

# THE MERCY MESSENGER

Monterey County

Fall Shipment, November 2013

Volume 4, Issue 2

## One for the Ages: A Merciful Harvest

*"To sum up, Mother Nature was kind this year," said Mike Kohne, winemaker for Mercy Vineyards, whose winery produces wines from the Arroyo Seco's trademark Chardonnay and Pinot Noir varieties. "In the Arroyo Seco we really had an idyllic growing season: dry and mild which limited yields and provided even ripening. Key indicators such as limited shatter, limited sun damage, small clusters and berries all highlighted nature's kindness. And, most importantly, the fruit tasted balanced and flavorful which points to outstanding vintage wines."*

- Wine Business Online, October 22, 2013

To state that Mother Nature was "kind this year" was probably a bit of an understatement. The facets of the 2013 growing season and harvest were in fact almost unimaginable. In a farmer's wildest dream; to go through an entire nine-month grape growing season without a multitude of weather related wrinkles, much less a single wrinkle, is in fact virtually impossible. However, this season and vintage the Arroyo Seco AVA experienced about as close to that dream as could ever be imagined.

A dry growing season, the region received only four inches of rain and not a drop after February. The arid conditions left the vines to struggle during critical

growth stages: bud-break, flower and set. This limited tonnage yields but is not that uncommon in the region. That said, uncommonly consistent ranges of daily temperatures (warm not hot), the absence of frost during the spring, coupled with virtually no heat spikes (consecutive days or weeks with temperatures above 95 degrees - the point at which vines start to shut down photosynthesis) is indeed a rarity.

Under the 2013 growing conditions fruit ripened very evenly. Further, it left the annual quandaries of both farming and, in a sense, winemaking (by virtue of when to harvest) entirely up to Mother Nature. It was a vintage made "easy" as no tough decisions were required! Now that is Merciful!!!



## In this Shipment: Holiday Fun!

Heading into the Holidays, Mercy is pleased to send club members two fan favorites from the Zabala Vineyard: the 2010 Chardonnay as well as the 2009 Syrah!



The Zabala property has been in the family's hands since the Spanish Land Grant. It is located adjacent to the seasonal creek and in the dry riverbed corridor of the appellation. It is a property in stark contrast to the properties that encompass much

of the fertile Salinas Valley.

Granite-based river rock washed out of the Santa Lucia Mountains litter the surface soil which is very meager and shallow. Planted in 1972, this windswept vineyard is meticulously managed by Luis and Joni Zabala.

From the Zabala Vineyard we received clone 4 chardonnay grapes on October 20, 2010. Arriving late in the season, the fruit was whole-cluster pressed and, due to the long hang-times, we fermented and aged in neutral French oak barrels for 14 months. The wine finished malolactic fermentation and has a creamy texture, balanced by the great natural acid levels achieved by the fruit. The

bouquet is classic with apples and pears in the forefront and mineral, lemon blossom and spice in the recesses.

As for the Syrah, in 2009 we received three clones of Syrah from Zabala; two French ENTAV clones (470 & 877) and one Australian, Barossa clone (7). Always the last grapes harvested, we barrel aged in French oak (18% new) for nearly two years before bottling. With a lower alcohol, this wine displays aromas of dusty plum, raspberry cream, dinner mint chocolate, lavender and spice.

As always, we hope you enjoy the wines! Happy Holidays!! Cheers.



Mark Dirickson



Mike Kohne

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### Holidays in the Tasting Room

Help the Monterey County Food Bank by bringing in your canned goods to the Tasting Room through December 25th. For those that contribute Mercy will add an additional 10% discount to any purchase made during your visit.

- SAVE THE DATE(S) -

### January 18th - The Forager

**Festival in Big Sur.** Join Mercy and other great wineries and renowned chefs as we battle it out in the *Fungus Faceoff*. Enjoy the world of wild food from 1pm - 4pm at Ventana Inn & Spa's deck in Big Sur.

### May 3rd - The MCVGA's

**Winemaker Celebration.** Stay tuned for more details on this, the 22nd annual event.



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## ARTISAN WINES FROM THE ARROYO SECO

**Mercy Wine Tasting Room**  
**40 W. Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley, CA 93924**  
**Thurs - Sun, 1pm to 5pm | T. (831) 659-4321**

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## Mercy in the Mercury

A couple nice articles have come out in the San Jose Mercury featuring Mercy wines. Both recent pieces featured different subject matter; one about visiting Monterey and its tasting rooms, while the other was about the Arroyo Seco AVA. But, in both Mercy was singled out as a top producer!

### **San Jose Mercury News**

in September the San Jose Mercury News put out its travel guide to Monterey County. In—and-amongst the insightful sections, columnist Jessica Yadegaran wrote a piece (Sept 17, 2013) titled “Carmel Valley: Five must-see Wineries”. In it she writes the following about travel to the area:

*Today, Carmel Valley, the quiet village 11 miles south of Carmel-by-the-Sea, boasts 19 wineries and tasting rooms, a healthy mix of iconic Monterey trailblazers (Talbot), new players (Mercy Vineyards) and established wineries looking for foot traffic. Everything on the lush, overgrown trail is within walking distance, but without the traffic and commercial presence of Carmel. This village is humble, and with vineyards nearby, the windy stretch of Carmel Valley Road that leads to the Cachagua Valley feels more like wine country. We spent a recent Sunday exploring the strip. Here's what stood out...*

Yes, Mercy was one of the (five) standouts. As we say, Have Mercy!

In addition to Ms. Yadegaran's article, the San Jose Mercury News also ran a nice piece on the Arroyo Seco and its 30th Anniversary as a designated American Viticultural Area (AVA). Written by Laurie Daniel, and syndicated beyond, the article is titled “The Arroyo Seco Has Arrived” and gives a pretty candid look at the achievements and promise of the relatively unsung and finite region.

Amongst the discussion of appellation, Laurie singled out Mercy as a good producer of both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir: “I tasted a number of wines from the area and, as a group, the chardonnays are probably the most impressive... there are good bottlings from Mercy, Wente, and Blair”, mentioning later “the 2010 Mercy Chardonnay (\$22), is lean and minerally with lemon, green apple and a kiss of oak.” As for Pinot Noir, Laurie states. “(it) is more of a work in progress, although there are some good ones from wineries such as La Rochelle, Mercy and J. Lohr...” again mentioning later, “Mercy produces several Arroyo Seco pinots, and my favorite was the one from Zabala Vineyard. The 2010 (\$38) is bright and spicy, with raspberry and cherry flavors.”

All-and-all nice compliments and members should note that the two Mercy wines singled out by Ms. Daniels will be in the next shipment!