

OCCASIO  
WINERY

*“Translating my mental images into wine...”*

## SPRING ISSUE

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WINEMAKER NOTES

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2013 FOUNDER'S COLLECTION CHARDONNAY  
2011 HERITAGE COLLECTION MALBEC

PIONEERING MICRO FARMING

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POCKETWATCH



## WINEMAKER NOTES

**It is said that the late Burgundian winemaker Henri Mayer created his wines in his mind, long before the fruit was ever harvested.**

It is only after years of studying the wines, history, and culture of our valley that I begin to understand Mayer's process of mental crafting. Now, the effort becomes one of translating my mental images into finished wine.

The process of going from the mind to a finished wine is not easy. I have been wrestling with it for the past several years, working to define the best ways to transfer my thoughts, first to paper and ultimately into practice. In the process, there was no choice but to reassess my approach to all aspects of winemaking. A restructuring of my cellar was in order.

From the beginning, my focus has been on making *terroir* wine. I was content to let the farmers grow the grapes as long as I determined when they were harvested. This works well for the Founder's Collection, as the farmers are growing grapes that support the fruit-forward style of wine popularized by Napa Valley. However, it is apparent that Livermore Valley is capable of greatness, and that is why my Heritage Collection was created. Heritage wines are crafted to express the subtle side of Livermore *terroir*- perhaps Old World

is the best descriptor, although I prefer the term "classic" when referring to Livermore wines made in this style.

With the continued refinement of the Heritage Collection, it is necessary to change my farming practices, not just in the timing of harvest, but in the way the fruit is grown. It was also clear we must resurrect the craft techniques of old, rediscovering the winemaking techniques of an earlier, slower-tempo era. I found it necessary to change my cellar operations, and with that, I have hired two new team members to lead our winemaking efforts going forward. I welcome David Hendrickson (Winemaker: UC Davis) and Styliani (Stella) Proukaki (Viticulturalist: University of Athens and UC Davis). I provide more detailed biographies elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter.

With the cellar reorganized, I am now addressing improvements to the way we communicate our story. You will have already noticed the redesign of our newsletter, allowing me to provide news and information in a more accessible format. Also, my new website is nearing its debut. The new website

will be easier to navigate, and provide much more news and information about our winery, the wine industry, and the history of our valley. It will allow a member log on that will provide access to exclusive wines and pricing.

With all of this excitement, I dare not forget the new quarterly releases: 2013 Founder's Collection Chardonnay, 2012 Founder's Collection Syrah, and our 2011 Heritage Collection Malbec. The Chardonnay continues with our tradition of using Burgundian techniques like barrel fermentation and aging *sur lie*. The resulting wine is filled with fruit and accented with the silky notes of new French oak. Past vintages of our Syrah have been used as a critical ingredient in our blends; this is its first appearance as a varietal wine in our portfolio. Enjoy this richly flavored wine with any number of grilled foods. This is the first time our Heritage Malbec has been included in a release as well. Enjoy this lovingly hand-crafted wine now, but a few years of cellaring will add some extra complexity.

- John Kinney



## NEW RELEASES

### 2012 Founder's Collection Syrah, *Livermore Valley*

GHIEMMETTI VINEYARD

This is a dry, richly flavored and well-structured wine, with complex spices and a cherry-like bouquet. This wine has exceptional balance that comes from firm acidity and firm tannins.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Oct. 16, 2012	23.6	0.65
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
45	3.5	13.8%

### 2013 Founder's Collection Chardonnay, *Livermore Valley*

DEL ARROYO VINEYARD

This is a structured, age worthy wine that is imbued with rich vanilla accents and notes of fig.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Sept. 3, 2013	23.3	0.65
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
140	3.4	14.6%

### 2011 Heritage Collection Malbec, *Livermore Valley*

GHIEMMETTI VINEYARD

Thick with sturdy tannins and ripe fruit, in the way of blackberries, cassis and blueberries, all tied together with a savory streak of espresso.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Nov. 3, 2011	24.0	0.62
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
50	3.4	14.9%



# PIONEERING MICRO FARMING

for our Livermore *Terroir*



*Terroir* Matters. It speaks to a unique sense of place, at a moment in time, and holds the soul of the wine. So we must ask, what constitutes the *terroir* of Livermore Valley? Noted characteristics of the finest Livermore wines over the centuries include: firm but not astringent tannins, plush mouth feel (most Bordeaux reds); excellent color extraction; rich fruit and floral notes (notably Merlot, Petit Verdot, Sauvignon Blanc, and Semillon); and minerality (ranging from wet slate to dusty gravel, depending on variety and vineyard).

Many of the finest elements of our *terroir* are fragile, and don't survive modern vineyard practices. Our pioneering sustainable micro farming in select vineyards allows us to adapt our cultivation practices to the *terroir*, providing us with the best hand selected, scarce fruit from an isolated site in the vineyard.

This **micro farming** approach allows us to select the ideal part of the vineyard in which to grow and harvest for our unique style, a style that speaks truly of Livermore.

Fruit yields are low, and prices are high. There is no economy of scale in crafting a *terroir* wine. Wines of *terroir* are hand harvested, a small price to pay considering the scarcity of the fruit. They are hand sorted, both at the vineyard and at the winery. Fermentation is customized to the vineyard, the variety, and the vintage.

**This micro farming approach allows us to select the ideal part of the vineyard in which to grow and harvest...**

## RECENT ACCOLADES

### DOUBLE GOLD

2015 SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE WINE COMPETITION  
2012 Founder's Collection Cabernet Sauvignon

*Every vintage, since 2009, has garnered 90 points, Best of Show or Double Gold medals.*

*We do have this beautiful Cabernet available for purchase.*

### 90 POINTS

WINE ENTHUSIAST, AUGUST 2014  
2011 Founder's Collection Cabernet Sauvignon

*"Juicy with ripe tannins, it tastes lovingly hand-crafted, detailed and focused in black currant, berry and leather. Though rich and luxurious it retains ample natural acidity to buoy its way through a meal or through several years of aging." Virginie Boone*

### DID YOU KNOW?

Contrary to popular belief, Robert Livermore did NOT found the first winery in Livermore!

Do you know who it was?  
Post your answer on our Facebook page - first with the correct answer will be rewarded!

## FEATURE RECIPE

### Chicken and Mushroom Julienne



A good friend and wine club member gave this recipe to me over the holidays. She told me it is a fairly authentic version of a recipe she grew up with as a child in the Ukraine. It is perfect for cold rainy weather, and that it is wonderful with all of the new wines in this release. It is called Chicken and Mushroom Julienne, but I like to add a little bit of peas, carrots, and celery and call it my crustless chicken potpie.

#### INGREDIENT LIST

1 cooked chicken breast shredded	Salt and Pepper
4 oz. mushrooms, sliced	1 Tbsp. flour
1 large onion	1 Tbsp. butter
8 oz. shredded mozzarella (or melting cheese)	½ cup heavy whipping cream
Olive oil	Pinch of paprika

Heat the oven to 400° F.

In a fry pan, sauté the mushrooms and onion until soft and slightly caramelized. Add the chicken to warm. In a separate saucepan, prepare the béchamel sauce by melting the butter and then adding the flour, stirring until the roux takes on a slightly brown hue. Then add the heavy cream, stirring until the mixture begins to thicken. Remove from heat.

To oven proof ramekins (I use French onion soup bowls), add the chicken and mushroom mixture until three quarters full. Split the béchamel sauce equally between the bowls and then add the shredded cheese to the top. Place the bowls on a baking sheet and place in the oven. Cook until the cheese is melted and browned on top.

## WE WELCOME...



### DAVE HENDRICKSON *Winemaker*

I had strict criterion for my Winemaker: an exceptional palate, solid grounding in both modern and classical winemaking methods, and a deft hand with *terroir* winemaking practices. I found this, and more, in Dave Hendrickson. Dave graduated with a Master of Science degree in Viticulture and Enology from the University of California, Davis, this past year. His master's thesis explored methods of harvest on wine quality.

While there, Dave was a recipient of the prestigious *Wine Spectator* scholarship.

Dave spent his internships at Navarro and Peay wineries, where he honed his skills with some of the finest producers of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Now in Livermore, he will begin to adapt the nuanced Burgundian techniques to the world of Bordeaux varietals. I expect great things from this young man, and am excited to welcome him to my team. Expect to see his influence beginning with the 2014 harvest wines.



### STELLA PROUKAKI *Viticulturalist*

All great wines begin with great fruit, and although there is much in Livermore, it is typically harvested more for the fruit forward, modern California style. In our search for a Livermore style, we must adapt our vineyards to the unique soils and climates of the region. We must become farmers of our fruit, and to this end, I have hired Stella to be our Viticulturalist, or as I like to call her, our "farmer in residence."

Stella was born on the island of Crete, surrounded by her family's historic vineyards and olive groves. She received her Masters Degree from the University of Athens, graduating in Agricultural Sciences. Her thesis delved into developing drought tolerant rootstocks for alkaline soils. Rootstocks are an extremely important element of quality, and are one of the key areas we are exploring for our new micro farming effort. Expect to begin to see Stella's influence beginning with the 2015 harvest.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Thursday, February 12, 6 – 8pm, Tasting Room

Member reception for newly released wines.

2011 Heritage Malbec, 2013 Chardonnay, and our very first 2012 Syrah! Members only

## Friday – Sunday, February 13 – 15, Tasting Room

Our first new wines of the year are released this weekend.

Be the first to sample the 2013 Chardonnay and 2012 Syrah - a first for Occasio.

## Saturday & Sunday, March 14 – 15, Noon – 4pm, Winery

In advance of Barrel Tasting Weekend – Tour the barrel room and taste the wines currently lying in repose. Tastings at 12pm and 2pm, groups of eight. Members only

## Saturday & Sunday, March 21 – 22, Noon – 4:30pm, Tasting Room

The annual Livermore barrel tasting weekend.

Sample still slumbering wines, with the opportunity to buy futures.

## Saturday & Sunday, April 18 – 19, Noon – 4pm, Library Room

A guided, seated tasting of the upcoming summer releases.

Seatings on the hour, beginning at noon, ending at 4pm. Members only

## Friday, May 1, 6 – 8pm, Tasting Room

Member reception for newly released wines. 2011 Heritage Petit Verdot, 2014 Rosé of Pinot Noir, and our very first 2014 Malvasia Bianca. Members only

## Friday – Sunday, May 1 – 3, Tasting Room

Be the first to sample the first vintage of our 2014 Malvasia Bianca and our perfect wine for spring, the 2014 Rosé of Pinot Noir.



## LOCAL ARTISAN CORNER

# McEVOY RANCH

“From orchard to bottle, McEvoy Ranch produces Estate-grown and produced Italian olive varieties.

Certified organic and certified extra virgin, the Traditional

blend is a medium-bodied oil with aromas of fresh olive fruit, newly-mown grass and robust garden greens. Emerald at harvest and mellowing to a greenish gold, the flavors are richly complex with hints of artichoke and almond, a touch of savoury bitterness and a mildly peppery finish.” Available in the Tasting Room!

*We are dedicated to the Heritage varieties of Livermore Valley. We devote our efforts to rediscovering the historic expression of our region by focusing on these magnificent varieties, those with more than a century of excellence in Livermore.*

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