeable, even a winemaker's decision to use wild yeast strains instead of cultured ones during the fermentation of a wine can have an influence on how terroir characteristics may or may not be on display in a wine.

However, the most controversial aspect in this regard is a winemaker's use of oak in the process, as some argue that exposure to oak assists in showcasing terroir elements, and others claim that the oak masks terroir characteristics (making wines indistinguishable from others). An-

Continued Inside

RESERVE WINE SELECTIONS

SCOTT FAMILY - 2016 Chardonnay



Vintage: It was another dry spell during the 2015-2016 winter. The harvest started off early due to the low rain fall and the warm Spring and Summer. In 2016 the fruit ripening was nearly perfect throughout the entire season which allowed for full flavor development over long and even growing season. The Chardonnay exhibited classic tropical and tree fruit character with hints of citrus.

Vineyard: Arroyo Seco ("Dry Creek"), a sub-appellation of the Monterey AVA, enjoys a cool climate, producing an extended growing season (often 2 to 4 weeks longer than Napa Valley). This added hang time allows for greater fruit ripening and brighter acidity. The Estate's vineyards, inland from Big Sur, have deep, gravelly soils, ideal for premium Chardonnay cultivation. This unique combination of soil and climate produces relatively small berries with intense, concentrated flavors. 2016 proved to be one of the warmest harvests for the traditionally cool Monterey AVA. A warm, dry spring season initiated an early bud break and flowering on the vines. However, a windy and temperate summer climate allowed for great preservation of our Chardonnay's bright acidity.

Tasting Notes: Vibrant honeysuckle, lemon chutney, ripe pineapple and vanilla. Creamy mid palate with a long finish. Rich flavors of honeysuckle, lemon and tropical fruits with underlying toasty oak.

Scott Family
2016 Chardonnay

Alcohol
14.5%

AVA
Arroyo Seco

Composition
100% Chardonnay

Cases Produced
760

Aging Potential
5-6 years

COASTVIEW - 2010 SA André



Vineyard: Located at over 2,200 feet in the Gabilan Mountains with a commanding view of the Salinas Valley and Monterey Bay. Coastview sources their grapes from this exceptional vineyard planted on decomposed granite and veins of limestone. In many respects including soils and elevation, this vineyard is nearly identical to those of Calera's famous Mt. Harlan vineyards just a few miles to the North. Owner John Allen farms the vineyard organically and follows our direction with respect to keeping yields down and managing the canopy for the highest quality.

Label: Coastview's wine labels speak to adventure and the idea of hidden treasure, in a Jules Verne style of thinking. Each label references a journey or traveler and speaks to the uniqueness not only of the wine but the vineyard where it was grown. For the 2010 SA André - The Swedish balloonist, Salomon August André, embarked from Svalbard, in July of 1897, in a balloon with two companions, scientific equipment, homing pigeons and several crates of champagne, attempting to pass over the North Pole and land near the Bering Strait.

Tasting Notes: In the glass, this classic Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec is a deep garnet red. The nose offers herbal notes and strong aromas of cedar, graphite and hard spice box elements. The palate is a voluptuous blending of the ripe fruits of each of these varietals. It promises to be the perfect pairing for a special dinner featuring prime rib.

Coastview
2010 SA André

Alcohol
14.27%

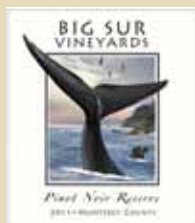
AVA
Monterey

Composition
65% Cabernet Sauvignon
25% Malbec
5% Cabernet Franc
5% Petit Verdot

Cases Produced
125

Aging Potential
8-10 years

BIG SUR VINEYARDS - 2013 Reserve Pinot Noir



Winery: On a small parcel of land, on the edge of the Ventana Wilderness, overlooking the Big Sur coast they planted a small grove of olive trees, and an essential oil garden of lavender and citrus and made hand crafted soaps. Their first client was Post Ranch and they would deliver to the Mercantile on their trips to Big Sur. Winemaking started as a hobby. They loved the Rhone varietals and for many years they picked Grenache, Syrah, and Petit Sirah from neighboring vineyards. Now they have grown into a small family wine business offering different varietals in their wine portfolio.

Tasting Notes: Floral overtones layered with dried berries and orange peel on the nose. These aromas translate to the palate along with tart red cherries, dried herbs, candied orange peel and citron. Firm tannins extend from the mid-palate well through the finish. This is a special Pinot from a unique appellation in Monterey County that will benefit from extended bottle aging.

Big Sur Vineyards
2013 Reserve Pinot Noir

Alcohol
14.2%

AVA
Chalone

Composition
100% Pinot Noir

Cases Produced
170

Aging Potential
5-6 years

Cover Article Continued



other winemaking technique, known as micro-oxygenation, is also a hot topic when the subject of terroir arises.

There are other decisions that can be made during the winemaking process which may influence terroir elements in one way or another, but the basic premise is that a wine can be produced that is terroir-driven, or a wine can be made with little-to-no regard for unique terroir characteristics. This humble point essentially explains why there is so great of a variance between wines in distinction and quality (and, ultimately...price).

So, how do we display terroir here in the States? In California? In Monterey County? Well, aside from offering it through the quality of our wines, we have our AVA system, which distinguishes terroir on a regional and sub-regional level, very similar to the French AOC system. And as les Français do, we also indicate specific single vineyard sourced wines...the very definition of narrowing down a terroir-driven wine.

For example, a Pinot Noir from Garys' Vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands is about as fine of an example of a terroir wine as any to be found on the planet. Due to skilled and adaptable growers and winemakers, there will always be exceptions, but other Monterey County examples for pristine terroir conditions for specific grape varieties includes Bordeaux varieties from Carmel Valley, Bourgogne varieties from the Santa Lucia Highlands, Rhône varieties from Arroyo Seco, and Spanish/Portuguese varieties from the San Antonio Valley AVA.

Once again, we stand in awe and appreciation of the truly incredible amount of diversity and vastly different possibilities we have for terroir-driven wines here in Monterey County.

RECIPE

Fettuccine with Shiitakes and Asparagus

Ingredients

3 tablespoons	olive oil, divided
1 bunch	asparagus, trimmed, cut into 2" pieces
	Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons	unsalted butter
8 oz.	shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, caps sliced
1 small	shallot, finely chopped
1 teaspoon	chopped fresh oregano
1 teaspoon	chopped fresh thyme
12 oz.	dried or 1 lb. fresh fettuccine
3 oz.	Parmesan, grated (about ¾ cup)
4 large	egg yolks



Directions

Heat 2 Tbsp. oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add asparagus, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

Heat butter and remaining 1 Tbsp. oil in same skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms, season with salt and pepper, and cook, tossing often, until tender, about 5 minutes. Add shallot and cook, tossing occasionally, until softened, about 2 minutes. Toss in oregano, thyme, and asparagus.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Drain, reserving 1 cup pasta cooking liquid.

Add pasta, ½ cup pasta cooking liquid, and 3 oz. Parmesan to skillet. Cook, tossing and adding more pasta cooking liquid as needed, until sauce coats pasta, about 2 minutes; season with salt and pepper.

Divide pasta among plates and top each with yolks and more Parmesan.

Serves 4

VISITING Varietals



TANNAT

Pronunciation: Tan NAW

Tannat is a red-wine grape originating in the Madiran region of France. Tannat is generally considered one of the dozen and a half or so of world-class red-wine grapes. Other regions are beginning to experiment with Tannat, both in South America and in the U.S. In the U.S., Texas is emerging as a hotbed of Tannat activity, and Virginia is showing some stirrings, too; California, of course, also has entries.

The very name of the grape means "tannin", and the wines are typically very dark and, yes, tannic (owing mainly to the unusually thick skins and high seed count of Tannat grapes). When made in the Madiran, Tannat is commonly blended with other wines to soften its tannic astringency. More recently, vintners there have experimented with using more oak for softening, and more recently yet, with "micro-oxygenation", the use of oxygen aeration during the fermentation process.

Tannat makes decidedly robust wines, with pronounced aromas of smoke and plum, significant tannins and a wonderfully spicy finish. The rich palate has juicy flavors of plum and raspberry, with a long, generous finish. The tannins are impressive, but nicely balanced with the intense fruit and spice flavors of the wine.

As for food pairings, Tannat's smoky character makes it a perfect match for roasted meats and game, as well as sausages and strong aged cheeses.

CHEESE

Varietals



MAHÓN

Pronunciation: mah-HONE

Mahon is a Spanish cheese from one of the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean, Minorca. Although widely exported, many people aren't familiar with Mahon. Next time you go into a cheese shop, take a break from the other famous Spanish cheese (Manchego) and ask for Mahon (pronounced mah-HONE) instead.

Mahon is made from cow's milk. Both raw and pasteurized versions are sold, although the pasteurized tends to be less flavorful, so keep an eye out for raw milk versions.

Young Mahon (aged less than 4 months) is semi-firm and mild. The cheese can be buttery, tangy and salty. Wheels of Mahon that have been aged 4 months or more take on a saltier, herbal, more complex flavor and a noticeably tangy finish. Wheels that are aged for a year or more have a texture similar to Parmesan and an intense caramelized, salty flavor.

Mahon has a natural rind. Young wheels of Mahon (and, usually, pasteurized versions) have rinds that are an eye-catching orange color. As the cheese ages, the color of the rind fades to gold, brown or rust colored. The shape of the cheese is square, with rounded edges.

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 Coastview 2010 SA André		\$52.00	\$39.00	\$41.60
 Big Sur Vineyards 2013 Reserve Pinot Noir		\$45.00	\$33.75	\$36.00
JUNE SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 08/31/2018		
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 Sofia 2016 Chardonnay		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
 Montoya 2014 Pinot Noir		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
 Montoya 2016 Chardonnay		\$17.00	\$12.75	\$13.60
MAY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 07/31/2018		
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 Nacina 2014 Off-dry SLH Riesling		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
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