



the EQUINOCTIAL ECLIPSE RELEASE OF 2015

This shipment is highly seasonal: because we bottled only 5 wines and one more Blowout this Spring, your shipment represents everything that we bottled. There are no red wines because we did not bottle any! You will have to deplete your cellar, and then wait for our Fall release for more.

2014 LOST SLOUGH VINEYARD NAUCRATIS

100% Verdelho; 100% whole-cluster pressed; fermented in stainless steel, chilled and protected from oxygen.

It was a fantastic year in Lost Slough; I hesitate to multiply superlatives and accolades for this wine. It is crisp and powerful at once, and was influenced and shaped by, or at least manages to echo, the wines that we tasted in Austria this Summer. It is our most Austrian Verdelho. Drink now and for 5 more years at least.

2014 LOST SLOUGH VINEYARD RIQUEWIHR

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

We harvested this fruit incredibly early: on August 1. But it was still quite ripe—and the wine shows it. It is not as light and delicate as the wines of 2012 and 2013; but, thank goodness, not quite the bruiser that the wines were in 2010 and before. Very fragrant, nearly raucous. I would hold on to this wine for at least a year, and serve it with someone or something loud.

2014 BECHTOLD RANCH RHODODACTYLOS

100% Cinsault from own-rooted vines planted in about 1870 in sandy soil in the center of Lodi; 100% whole-cluster pressed; fermented in stainless steel from juice only, chilled and protected from oxygen.

This is a beautiful, light, high-acid wine. Yields were terribly low in Bechtold this year, and berry size was very small. This has the most intensity of any Rhododactylos, and, because of the small berries, lots of color in spite of our delicate pressing. The wine is exceptional—more white wine in the mouth than rosé, in spite of its color. We made it to drink immediately, and we succeeded—but experience with older vintages has also taught us that this wine ages well. The exceptional fruit quality suggests that this will age for 5 years without difficulty.

2014 KIRSCHENMANN VINEYARD FTP

100% Pinot Grigio from 30 year-old vines planted in the sandy wash of the Mokelumne; about 85% juice and 15% whole-cluster, fermented in open puncheon with minimal foot-treading.

A wine of great delicacy and precision; certainly our best FTP yet. Heat pressed us to harvest suddenly and we succeeded in capturing the fruit at its freshest and with perfect ripeness—no roasting of the skins, no softness or flattening of flavors. One sees the effect of the nearly red skins, and one senses as a shadow their effect on the wine—but on the whole, it is another white wine of lightness and precision from the center of Lodi.

2013 MICHAEL MARA VINEYARD MICHAEL FARADAY

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

Steve pruned and thinned the vineyard in 2013 to try to allow it to recover from the rigors of 2012, and it sprung back well. Our section bore 3 tons; the most that we have ever harvested from this vineyard. And fruit quality was very high; there was more vegetation in the vineyard, not just more fruit—and so the fruit was better shaded than in the past. Growing conditions remain rigorous, but for once, one could not call them “harsh.” The wine shows this richness, and, one might even say, a lack of sharp definition compared to previous vintages. My thinking is that it needs time for complexity and difficulty to rise up and meet richness and power. I would sit on this wine for at least a couple of years.

2014 BLOWOUT ROSE SPARKLING WINE

We sold out of our first release of Blowout so quickly that we could not put any in a shipment for you. But have had this rosé in the wings, and you are getting the very first bottles as they come off the line.

The wine is about 65% Verdelho, and 20% each Sauvignon Blanc and Grüner Veltliner-- and about 4% Cinsault made as red wine. The Verdelho and Gruner were grown in the Lost Slough vineyard in the Sacramento River Delta; the SB from Farina in Sonoma; and the Cinsault from historic Bechtold in Lodi. We harvested and fermented the Verdelho and Gruner together, in sealed and refrigerated stainless steel tanks with lucky cat banners on them, and used lots of SO2 to inhibit malolactic fermentation. We made the other wines separately and composed the final blend only in February-- after the first, white, Blowout had instantly sold out. The wine is lightly stained by the Cinsault, a brilliant and luminous light pink.

We have no idea how or if this wine will age. Drink by dawn of January 1 2016.

In contrast to this ancient and rustic method of Pétillant Naturel, we call ours Pétillant Industriel, or the Méthode Futuriste. We take this name from the difficult Italian thinker Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who advocated the abolition of pasta from the Italian diet. He promoted a cuisine based on speed and technological intervention, intended to free his nation, through the belly, from "the dungeons of history" and the "trembling traditionalists" who held it back. While we do not crave the stamp of his authority, it is good to have a theoretical scaffolding for the forced carbonation of a beverage.

2014 TENBRINK FAMILY VINEYARDS TRADITIONAL OLIVE OIL

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 21st and 22d 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 22d at Il Fiorello, the amazing mill only a few miles down the road.

We released an Olio Nuovo immediately, with our Fall wine release, bottled only 5 days after pressing. The oil was amazing; more vibrant than anything I had ever smelled or tasted. I am still using it-- but its power is fading. This is exactly what the owners of Il Fiorello had projected. They instructed us that for immediate use, Olio Nuovo was perfect. But for use into the Spring and Summer, and until the next Olio Nuovo would be pressed-- during this time, we would want an oil produced in the traditional way: settled after pressing in larger containers, and then decanted in the Spring into the small bottles that the oil would eventually live in. This is what we did in 2014 with all of the oil; and that oil is still superb and seems no less fresh than it did a year ago. And so this is the method that we have chosen for the second half of our 2014 harvest: settle until Spring, and then bottle.