

November 2004

Arthur Earl Winery

Society Pages

Miscellany

Well, harvest lasted just a little bit longer than expected. We thought we were finished on November first, but another local winery asked us to do some grapes for them on November 4th, so we actually finished pressing and barreling on the 19th. Still, a lot earlier than normal to be “completely” finished with harvest. The wines from this harvest will be interesting to watch. We had almost ripe grapes with high sugars, and very ripe grapes with lower sugars, and a few varieties that were right where we want them. This is one of the few years I have seen in Santa Barbara County when the winemakers will really earn their money. In the tasting room we are running out of some wines and introducing some new ones. The Viognier will be gone in December, the Barbera, Grenache and Il Re are already out, and the Silver Label Syrah has just a few cases left. All but the Barbera will be replaced with new vintages. The next Barbera will not be released until next June. We have also added what I think is some great, new merchandise to the tasting room. We have fabulous reproductions of French wine posters very reasonably priced on heavy paper, and also available on canvas for somewhat more money. For a while now we have had terrific coasters with several wine themes, or scenes of Italy. Now, we are adding placemats to match. These are high quality and very attractive. Finally, we have a fine selection of duck decanters, including some from Riedel. They range in price from about \$129 to \$310. The \$310 Riedel is spectacular. All of these items make great gifts, and all are available with your 25% discount. Art

This Month's Wines

We are out, or about out, of both the wines you are scheduled to receive this month, so you are getting new vintages of both wines. This either just before they are released, or at virtually the same time. The Grenache is our first from the Vogelzang Vineyard, located at the eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley, at the foothills of Figueroa Mountain. The vines are not as old as the Collins Vineyard where our previous Grenache came from, but the farming is much better. All our future Grenache, we hope, will come from this vineyard. The Il Re is the second edition of this blend. While the first had slightly more Barbera than Nebbiolo, this one is reversed, with slightly more Nebbiolo than Barbera. Either way this combination is great.

2001 Grenache ~ Vogelzang Vineyard ~ Santa Ynez Valley ~ Santa Barbara County

The Grenache grape has many homes and faces. In Rioja, Spain, it's the grape second in importance to Tempranillo, and can show excellent character. In southern France including the southern Rhône Valley, Grenache can be a wine fit for a king (or a pope) in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and, sometimes, Gigondas. Grenache's rambunctious personality comes forward with ample red and black fruit, medium to full body, and easy to enjoy spicy flavors. Its versatility with other red grapes allows it to match nicely with lamb, pork and veal, but it's equally satisfying with eggplant, pasta or red snapper. The more serious, low-yield examples are fine with more complex meat and savory dishes. 225 cases made.

2002 Il Re ~ Carrari Vineyard ~ Santa Barbara County

Barbera and Nebbiolo are Italian varieties, produced throughout the Piedmont region, and are, in fact, the most planted grapes by far in that part of Italy, and in other parts of the Northwest. Italian Barberas and Nebbiolos can be very dark in color and equally full-bodied, even heavy and acidic, but these wines produced in the coastal regions of California are more medium in color and body and softer in tannin and acidity. This blend is a full-bodied but soft-textured wine with minimal tannins and good acidity. It exhibits wonderful aromas and flavors of fruit, mostly cherry, and is a pleasant, easy drinking, red wine that is very food friendly. 222 cases made.