



Bedrock Wine Co. Fall Release

August 2012

Dear Friends,

The Fall Release contains the first offerings from the 2011 vintage. Much has been made of how wet and cold the vintage was, and this is certainly true. However, wet and cold played very much to the stylistic leanings of Bedrock Wine Co.. I have always been one of the first to pick out of any vineyard as I feel over-ripeness of fruit occludes terroir and variety definition. If I were one who picks at 30 brix the vintage would have been a miserable, hellish, experience-like a snowglobe filled with botrytis spores. However, I do not, and picking at 23.5-24.5 brix was not too far from normal and I love the wines. Yes, there were some vineyards that just did not quite make it - I have declassified nearly 40% of the fruit. However, the wines left are old-school in their sensibility; they are fresh, claret-like, delicious, expressions of place and year. After all, isn't the reason why wine is such a fascinating thing - the limitless variations due to the nexus of vintage, vineyard, and winemaker? The Zinfandels, as a set, are my favorite wines that I have made to date and the limited number of Syrahs are just as good. Most will not ring the bell at Spectator but they will be great when the dinner bell rings.

As usual the wines were fermented completely with native yeasts in small open-top fermenters with a combination of punch-downs and pumpovers. The wines were raised completely in French oak with percentage new varying between 20-40% depending on the wine. I try to be as meticulous as possible with my cooperage selection and use 16 different coopers in the winery to properly match fruit and vineyard tone with oak choice; the goal is not to overpower the wine but to enhance spice and fruit character. In order to capture the freshness of the 2011 fruit most of the Zinfandels were bottled inside of 11 months, while the 2011 Syrah's will be bottled after 14.

You will notice that the wines formerly called "Heirloom" wines are now being called "Heritage" wines. This was not my decision but rather the result of receiving a cease-and-desist from a very large wine corporation that owns the term "heirloom." The Heritage wines, just like the Heirloom wines before, signal that the wine in the bottle is made from a very old vineyard and is field blended. Most of them are based on Zinfandel but they rarely meet the 75% necessary to be called Zinfandel. Rather, they contain a healthy dose of those varieties traditionally grown alongside Zin in California's oldest vineyards- Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Carignane, Grand Noir, Tempranillo, Syrah, and many others. To me, these are the wines that we can make in California, in their melting-pot glory, which no place else in the world can make. Though the name is not quite as sexy, hopefully the wines still are!



There are a few interesting vineyard additions for the 2012 harvest. On top of the beautiful Sodini Ranch, planted in 1905, on Limerick Lane that my friend Mike Officer and I are farming together, I am thrilled to work with a couple of new sites that folks might not normally expect for Bedrock. The first is a vineyard owned by the talented Sleight of Hand crew in “The Rocks’ of Walla Walla, Washington. The densely spaced Syrah vineyard is planted on the intensely rocky soils from which the amazing wines of Sleight of Hand and Cayuse come from (and if you cannot get your hands on the Cayuse wines try Sleight of Hand’s “Funkadelic,” it is sick). The second will be the first Cabernet from a vineyard that is not my own. It will be sourced from the most amazing and best-farmed site for Cabernet I have ever seen; located high up on the Sonoma side of Mt. Veeder this is the first time the vineyard owner has ever sold the fruit to another winery.

The Wines of the Fall Release

Wines:

2011 Compagni Portis White Wine, Sonoma Valley, \$25. As I have written in the past I am just smitten with this vineyard. The eclectic field blend of Gewurtzraminer, Riesling, Chardonnay, Roter Veltliner, and others was planted in 1954. Starting in 2010 I began overseeing the farming of the vineyard with organic guru Phil Coturri. Though we (with your help!) have invested a lot in the vineyard (new posts, wires, spading, cover crops, compost) there is still much to be done. The dry-farmed vines yielded a scant 1 ton to the acre in 2011. The wine was whole-cluster pressed and native yeast fermented in a combination of stainless steel and older French barrels. As one would expect from a cooler year this is a more delicate version of Compagni; it is beguilingly fragrant and expressive and will likely reward earlier drinking than the 2009 or 2010.

2011 Sonoma Valley Old-Vine Zinfandel, Sonoma Valley, \$22. If there is any wine of the 2011 releases that accurately demonstrates the poised, claret-like, character of the 2011 vintage it is the 2011 Sonoma Valley Old-Vine. The late ripening Stellwagen Vineyard once again was included into this cuvee to lend its dark fruit, and Casa Santinamaria, another vineyard originally slated for vineyard designation, was included for its beautiful spice. The remainder of the wine is composed of Zinfandel from the terraced Los Chamizal Vineyard, some younger vine fruit from Rossi Ranch in Kenwood, a few barrels of Monte Rosso Zinfandel, and a dollop of old-vine Carignane and Mourvedre from my Bedrock Vineyard. This is old-school Zin- bright, focused, and energetic. Like previous releases of this wine, I would expect it will reward a year or so of short-term aging.



2011 Bedrock Heritage Wine, Sonoma Valley, \$36. The grand poobah! The 2011 Bedrock Heritage Wine comes from vines planted 123 years ago at my family's vineyard in Sonoma Valley. It is a field-blend of 22 different varieties. Dominated by Zinfandel the remaining 40% of the wine is Carignane, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir de la Calmette, Syrah, Tempranillo, Trousseau, Mission, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and many others. Bedrock lies in the alluvial wash of the famed Monte Rosso Vineyard and is the only vineyard on the valley floor to share the same Red Hill Clay Loam soils that pour downward from the west slopes of Mount Veeder. The 2011 is dominated by fragrant red fruits, spices, and a dollop of orange oil. Like all the Sonoma Valley offerings from 2011 the wine is nervy and young and will need a few years to loosen its sinewy limbs and limber up.

2011 Evangelho Heritage Wine, Contra Costa County, \$30. I might be more excited about this wine than any wine in the cellar this year. The 100+-year-old mixed vines of Evangelho Vineyard stretch upwards on their own roots out of 40' banks of sand. This wine was made on a lark and a percentage of its profits should probably be given back to my friend who called me September 9th of 2011 saying that Frankie Evangelho still had some fruit. I arrived at the vineyard having never been to Contra Costa County before. Upon arriving I rubbed my bleary eyes, trying to clarify the image of vines from California's viticultural antiquity standing starkly against the backdrop of softly blinking lights atop the towers of the PG & E power plant behind it. I was greeted by Frank Evangelho, forever to be known as Frankie from here forward, and as my bins were loaded on the picking trailers I was asked what I wanted to pick. I asked about Zinfandel, but after tasting delicious unpicked Mourvedre and Carignane I asked about that too. We started picking: first the Zinfandel, mixed with Carignane and Mourvedre, then the Mourvedre mixed with Carignane and some whites, and then the Carignane mixed with Mourvedre and whites. He asked if I wanted the whites. Sure! Back at the winery the fruit was all destemmed together into the same fermenter. I am not quite sure what is actually what but my guess is that it is about 40% Zinfandel, 25% Mourvedre, 15% Carignane, and 10% mixed whites. The wine, if I may say so, is fucking delicious. As with Rhone wines that grow on sand, the wine is marked by high-tone perfume and lift, broad rich fruit, and a pirouette of bright acid that leaves the mouth watering for more. What is perhaps most exciting is that in the three years of 2009, 2010, and 2011, where I generally have to tell people to "wait! Don't drink that yet!," I can say, "Drink this! Drink it with this year's Turkey!"

2011 Saitone Ranch Zinfandel, Russian River Valley, \$37. Saitone Ranch, which lies next to Papera Ranch in the Piner-Olivet area of the Russian River Valley, was planted in 1896. As one would expect it has a smidge of Petite Sirah, Alicante, and other mixed-blacks in it. Perhaps due to vine age and perhaps due to farming the Saitone is a step up in breadth and intensity from neighboring Papera. The wine was raised in a combination of smaller French barrels and a 600 gallon foudre. Typical of the Russian River Valley this wine has a low pH of 3.4 which balances the density of fruit with a laser beam of brightness.



2011 Papera Ranch Zinfandel, Russian River Valley, \$37. My first year working with Papera as last year the vineyard was lost to the heat-storm of August 23rd and 24th in 2010. Though my block has 22 different interplanted varieties in it the coolness of the year meant the Carignane, Valdigue, and others just never got ripe. As a result only the Zinfandel was picked. The wine is about as delicate and pure an expression of RRV Zinfandel as I have made- it many ways it is more Russian River Valley than Zinfandel. I love this wine.

2011 Dolinsek Ranch Heritage Wine, Russian River Valley, \$37. In 2011 the Dolinsek's got a whopping .5 tons to the acre off of their mixed vines planted in 1910. In contrast to the Papera and Saitone, which are grown on heavier soils on the east side of the Laguna del Santa Rosa, Dolinsek lies on a north-facing hillside of Sandy Goldridge Loams on the west side of the water. The vines, even carrying 1-2 clusters per vine, struggle to ripen in the water and sun-starved environment. The result is that Dolinsek is always one of the latest picks of the year and that the wine is one of the most uncannily dense wines that I make. People don't normally associate the term "minerality" with old-vine field blends but this one has it. A rockstar wine from one of my favorite vineyards.

2010 Griffin's Lair Syrah, Sonoma Coast, \$36. The last of the 2010 Syrah's to be released is probably my favorite of the year. Joan and Jim Griffin's perfectly farmed site in the Petaluma Gap of the Sonoma Coast yielded a dense, tannin, wine in 2010 that will easily be the longest lived wine of the release. The wine was vinified with 50% whole-cluster and was raised in a combination of smaller barrels and puncheons. It is ferally perfumed, aromatic, and dark - a brooding and masculine wine from a great vineyard.

As always, I extend my deepest thanks and gratitude for that loyal and active participation of members of the Mailing List. As Bedrock goes into its sixth vintage and I look at the absolutely amazing quiver of vineyards that I get to work with I am humbled and grateful as it is only due to members of the Mailing List that I have the means to do so. Here is to a successfully 2012 Harvest for everyone!!

Best,
Morgan Twain-Peterson
