

November 2005

Arthur Earl Winery
Society Pages

The End - Almost

After a very strange harvest season we are essentially finished, but we have our eye on some late harvest dessert wine grapes that we may receive in the next week or so. We started the harvest season waiting for things to get ripe. Then we had a burst of hot weather and the early ripening varieties all came in at once. Then it was more waiting and another burst of warm weather sent us another group of ripe grapes. After that we waited and waited and waited some more for the last varieties finish up. In the end almost everything was ripe, but some of the sugar levels were well below what we are used to. The only grapes we decided not to pick this year were Mourvedre; it just never got ripe. Overall, our problems this year do not necessarily mean any drop in quality. We did not compromise our standards when it came to our grapes. The biggest difference we will see is some wines with lower than normal alcohol levels. This may be a good thing as many people think that alcohol levels in wine have gotten too high anyway, and this year's will still be above what is common with our European friends. In the tasting room there are new wines as usual. December will see the release of the 2004 Viognier, the new vintage of our Rhone blend *A Genoux* happened just a few weeks ago and it joins the 2001 Syrah as new Rhone style releases this fall. The holidays upcoming are a busy time for us in the tasting room and a time when we enjoy meeting many of you again. The tasting room has a nice selection of potential gifts, most with a wine or food orientation, that you might want to check out. Hope we see you soon. Art

This Month's Wines

This month's selection is all about Italy. You are receiving two Italian red wines. The first is our always popular Nebbiolo. This vintage is turning out to be my favorite of the eight vintages we have released so far. The usual outstanding fruit is there, of course, but the flavors seem as complex and sophisticated as they can be. You are also receiving our Italian blend of Nebbiolo and Barbera, called *Il Re*. This marriage of the two great red grapes from the Piedmont region of Italy shows off the best of both varieties. I recommend trying the Nebbiolo first, followed by the *Il Re*. In this way you can experience the Nebbiolo by itself, and then see how the wine changes when the Barbera is blended in. Enjoy.

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

The newest vintage of our Nebbiolo may be the smoothest and easiest drinking yet. As usual we see some variation from vintage to vintage. 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. 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.

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 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.