



Message in a Bottle

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Winter in the Vineyard

So, our winter newsletter is a little late. You'd think that winter would be our down time, but it's actually extremely busy in the cellar (see page 2) and we have been spending a lot of time expanding our markets so our wines are easier to find!

One place that is quiet in the winter is the vineyard. It looks like we made it through the winter without any freeze damage. We didn't even come close to critical temperatures of -5 to -10 degrees Fahrenheit. The lowest the temperature got in the vineyard was about 9 degrees. With the light crop we had last year we can expect the vines to be very fruitful this year with larger clusters. We will try to mitigate this a little by cluster thinning after bloom. This will allow us to hang a smaller crop.

Yield is one of the most critical factors relating to the quality of the wine. High yields (5 to 7 tons per acre) will give us wines that are thin, with less flavor, lighter color and weaker varietal character. Sometimes when you have a wine that has been over-cropped it will have a strawberry flavor. If the crop is small (3 to 4 tons per acre) the wines will be more concentrated in flavor and richer in color.

As a vineyard manager, the trick is to determine what crop levels will yield the best wine and still provide a profit for the vineyard. We have found that very low yields (< 3 tons per acre) can provide bigger and more concentrated wines, but the increase in quality generally is quite small so it is hard to economically justify these small yields. We have found that 3.5 tons per acre for Cabernet Sauvignon provides the best wine from our vineyard at a reasonable return for the cost of the grapes. We have gone lower for a special wine, or a very cool year.



Other considerations are cluster size, berry size, fruit set—all of which are dependent on spring frost, and summertime temperatures and watering. Because we don't have a crystal ball and we can't determine all these factors, we are not taking our chances and leaving plenty of buds while we prune. Then, in June after bloom we will assess the crop and pull clusters off the vines to balance the crop load. Stay tuned...we'll have another update later this spring!

Cheers!

Jeff Gordon

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Upcoming Releases:

May 2005

☞2003 "Katie's Vineyard" Sauvignon Blanc

March 2005

☞2000 Tradition

Wine Club

If you haven't already, now is the perfect time to join our Wine Club! We are offering some incredible purchase allowances on our new releases, which you are receiving in your winter shipment! And, just until the end of March, we are offering an exclusive **40% case discount on these new releases** (*limit 2 cases per varietal*)! Call or e-mail us now for this incredible special! If you would like to join the wine club, visit www.gordonwines.com to learn how.

New Releases

2003 Late Harvest Gewurztraminer

Bright peach and pear are followed by a refreshing blast of lychee and spice. This balanced wine is dominated by smooth tropical fruit and bright acids. Enjoy the 2003 with fresh tropical fruits, exotic cheeses or even Apple pie.

2001 Syrah

Deep purple, the 2001 Syrah shows sweet aromas of plum and candied fruit. Peppery flavors of berry spice and leather spread over jammy fruit. White pepper, cedar and smoky fig explode on the finish. Match with peppercorn steak, barbeque ribs or even (believe it or not) Lobster.

Cellar Report by Dave Harvey, Winemaker

Winter, mild as it has been in 2005, is behind us once again here on the Snake River. People always ask me what goes on at the winery this time of the year, thinking I'll tell them stories of weekday fishing trips, loafing around the office and sneaking away for a nap in the barrel room. Believe me, winter is a very busy time here.

First and foremost this year we have been kept busy bottling our 2003 Late Harvest Gewurztraminer, as well as our 2002 reds. The Gewurztraminer is already selling briskly. Pick up a bottle and a box of gingersnaps for the quickest, easiest dessert you've ever savored. The reds will be allowed to bottle age for the next few months. I am really looking forward to sharing these wines.

The 2003 wines are also keeping us busy. The Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc are of a brighter and fresher style than previous vintages. Both are bottled and being bottle aged as we speak. The 2003 reds are still barrel aging. These wines are rich and fruity but will benefit from a relatively long aging span. We won't bottle these until next year so we continue to put a lot of time into racking and topping these wines.

The 2004 wines are progressing well also. The reds will be ready for racking soon. The Sauvignon Blanc and Gewurztraminer are filtered and just about ready for bottling. The Chardonnay has about 8 more weeks of barrel aging before we blend it and filter it for bottling.

If all this isn't enough for you we have one more ongoing project called KAMIAK. This is a new brand for us made from grapes off of other Washington vineyards. Although it is just one red wine, Cellar Select, it has kept us hopping. We designed the label last summer and bottled the 2002 vintage in December. In the short time it has been on the market, sales have been very rapid.

As you can see, things have been busy around here. Its making me so tired thinking about it I think I'll go find a place out in the barrel room to take a nap.



Awards & Accolades

2000 Tradition

Wine Spectator—90—*“Ripe and generous, brimming with blackberry, currant and plum flavor, nicely shaded with white pepper and toast, framed with mildly gritty tannins. Needs time to settle in, but then it should be a beauty.”*

New World Int'l Wine Competition—Silver Medal

2001 Cabernet Sauvignon

Tasters Guild 17th Annual International Wine Competition – Gold Medal

Wine & Spirits Magazine—93—*“Classic cabernet and classic Washington.”*

San Francisco Chronicle—Silver Medal

2001 Merlot

Wine Spectator – 88—*“Firm and Spicy, with mature overtones of dried orange peel and musky floral notes around a core of cherry and espresso flavors.”*

Dallas Morning News – Gold Medal

2001 Syrah

Wine Spectator – 91—*“...this is a big step up.”*

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