

January 2005

Arthur Earl Winery

Society Pages

Happy New Year!

It hardly seems like a full year has passed since the last time I sent these wishes. All of us here at Arthur Earl wish you and your families a happy and prosperous New Year. In the wine industry, of course, our new year really starts in September when the grape harvest begins in earnest, and ends in August with the last bottling of the year. Looked at from that perspective, we are a good five months into our "wine" year. We have completed harvest and our first bottling of the year and are well into our first racking cycle. In fact, the 2004 Pinot Grigio and Viognier are already in the bottle, although they will receive some bottle age before they are released. This is especially true for the Viognier, as our 2003 Viognier was just released in December. The 2004 Pinot Grigio will probably be released in June. The new Grenache we released just a couple of months ago continues to be exceptionally popular. Each year there is at least one wine that exceeds our expectations. In 2004, first it was the 2002 Barbera, which lasted only four months, and then it was the Grenache. In 2003, it was the Mourvedre. The Grenache is from a new vineyard so it is nice to see that we made a good decision with that choice. The 2001 Silver Label (Reserve) Syrah is gone, and has been replaced with the 2002 vintage. I actually like it better, but it is a bigger wine, not as much dominated by the upfront fruit, so we will see what our Wine Society members think. Later this year we will have a new regular Syrah from a new vineyard, the same vineyard that produces our Silver Label Syrah, and an exciting new A Genoux with four different Rhone varieties and flavors that I find really impressive. Hope to see you soon. Art

This Month's Wines

This should be a great shipment for most of you. These are two big and complex red wines for you to enjoy. Both are untypical, too, when it comes to what you usually find in the tasting rooms of Santa Barbara County. Our *A Genoux* is a southern Rhone style blend of the grapes that typically appear in wines from that region, such as *Chateauneuf du Pape* and *Cotes du Rhone*. Each year the varieties and percentages will change, but it will always be three to five different varieties blended to make an appealing wine. Our first vintage contains the three most common varieties, Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre, but with less emphasis on the Grenache than the French versions. The second wine is our Zinfandel. Full bodied with lots of fruit flavors all the way through. Anyone who would make pink wine from this stuff is crazy.

2001 A Genoux ~ Central Coast

This type of blend is a long time tradition in this part of France, which is a testament to their success. It is an example of how the whole can be more than just the sum of the parts, as the complexity of the wine attests. 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. Enjoy with roasted meats and dark sauces. About 360 cases made.

2002 Zinfandel ~ Paso Robles

The raspberry aromas highlighted on the nose explode into flavor on the palate. Although somewhat muted on the nose, the peppery quality of many good Zins shows up on the palate. Jammy fruit at the start gives way to a smooth finish, as the lower alcohol level of this vintage does not grab your palate the way the 2000 vintage did. This wine will continue to mature and age well for some time to come. About 265 cases made..