

Ceritas

S P R I N G 2 0 1 2 I S S U E

Dear Friends,

As growers and winemakers who seek a pure expression of vintage and site, 2010 was a challengingly long, cool and damp year to be tending vines in western Sonoma county, but in the end we were blessed with a vintage perfectly suited for the wines that we strive to make.

Because our intent has always been to make the wine in the vineyard rather than resorting to cellar tricks, we and our growers had our work cut out for us, but the reward was the vibrantly ripe, complex fruit at lower sugar levels that we consider ideal.

And as this model ripeness lends itself so well to vineyard expression, 2010 is also a great vintage for introducing our first Chardonnay from one of the Sonoma Coast's iconic sites, the Charles Heintz Vineyard.

We've long admired Charlie Heintz' perfectionist farming of his now 30 year old Chardonnay vines, and the fine wines from here made over the years by Littorai and DuMol.

So when the opportunity to craft Chardonnay from Heintz came, we didn't hesitate, and are thrilled with the results - its spicy complexity and resonant depth is wonderfully balanced by bright acidity, sappy texture and its close to the Pacific briny minerality.

And, it provides a fascinating contrast to the taut elegance of our flagship Porter-Bass Vineyard Chardonnay.

As the Burgundians have known for centuries, Chardonnay is not only one of the world's true noble varietals, it also gives voice to the place where it is grown with remarkable transparency, as the distinct characters of our 2010 Chardonnays clearly demonstrate.

Our Pinot Noir release for spring 2012 is also something new - our first blended wine. "annabelle" Pinot Noir is composed of small lots from two Sonoma Coast vineyards, and while both were of the requisite fine quality we seek, they were small enough to pose a question - did it make sense to bottle them separately or

would it be better to combine them?

Our final decision was inspired by a different European tradition, that of Barolo where the classic method was to blend from different sites to achieve a balance of fruit, perfume and structure, resulting in a quintessential expression of the region.

We feel that the 2010 “annabelle” is just such a wine for the Sonoma Coast, combining all of the qualities we love about the Pinots from this cool growing area - the rose petal, baking spice and dark cherry aromas and flavors balanced by forest floor and earth, and the weightless intensity and fine structure in a wine more immediately accessible than our more brooding 2010 Escarpa Vineyard Pinot.

We've certainly felt this way before, probably even said it in newsletters - one of our favorite parts of making wine is the feeling that we're on a journey through these phases of the seasons. The land is dormant, latent and suddenly flowering and responsive, and we watch, usually awed, and do our best to react and harness the very best of what we're given.

In 2010 we feel as though we were lucky again to have superlative - if markedly different from a riper vintage like 2009 - raw materials, and we're exceedingly happy with the results. We hope you enjoy these wines.

Thank you for your continued support. Be well.

John Raytek & Phoebe Bass