

OCCASIO
WINERY

"...the anticipation of warming weather..."

SUMMER ISSUE

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WINEMAKER NOTES

**“Now is the winter of our
discontent made glorious
summer....”**

Richard III’s elation over his brother’s defeat of Henry VI pales in comparison to the joys of coming summer that must now be felt by our friends out East, who have suffered the longest winter in memory. Indeed, it is the anticipation of warming weather that makes me so happy to be releasing a distinctly summery set of new wines this quarter. Two of these wines, our 2012 Founder’s Collection Zinfandel and 2014 Founder’s Collection Rosé, are popular favorites that need little introduction. The other two wines, new to our portfolio, continue to explore the historic traditions of our Valley - 2014 Founder’s Collection Malvasia Bianca and 2009 Heritage Collection Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve.

Before prohibition, Livermore was home to more than a hundred grape varieties. Of these, around a dozen were considered to be exceptional, a list of cultivars that included all of the Bordeaux varieties as well as Zinfandel,

Syrah, and ... Malvasia Bianca.

Malvasia (pronounced mal va SEE Ya) was widely planted in northern Italy, before being wiped out by phylloxera. By then, fortunately, Malvasia had arrived in California; Italian immigrants introduced it into our Valley over a century ago. Today, however, Malvasia is an orphan grape; only 1500 acres are planted statewide, and most of these are in the warm Central Valley. I was very surprised (and pleased!) to find a small amount still planted right here in our Valley.

Today, few wineries make a Malvasia, and there is no consistent style – they cover the gamut from sparkling to sweet to bone dry. The historical records of how this wine was made before prohibition are also inconsistent. The most reliable records are those from Cresta Blanca Winery, who made an off-dry (slightly sweet) still wine from the grape. We have chosen to produce the Occasio Malvasia in this off-dry style as well, as the small amount of residual sugar helps frame the unique, almost Muscat, perfume of the variety.

Some of you will remember our first release of Cabernet Sauvignon with the 2009 vintage. This wine went on to win Best of Show in competition, and began our consistent run of 90+ points or higher Cabernets from then on. That same year, we set a small amount of the wine aside for additional aging in our rare T5 barrels. This wine was bottled in the fall of 2011, and has aged in our climate controlled cellars for almost five years. Late February, Dave and I decided this wine was entering into its optimum drinking window, and felt now is time for its release. Especially now, as none of the original 2009 remains! This release of our Heritage Collection 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve gives our Members the opportunity to experience this vintage once again. I hope you enjoy.

**Before prohibition,
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2014 Founder’s Collection Rosé, *Livermore Valley* DEL ARROYO VINEYARD

Seeking a uniquely Livermore take on a provençal-styled Rosé, this year’s harvest was fermented in mixed wood barrels of French oak and Black Locust. This wine is marvelously refreshing!

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Aug. 20, 2014	23.2	0.65
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
25	3.4	12.9%



2014 Founder’s Collection Malvasia Bianca *Livermore Valley* DEL ARROYO VINEYARD

We have recreated a Cresta Blanca classic—a wine literally like no other. Slightly off-dry with muscat flavors accented with hints of burnt orange and cardamom.

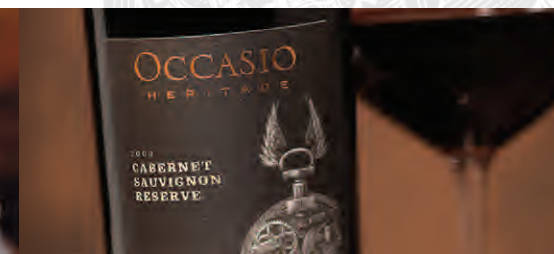
Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Sept. 5, 2014	23.8	0.65
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
48	3.6	14%



2012 Founder’s Collection Zinfandel, *Livermore Valley* DEL ARROYO VINEYARD

A wine of structured elegance in a style that defined Livermore’s historic success with this variety, a wonderful balance of fruit and spices.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Oct. 25, 2012	23.2	0.55
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
97	3.5	13.1%



2009 Heritage Collection Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve *Livermore Valley* GALLES & GHIEMMETTI VINEYARD

This Cabernet is from the fabled Galles Vineyard. Aged 20 months in rare French Oak, was bottled in Sept. 2011, and aged in bottle for four years.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Sept. 25 and Oct. 3, 2009	24.5 (Galles) 23.8 (Ghielmetti)	0.55 – 0.6
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
22	3.5 – 3.6	14.3%

THE MANY FACES OF ZINFANDEL



Zinfandel has had many incarnations: first as a substitute for French claret in the 1870s, and then later as port wine, White Zinfandel, and today's fruit bombs. As a wine, Zinfandel has been simultaneously vilified as a poor substitute for cabernet and worshipped as a California original. In short, the many faces of Zinfandel reflect the fashions of the times.

As I survey the landscape today, Zinfandel producers continue to push ripeness, with many wines now exceeding 16% alcohol by volume. But, are these ultra ripe wines still Zinfandel? At what point might we lose the briary red fruit and peppery spices characteristic of the variety and replace them with the flavors of raisins and plums? Have we lost the Zin-ness that caused us to fall in love with this wine in the first place?

The Zinfandel that first won me over was from Ridge Winery in the early 1970s. Paul Draper had created a marvelous wine of 12.5% alcohol, and though these levels have risen over the years, his wines still retain a balance that seems missing from the more hedonistic wine styles in fashion today. It is the remembrance of these early wines that led me to search for balance in our Del Arroyo fruit in 2012. A field blend of two ancient clones, we hand sorted ripe, but not overly ripe, berries from each cluster, a painstaking process that reduced our already low yields by half. Personally, I find these efforts to have been worth it, as we have produced a wine of balance that is pure Zinfandel. I hope you enjoy this 'experiment' as much as I do.

OCCASIO
IN THE NEWS

SAN FRANCISCO MAGAZINE MARCH 30, 2015

HIGHLIGHTED FOUNDER'S COLLECTION PINOT GRIS

Ian White (of San Francisco Magazine) placed Occasio Pinot Gris on his list of "12 WINES TO PAIR WITH YOUR NEXT SPRING FEAST". He paired it with Spring Pea Salad and Chilled Greens. Just toss together a few ingredients like parmesan, olive oil, radishes, fresh herbs and tomatoes.

OAKLAND MAGAZINE

HIGHLIGHTED OUR EFFORTS TO UNCOVER THE TRUE HISTORY OF LIVERMORE VALLEY

LOCAL WINEMAKER SHREDS LIVERMORE VALLEY MYTHS by Anneli Rufus

"Feast Bay was lucky enough to connect recently with fifteenth-generation farmer and UC Davis alum John Kinney, founder of and winemaker at Livermore's Occasio Winery... Kinney shared with us some interesting insights into Livermore, wine and more."

FEATURE RECIPE

Barbecue Ribs



There are few better ways to show off our summer wines than by pairing them with barbecue. Our new winemaker Dave Hendrickson shares his favorite BBQ ribs recipe, with a sauce he borrowed from Ina Garten* with just a few tweaks. The secret is pre-cooking the ribs at low heat and then a final turn on the grill before serving.

THE SAUCE

1 ½ cups chopped yellow onions (1 large onion)	½ cup Worcestershire sauce
3 – 4 cloves of smashed minced garlic	1 cup Dijon mustard
½ cup olive oil	½ cup soy sauce
1 cup tomato paste (10 ounces)	1 cup hoisin sauce
1 cup cider vinegar	2 Tbsp. chili powder
1 cup honey	1 Tbsp. ground cumin
	½ Tbsp. crushed red pepper flakes

In a large saucepan on low heat, saute the onions and garlic with the olive oil until the onions are translucent but not browned. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer, uncovered, on low heat for 30 minutes.

THE RIBS The first step can be done the day before. Take a rack or two of baby back ribs and remove the membranes from the underside. Place the ribs on a baking pan and slather both sides with sauce, letting the meat marinate while you heat your oven to 300°. Cook under slow heat for about 90 minutes (meat side up) until the meat is tender. Remove from oven and slather them with more of the sauce. Now, either heat up the grill or cover the ribs and refrigerate overnight.

Heat grill to about 250°, use the indirect heat method. While the grill is firing up, take ribs out of the refrigerator and bring to room temperature. Place the meat away from the coals and cook covered at low temperature to get that smoky flavor (from 10 – 30 minutes). Remove from grill and add some additional sauce. Enjoy!

*Ina Garten, Barefoot Contessa Foolproof: Recipes You Can Trust (2012).

MALVASIA BIANCA

RESCUING OUR VANISHING HERITAGE

Malvasia Bianca is disappearing. This northern Italian cultivar, which once thrived in our valley, has now been replaced with more fashionable varieties like Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio. Today, fewer than 1500 acres remain, mostly growing in the Central Valley. Coastal plantings, such as the few remaining in Livermore Valley, are vanishing.

I refuse to allow another Livermore heritage variety to become memory without a fight. That is why I included Malvasia Bianca in our 2014 harvest. I hope other local wineries will do the same, as a single ton does not a vineyard save. However, if others follow our lead, it will be the small producer, as the big wineries that control most of California's wine production have little interest in adding another varietal to their long lists of labels.

In the end, however, the future of this variety will depend on how well it appeals to you, the consumer. Malvasia is a unique wine, literally like no other. It is not clear that the American palate will embrace these new flavors. In April, we had a chance to sample this wine with our members at the monthly seated tasting; the response was enthusiastic. Now, I look forward to seeing if this enthusiasm continues as we release Malvasia to the public in May. I hope so, as Malvasia Bianca is a wonderful wine with historic connections to our valley's past.





UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 7, 5 – 9pm, Blackhawk Plaza
Blackhawk Film Festival, Behring Auto Museum.

Wednesday, June 24, 5 -8pm, Tasting Room
Wine Wednesday, after hours at Occasio Winery.


Saturday, July 18, 6 - 9pm, Uncle Yu's at the Vineyard
Wine Maker's Dinner at Uncle Yu's at the Vineyard in Livermore


Thursday, September 10, 6 - 8pm, Tasting Room
Member reception for newly released wines.
Occasio Winery club release. Members only



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

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