



Bedrock Wine Co. Fall Release

August 2009

Dear Friends,

And a third glorious harvest is coming to little **Bedrock Wine Co.**!

So far 2009 has not displayed any tween-like mood swings of temperamental 2008. In fact, in discussions with other winemakers and growers the comparisons are to the coolness and evenness of 2005 with the moderate crop of 2006 or 2007, aka beautiful. However, I only whisper such conjectures to the winds, as the fickle tides of August are prone to bringing the worst spells of heat and desiccation. For now, I happily look upon grapevines straddling the perfect mid-ground between crop and canopy, loose clusters and small berries—all under cool morning fog and warming afternoon sunshine.

I am really pleased to announce a few amazing “off-season” additions to the **Bedrock Wine Co.** roster. First, I have found a remarkable, 100 year-old, vineyard to make a Russian River Valley Heirloom wine from called Dolinsek Ranch (the old Frati Ranch). It is right down the road from Rebecca’s Vineyard in the Golden Triangle and is on Sandy Goldridge Loam soils. Also, Bedrock Wine Co. has started organically farming and will receive the fruit from the 110-year-old Stellwagen Vineyard in Sonoma Valley—and it is looking great! In the Syrah world, the winery will receive three clones of Syrah from the incomparable Griffin’s Lair Vineyard in 2009—a vineyard I have been longing to work with since I started the winery. Along with this, and it brings tears to my eyes to write it, **Bedrock Wine Co.** will be receiving my good friend Michael Havens’ old T-West Block of Syrah from the front ranch at Hudson Vineyard (one of the oldest blocks of Syrah in the state). It is from this block that I first tasted a wine that made me realize the incredible potential of Syrah in California and to receive it is an absolute and total thrill. Michael and I are also working together on an Albarino project...but more on that in future newsletters! Onto the fall releases...

The Fall release features the last wines from the wonderful 2007 harvest—a year sure to be compared with 2001 and 1992 in terms of sheer richness AND balance. All, as one might imagine given the far date from vintage, are rich in fruit and tannin, and necessitated extended aging in both barrel and bottle. They pose the counter-weight to the rose’ and whites needed to survive the heat spells of summer, and will be released to you in time for the first braises of fall. The ides of March and the braises of Fall I doest say!



The Wines

I absolutely love Syrah; its dark fruits, its perfume, its animal sensuality. The greatest examples in the world, whether they be from the Northern Rhone, Australia, or California, combine the uncanny ability to be both rich but perfumed. For me, too often, it is this perfume, this sensuality, which is lost in the varietals upbringing. The greatest examples in the state, those from Wells Guthrie at Copain, from Pax Mahle, Nate and Duncan at Arnot-Roberts, and Eric Sussman at Radio-Coteau, to name a few, find this symphonic balance.

It is, of course, the three-way --the ménage-a-trois-- between site, year, and winemaker, which can allow the varietal to reach such great heights. We are just at the beginning of our learning curve here in California, and the best is yet to come. Though I have much to learn (I am only 28 after all!) I must say I am very proud of the first two Syrah's to emanate from the snug cellars of Bedrock Wine Co.. With each, I attempted to strike that aromatic/rich balance in a different way.

The **2007 Kick Ranch Syrah** comes from a rocky, hillside, vineyard located in Rincon Valley. Some might claim it to be the far side of Spring Mountain. In reality, it bears a more special and focused relationship with the Petaluma Gap than that more famous Napa provenance. It is this bearing that gives it deep breathes of cool air at night and bears fast witness to the diurnal fog cover. The glory of the 2007 harvest was not lost on the site—and the two clones (470 and 174) ripened perfectly. For aromatics I co-fermented 5% Viognier, the explosively perfumed white grape of Condrieu. The wine fermented using native yeasts in an open-top redwood fermenter, was manually basket-pressed, and aged for 18 months in 40% new French oak. The resulting wine is aromatic, spicy, dense, and still tight (despite me holding it in bottle for 6 months prior to release). I highly recommend decanting for at least six hours if you are planning on serving it soon. 117 cases were produced.

The **2007 Old Lakeville** comes from a cold vineyard site located at the mouth of Petaluma Gap. The fruit ripened late in the month of October and turned as black and black can be in the fermenter. To strike that aromatic/rich balance I used 33% whole clusters in the fermenter—a technique that brings out spice and a bit more structure to the sometimes-corpulent cultivar. As always, only native yeasts were used, the wine was manually basket-pressed, and was raised in a variety of French oak barrels and puncheons—the 60% new wood fraction being supplied by my the lovely barrel-makers at Ermitage and Meyrieux. The resulting wine is explosively aromatic, flashy, and rich—currently a bit more forward than the Kick Ranch, but definitely in need of decanting as well! 118 cases were produced.



The final wine in the Fall offering is the **2007 Bedrock Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon** from our home vineyard in Sonoma Valley. It has been the secret project for the last two years—the four barrels at the back of the cellar that when people point and ask I have simply shrugged and said “I don’t know where those came from!” It has always been my contention that Sonoma Valley, though having fewer great sites for Bordeaux varietals than our warmer neighbor, can produce remarkable Cabernet. Sonoma Valley is the Pessac-Leognan to Napa’s Medoc (for those of you who wish to geek out with me!). The problem is that the more limited price-point means lesser farming, which means inferior grapes, which means lesser wine, which means lower price-point, which means lesser farming, and the cycle goes on and on.... This is an attempt to break that cycle.

The grapes for this wine come from a few distinct blocks at Bedrock Vineyards where the soils are the rockiest. The Cabernet element is split evenly between a twenty-year-old block of Jackson clone (i.e. low yields and lots of tannin), and a ten year old block of clone 337. A small amount of Petit Verdot was co-fermented with the clone 337, and a small amount of Merlot was vinified separately and blended in. The average crop yield was less than two tons an acre, and the resulting grapes were phenomenally dense and dark. No expense was spared on cooperage, as 100% new French oak from Darnajou, Boutes, Sylvain, and Bel Air were used in the wines upbringing. It spent 22 months in barrel with only two rackings.

The resulting wine is old-school California Cabernet. It is dark, black, wine with lots of fruit, but also plenty of gout de terroir, gravelly cassis perfume, and penetrating tannin. The 100% new oak is wonderfully absorbed. It is well-balanced, however each element of the balance—the fruit, the wood, the tannin, are all enormous. This is a wine for the cellar. I very purposely did not try to massage out the primal elements of the wine using micro-ox or multiple rackings. Rather, this is a wine that will gracefully last twenty years in any good cellar, but might bite back a little if cracked in the next year. You have been warned! 110 cases made.

I have also included the **Cuvee Caritas White Wine**, a holdover from the Summer Release, in the offering. Why? Well because it did not sell as well as it should have of course! If it were not excellent it would not annoy me, but in my opinion it may be the best wine I have made to date. The wine, which is 55% 117 year old Semillon from the acclaimed Monte Rosso Vineyard, and 45% Sauvignon Musque from Kick Ranch is a serious, complex, white wine that will age better than the vast majority of whites made in our Golden State. Also, if I can sell it and afford to pay Gallo a bit more than maybe they will not rip out the old vine Semillon, which currently sells for \$2000 less a ton than the Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon grown at the famous vineyard! Since it is perhaps the oldest Semillon in the state that result would be high on the suckage meter...

My deepest thanks!
Morgan Twain-Peterson
