



Bedrock Wine Co. Winter Release November 2015

Dear Friends,

2015 Winter Release

“If dreams were thunder, and lightning was desire, this house would have burnt down a long time ago” –John Prine

We got our first rain in what seems like a laboring man’s forever this week. First, gentle rain filling all the aromatic interstitials with a salve of earth and stone and a hint of greenness to come, like long-needed aloe dabbed onto sunburned skin. Then, fierce wet thunder and hail—petulant, dramatic, and wonderful. And all I could do is flash a smile that might be illegal if it was not California.

The vineyards are ready for winter, their leaves still flaming, waiting for the first deadening frost that will render them brown. Tons of compost have been spread, cover crops seeded, and straw scattered. We have cooed assurances of rain, promising a less meager liquid diet in the future, and now we wait hoping that Mother Nature does not make us look fools again (which is a nice way of saying we hope the meteorologists/ Vegas odds makers are right). It has been far too dry for far too long.

The historically early and intense 2015 vintage is wrapped up. The finished wines are screaming through malolactic conversion with the same gusto with which they went through primary. The wines, across the board, are dark and intense and not quickly giving up their secrets. Yields were down, in some places significantly, likely contributing to their richness. More than 2012, 2013, or even 2014, the real trick in 2015 was finding a way to temper the natural weightiness of the vintage with enough brightness, like finding a trace of celestial in the terrestrial. There appear to be many successes even if harvest felt like a flash in the pan.

The 2014 wines are rounding up to be an elegant and pretty group of wines. Though not as intense as the 2013s or buxom as the 2012s, these are fresh and delicious wines that in some cases will reward nearer-term enjoyment with a good decanting.



Vineyards:

“My love is deeper than the holler.” –Randy Travis

When my father was a child, he remembers visiting the rustic Nervo Winery in Geyserville with my grandfather and grandmother. My grandparents, who were part of several early wine tasting groups in the Bay Area, would make the trip from their home in Pt. Richmond to North Sonoma to buy the winery’s Claret and Burgundy. Though the winery is no longer called Nervo, the steep hillside vineyard that adjoined it is. The ten acres, with several blocks dating to 1896, lie on east-facing slopes composed of decomposed shale—a soil distinct in North County to the ridge that divides the western edge of Alexander Valley from the eastern Bench of Dry Creek Valley. Its esteemed neighbors are Turley’s beautiful Vineyard 101 and Ridge’s Whitton Ranch/Geyserville vineyards. Its hollers contain shaded mysteries. An old caboose sits guard at the top of its sunny slopes. It is one of the most gorgeous and unique vineyards we have had the pleasure of working with. In October, the Mengali family, whose beautiful patriarch nursed the vineyard back from the brink over two decades ago and tended it lovingly until his passing last year, decided not to renew their lease on the property. I don’t presume to know much about the deceased and how they play the celestial Ouija board, but I feel Grandpa Walter and Grandma Frances along with their new friend Joe Mengali were pleased when we signed a long-term lease on the vineyard a couple of weeks ago.

The Winter Release Wines:

2014 Bedrock Heritage Wine: The grand poo-bah. With the new discoveries of Mondeuse and Bequignol Blanc (!) this year, there are 25 different varieties represented in this wine. The only major contrast this year, compared to previous iterations of this wine, is that it contains a slightly higher percentage of Mataro/Mourvedre. As with the Carignan, we have two old blocks dominated by Mataro that we pick a little later than the rest of the vineyard and blend back into the wine as we see fit. In years past we have used some of this for rosé, but it tasted so great in 2014 that we let it hang a bit longer for red. We are enormously pleased with the results, the Mourvedre adding just a trace more earthen depth to the usual orange-tinged and spicy perfume so typical of the site. \$38

2014 North Coast Syrah: What do you get when you combine barrels of Hudson, Griffin’s Lair and Weill Vineyard? This wine. It certainly is not our highest margin wine but it is one of our most delicious. Roughly 96% Syrah and 4% Viognier this is a gamey, peppery, violet-incensed thing of Syrah beauty. All exotic and sh*t. Like previous incarnations of this wine, this will age as well or better as any Syrah from California at its price but will also satisfy those of you who are itching to crack something with the Bedrock vine on the label with a good decanting. \$19



2014 Oakville Farmhouse Heritage Wine: It is hard not to slobber all over myself when I talk about this vineyard and the resulting wine. The little two acre patch of vines, planted in the 1930s, sits at the foot of Futo and Harlan and catty-corner to To Kalon. It is a patchwork quilt of different varieties—Negrette, Mondeuse, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Carignan, Ruby Cabernet, Malvasia Bianca, Chenin Blanc, Colombard, and more. And despite this assortment, it just reeks of old school Oakville wine—fresh currant, underbrush, pencil lead, camphor and more. This one is going to need some time to unwind but should reward aging. \$56

2014 Monte Rosso Zinfandel: Our fifth year of making wine from this staggeringly beautiful vineyard (though the 15th for my father and me combined). Our gorgeous block 32, planted on a steep westward-facing slope, is remarkably pure for a vineyard of this age—probably only 2-3% Alicante Bouschet and Grand Noir is mixed into the Zinfandel. That said, this vineyard produces a Zin that seems to age like one of our Heritage wines, rife with the darkening complexities of field-blended mixed-blacks. This will need 3-4 years to come around (it seems Monte always does) but is a beauty. Get your Dickies on, this is mountain Zin. \$42

2014 Dolinsek Ranch Heritage Wine: This old vine vineyard, planted in 1910, is one of the only left on the Goldridge loams west of the Laguna del Santa Rosa in Russian River Valley. Planted on north-facing slopes, the vineyard is a patchwork of varieties—Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Syrah, Alicante Bouschet, Palomino and a trace of Muscat among others. The 2014, like its predecessors, is quintessential RRV—lots of blue fruit, spice, exotic perfume and a certain richness to the mouthfeel despite the brightness. Though this will certainly age nicely, it could be enjoyed on the earlier side with a good decant. \$38

2014 Kirschenmann Zinfandel: From this venerable vineyard, planted in 1915 on its own roots in a cool oxbow of the Mokelumne River, the 2014 Kirschenmann is perhaps the most structured example we have made. Currently it smells like dusty red fruit and beef blood and the bottle I opened this weekend needed a solid 24 hours to start coming around to its pre-bottling form. When it does, there is a lovely amplification of fruit and spice and a bit of sandy-loam soil. This is not your typical Lodi Zinfandel, but then again, Kirschenmann never is. \$30

2014 Sherman's Gold Zinfandel: I am not sure I can relate how much I love this wine. From Esola Vineyard, the vines are located at 1600', grown on granite in the heart of Shenendoah Valley in Amador County. That said, it is higher acid, nervy, downright aromatic (like someone put Frappato or Mammolo or something into it), and best with food. I have no doubt this will be controversial as this is quite opposite to what I think most people believe Zinfandel to be. Like Nebbiolo's prettiest daughter having an illicit love child with the son of the Zinfandel. Delicious. \$35



2014 Wirz Riesling: This is a special vineyard. First off, it is from the Cienega Valley. Yeah, I didn't know where it was when I first heard about it either. The appellation is south of Gilroy on the eastern side of the Gabilan Range, think Calera (in fact Calera's first wine, a Zinfandel, came from this vineyard back in the early 1980s). The vines are own-rooted and planted in 1963, which makes it the second oldest Riesling planting after Stony Hill in California; actually, it is tied for second-oldest as our friend Rory Williams' plot in Napa was also planted in 1963 (check out his Calder wines!). The Riesling also has a little Sylvaner interplanted in it, which the owner Pat Wirz calls by the name indigenous to California "Franken Riesling." The wine was fermented with native yeast in a neutral oak upright tank and aged for 6 months on lees prior to bottling. Dry, stony, floral and perfumed this is a fun and delicious expression of Riesling. More Heiligenstein than Graacher Himmelreich, more Riquevillean than Sharzhofian. No I didn't just make those words up. \$18

2014 Abrente Godello: Why do we love Godello? We love it because this variety, from the Valdeorras of Spain (just north of Portugal) has the richness of Chardonnay combined with the raciness of Albarino—a certain grapefruit and tarragon-laced perfume with viscosity. This was fermented using native yeast stainless steel tank and then barreled down to neutral oak barrels. I opened this with a feast of clams and mussels simmered in coconut milk, ginger, lemongrass, garlic and mirin this weekend and it was perfect. \$24

2012 Weill Syrah, Expositions:

"This is the west, when the legend becomes fact, print the legend." –Maxwell Scott in The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence

Offered as a three-pack, these wines are a bit of an outlier to our normal style. They are big, voluptuous, modern wines filled with a sense of "we are in California and we can do whatever the hell we want," mentality. From the many angles and inflections of Weill Vineyard on the "coastal" periphery of Sonoma Valley, only five barrels of each of these were made. Made in the model of the Guigal "LaLa" wines, these range in percentage of whole-cluster and Viognier. They should age well and need a good decanting if consumed young. \$165

Cheers!

Morgan and Chris
