

Ceritas

FALL 2008 ISSUE

Dear Friends,

First we would like to extend thanks and gratitude to all the people who sought us out for our initial release. We began Ceritas as an experiment and asked ourselves an important question, "Can two people with a passion for crafting wines that are a unique reflection of place and time, do no unnecessary harm to the environment and run a company which is morally and socially responsible?" We felt that we could.

As many of you already know, Ceritas is committed to crafting wines that allow the expression of place through Chardonnay and Pinot Noir with an emphasis on winegrowing along the Sonoma Coast and western Russian River Valley. We forage for sites that speak to us. Our sites allow us the opportunity to craft balanced wines and that are to be consumed with food and friends rather than drunk on their own.

We allow our sustainable farming practices to be dictated by season and observation rather than employing prescriptive farming. We work with like-minded individuals and companies that share these values. All of our vineyards are either farmed biodynamically or are in the initial stages of being converted to biodynamic farming methods. Why we do this is simple. We feel that biodynamic and organic farming methods allow the vine to know what it is experiencing and respond, thereby allowing the greatest expression of place. From spring frosts, to high winds during bloom to late season maladies, each of our vineyards needs directed attention rather than the same farming year in, year out. By allowing the vine to experience as close to a natural balance with its environment we find that the vine's ability to express place becomes more focused. Just as you can taste the difference between oysters grown in Tomales Bay compared to ones from the Puget Sound - we want you to experience that same sense of place in enjoying wines from us.

Starting in 2008, we have decided to offset our company's impacts to the environment by joining 1% For the Planet. Each year, 1% of our gross revenue, profits or no profits, will be donated to a grassroots organization focused on cleaning up our actions in the environment. In placing your order with Ceritas, you are automatically participating in our cause to reverse or mitigate our collective environmental impact. In 2008, the organization that will be receiving our donation is Surfrider Foundation - San Francisco Bay Chapter.

Ceritas has also been fortunate to have a community supporting our goals. The backbone to this community is the Porter-Bass family and vineyard. In 2001, I had the chance to meet the Porter-Bass family while working for Flowers Winery. During a tasting in the cellar with Hugh Chappelle, winemaker for Flowers at the time, we came across a Chardonnay that had been grown at Porter-Bass. The wine impressed me in its purity and expression and reminded me of Puligny-Montrachet. After contacting the Bass family, I stopped to visit the vineyard and quickly became friends with the family. Several years passed before meeting Sue and Dirck' daughter, Phoebe Bass. Phoebe and I shared a commitment to her family' vineyard and started Ceritas in 2005 using Porter-Bass grapes as our first grape source. In addition, her brother Luke shares in the farming of the vineyard along with serving as the winemaker to his own winery, Porter-Bass.

In 2006, we made only one wine and it is from this beautiful site.

VINTAGE 2006

The 2006 vintage was full of surprises. By mid-April the North Coast saw no more rain. A late spring was warm and canopies grew healthfully. Average temperatures through June and July were a full 5+ degrees above average but cooler weather arrived in August and September which allowed for an even and gradual ripening. In early August growers in Sonoma County and Carneros started to report signs of botrytis. Vigilant efforts thanks to Sue kept the botrytis at bay at Porter-Bass but as time progressed signs that it was spreading were confirmed. The day before we picked, Phoebe field sorted by dropping over 30% of the fruit on the ground to ensure the highest quality leaving the vineyard.

In the winery, the Chardonnay went through a rigorous sorting process. Primary fermentations were initially fast but the winter months brought things to a halt. Spring weather the following year reinvigorated the yeast and primaries finished in early summer 2007 with malos finishing pre-harvest 2007. The wine shows good intensity highlighted by subtle pear and linden blossom notes. The palate is fresh and shows typical Porter-Bass minerality and natural acidity. In comparison to the 2005, the wine shows more exotic notes of guava, toasted hazelnuts and spice.

ESCARPA

Finally, the good news is that Ceritas is growing, albeit slowly. In 2007, we were fortunate enough to have met the acquaintance of Milan and Tish Momirov in Occidental. Milan and Tish have owned a beautiful property west of Occidental for the past 10 years. When they acquired their new land, they also inherited a semiabandoned vineyard that had been planted back in the 1960's. We had been inquiring about working with the vineyard for the past two years and got the opportunity to work with some Pinot Noir from their vineyard in 2007. No commercial release of wine has been made from the property. We jumped at the opportunity to work with Pinot Noir from this unique site. In 2008, Ceritas took over farming the Escarpa vineyard which will allow us to farm the highest quality fruit possible. Initial impressions of the wine reveal a wine with great promise. The wine reminds me more of a Burgundy than a Californian Pinot Noir. The first release of Escarpa will follow in the late Summer of 2009.

From our hands to your table we thank you for your support of Ceritas - without it our dream would not be possible.

John Raytek & Phoebe Bass