

Tasting Monterey

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

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11:30am daily

*No new member tastings
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THE RISING GLORY OF Grenache



“If Grenache were a person,
it would be a pretty girl’s very
nice but plain best friend.” This
provocative quote is an accurate
illustration of the traditional percep-

tion of Grenache. Some widely-held beliefs are that finding a varietal wine produced with Grenache of any quality is impossible and that it’s only a blending varietal. But Grenache is undergoing a remarkable makeover these days and may just be the next big trend in the wine world.

The phylloxera epidemic in the late 1800’s devastated European grape vines, but it also ironically boosted the proliferation of Grenache, as the varietal is easy to graft and was widely planted afterward. Grenache vines are also vigorous, have a high resistance to drought, and can produce an abundance of fruit.

These qualities inspired early growers in California, specifically in the Central Valley, to plant significant acreage of Grenache. As it was a vine that could produce high quantities of fruit, it became primarily used for mass produced “jug wines,” and this use of the grape continues to this day. However, this is also a classic example of quantity versus quality, as allowing Grenache vines to flourish without restraint sacrifices the quality of the grapes.

Grenache is typically one of the last grapes to be harvested, ripening long after Cabernet Sauvignon. Its long growing season allows ample time for sugars to develop, resulting in wines with considerable, and sometimes powerful, alcohol levels. As for its ideal growing climate and soil, one need only to consider its ancestral homeland of Spain and its adopted homeland of Southern France; both are areas with warm climates, well-drained and dry soils.

Specifically to winemaking, Grenache is used to add body and fruitiness to wines. In contrast to its relative ease of growing, it’s actually not the easiest varietal for winemakers to work with as it has a tendency to oxidize easily and lose color. However, attentive winemakers can adjust the fermentation process in order to produce stellar wines.



Typical aromas most associated with Grenache include black pepper, spice, cherry, and currant. Other flavors such as licorice and raisin are also frequently encountered. Varietal style Grenache wines tend to be high in alcohol content and are often on the fruitier side.

Grenache’s recent revival is at least partly due to the Rhone Rangers movement, a group dedicated to promoting Rhône-style wines around the world. But the grape is no new-comer and is one of the most widely planted varietals on the planet. It thrives in a few distinct places, including regions in Spain, France, and California.

Garnacha, the Spanish name for the grape, is prolifically planted in its native homeland. Although it is blended with Tempranillio in Rioja wines and is planted in other areas, the Aragón region (and the Priorat region within it) is truly tierra de Garnacha, with vines planted on steep terraces. Some of the oldest vines in all of Spain are located here and it’s believed that Grenache has been grown in Aragón for at least 800 years!

Grenache’s spread in France includes the famed Châteauneuf-du-Pape area and other notable growing areas including Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Provence, and Languedoc-Roussillon. Full bodied rosé wines made from Grenache are popular as well. True varietal Grenache wines are fairly rare, as it is most often blended with Syrah,

Continued Inside

RESERVE WINE SELECTIONS

SINECURE - 2013 Grenache Noir



Winery: While Sinecure is a small production winery, they bring a combined knowledge base of over 20 years to our wines. They have spent the last several years studying under "in their opinion" one of the best in the Monterey county by the name of Doug Meador. With his guidance and the personal care that they give their wines they feel that they have crafted some beautiful vintages. They are family owned and operated winery. Their business is not to just make wine but rather to offer a fun and enjoyable experience with their wine that you hopefully share with your friends and family

Tasting Notes: On the nose you pick up strawberry tops, raspberry, herbs, and hints of white pepper and faded exotic spices. On the palate this shows good depth of fruit, light raspberry and strawberry notes with a thin mineral vein that cuts through the berries. This really exhibits the beauty of the Grenache Noir grape, with solid supporting structure lurking just under the wonderfully transparent yet faceted fruit of the mid-palate.

Sinecure
2013 Grenache Noir

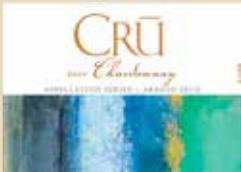
Alcohol
14.5%

AVA
Monterey

Composition
100% Pinot Noir

Aging Potential
7-8 years

CRU - 2011 Arroyo Seco Chardonnay



Vineyard: The Cru Arroyo Seco Chardonnay is comprised from two vineyards in the Arroyo Seco Appellation. Both the Marks and Cobblestone Vineyards are located just west of highway 101 in the Greenfield area. The vineyards receive daily coastal influence channeled down the Salinas Valley. The Marks Vineyard is located on decomposed granite and shale soils which plays a key role keeping the vines nutritionally balanced which lends itself to better flavors. The counter part for this wine, the Cobblestone Vineyard, is located just a couple miles away.

Winemaking: The fruit from both vineyards were whole cluster pressed and settled for 24 hours without any SO₂ to allow the enzymatic browning reaction to occur. After setting, the wines are racked and inoculated in tank with yeast prior to transfer to barrel for barrel fermentation. The lees were stirred periodically they help with mouth feel and flavors.

Tasting Notes: Intense notes of green apple, nectarine, and jasmine. The palate is elegant and expressive with ripened nectarine, peach, pineapple and guava. The French oak is well integrated throughout the whole experience.

Cru
2011 Arroyo Seco
Chardonnay

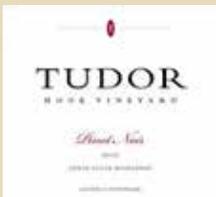
Alcohol
13.7%

AVA
Arroyo Seco

Composition
100% Chardonnay

Aging Potential
5-6 years

TUDOR - 2010 Hook Pinot Noir



Winery: Every year their grandfather Tudor used to make wine for his friends and family. It's a tradition. The Tudor family has been growing grapes and lavender – and making wine on the Island of Hvar in Croatia – for over 2,000 years. The Tudors began growing grapes in California early in the 1900's and continue to operate one of the largest table grape vineyards in the country.

In an increasing mechanized world, there are still a few handmade products that stand out. Fine wine is one of them. Tudor select sfruit from family owned vineyards and transform it into wine using traditional techniques. These include small fermentations mixed by hand and aging in French barrels. The resulting wine has a purity of natural expression that cannot be duplicated on a larger scale.

Vineyard: Hook Vineyard is in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA. This bench land runs along the west side of the Salinas Valley above the valley floor, between the City of Gonzales and the Arroyo Seco canyon. A fault line divides the valley floor and the Santa Lucia Highlands. Its southeast facing slopes allow the highlands to take advantage of the morning sun. Sitting above the valley fog that shrouds the Salinas Valley each morning during the summer, long cool days characterize the area

Tasting Notes: Very dark and high toned. Ripe fruit is evident in the cherry jam aromas that are typical of the appellation. "Brilliant ruby-red. Sexy, oak-spiced aromas of black raspberry and cherry-cola, with a smokey nuance gaining strength in the glass. Sappy, incisive dark berry flavors take a brighter turn with air, picking up notes of bitter cherry and candied rose. The vanilla note comes back on the finish, which shows excellent clarity, supple tannins and lingering sweetness.

Tudor
2010 Hook Pinot Noir

Alcohol
13.5%

AVA
Santa Lucia Highlands

Composition
100% Pinot Noir

Aging Potential
5-6 years

Cover Article Continued

Mourvedre, Cinsaut, and/or Carignan.

Grenache had humble beginnings in California as a mass produced and low quality grape. However, the grape has come a long way in recent years. New cuttings from southern France are now planted throughout the greater Central Coast appellation. Paso Robles is prominently leading the way, but Monterey County's appellations are beginning to see more plantings of high quality Grenache vines every year. Grenache is being used to produce excellent varietal wines and Rhône-style blends. Its popularity and recognition are both on the rise.

Monterey County's own 2013 Sinecure Grenache Noir (Grenache Noir is just another name for Grenache distinguishing it from a related, yet different varietal - Grenache Blanc) sourced from Arroyo Seco is a perfect example of California's vastly improved Grenache wines. There is nothing remotely resembling a simple style of winemaking here. This Grenache is grandiose with strong aromas, a full body, bold tannins, and a lingering finish.

So is Grenache on the verge of becoming the next "in" varietal? Key elements are definitely there for it to experience a breakthrough: an intriguing history, a new image, the potential for fantastic wines, and a burgeoning cult following...only time will tell!

Bryce Ternet - is a contributing editor and is the author of: "The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula."



VISITING Varietals



CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Pronunciation:

Cab-Er-Nay Saw-Vee-Nyon

Cabernet Sauvignon is planted all over the world in a myriad of climates. It reaches its full potential in Bordeaux, especially in the Medoc as well as in Pessac Leognan, and of course in California. It is used to produce much of the world's most expensive wine. It is also used to make a lot of inexpensive wine. Cabernet Sauvignon continues to gain in popularity as a grape for wine. To illustrate the grapes explosive growth, in 1990, it was the 8th most widely planted varietal in the world. By 2010, it jumped to being the world's most popular grape variety! To give you an idea on how popular Cabernet Sauvignon is today, there are over 300,000 hectares of the grape planted all over the world. That is more than 741,300 acres. In 1990, 100,000 hectares were planted. Cabernet Sauvignon is so popular, the grape has its own holiday, International Cabernet Sauvignon Day is celebrated every August 30.

Flavor Profile: At its best, Cabernet Sauvignon produces wines with deep, dark colors that offer complex scents and concentrated flavors ranging from blackberries, creme de cassis, black cherries, boysenberry, blueberry and chocolate when young, to fragrances of tobacco, truffle, cedar wood, earth, lead pencil and leather when mature. When the berries are not ripe, distinct aromas of green peppers or olives can be found. The wines can be rich and concentrated, as well as tannic. Cabernet Sauvignon wines have the ability to age for decades when grown in good soils and allowed ample time to ripe.

RECIPE

Scallop & Corn Chowder WITH SAUVIGNON BLANC

Ingredients

5 slices	bacon, cut into small dice
1 1/2 lbs	sea scallops (about 16), patted dry
1 small	yellow onion, thinly sliced into half-moons
1/2 lb	Yukon gold potatoes, peeled (if desired) and cut into a 1/2-inch dice
1/2 cup	Sauvignon Blanc
1 cup	chicken broth
1/2 cup	heavy cream
1 cup	corn kernels, fresh (from 2 ears) or frozen
1/4 cup	chopped flat-leaf parsley
	kosher salt and black pepper



Directions

1. In a large skillet, over medium heat, cook the bacon until crisp, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels.
2. You should have about 2 tablespoons of bacon drippings; if necessary, supplement with olive oil. Increase heat to medium-high. Season scallops with 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper; cook until golden brown, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.
3. Add the onion to the drippings in the skillet and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the potatoes, wine, broth, and cream; cover partially and reduce heat. Simmer gently until the potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.
5. Add the scallops and corn and simmer gently to heat through. Sprinkle with the parsley and bacon

CHEESE *Varietals*



PORT SALUT

Port Salut is a semi-soft pasteurized cow's milk cheese from Pays de la Loire, France, with a distinctive orange rind and a mild flavor. The cheese is produced in wheels approximately 23 cm (9 inches) in diameter, weighing approximately 2 kg (4.4 lb).

Though Port Salut has a mild flavor, it sometimes has a strong smell because it is a mature cheese. The smell increases the longer the cheese is kept — this however does not affect its flavor. It can be refrigerated and is best eaten within two weeks of opening.

The cheese was developed by Trappist monks during the 19th century at Port-du-Salut Abbey in Entrammes. The monks, many of whom had left France during the French revolution of 1789, learned cheese-making skills to support themselves abroad, and brought those skills back upon their return after the Bourbon Restoration. The name of their society, "Société Anonyme des Fermiers Réunis" (S.A.F.R.), later became their registered trademark, and is still printed on the wheels of Port Salut cheese.

In 1873, the head of the abbey came to an agreement with a Parisian cheese-seller granting exclusive rights of distribution, and the cheese soon became popular. The abbey sought trade protection, and eventually (in 1959), sold the rights to a major creamery. The cheese is now produced in a factory; the characteristic smooth rind the result of a plastic-coated wrapper. The rind is edible, but is made of wax and detracts from the flavour of the cheese.

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