



Bedrock Wine Co. Winter Release November 2014

Dear Friends,

*Stuff that works, stuff that holds up
The kind of stuff you don't hang on the wall
Stuff that's real, stuff you feel
The kind of stuff you reach for when you fall
-Guy Clark*

The wane of the day is earlier now. The leaves on the buckeye have fallen and rest in the still dry bed of Hooker Creek. The vineyards wear coats of many colors that will soon crinkle and turn brown when the thermostat gets turned all the way down. Tomato plants are in the compost heap and fine, leathery leaves of cauliflower, zygotes of purple and orange florets, stretch upwards towards a cooler sun. Winter is coming, hopefully not too dry nor cold, and another season is done. And, it has been far too dry for far too long.

This time of year is my favorite. The barbeque is supplanted by the braise and basil gives way to thyme. Rich stocks flavor the kitchen air and the desires for rose' and bright whites (and big cities?) scurry away as the specter of rich red wine, fecund with dark spice and fruit, looms upon the collective palate. It is the perfect time for our Winter Release, wines that by and large match Fall and Winter cuisine. Some might make it all the way to Spring. But, it has been far too dry for far too long.

In the vineyards the next cycle has already begun. The early harvest and generally dry October and early November have given us plenty of time to spread and integrate compost and other amendments into the soil. Thousands of pounds of seed lie in dirt of good tilth awaiting a dousing of much needed rain. Legumes, clover, peas and vetch are planted in most of our vineyards for their nitrogen-fixing capacity—a critical element of vine growth. Brassicas, such as mustard, are planted in vineyards with high nematode populations; upon integration in Spring, they give off mustard gas as they break down, bringing down the population of the root-eating little buggers. Also, we are seeding avenues with fescues which will help keep dust - the main vector for spider mites - down come summer of next year. However, all of this only works if we get rain. It has been far too dry for far too long.



In the vineyards the next cycle has already begun. The early harvest and generally dry October and early November have given us plenty of time to spread and integrate compost and other amendments into the soil. Thousands of pounds of seed lie in dirt of good tilth awaiting a dousing of much needed rain. Legumes, clover, peas and vetch are planted in most of our vineyards for their nitrogen-fixing capacity—a critical element of vine growth. Brassicas, such as mustard, are planted in vineyards with high nematode populations; upon integration in Spring, they give off mustard gas as they break down, bringing down the population of the root-eating little buggers. Also, we are seeding avenues with fescues which will help keep dust - the main vector for spider mites - down come summer of next year. However, all of this only works if we get rain. It has been far too dry for far too long.

Despite this dryness, 2014 was a vintage of many successes. The rockstar vineyards- Bedrock, Pagani, Monte Rosso, Evangelho, etc. sang anthems of booming grandeur. Wines are rich but fresh, physiological ripeness came early, and the wines bear good resemblance to the excellent 2013's. Though perhaps not as thoroughly consistent as 2012 or 2013, there is much to love from the vintage. However, it has been far too dry for far too long.

This release features the next set of wines from the wonderful 2013 vintage along with a scarce trio of Syrah's from the 2011 vintage. The 2013 wines, as their inflections and angles become more apparent with a little time, are shaping up to be the best wines Bedrock has ever made. In this release, Pagani Ranch, Nervo and the Ode to Lucien are wines that I suspect one could enjoy 20-25 years from now with proper storage; in many ways they remind me of my father's wines from 1991, the majority of which are still drinking fresh, complex, and deep today (Old Hill ranch in particular). Kirschenmann is broad and forward and a deliciously tall drink of Zinfandel goodness and the North Coast Syrah might be the best iteration yet. Monte Rosso is just Monte Rosso, so you know, mountain Zinfandel at its perfumed and structured best.

Wines:

*Well to live is to fly, all low and high
So shake the dust off of your wings
And the sleep out of your eyes
-Townes Van Zandt*

2013 North Coast Syrah: As in 2012 the 2013 North Coast Syrah benefited from the benevolent 2013 harvest and I think it easily rivals last year's iteration in terms of complexity. A blend of Hudson, Weill, and Kick Ranch, the wine saw roughly 60% whole-cluster along with a nice 4% dollop of cofermented Viogner. Rased in a combination of larger format and traditional barrel sizes the wine ultimately saw 17% new French oak along with a 14 month elevage with no racking until bottling. A Syrah's Syrah, filled with pepper, smoke and violets this should make for delicious drinking over the next 5-10 years. \$20



2013 Kirschenmann Zinfandel, Lodi: From the vines that inspired us to buy the vineyard next door, Kirschenmann Vineyard produced a wine of greater density than the pretty 2012. The vines, own-rooted and planted in 1915, yielded just 2.85 tons per acre of lovely fruit in 2013. Planted on Tokay Fine Sandy Loam near the banks of the Mokelumne River in east Lodi, the vineyard is located in one of the cooler sub regions of Lodi which imbues it with a finesse and perfume not normally associated with the appellation. The 2013 is imbued with a bit more broad-shouldered bravado than the slinky 2012 but this wine should still drink as well in its youth as with a few years of age on it. It was fermented with native yeasts and spent 14 months in a combination of smaller barrels, demi muids, and a 600 gallon foudre. \$30

2013 Monte Rosso Zinfandel, Moon Mountain: This vineyard really does not need much of an introduction. For those of you who might wonder why we are so perpetually excited about it the vineyard though, this is why: Imagine a dude named Emmanuel Goldstein, slogging up a long dirt singletrack in the mid 1880's, clambering up switchbacks and seemingly impossible elevation gain and arriving at an elevated bench overlooking the wooded and relatively undeveloped Sonoma Valley. Looking around at the fertile wilderness of Madrone, Manzanita, laurel bay, poison oak and sage brush he says "alright, this is where I am going to plant a 350 acre vineyard." Then imagine that statement of lunacy becoming a physical reality. On top of that, this wine comes from those original vines, planted in 1886 at over 1000' above Sonoma Valley. It is one of the most beautiful vineyards in the world and the wines are equally exciting. The 2013 is very typical of the vintage—perhaps not as flamboyant as the 2012 but dense, perfumed, focused and ageworthy. \$40

*Well, the Devil made me do it the first time
The second time I done it on my own
-Billy Joe Shaver*

2013 Ode to Lucien, California: Well, is this wine really a surprise? It actually was to us. I had long been thinking about making a Bandol-rouge style wine but never felt like I had found the right vineyards. I did know that one component fell into place when we found Evangelho Vineyard in Contra Costa County back in 2011. The second element came with Gibson Ranch and its incredibly old Grenache and mixed Syrah (the 2013 of which will be released in the Spring). While futzing around with blending this Spring I, rather jokingly, put together a blend that resembled Tempier's La Miguoa (Mourvedre with a nice dollop of Grenache and Cinsault) but replacing the Cinsault with the old mixed Syrah plantings. I brought a glass over to Chris who was mumbling sweet nothings to his computer (typical) to get his thoughts. We are releasing the wine so you can imagine what he said (there may have been chest bumping and awkward pats on the ass involved). The wine comes completely from dry-farmed vines planted prior to 1900. It was aged completely in neutral oak prior to being transferred to a small older foudre. \$37



2013 Nervo Ranch Heritage Wine, Geyserville: This is a wine of bittersweet memories and grand personalities, of characters that have helped define my existence but whose contact has been fleeting and ineffable. My grandfather, who passed while my father was a young man, started buying the wines from Nervo Winery in the 1960's. In July of 2013, David Gates from Ridge Vineyards let my father know that the winery taking the fruit from Nervo (Ridge took it for a long time in the 90's) had backed out of the contract with harvest fast approaching. A few short days later I was driving north to Geyserville to meet one Joe Mengali. It took only a few short moments of walking the vineyard with Joe to both see the remarkable potential of the vineyard as well as the good-humored and roughhewn love with which Joe farmed it. The vineyard's oldest vines were planted in 1896 and cling to steep slopes of decomposed shale and are a classic mix of Zinfandel, Negrette (Pinot St. George to the old-timers), Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir, Grenache, Carignane, Trousseau Noir, Cardinal, Burger, Semillon, and even a little delicious Sauv. Blanc. It was a no-brainer for Bedrock and the 2013 is one of our very favorite wines of the vintage—dense, peppery with a cool old-school claret character. Unfortunately, Joe Mengali, with his soft eyes, worn hands and huge laugh left us a few weeks ago after a long battle with cancer. The affliction, which the VA attributes to exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam, took him at the age of 67. Both Chris and I cherish the couple of years we got with Joe and look forward to a continued close relationship with Joe's family. In Joe's memory we will be donating \$5 per bottle to a couple charities chosen by his family: North Bay Hospice and Vietnam Veterans of America. \$38

*An' I looked to the stars, tried all of the bars.
An' I've nearly gone up in smoke.
Now my hand's on the wheel, I've something that's real,
An' I feel like I'm goin' home.
-Willie Nelson*

2013 Pagani Ranch Heritage Wine, Sonoma Valley: This venerable and famed vineyard, planted in the 1880's, produced perhaps the finest wine we have made yet from the site. As is typical with the vineyard, its ash-rich grey soils and its rostrum of particularly dark mixed blacks varieties the wine is on the burly side of elegance. More Waylon Jennings than Willie Nelson, more Wagner than Mozart. This wine separates itself from the 10, 11, or 12 as in 2013 the stentorian tone found the higher angels of perfume and the flavors run the gamut from an earthen core to celestial heights. \$38



2013 Belle Du Jour Vineyard, Russian River Valley: Climb the heights of Mont Toffee! Planted in 1927 off of Piner Road in the Russian River Valley, this wine comes from a very well-known vineyard farmed under the supervision of our friend Mike Officer at Carlisle. In fact, I could argue that the 2007 from this vineyard is the best Zinfandel I have had from this decade of the 2000's. For that reason, despite only being made under the Bedrock label in 2013 we could not help but release it. A pure mouthful of dark blue-spiced goodness this wine should be delicious over the next couple of years and should hopefully age nicely as well. \$38

2011 Weill Vineyard Exposition Project Trio: I have been impatient to release this one for a while but the very definition of the project requires temporal restraint. Ever since doing the Hudson Vineyard “Three Ways” experiment in 2008 I have been wanting to do an experiment in a similar vein but roughly following the examples of the interesting “LaLa” wines of Cote Rotie. When we found Weill Vineyard I realized I had found the spot. Planted at the mouth of Sonoma Valley (technically in the sprawling Sonoma Coast AVA) the vineyard, planted by vineyard guru Daniel Roberts (think Marcassin, Blue Side Ridge, most Ramey Vineyards, etc.), is a jumble of Syrah clones, exposures, and soils along with a good chunk of Viognier. For the project we took three distinct clonal and exposure expressions and vinified them quite differently. The first, done entirely with clone 470 from a steep east facing block, was vinified with 100% whole-cluster. The second, from a south-east facing block of clone 877, was vinified with 50% whole cluster and 8% Viognier. The third, from a due south block of both 877 and 470, was done with 10% whole-cluster and cofermented with 16% Viognier. All of the lots spent three years, unracked, in a combination of large and standard format barrels. It was pretty remarkable seeing the transformation of these three wines and how their individuality grew with extended time untouched in barrel. I am extremely pleased with the results and have repeated the exercise every subsequent year. Between three and four barrels were made of each wine so quantities are very limited. \$140/ 3 pack.

We hope you enjoy these wines as much as we do.

Morgan and Chris
