

February - March 2006

Arthur Earl Winery

Society Pages

Catching Up

We have just finished our winter bottling, which means that our “off season” can start in earnest. Our wine year starts in mid-August when we gear up for harvest, and sometimes receive some early grapes. Harvest winds down about Thanksgiving, and then we are into the holidays. The beginning of the year is dominated by our winter bottling, and then things settle down a bit. We start a regular cycle of racking and washing barrels, and we get caught up on any maintenance that needs to be done. The routine is interrupted by more bottling in May and July, and before you know it we are ready to start a new “year.” The tasting room usually slows down from December through March, but this year the slow down has been much less than normal. Maybe it is the warm weather, the great economy, a combination of both, or some mysterious other factor beyond my comprehension. President’s Day weekend was a smashing success, combining the Santa Ynez Valley Wine Country Association’s Passport Event with visits from many of you and the rest of those taking advantage of the holiday weekend. It really was good to see so many of you in the tasting room. I can remember when I used to know most of the Wine Society members by name, but now with our large membership and less time in the tasting room for me, that is just impossible. It is great when you introduce yourselves, because when I am there I enjoy meeting and talking with all of you. For those of you who have not visited in a while, we have new vintages of Viognier, Syrah and IL RE, and all have been very well received. We will soon be introducing a second Syrah to our list (three if you count the Silver label). We are looking forward to another great year and plan to keep trying to make each new vintage a little better than the last. Thanks for your support. Art

This Month’s Wines

What a powerful selection we have this month for you red wine lovers out there, and that seems to be most of you. The wines are A Genoux and Zinfandel. I cannot remember us ever sending this combination before. The A Genoux has become my favorite wine, although it is close with several others. A Genoux is always a southern Rhone style blend with some combination of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Cunoise and Cinsaut. As with the French blends, this wine will almost always feature some Grenache. This particular vintage, however, has none, making it a unique and probably one of a kind blend. The flavors are unusual, but very compelling. I am never disappointed with this wine. The Zinfandel is another higher alcohol version like the one of a couple years ago. We like to pick these grapes very ripe to get the full bodied flavors we enjoy, and that results in the higher alcohol. Enjoy!

2002 ~ Central Coast ~ A GENOUX

The 2002 A Genoux manages to integrate a ripe rich style of wine with just the right amount of wood, to make a superb very well defined red. Its multidimensional nose is exciting, with aromas of roasted coffee, toasted cocoanut, black pepper and sweet leather, intertwined with a dense floral ripeness of violets, a fruity purity akin to black cherries, and ripe raspberries. In the mouth its bright fruit forward style is evident with a sweet jaminess that coats the palate, reminiscent of raspberry liqueur. Its fine tannins give indication to a well crafted and balanced wine that not only show fruit purity but oak extractions. The moderate acidity is also an indicator of the fruit quality the wine possesses, making it fresh and exuberant, but never heavy. On the finish, the oak becomes more evident, as the coffee and milk chocolate flavors intermix with the cherry and violet aromas, ending in a soft velvety mouth feel.

2003 ~ Paso Robles ~ ZINFANDEL

Zinfandel is considered the most American of grapes. Although its DNA has been matched to the Primitivo grape of southern Italy, its origins were more likely in the eastern European areas of Croatia. The nose of this wine is definitely Zinfandel. The great aromas of fresh fruit can not hide that unique aromatic nuance that one recent taster called “Zinfandel funk”. 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.