

THE MERCY MESSENGER

Monterey County

Winter Shipment, November 2014

Volume 5, Issue 3

2014v - A Lovely, Big Balancing Act

The beautiful thing about wine and winemaking is that every time one thinks they know the what's, how's and when's of a vintage or harvest Mother Nature throws in a curve. Or in this case a hanging curve that allows a producer to hit it out of the park!!

Keeping the winery on its proverbial toes, the 2014 vintage started early as pinot noir rolled in from Zabala Vineyard on Sept 2nd - the earliest pick date for pinot noir that we can recall over the last 15 years (making wines from Monterey, Santa Barbara and beyond over that span). Following the early beginning,



Sept 2, 2014 - First Bins

harvest stalled as we waited twenty days before the next round (more pinot) was deemed "ready". Then in the blink of an eye we finished all the pinot noir and chardonnay - 5 lots in 4 days. Ultimately, Harvest finished on October 8 with Mercy's first ever pick of Riesling. Cumulatively it took one month and 6 days... even with almost a three week stall the 2014 harvest was the most compressed harvest we've ever experienced at Mercy.

In certain respects, the 2014 vintage felt a lot like the previous (2013) vintage; in terms of elevated crop

loads (3 - 4 tons per acre in the self-limiting Arroyo Seco riverbed corridor), total degree days and both included a moderate late/key development window (the duration of time between veraison, when the grapes color up, and the pick date). However, with so many similar attributes the translations were very different as far as style of wine goes.

Now nearing a month of barrel age, with all the similarities between 2013 and 2014 could not be more different in character. The 2014 vintage wines looks to be a lot like the 1999, 2006 and 2007 vintages whereby the wines are very dark, dense and intense with great acidity and flavor (pH) components (while the 2013v wines are much more akin to the wine style of 2003 and 2005 from California).

When all said and done, the 2014 vintage appears very exciting and like the Harvest is lovely, big and balanced!!!



Photos from Harvest 2014

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Notes on our last shipment:

We were happy to learn, albeit after the sending of our last shipment, that the two wine club selections (2013 Zabala Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc and 2010 Cedar Lane Pinot Noir) both received 92 points from Wine Enthusiast.

We are extending to members the opportunity to purchase these wines with extended discounts. A special order form has been included in this shipment...

Visiting the Carmel Valley?

Check out CVWE

As part of the local chamber of commerce the Carmel Valley Wine Experience (CVWE), is devoted to highlighting many of the regional activities, and in particular the wine tasting rooms found in the Carmel Valley. The organization offers for sale a "Cellar Pass" that affords patrons the opportunity to taste at eight tasting rooms for fifty dollars. More information and ticketing details can be found on the CVWE's website www.cvwineexperience.com.

In this Shipment: The Riverbed!!

As we move into the Holiday Season, we are excited to share with you two inaugural wines: the 2012 Riverbed Chardonnay and 2012 Riverbed Pinot Noir. Both carry a proprietary designation of "Riverbed" as they come from contiguous properties in the Arroyo Seco's dry riverbed channel.

We always tell people the reason why we do what we do, where we do it, is because of the unique dried riverbed terrain found in a small sliver of the Arroyo Seco AVA. Having worked extensively throughout California's many growing regions, this finite spot has both ideal climate as well as meager surface soil (beds of granite and shale

river rocks) that diminish yield and produce grapes of dynamic flavor and character. It is a very special place.

The 2012 Riverbed Chardonnay hails from both the Zabala and Griva vineyards. Layering specific vineyard characters as well as varied clones (clone 4 and Robert Young selection, respectively), the wine was both fermented and aged in French oak barrels (about 20% new French oak from Francois Freres cooperage). Completing malolactic fermentation the resulting wine is creamy yet still very focused on fruit and minerality we find in the "riverbed" terrain.

The 2012 Riverbed Pinot Noir is the composition of three neighboring

properties: Cedar Lane, Griva and Zabala vineyards. Similar to its Chardonnay sister the layering of flavors allows us to showcase the beauty of point noir grown in this limited area.

Employing a multitude of clones; both heritage as well as "Dijon" clones, the bouquet is complex with delicate and nuanced red and black toned berry fruit. In the recesses one finds violets, rhubarb, baking spices and minerals.

Already the "Riverbed" wines have received a nice bit of acclaim (see the press article). We hope you enjoy the wines and Happy Holidays!!!!

 
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[Wine technical notes are enclosed]

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The Wine Press

92s Abound... Just a few days ago we received word that the 2012 Riverbed Pinot

Noir (in this shipment) will be given 92 points and the designation of "Editors Choice" from the Wine Enthusiast magazine (in the February issue). This news comes on the heels of two other wines receiving the same score from the same publication: the 2013 Zabala Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (in the last shipment) was also given 92 points and the designation of "Editors Choice", while the 2010 Cedar Lane Pinot Noir (also in the last shipment) was given 92 points and recapped in Wine Enthusiast's Central Coast Editor Matt Kettmann's article *Ready-Aged Beauties* (a great article about reviewing wines that have been held in bottle and sent after they developed a bit more complexity). The Wine Enthusiast also reviewed the 2012 Riverbed Chardonnay (in this shipment) giving it 89 points giving it glowing recap: "aromas of golden pear and buttered toast. The palate is dominated by racy tones of lemon peel and fresh-cut yellow flowers, but rounded out with a slight vanilla buttercream on the finish."

In addition to nice scores in the Wine Enthusiast the California Grapevine also favorably reviewed the Mercy wines. They gave the 2012



Riverbed Chardonnay a score of 90 points, noting it was "Very

Highly Recommend". They had the following comments, "attractive, fragrant, spicy, moderately toasty, pear and baked apple aroma with floral and mineral notes."



MONTEREY COUNTY WEEKLY In local news, on November 18th the Monterey County Weekly published an piece recapping the Wine Tasting Rooms in Monterey County. In the recap, Mark Anderson wrote an article *A sommelier's tasty way to navigate Carmel Valley's increasingly populous wine tasting rooms.*, which followed sommelier Alicia Hahn-Peterson's travels from room to room. As it pertained to Carmel Valley Alicia noted Mercy as one of her top five places to taste wine stating, "**Mercy** is one of the newest tasting rooms in the area. I really dig it. They're the nicest people, and so engaging, and the wines are bright and stand out against buttery, oaky bombs." In another portion she comments "Mercy wins for quality and kindness." We could not be more honored as there are so many great tasting rooms and even more delicious wines in Carmel Valley.