

THE MERCY MESSENGER

Monterey County

Winter Shipment, December 2012

Volume 3, Issue 2

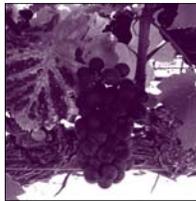
Harvest 2012 - Well, Balanced



Luis Zabala - Pinot Noir QC

Just last week we pressed and barreled down the final wine (Syrah) from the 2012 harvest. It's hard to believe but the winery has finished up its fifth harvest, and with the chaos subsiding, and the wines aging in their French oak barrels, we have a moment to reflect on what should be an amazing vintage!

Bud-break this year began in mid-March, following a relatively dry January and February (a total of 2 inches fell versus a normal 5 inches). And, as the vines pushed they were immediately met with a very wet and rainy March and April which combined for over 5 inches of rain (2 inches above the norm, respectively). The early rainfall aside, precipitation totals for the season were rather normal (dry) in the Arroyo Seco AVA. But what made 2012 remarkable was its balanced growing season.



La Tache Clone Pinot Noir at Griva Vineyard (8/22).

From May through September the region was blanketed with fog virtually every morning,

and yet the afternoons warmed up significantly (total degree days far exceed the past 2 years). That said, the 2012 growing season had very few days with temps of 100°+. Further, as Summer turned to Fall we continued to have very balanced heat - up until the final two days of the month, September had not seen a day over 80°. The constant, relatively mild weather gave us over a week of additional hang-time(s), allowing pH-levels to escalate (great for aromas) and acid levels to stay firm. In the end, Mercy began the 2012 Harvest on October 9th with Pinot Noir fruit from Zabala Vineyard. In fact, we picked all our pinot that same week (from 3 different vineyards) and over the next 24 days finished the entire harvest. As always, the Syrah was the last lot picked (Nov 2th).

Unlike the last two vintages, seasons which featured very cold summers with multiple heat spikes, the 2012 growing season seemed much more "normal" for the Central Coast, with a long development cycle leading to ideal numbers. Technically speaking, the numbers were in a nice sweet spot (lower sugars with respect to pH and acidity levels). The wines in barrel taste great and needless-to-say we look forward to their evolution and sharing the results with you...



Mark Dirickson checking sugars at Zabala Vineyard.

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Member News:

Mercy Wine Tasting Room -

We are getting ready and busy making final preparations for the Opening of our retail and wine tasting room in the Carmel Valley. Located at 40 West Carmel Valley (93924), we anticipate receiving our license in January 2013. Once opened the space will offer our club members a place to taste the Mercy wines and also pick up their shipments, should they so desire. The tasting room will be open Thursday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm (as well as by appointment), and wine club members will receive complimentary tastings for three people, total). We will have more details in our following Newsletter...

Save the Date - World of Pinot Noir: Sat, March 2, 2013. Join Mercy as we make our annual pilgrimage to Shell Beach for this fabulous tasting. Visit wopn.com for more details.

In this Shipment: Mercy Holidays!

The two wines in this Holiday shipment provide a nice snapshot of the 2010 vintage. Akin to the 2008s, the Mercy wines from 2010 are vibrant and show lots of rich, bright fruit components yet are elegant, complex with great texture.

Coming off back-to-back Editor Choice designations from Wine Enthusiast magazine, the 2010 Arroyo Seco Sauvignon Blanc is another crowd pleaser. Exclusively from the Zabala Vineyard, we source *musque* clone, stainless steel ferment and age the wine to enhance its natural flavors. Hailing from the Loire region of France the *musque* clone ties in nicely with the rocky, river soil types we find at the Zabala

ranch. The inherent nature of the clone in concert with our picking slightly immature fruit (23° brix, sugar), plus our vinification methods, help us produce a racy wine with fruit-forward characters of melon, citrus, straw-hay, white peppercorn and a sparkling mineral-notes.

The 2010 Griva Vineyard Pinot Noir follows up our inaugural vintage. This vineyard is located along the south-side of the river and is planted to multiple clones of Pinot Noir. We source four clones in total from Michael Griva, two "Dijon" clones (667 and 777) along with two classic clones (Martini clone 13 and La Tache clone). The "Dijon" clones constitute a majority (just over 60%)

of blend but the Maritini and La Tache selections add depth and intrigue to the recesses of the wine. Fermented in half-ton macro-bins, the extraction levels were great with the resulting wine aged in small French oak barrels (one new Dargaud & Jaegle barrel and six 2-year-old barrels). In summation, aromas of Bing cherries and raspberry cream exude from the glass as rustic notes of bramble berries and baking spices combine with floral and earthy-mineral tones in the recesses.

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

Mark Dirickson Mike Kohne

[Wine technical notes are enclosed]



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THE MERCY MESSENGER

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Schaeffer on Wine! Mercy, Mercy, Mercy

"A harmonious balance exists in all the wines, where everything is in its place and nothing sticks out. The fruit is direct and accessible, caressed by floral, mineral and earthy aspects as well..." Santa Barbara News-Press (11/1/12).

On November 1st, 2012, the Santa Barbara News-Press published a nice article about Mercy and some of the wines, including the two wines in this shipment. The article, written by long time wine columnist Dennis Schaeffer, is titled *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy* and gives some background on the winery, tying it into vintners Mark and Mike's past endeavors with



River rocks at Zabala Vineyard. To this Mr Schaeffer wrote, "all their grapes are sourced from riverbed vineyards with rocky and sandy but well drained soil that limits grape yields."

winemaker Alan Phillips in Santa Barbara wine country. A link to the article in its entirety can be found on the Mercy website in the News Broadcasts section.

As for the two wines found in this shipment, here is what Dennis states; regarding the

2010 Arroyo Seco Sauvignon Blanc, "From the Musque clone, this sauvignon blanc marches to a bit of a different drummer. Green melon and lemon verbena aromas meld with grapefruit, the latter far less aggressive than in New Zealand types. It's very clean and refreshing, almost racy on the nose. The flavors follow the aromas with green lemon and lemon verbena and kiwi, as well as a sense of minerality and just a whiff of jalapeno and green peppercorn. Actually despite the description, it's a subtle and laid back wine best enjoyed with food."

As for the **2010 Griva Vineyard Pinot Noir**, Mr. Schaeffer states, "This vineyard-designated wine is a more serious and focused representation of Monterey County pinot noir. Raspberry and cream are the first aromatic impressions, followed by both black and red cherry along with hibiscus as well as other floral and earthy notes. On the palate, the dark fruit, like black cherry and plum, come through first, then the raspberry and red cherry deftly slide in on mid palate. It shows a pristine sense of balance all the way around as well as being moderately bodied with a pleasant upbeat fruit tartness on the finish."

Having always admired Dennis' writing it was an honor to have the Mercy wines reviewed. Check it out at mercywines.com.