

December 2004

*Arthur Earl Winery*

# *Society Pages*

## *Update on All Our Wines*

December is one of only two months each year that all of our members receive wine in the same month. This makes it a good time to provide an update on all of our wines, including a little bit about what is to come. We still have some of the 2003 Pinot Grigio, which is good, because the 2004 will not be bottled until February. When it is, however, I think it will be our best Pinot Grigio ever, in part do to fruit from a new vineyard. The 2002 Viognier is being replaced this month with the 2003. There may be a few cases of the 2002 left if you want to get some before it is gone. We have just released a new vintage of Grenache, our first from the Santa Ynez Valley. The new Mourvedre was released in October. Our 2000 Syrah continues to get better, showing the effects of long bottle aging. There is still some of the 2001 A Genoux left, and the 2002 is aging nicely in the bottle. The 2002 is a different blend of grapes, and the flavors are something to look forward to. The 2001 Silver (Reserve) Syrah is almost gone, with less than 10 cases available. It will be followed immediately by the 2002 vintage, which is another wine I am really looking forward to. Our Nebbiolo was released in June and is as popular as ever. We also released Barbera in June, unfortunately, that is sold out already. The 2001 IL RE disappeared in November and was immediately replaced by the 2002, a slightly different blend but just as good. Finally, our Moscato is as popular as ever. We did not make any this year, so when what we have now is gone, there will probably be a gap until the 2005 is ready. This is also the perfect time for me to thank all of you for your continued support. As you know, virtually all of our wine is sold directly to you, the consumer, so we do not have much business from restaurants, supermarkets and wine shops to rely on. We like it that way. Art

## Holiday Gift Selection

Many of you are familiar with Barbera who has been a stalwart in our tasting rooms for many years (she won't let me tell you how many). Barbera has put together a terrific selection of new merchandise in the tasting room that is available just in time for the holidays, and it is all wine and food related. We have an excellent selection of decanters, including some from Riedel. They are lovely and range in price from \$120 to \$310. We also have an assortment of books on wine and food. Recently we added a selection of reproductions of old French wine posters, some of which are available on canvas, and a great selection of high quality placemats and coasters. They have wine themes and scenes of Italy and are available separately or as matched sets. All in all it is a wonderful selection of perfect gifts for the food or wine person on your list.

### **Viognier ~ Vogelzang Vineyard ~ Santa Ynez Valley ~ Santa Barbara County**

Viognier is one of the three northern Rhone white varieties found in common usage, and probably, the most common and popular of the three. This version has great flavors of peaches and apricots, with the peach definitely dominating in this wine. Because of the forty percent new oak barrels used for fermentation and aging, it has a wonderful richness, almost sweetness that compliments the peach flavor, although there is no significant residual sugar in the wine

### **2000 Syrah ~ El Pomar Vineyard ~ Paso Robles**

Start with the dark red color to get a hint of the structure and body of this wine. Much of the complexity of the blend comes through on the nose and the palate with hints of coffee and chocolate from the Syrah, cinnamon from the Grenache and clove from the Mourvedre. This is a very big, chewy wine not for the faint of heart. Enjoy with roasted meats and dark sauces. About 350 cases produced.