

January 2006

Arthur Earl Winery

Society Pages

One Year Ends . . .

And a new one begins. I would like to start the new year by thanking everyone of you on behalf of all of us at Arthur Earl for your continued support into 2006. I know that Nancy and Alexis, Barbera, Brett, Kelsey and Dyan, and Dack and Jose are all grateful for your business. And me, too. In 2005 we enjoyed continued success with our line of Rhone and Italian wines (plus Zinfandel). We introduced new vintages of almost every variety, and as usual, some of them became stars overnight. Also, as usual, it was impossible to predict in advance which wines would be the big new hits. In reality though, Arthur Earl enjoys an amazing balance in the sales of its wines. While some sell a little more and some a little less, all the varieties sell very well and there are no really big disparities. For several years now, the Italian varieties, Nebbiolo and Barbera, have been statistical leaders, but the new releases are helping the Rhone varieties catch up. The current A Genoux and Syrah are very popular. As far as winemaking goes, we have not changed very much. Each year we try a little harder to make the best wines we can and hope we learn a little more about how to do it. Occasionally there is a vineyard change that enters into the mix, but overall most of the differences are just variations in vintages or in the percentage of the blends we choose. With the successes of 2005 we are not planning any major changes for 2006, just more of the same good wines. I hope to see you soon and that you have a happy and prosperous new year. Art

This Month's Wines

As mentioned above, Nebbiolo and Barbera have been among our best selling wines since we introduced them. These are the two most prominent varieties from the Piedmont region of Italy (my favorite) and both have wonderful fruit components if not aged too long. In this shipment we are sending you both of these wines. Each is very food friendly, even more so if enjoyed with some classic Italian dishes. While you will be enjoying these two varieties individually from this shipment, when you get a chance, try a bottle of our IL RE, which is a blend of these two varieties in almost equal proportions.

2003 ~ Stolpman Vineyard ~ Santa Ynez Valley ~ Santa Barbara County

NEBBIOLO

The newest vintage of our Nebbiolo may be the smoothest and easiest drinking yet. As usual we see some variation from vintage to vintage. 2003 was a year in which we increased our production of this variety. The wonderful cherry flavors are still there. Each year I try to make this wine a little more "Italian" while maintaining the cherry-like richness that makes this wine so popular. The way this wine finishes makes me think I am on the right track. Considered by many to be the best Italian grape, Nebbiolo is the pride of the Piemonte (Piedmont) region in Northwest Italy. Our version is medium bodied and fruity. The cherry red color is a hint of the black cherry flavors that dominate this wine. There is just the right amount of acidity for an Italian red wine, which makes it an especially fine accompaniment to a good tomato sauce such as you might have on anything from pasta to fish to chicken to veal to beef. About 320 cases made.

2003 ~ Carrari Vineyard ~ Santa Barbara County

BARBERA

Barbera is an Italian variety, produced throughout the Piedmont region, and is, in fact, the most planted grape by far in that part of Italy, and in other parts of the Northwest. Italian Barberas can be very dark in color and equally full-bodied, even heavy and acidic, or sometimes lighter and fruity, but Barberas produced in the coastal regions of California are softer in tannin and acidity. This version is a full-bodied but soft-textured wine with minimal tannins. It exhibits wonderful aromas and flavors of fruit, mostly cherry, and is a pleasant, easy drinking, red wine that is very food friendly.

About 350 cases made.