



Harvest 2016: Fast & Furious, Sweet but Short!

Sebastopol, CA – Except for the fact that yields were way below average, this was a sweetheart of a harvest. The fruit came in looking beautiful every day, with exciting flavors, and sugars not high at all. Fermentations, all of them with our own indigenous yeast, are clean and progressing well.

The Growing Season

Yields were down due to several factors: First of all, the flower initiation (an indicator of the amount of flowers the following season, which happens the spring before and is influenced mostly by weather) was poor since we had a very cool, early spring last year. The set this year was also poor due to cold weather after flowering; and although we had average rainfall this year, the vines are still stressed from the former year's drought.

A Pretty Smooth Summer

We had a very cool August, which slowed the ripening – that is indeed not a problem, but then the last week, starting on the 29th, it became very warm and the sugars climbed. So we started harvest on August 31st; and after picking every day except Sundays, by September 15th we were done with all the Albariño, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The earliest ever!

The only problem we encountered this year, really, was an unusual invasion of deer that nibbled at the tender shoots – especially in our beloved Stony Block, the farthest parcel in our property. You see, the wilderness in that 14-acre block (with only 3 planted) is so prevalent that even with a fence surrounding the property to keep them away, sometimes a tree falls or something tears the fence; and pretty soon the pesky animals find a way to get in. We chased them out and they kept coming back in! As graceful as they are, deer are not our friends in the vineyard. And they LOVE nice young shoots!

Great Fruit from our New Block of Albariño

In its third leaf, the new planting of Albariño has given five tons of really good fruit and we are thrilled. That translates to 300 cases, which added to the existing block will produce enough to allow us to sell this wine in all our markets, as opposed to doling it out like we've been forced to do. Given how well the wine is showing, this is really good news!

Picking all Night – and Then a Special Breakfast

This year our vineyard crew of nine people started picking at 3 a.m. – but pretty soon they decided to begin at 2 a.m. instead! They like it cold – and with the new lights available now, reflective vests, and better headlamps, they seemed quite happy. Then at sunrise, they do appreciate my healthy breakfast of freshly made coffee, juice, seasonal fruit, nuts – and oh well, pastries too. Breakfast with the pickers at harvest is always the highlight of my day!

New Tempranillo and Now, Godello!

Our new block of Tempranillo, planted two years ago, is in its first leaf – still another two years before we get some fruit! And the new experiment in another Spanish variety, Godello, is progressing well. Unfortunately it takes sooooo long to develop a planting... another four years before we get a harvest!

As always, Tempranillo and Syrah were the last picked, on September 23 and 26 – and with that ended a fast and furious harvest from which we expect high costs but excellent quality!

Marimar Torres
Winegrower / Proprietor

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2016 HARVEST



MY DAY DURING HARVEST ALWAYS STARTED TAKING BREAKFAST TO THE PICKERS – EVEN BEFORE SUNRISE!



BONITA AND CHICO JUMPED AS HIGH AS NECESSARY TO REACH THE GRAPES AND GULP THEM DOWN



WE PICKED THIS BLOCK FOR PAUL HOBBS WINERY ON A DARK FOGGY MORNING. BRIGHT VESTS CAME IN HANDY!



FILIBERTO WAS VERY PLEASED WITH THE PINOT FROM OUR ALMOST-WORLD-FAMOUS EARTHQUAKE BLOCK!



OUR SPANISH INTERNS, DAVID AND SALVADOR, HAD THEIR HANDS FULL IN THE CELLAR – AND SOME FUN, TOO



WE CELEBRATED THE END OF HARVEST WITH THE VINEYARD & CELLAR TEAM AT MY HOME – SOME YUMMY TACOS!