

ADELAIDA

SPRING 2007 CLUB VIKING SHIPMENT: NOTES FROM THE WINEMAKER

Spring Update

Spring has arrived here at Adelaida. The freshly pruned vines are decorated with beautiful green spears that are about six inches in length. The site of contoured rows of vines with new growth trailing off down the mountain is incredibly stunning. The vines are coming to life again and a new vintage is born! Well, I may be waxing poetic, in reality for me it is the tell tale sign that harvest is just around the corner (this despite the fact that it seems like we just finished the 2006 vintage). So let me catch you up on what has been happening here at the winery and in our vineyards since my last letter and your last Club Viking shipment.

The 2006 harvest was a marathon vintage. The cooler than "normal" weather during the latter part of harvest created what may be the longest harvest I have ever been involved in. We picked our first of the Pinot Noir the day after Labor Day, which is typical for our HMR Pinot Noir vineyard. This pace continued through all of our estate vineyards, with the Syrah coming off next, then the new heritage clone dry-farmed Zinfandel, and finally our Viking Cab. At this point, with all but one of our estate vineyards in and fermenting, the weather changed and the remainder of the Cabernet, Rhône varietals, and Zinfandel that we purchase from our neighbors just stalled. The fruit hung on the vine for weeks. You hear a lot of talk about microclimates out here in the Adelaida district of Paso Robles . . . this vintage really showed how vineyards that are only one mile apart can ripen at such different rates. We were starting to get worried, but the lull allowed us to try some extended fermentations on a few of the Pinot Noir lots. Twenty eight days was the goal (14 to 18 is our standard). We were able to let the fruit ferment nice and slowly for the duration. The longer fermentation allowed some of the more aggressive tannins to soften while still giving a nice structural component. Currently, these lots are showing very well and we are optimistic about their longevity.

Finally, the gods smiled upon us with a little warmth, which allowed the last of the Cabernet Sauvignons to finish ripening. We pressed off the last tank of Cabernet Sauvignon on November 22, the day before Thanksgiving. After working straight through from Labor Day, our Production Team had a true Thanksgiving.

So in the end, 2006's extended harvest and cooler weather allowed us to pick the grapes at more moderate sugar levels, which translated to a lower overall alcohol. This, along with good acid and tannin structure, enabled us to produce incredibly well balanced wines. I am very happy with how the 2006 wines are currently showing and I think you will be too when you see them in another 2 to 3 years! That is, of course, unless you stop by the winery to do some barrel tasting.



I may be getting a little long winded at this point, so let's get on to the wines in this Spring 2007 Club Viking shipment. As I have stated in the past, it is truly a pleasure to send you the wines that we, here at Adelaida, are most passionate about. They are from extreme single vineyard sites that lie on rocky calcareous/limestone hills. Once the grapes are picked, they are fermented with native/indigenous yeast, aged in French and European Oak and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. We are proud to introduce the 2004 vintage of Viking Syrah, Chelle Mountain Syrah and the Viking Cabernet Sauvignon.

Thank you so much for your interest in Club Viking and Adelaida wines. With outstanding vineyards and a great crew, it is truly a pleasure to come to work and make these wines that I hope you enjoy.

Cheers,

The Wines

THE WINEMAKER'S DESCRIPTIONS

VIN GRIS GLENROSE VINEYARD RESERVE 2006

Last year we sent you the first ever Reserve Vin Gris and it was a big hit. So this year we are presenting you, our Club Viking members, with this complimentary 2006 Reserve Vin Gris as a thank you gift. (*Note: the 2006 vintage was still in grape form and was hanging on the vines when you received your fall 2006 shipment.*) A dry Rosé, this wine is a blend of Grenache 57% and Syrah 43%. A Vin Gris is produced during harvest by pulling some free run juice from the fermenter. This is done within the first 24 hours of fermentation. The saignée (French for bleeding) process increases the intensity of the wine left behind in the fermenter by increasing the grape skin to juice ratio. It also produces a small amount of beautiful pink juice that we ferment in neutral French oak barrels. It is the nectar of these two varietals that we ferment dry and crisp to create a robust deck wine for the summer. Think Provence and serve it lightly chilled.

SYRAH CHELLE MOUNTAIN RESERVE 2004

Those of you who have been Club Viking members for more than a year should remember the Chelle Mt. Cab/Syrah blend. We thought it would be fun to produce the Syrah on its own this year to show its potential. Don't worry . . . 2005 will see the return of the Chelle Mt. Cab/Syrah and quite possibly a varietal Cabernet and Syrah to boot. I'll keep you posted. Now back to this cool climate Syrah. The grapes came from the Chelle Mountain vineyard and are located in the York Mountain AVA, which lies farther west than the Adelaida District/Paso Robles appellation. The vineyard is about 8 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean at an elevation of 1,500 feet. It is almost directly inland from the village of Cambria. This cool climate site produces a beautifully balanced Syrah with delicate, but rich, fruit and stunning acidity. When you drink this Syrah close your eyes . . . it just might remind you of the Northern Rhône rather than California.

SYRAH VIKING ESTATE RESERVE 2004

Our Estate Viking Vineyard is the extreme site that you have come to know both in our Syrah and our Cabernet Sauvignon. This vineyard was planted in 1992 at 1,600 feet in elevation, about 14 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and Hearst Castle. The Viking Syrah planting is a mere 1.5 acres of this 15 acre vineyard, set on a 30% grade with limited top soil and a base of calcareous rock. When we planted Viking we went straight down hill with the rows, making the tractor ride a real thrill! The wine we made from this vineyard has the distinct Viking flavor profile prevalent in all three varietals planted there: Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Cabernet Franc. The Viking vineyard terroir showcases a bouquet of violets and high tone fruit with substantial structure as its hallmark. The Syrah itself is an all-encompassing pallet pleaser with rich black cherry fruit; however, it's the elegance and lingering finish of the Viking Syrah that makes it one of my most favorite wines that I have the pleasure to work with.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON VIKING ESTATE RESERVE 2004

We consider this wine to be our flagship Cabernet Sauvignon. The Viking Vineyard is an extreme site that was planted in 1992 at 1,600 feet of elevation, about 14 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and Hearst Castle. Consisting of 10 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and 1.5 acres of Syrah this vineyard is set on a 30% slope with limited top soil and a base of calcareous rock. The site is somewhat sheltered from the coastal winds and consequently develops big, beautiful, round Cabernet flavors with a varietal core. We picked this vineyard in five different pickings to give the variations we wanted for the finished wine. The Viking Cabernet Sauvignon was aged in 100% French oak barrels with about 40% brand new French oak barrels. This Viking Cabernet Sauvignon is not 100% Cabernet Sauvignon . . . we added about 5% Cab Franc from the 1 acre of Viking Cabernet Franc that was planted back in the mid 90. I hope that you enjoy the extra layer that this addition provides. Club Viking is the first to see this wine and it will not be available to the general public until September 2007, so if you guys play your cards right and drink enough, there is a strong possibility that you may be the only humans who get to try this wine. My advice is if you like the wine, reorder before September when you have to fight the masses for availability.