



JANUARY OBLIGANTS SHIPMENT

2013 FARINA VINEYARDS THE PRINCE IN HIS CAVES

100% Sauvignon Blanc; 80% whole-cluster fermentation; 20% whole berry; fermented in open puncheon with minimal foot-treading.

The fruit from the Prince's section of Farina Sauvignon Blanc has never been richer or ripened with more leisurely pace. It is as if we were waiting for the berries to blind us with their complexity in 2013: they ripened early and deepened in the cool, dry air of mid-Fall, without adding sugar. Still somewhat abashed by the ferocity of the 100%

whole-cluster wine that we had just bottled from 2012, I decided to back off the stem inclusion to 80%; but we made every fermentation the same: all 80% whole cluster. Brenna performed foot-treading at most once a day; we kept the fermentations cold, and aimed for subtle, not forceful, extraction. We are rewarded with a wine that is dark like the 2009, but the opposite of fierce: powerful, of course, but deeply subtle, long, evanescent.

2012 MICHAEL MARA VINEYARD MICHAEL FARADAY

100% Chardonnay; 100% barrel-fermented and aged; made from juice only.

We were so fortunate in 2012: our rows in this crazy Chardonnay rockgarden yielded twice as much fruit as they did in 2011: 1.77 tons-- less than 2 tons per acre. We have decided to denominate this wine anew with this release. Here is the story: Steve Matthiasson farms this vineyard in conjunction with the Idell family, who own the land. They have wanted to call the vineyard "Michael Mara" from the beginning, in honor of their children. I had said, "Fuck that; I am calling it after Steve, who created the vineyard, farms it, and brought me into it." I was happy with this position, until Alex, Brenna, and I went to a tasting hosted by the Idells at the vineyard this spring. Steve now doles out fruit to about 8 different winemakers. All of them were present, with samples of their 2012 and 2013 wines. We tasted everything, and were overwhelmed with the way that the site-- a very young vineyard-- completely trumped the strategies and intentions and practices of the many different winemakers and wineries. Even in such immature wines, the vineyard shone through, and proclaimed itself not just a powerful site, but a grand one. All of us felt bound together by the honor and privilege of working with the vineyard, and from that moment on, it felt only right to use the same name as the other wineries, so that you could compare our work, and see the vineyard through it. And it is a pleasure to respect the wishes of the family who were partners in making this amazing thing possible.

The wine is less ripe and rich than the sun-drenched 2011 vintage, and not as funky and Jurassic as the 2010. The wine was affected by flor during its maturation in barrel, but is much more like one of Ganevat's vins ouillés, or a very rich and surprising Meursault. The most striking feature of the vineyard is its ability to convey minerality and ripeness at once. The wine is stony and structured to the highest degree.

2013 ANTLE VINEYARD POLUPOUS

100% Pinot Noir from vines planted in the 1970s; 100% whole-cluster, fermented in open puncheon with minimal foot-treading.

This is our greatest experiment in years. Two things are behind it: our recent success with 1MN has given us the confidence to try our hands with some other grapes that (seem to us) to demand gentle and subtle treatment. It is part of our learning to move beyond the somewhat monstrous and exuberant reds that we are sort of good at. The second factor was Bill Brosseau offering us some fruit from the Antle Vineyard, and the recollection that Robert Dentice had become interested in the vineyard a few years before. Antle is an extremely interesting property in the Chalone appellation in the Gavilan mountains, very high up-- a kind of rolling desert a few thousand feet above the valley floor, and directly facing the Pacific. The soils are

marine in origin and really well-drained, all of the vineyards slope, the vines are old and embedded in struggle. We could not resist.

Our first effort is very good. It is masculine, with deep earthiness and a nearly rough muscularity. There is no fruitiness or any form of sweetness-- this was not our aim. The wine is subtle for all of its strength, and complex, yet it is neither as delicate as we would have liked, nor as simply expressive. It is somewhat brooding. I know so little about Pinot Noir-- I know that there are some excellent wines that have the same brooding character. Is this wine excellent? Is the vineyard by nature muscular and brooding? It is too early for us to tell, but we are going to devote ourselves to making something excellent from this very compelling site.

2012 HUDSON VINEYARDS GOLGOTHA RESERVE

100% Syrah; 100% whole-cluster, fermented in open puncheon with vigorous foot-treading. The Fall of 2012 was glorious in Lee Hudson's Widowmaker Syrah block. The catastrophe of 2011 was still present in everyone's imagination in September 2012, as the fruit ripened early, and in perfect conditions of dry, cool air. The wines that we made from it are both intense and animal, with Androkteinos showing the complexity that we have only found recently in the Golgotha, from the higher, northern section of the rows. 2012 is so good that Androkteinos equals Golgotha from previous years, and the Golgotha soars. Golgotha is dense but graceful and perfumed, like the Androkteinos-- but it is darker and deeper, even more intense. It shows the whole-cluster character more clearly, and, for all its intensity, it is the most classical Golgotha we have made.

For some reason, nearly every fermentation from this vineyard became slow or stalled in 2012, yet every single one eventually finished on its own. The wine that went into Golgotha came not only from the best section of the vineyard, but from one of the best fermentations. Two thirds of it came from a puncheon named by Alex Kongsgaard for George Frederick "Buzz" Beurling, a great Canadian RAF fighter ace of the Second World War; a third came from another fermentation, named by Alex for Bucephalus, the war horse of Alexander the Great.

2012 WOLFSKILL VINEYARD WOLFSKILL RESERVE

100% Cabernet Sauvignon from old vines in rocky soil; about 60% destemmed and fermented with pumpover of juice, and about 40% whole-cluster, fermented in open puncheon with significant foot-treading.

The source of this wine is the old vine, dry-farmed, Cabernet that Steve Tenbrink farms on a hillside in Suisun Valley. The vineyard somehow has the character to recapture the more delicate and herbal Napa benchland wines of the 70s; our winemaking emphasizes this, rather than richness or extraction. We are honored and delighted to be working with this fruit. The reserve wine is a blend of puncheon fermentation, with some whole cluster and foot-treading, and wine from the larger wooden tank, pumped over once or twice per day. All of the wine was selected for the riserva during the summer of 2013, and aged separately in neutral oak for nearly two years. The wine has more in common with Nebbiolo than most contemporary Cabernet; it is high-acid, light, even filigreed, and achieves a degree of transparency uncommon in such red wines. Very exciting. This is the only wine where it seems important to offer instructions on opening: I would wait until about 2019. Though the wine is light, it is also dense and closed. Give it time.

2014 TENBRINK FAMILY VINEYARDS OLIO NUOVO

In 2006, just we started planning the construction of our winery, the Tenbrinks decided to plant an olive grove on the property. They consulted with friends and colleagues in the area, and did research on European olive oil production, and decided to plant an experimental grove of nearly twenty different varieties. We have always been devoted to both learning and complexity in everything that we do, so the method seemed perfect to us: destined to offer the greatest opportunity for learning, and the highest possible complexity in the oil. I am so happy with their decision. We have made oil together for 3 years now, and this year have begun

tasting our oil against the small-production oils of some of the best wineries in Europe. And we are proud of how our oil stacks up against them. One of the factors is surely the complexity of our fruit source.

We harvested the fruit ourselves on the 22d and 23d of October, after we had harvested all of our grapes for wine, and as most of the fermentations in the winery were reaching completion. We harvested about 2500 lbs from about 80 trees, pressed the fruit immediately on the 23 at the amazing mill only a few miles down the road. The oil is still quite green and powerfully fragrant. The solids are beginning to settle to the bottom of the bottles; after they all settle out, the oil becomes more fragile. We recommend consuming the oil right now; if you want to age it, let it settle for a couple of weeks after you receive it, and then decant it carefully off the solids. We are aging some right now at the winery which we will treat in the same way: in a few days, we will rack this oil of its solids, age it in stainless for a few more months, and then bottle and release it early in the Spring. It will be completely stable at this point and will easily keep for a year or two.