

OCCASIO
WINERY

"I believe we are witnessing the rebirth of Livermore Wine Country."

SPRING ISSUE

WINEMAKER NOTES

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POCKETWATCH



WINEMAKER NOTES

I always find it remarkable that Livermore Valley, in just ten years, was able to transform itself from wheat and grazing lands into one of the finest wine producing regions in the world.

(It was 1890), and Napa and Sonoma had been producing wine for much longer, but without the success of Livermore's finest early wineries. Livermore's meteoric rise was not a flash in the pan; our Valley would remain at the pinnacle of wine quality for another 70 years, until rising land values began to exchange vineyards for home sites.

Two decades ago winegrowing was revitalized when far sited Valley residents created the South Livermore Plan. Today, Livermore Valley is producing nearly ten times the quantity of wine grapes than it was in 1990. Many of these plantings are now reaching maturity, and are producing fruit of the finest quality.

With the return of the vineyards, Livermore Valley is poised to regain its former stature. Writing over a century ago, famed Sonoma winemaker Charles Bundschu attributed Livermore's

winegrowing excellence to its soils, its climate, and the talent of its winemakers. We have always had the soil and climate, and the vineyard replanting is bringing with it new winemaking talent. I believe we are witnessing the rebirth of Livermore Wine Country.

Last year, we grew our winemaking team when we had the fortune to hire Dave Hendrickson. A *Wine Spectator* scholar at UC Davis, Dave trained with the finest minds in modern winemaking. He followed his formal training with internships at important wineries in Sonoma, where he learned the art of wine crafting. The 2015 vintage belongs to Dave's first at Occasio, and I am excited to release the first of these wines in our 2015 Rosé of Pinot Noir.

Pinot Noir began our 2015 harvest on August 18th. Destined from outset to become a Rosé, our Pinot Noir fruit was harvested ahead of the Valley. Only half a ton was selected, allowing us to produce a scant twenty-one cases of this wine. I am releasing it for Valentine's Day, not only because it is the perfect wine for the occasion, but also to provide our members an opportunity to purchase additional bottles of this wine before it is released

to the general public in May.

Accompanying our Rosé are the most recent vintages of our Founder's Syrah (2013) and Heritage Petit Verdot (2012). When asked to name one of the better regions to grow Syrah, famed winemaker André Tchelistcheff picked Livermore Valley. He always believed that the climate and soils of our valley were superior for growing Syrah that could rival the best of the Northern Rhone. Indeed, when you taste our Syrah you will notice the aromas of the "old" world accompanied with the fruit of the new. This is, simply, a wonderful wine – a testament to André's judgment.

To this day, Occasio still produces the highest rated examples of varietally labeled Petit Verdot in Livermore Valley, if not the state. Predominantly a blending grape to add flesh to Cabernet, we bottle a small amount of this wine each year for our enjoyment. A century ago, Livermore winemaker Theodore Ghier heralded Petit Verdot as one of the finest cultivars to grow in our Valley, and I think you'll agree when you taste it.

I hope you enjoy these new releases.

– John Kinney



NEW RELEASES

2015 Founder's Collection Rosé, Livermore Valley DEL ARROYO VINEYARD

Filled with cherries and strawberries, a glass of spring that can stand on its own or be paired with a variety of foods.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Aug. 18, 2015	23.2	0.73
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
21	3.4	12.9%

2013 Founder's Collection Syrah, Livermore Valley GHIELMETTI VINEYARD

A dark and powerful wine redolent with wild berry and black licorice flavors yet surprisingly graceful, with floral, spicy, and peppery aromas that end up gliding across the palate.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Oct. 17, 2013	23.8	0.61
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
58	3.7	14.5%

2012 Heritage Collection Petit Verdot, Livermore Valley DEL ARROYO VINEYARD

Complex and focused, with flavors of wild berry, delicate herbs, spices, and mineral.

Harvest Date	Brix	TA
Oct. 25, 2012	23.1	0.62
Cases Made	pH	Alcohol by Vol.
70	3.6	13.8%

THE MAKING OF OCCASIO ROSÉ



It has been my privilege to teach the *Introduction to Winemaking Class* at Las Positas College. One of my class lectures is devoted to the making of Rosé wine, and though I teach several methods, there really is only one way to make a proper Rosé, *méthode ancienne* – the old way. Time consuming and costly, the old way requires precise timing at harvest and attention to detail at every step of production. The reward of these labors, however, is wine that is worthy of attention. Its versatility with food and suitability in casual contexts must not hide the fact that a well-crafted Rosé can be a serious wine.

This year we produced only 21 cases of our Founder's Rosé of Pinot Noir. An early Napa harvest and demand for crews for the Lake County fire made it difficult to find harvest crew in Livermore. We faced two choices; either we wait to pick with the rest of the valley, or we borrow a few spare hands and pick the

fruit ourselves. I won't compromise the quality of our wines, so that is how we found ourselves, on the morning of August 18th, with our vineyard manager Stella Proukaki and a few additional helpers harvesting a scant half-ton of Pinot Noir while our winemaker, Dave Hendrickson, and my two sons prepared the winery to receive the fruit. We toasted the sunrise with Champagne, on this first day of harvest, a tradition passed down from Paul Masson and Martin Ray that we continue to honor each year.

Our Founder's Rosé of Pinot Noir is like few others – it requires hard work and a relentless attention to detail. It is a wine that the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* (in the heart of Sonoma wine country, no less) describes as, "a glass of spring..." So now, as we enjoy the life-giving rains of El Niño, let us raise our glasses to toast the coming spring, and the perpetual cycle of life.

RECENT ACCOLADES

VIRGINIE BOONE LIVERMORE'S QUALITY REVOLUTION

WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE, NOVEMBER 24, 2015

"[Occasio has] sparked a regional surge in quality in recent years, giving the world excitingly lush Chardonnay, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Sauvignon Blanc, and Cabernet Sauvignon – based wines."



FEATURE RECIPE

Wild Mushroom Risotto

El Niño is finally with us, and, true to form, it is following a classic pattern of heavy winter rain with massive snowfall in the Sierras. This is the time for substantial food, and this recipe fits this need. Similar to a recipe we published in our 2014 Fall issue of our Pocket Watch newsletter, our winter risotto is more generous in its use of red wine, and adds the unexpected ingredient of soy sauce that builds upon the savory nature of the mushrooms.

Serves 2 – 4 depending on whether it is used as a side dish or main course.

INGREDIENTS LIST

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 1/2 cups of chicken stock | 2 teaspoons soy sauce |
| 1 1/2 cups of dry red wine | (or Tamari, if gluten free) |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 2/3 cup leeks, finely chopped white and light green parts |
| 4 tablespoons butter | 1 cup Arborio rice |
| 3 shallots, finely chopped | 1/2 cup Parmigiano Reggiano, grated |
| 1 clove garlic (smashed & chopped) | 1/4 cup Asiago cheese, grated |
| 1/2 pound wild mushrooms, sliced | 1 tablespoon chives, chopped |
| 2 teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped | |
| 1 tablespoon fresh Italian parsley, chopped | |



METHOD Combine chicken stock and wine in a pan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Adjust the heat to avoid boiling, and keep the liquid warm.

Meanwhile, in a medium fry pan, combine the olive oil, half of the butter, the shallots, and garlic. Sauté until they just start to caramelize, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms, thyme, and parsley, and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the soy sauce and toss to coat the mushrooms. This is a good time to add salt and pepper to taste.

Remove the mushroom mixture from the heat and set aside. Melt the remaining butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the leeks and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the rice and stir for 2 minutes, until the grains are toasted and coated with the butter and leeks. Stir in a ladle of the warm stock-wine mixture and cook until the rice has absorbed it all. On medium heat, add the remaining stock one ladle at a time, letting the rice absorb the liquid completely before adding more. Keep stirring and checking the rice for doneness – this could take up to 30 minutes. If the stock evaporates before the rice is fully cooked, add small amounts of water to the pan and stir.

Stir the mushroom-shallot mixture and cheese into the rice. Spoon into serving bowls and top with the chives.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 4, 6 – 8 PM

Winery and Tasting Room

Release Reception for Spring Wines

Members only

Thursday, March 17, 12 – 5 PM

Tasting Room

St. Patrick's Day Release of 2015 Malvasia Bianca

Saturday and Sunday, March 19 - 20, 12 – 4:30 PM

Winery

Annual Barrel Tasting Weekend

Saturday and Sunday, April 16 - 17, 12 – 4 PM

Tasting Room

Spring Preview of Summer Wines

Thursday, May 5, 6 – 8 PM

Winery

Release Reception for Summer Wines

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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