

## LIBRARY TASTING 2017

This is the first in a series of tasting notes from a comprehensive tasting which took place in February 2017.

Never had we sat down to taste all of the wines we have produced over a series of consecutive days and in doing so, we learned several things: first, the quality of the wines impressed us (even though we are biased); many of them had aged into beautiful examples of what is possible from noble California terroir. Secondly, vintage played an important role in how the wine was shaped; cold vintages like 2010/2011 allowed deep penetrating acidities to shine, drought years like 2013-2015 produced dense wines with great balanced acidities and unique vintage like 2005, 2006, 2008, 2012 all produced wines that had no equal in the last 12 years. Lastly, we feel like wine can be enjoyed at a variety of stages during its evolution, therefore, a wine that is 1-2 years old can be just as delicious as an older version of itself.

Finally, tasting wine is an objective event and what I taste may not be what you taste so pull a few corks from the wines below and share them with a friend or loved one.

### CHARLES HEINTZ VINEYARD CHARDONNAY / WEST SONOMA COAST

2010 Pale yellow. Highly aromatic, fruit-driven nose offers sweet yellow grapefruit, ripe lemon and kumquat. Shows a distinctly fruity sweet nectarine and linden blossom element in the mouth with considerable mineral firmness. Boasts concentration and breadth and finishes chewy, salty and long. Production was a low 25 hL/HA resulting in great concentration and expressiveness.

Enjoy now. Will continue to evolve well for next 3-7 years.

2011 Pale yellow. Complex aromas of quinine, lemon shave ice, mint and crushed stone. Even more minerality than it's cold vintage cousin of 2010. Offers the inner-mouth tension showing a sharply chiseled quality to its grapefruit and mineral flavors. Fine grained, dry and classic, but the penetrating density of the long cool growing season is ever present here.

Totally enjoyable now but should age beautifully for another 5-10+ years.

2012 Very pale green lemon color. The nose conveys high-pitched aromas of lemon curd, white pepper and iodine oyster-shell minerality. Super concentrated, elegant and weightless on the palate with penetrating flavors of citrus peel, sea salt and liquid chalk. No corners on this wine. A great wine in the making, utterly seamless from start to sappy, palate staining finish.

At attention right now and fully enjoyable. Drink one if you have a few; you will not be disappointed. Should age gracefully for 5-12+ years.

2013 Very pale yellow. It possesses tons of energy in reserve. With time in the glass hints of salt, crushed chalk, blood orange and white flowers start to take shape. Suggests a profound wine in coming years. Breathtaking for its clarity and precision. There is something new to discover with each taste as the wine opens up in the glass. Finish is long, persistent and beguiling.

Open now, decant 30 minutes at room temp, or better yet decant and put in refrigerator for 1-2 hours before enjoying. Much more to come from this wine in 3-11+ years.

2014 Yellow. The 2014 is defined by density, precision and cut. A pure, crystalline wine, it shows fabulous balance and tons of pedigree. White stone fruits, gravenstein apples and jasmine all come to life as

the wine virtually sparkles on the palate with its irrepressible energy. The finish is beautiful, long, polished and vibrant. This is one of the most taut examples we have made from Charles Heintz.

Holds much in reserve right now. Put away for now. Should give another 10+ years of enjoyment.

2015

Pale yellow-green. Nose is dominated by wet stone and menthol, with primary fruits deep in the background. Rich and silky in the mouth with enticing fruit sweetness but little obvious fruit to show for it. Shows very noble minerality with distinct iodiny quality lingering in the nose. Taut and savory with an energetic finish.

Full of promise and energy. Put away.

## PORTER-BASS VINEYARD PINOT NOIR / WEST SONOMA COAST

2012 Pale brick red. Tight aromas of narcissus, sour cherry and wet hay convey a medicinal aspect that is leavened by intense purple flower aromas. Moderate ripeness but tangy and tight, showing little in the way of early sweetness. Wine comes across as cool in style and a bit angular still to date. Dusty palate finishes long and persistence with moderate tannins still framing the wine.

Drink one now. Hold for another 3-5 years and check in.

2013 Medium brick red. A bit darker and less floral than the 2012 right now. Offering scents of raspberry and dried garrigue herbs complicated by intense orange blossom. A bit less angular than expected from Porter-Bass, showing more easy sweetness due to tiny-berries from 2013. Finishes with substantial serious tannins and subtle nose of salty, slatly minerality. This should age nicely over time given the higher proportion of stem material used in vintage.

Complex. Drink one now with some decanting. Hang onto at least one, should reward 7-12+ years.

2014 Moderate deep ruby red. Great delicacy and class with aromas of tart dark cranberries, violet pastilles, talc and burnt matchstick. Wonderfully silky and brooding at the same time with superb inner-mouth lift. Most impressive today with long, dry, rising finish where sauve tannins arrive late with hints of graphite and iron shavings. Outstanding potential due to near perfect balance. Harmonious.

I like this one in it's current stage. Should age a little more quickly than the 2013.

2015 Dark crimson red. Aromas of dark cherry, black raspberry, crushed stone and cinnamon convey an initial sexy carnal quality to the wine. Velvety and broad but also light on it feet; more about the deep red fruits and inner-mouth youthful perfume than earth tones – these will come later with bottle age. Perhaps a bit youthfully clenched but substantial tannins are ripe and harmoniuous and continuous throughout the wine. This is a classic wine.

Young and stout. Hold.

## ELLIOTT VINEYARD PINOT NOIR / WEST SONOMA COAST

2012 Pale bright brick red. Knockout discreet nose combines raspberry, Asian spices, rose petal and cinnamon oil. Extremely intense in the mouth, with its imploded flavors of saline minerality conveying outstanding definition and energy. Finishes with noble building tannins and lovely red berry, spice and crushed-stone perfume. Higher-pitched and redder than other vintages. Hitting its stride right now.

Drink one now. Hold onto the others for a few more years.

2013 Pale ruby-red. Deep, brooding yet expressive scents of boysenberry, raspberry leaf, pekoe tea and cayenne. Conveys a rare combination of texture and terrific life, with sappy fruit flavors lifted by spices, minerals and orange zest. Offers superb cut for such a deep wine. Finishes with a big tannic structure but no heaviness or dryness. Light on its feet but oh so compelling right now.

Delicious. Approachable now and expressive with a little bit of air. Should age gracefully for another 5-12+ years.

2014 Deep bright scarlet. Wild, musky aromas of blue and purple berries, violet and game. Thick and pliant with deep flavors of crushed fruit, mineral and grilled meats. More precise than the 2015 with long and ripe tannins. Classy wine with great energy. Dry, long, rising finish, where the very sauve tannins arrive late. Small clusters led to deep, classic wine.

This wine never fails to grab me. One of the best Pinot's we have made to date. The complete package. Drink now or through 2030.

2015 Deep crimson. Very dark due to low yields (<15 hL/HA), liqueur-like nose hints at candied white flowers, sandalwood, mulch and minerals. Thick, plush and deep, delivering great depth of texture indicative of the year. Exotic spice and earth tones emerge with flavors of red mulberries, rose petals and petrol with plush, broad tannins totally coated by fruit, this tactile wine is hard to scrape off the palate. Brings tons of mineral and floral notes and definition.

Drink one now to get a sense of the wine. Put these away for a few years to let the wine harmonize.

## "COSTALINA" PINOT NOIR / WEST SONOMA COAST

2010 Dark red. Ripe, slightly high-toned with fresh dark fruit aromas of cherry, bergamot orange peel and sarsaparilla. Lifted palate with sweet flavors that comes across magically fresh with huge material and powerful fruit. This really stains the palate on the aftertaste, finishing broad, building tannins and outstanding aromatic complexity. Starting to show its age a bit with undertones of earth and wet forest floor. Labeled as "annabelle" in 2010.

Drink now. Should age another 3-5 years.

2011 Bright, full red. Very closed still, yet delicate nose offers scents of orange oil, oolong tea, pennyroyal and bright cherry minerals. Soil driven, saline and taut, with powerful minerality accentuating the wine's delicate concentration. Tactile yet light on its feet, the vibrant wine saturates the entire mouth with perfume and hints of graphite. Moderate refined tannins are backed by long wispy finish.

Drink now with an hour or two in the decanter. Should continue to age another 5-10+ years with good cellaring.

2012 Tightly-coiled and bristling with pure energy. Dark cranberry, mulberry, savory herbs and mint lay quietly in the nose. Powerful and structured, yet light on its feet; boasts medium density, sweetness and inner perfume. Firm yet beautifully integrated tannins suggest another couple of years in the cellar will reward. This is the most intensely mineral and haunting of all of the "costalina" wines. Beautiful and thought provoking.

Open one now.

2013 Bright medium red. Compelling perfume of rainer cherry, dried fir duff, game and wet stone. Tactile and vibrant in the mouth, with complex flavors of dark red cherries, flint and white flowers accented by soil and wet moss nuance. Not as thick as the 2014 currently, but wonderfully expressive and a complete village level wine. Finishes saline and sweet, with fine-grained tannins and superb length.

Between the 2013 and 2014, drink the 2013 now, put the 2014 away for a bit longer. Don't hold onto it forever as the wine is best enjoyed young in its primary profile.

2014 Pure, reticent aromas of kirsch, licorice and Chinese five spice. Less expressive than further aged examples. Hugely concentrated and compellingly sweet in the mouth, but with outstanding sappy energy backed by flavors of black raspberry, minerals and peach pit. Near perfect balance between flesh and mineral energy. Finishes with outstanding tactile persistence and complicating saline quality, the tannins perfectly supported by the youthful but strong extract.

2015 Medium red. High-pitched perfume of crushed raspberry, red cheery and blood orange. Boasts compelling richness and depth of fruit. A wine of great sweetness right now and early balance, this spectacular rendition maintains outstanding fullness and breadth through a rising finish. Noble tannis, savory minerality and astonishing lightness of being, this is the essence of Pinot Noir.

Hold for now. Or decant for 3-4 hours before serving.