

VARIETAL FOCUS:

Rhône

Blends

Lance Cutler

WHEN WE CONCEIVED of the Varietal Focus series, we thought it would reveal a lot about how terroir impacted winemaking and affected style. It became clear that terroir was always important but not as significant a factor with all varieties. Terroir had major influence on Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc and Tempranillo, all of which were dramatically affected by where they were grown. It seemed to have less impact on varieties, like Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Merlot, where winemaking decisions often influenced style as much as place.

For this Varietal Focus we decided to bring another element into the discussion: the art of blending. We selected Rhône blends to help limit the number of varietals and decided to use the Central Coast region exclusively to limit the influences of widely different terroirs. We opted to look at both white and red blends.

Grapes were first cultivated in the Rhône as early as 600 BC. DNA tests point to Syrah as having originated in the Rhône region. Rhône wines really became popular in the 13th century when the Popes moved to Avignon. They purchased a huge amount of existing vineyards and planted even more, creating one of the Rhône's most famous wines, Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

The Rhône region in the south of France is divided into two sub-regions. Northern Rhône,

Lance Cutler has been a working winemaker in Sonoma County for 35 years. He has been a contributing editor for *Wine Business Monthly* for more than 10 years. His unique perspective on winemaking has led to our Industry Roundtable series and our Varietal Focus series. Lance is also the author of four books, including *The Tequila Lover's Guide to Mexico*.



which is cooler, produces red wine made with Syrah, sometimes blended with white grapes, like Marsanne, Viognier or Roussanne. Southern Rhône, with its Mediterranean climate, bases its blends on 19 different varietals. White blends are primarily composed of Marsanne, Roussanne and Viognier, depending on where in the Southern Rhône a winery is located. The primary varietals for their red blends are Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre.

The Rhône has more than 6,000 wine-growing properties and more than 100 cooperatives. There are 50 negociants, buying bulk wine or grapes to blend and sell all over the world. Annual production for the Northern and Southern Rhône combined is more than 105 million gallons.

While Rhône varietals have long been planted in California, it wasn't until the 1980s when **Randall Graham, Joseph Phelps, Steve Edmunds, Bob Lindquist** and several others started the **Rhône Rangers** to popularize the marketing of Rhône varietals. Then, in 1989 **Robert Haas** teamed up with the owners of **Château Beaucastel** to create **Tablas Creek Vineyard** in Paso Robles.

Haas got cuttings direct from the Beaucastel vineyards to supply grapes to his fledgling winery, and then he generously established a nursery and offered cuttings to all who wanted them. By 2010, 38,000 acres were planted to Rhône varietals, and much of that is related directly to the Tablas Creek clones.

Versions of Rhône blends are popular worldwide, especially in France, Spain, Australia, California and Washington state. For the most part, winemakers stick to working only with traditional Rhône varietals although every now and then someone will add something extra. For our white blends we started with Randall Graham from **Bonny Doon Vineyard** and his 2014 Le Cigare Blanc. **Jeremy Weintraub** from **Adelaida Vineyards & Winery** brought his 2014 Anna's White and **Grey Wolf Cellars'** **Joe Barton** presented his 2015 Sentinelle. On the red blend side **Kevin Jussila** of **Kukkula Winery** shared his 2014 Noir, **Bill Wathen** from **Foxen Vineyard** brought his 2014 Cuvée Jeanne Marie from the vineyard named for his mother, and **Jordan Fiorentini** poured the 2013 Ingenuity from **Epoch Estate Wines**. Tablas Creek winemaker **Neil Collins** presented 2014 Oveja Negra from his own **Lone Madrone**, **Jeff Poe** introduced the 2012 GSM from **Tobin James Cellars**, and **Carl Bowker** from **Caliza Winery** brought his 2013 Azimuth.

Bonny Doon Vineyard

2014 Bonny Doon Le Cigare Volant Blanc, 13.5% Alc., 1,307 cases, \$28, 66% Grenache Blanc, 34% Roussanne

Randall Grahm studied liberal arts at **UC Santa Cruz** before grabbing a job at a wine shop where he became enamored of wine. He went to **UC Davis**, got a degree in plant sciences in 1979 and soon, with family help, had purchased land in Santa Cruz that became known as Bonny Doon. At first in love with Pinot Noir, he discovered his property was more suited to Rhône varietals and in 1989 appeared on the cover of *Wine Spectator* as the Rhône Ranger. In 1994 he was named Wine and Spirits Professional of the Year by the **James Beard Association**. His most current project is a 400-acre parcel he calls **Popelouchum** where he hopes to breed 10,000 new grape varieties.



According to Grahm:

“Roussanne and Grenache Blanc naturally produce a fairly rich, unctuous wine. We attempt to introduce a certain lightness and grace to stop it from becoming too ponderous. Typically, we get aromas of pome fruit, specifically quince, along with fennel/anise and even spearmint. We don’t interfere, but we try to manipulate things to achieve the best wine possible. Already rich in tannin, this wine needs time in bottle to develop before being fully approachable.

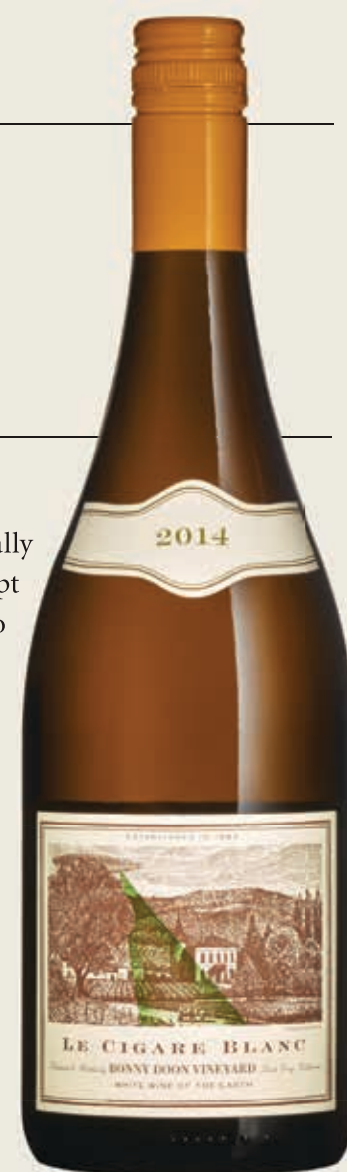
“This Beeswax Vineyard is gravelly loam soil and planted on a 6x10 foot spacing. We’re not sure about either the rootstock or the specific clones. We irrigate but in a slightly non-conventional way. Drip tubing is placed in the centers of rows on the ground in a diamond pattern so that the plant looks for water in four directions, not just one. This makes water available to the vine, as needed, but not too much. We get moderate growth and shorter nodes with this method.

“We thin for uniformity and use discrete north side leaf pulling for better light penetration because Roussanne tends to ripen unevenly from one side of the grape cluster to the other. We generally get 4 tons per acre on Grenache Blanc and 2.5 tons per acre on the Roussanne.

“We pick based on flavor, flavor and flavor. Then we integrate a number of different factors, including balance, potential alcohol, logistics and guidance from the biodynamic calendar, seeking those elusive “fruit days.” With the Grenache Blanc we look for a grapiness, which gives a persistence of flavor on the palate. Roussanne goes from a certain sappiness to flavors of citrus and lime. We eschew wholesale manipulation of the must, like adding water, so we try to make sure grapes are not picked above 22.5° Brix.

“Grapes are picked into half-ton bins early in the morning. We whole-cluster press with no skin contact for pH reasons, adding 45 ppm of SO₂ to the pan. We also add 3 lbs. per 1,000 gallons of bentonite. We find that Roussanne needs a certain percentage of solids to ferment well, so we don’t over-settle. We try to end up between one-half to three-quarter percent of solids. We make a pied de cuvée by picking some grapes seven to 10 days early and building up the native yeast population, giving it plenty of oxygen. After 24 to 48 hours settling at 45° F, we warm the racked juice to 53° F. Grenache Blanc is fine, but sometimes we have to make an acid addition on the Roussanne to lower pH to 3.4 to 3.45. Then we add our yeast culture and give a discrete dose of Fermaid after the first Brix drop. We ferment in the low 50’s, shooting for a daily Brix drop of 1 degree, half in stainless steel and the other half in older oak barrels.

“Post-fermentation we inoculate with malolactic and top up, leaving the wine to sit on the lees. We’ll stir the barrels about every two weeks. We’ll seed and chill the wine to achieve cold stability and add more bentonite for heat stability if necessary based on trials. The wine is cross-flow filtered and gets two years of bottle age before release.”



REMEMBERING SETH KUNIN



Even though we have already noted Seth Kunin's untimely passing, I'd like to mention him as a producer of Rhône-style wines. We listed the Kunin Wines 2007 Santa Barbara County Syrah as one of the WBM Hot Brands for 2012. As I recall, Seth also brought one of his white Rhône-style blends to pour at our Hot Brands party which was greatly appreciated if only because they were wines that Seth hadn't been making while a custom-crush client of mine. I had been impressed enough by his red Rhône

varieties that I had pretty much changed my entire approach to making those wines. I was curious to see if his white Rhône would hold a similar revelation for me.

One of the reasons we chose Kunin Wines as one of our Hot Brands is simply because I think that Seth produced some of the best wines of our generation, especially since he produced wines from varieties in which I specialize myself, and did so to the point at which I consider him the better winemaker.

One thing I noticed was that Seth's barrel-aging program was very different from my own. He didn't add SO₂ after malolactic fermentation (MLF). Instead he just topped, bunged, and rolled the barrels and left them for up to six months. He only topped barrels that popped a bung. This is pretty much the opposite of what was my usual aging program which had SO₂ additions right after MLF, weekly or biweekly topping.

Seth also sourced his fruit from cooler vineyards than I did, picked earlier than I did, used less pronounced oak than I did, and generally produced wines that were less extracted, less tannic, less powerful, but more elegant, more complete than, and more interesting than mine.

One thing that struck me about Seth's winemaking, was his utter fearlessness when it came to building a blend. Aging wine without SO₂ runs the risk of having a barrel oxidize or develop microbial spoilage problems should the bung become loose unknowingly. Seth was dedicated enough to his winemaking that he would dispose of bad barrels rather than try to "rescue" them even if that meant dumping a significant portion of his production. Of course, his total production was small enough that he didn't have the option to try to bury a bad barrel or two in a larger lot of wine, but I think that uncompromising stance had a lot to do with just how delicious his wines were.

– Curtis Phillips



Tasting Notes

GRAHM: The nose is vaguely honeysuckle with pome fruit, mostly quince with some apple and pear. There is a fennel or anise note. On the palate some discreet astringency, which is typical for Roussanne and a key to age-worthiness. There is a lot of length on the palate with some bitterness on the finish but good persistence. This wine begs for food.

BOWKER: I get a tinge of lemon rind and pear and a rich mineral characteristic on both the nose and palate. It has a really nice, rich mouthfeel and a pleasant, lingering finish.

POE: There is apparent citrus, along with apple and a hint of black pepper. The palate has weight and an earthy, mineral character. The mid-palate is full with light licorice on the finish and a touch of bitterness, which should work well with food.

WATHEN: I get a lot of honeysuckle, lychee and young stone fruit, like apricot, in the aromatics. In the mouth I get an oily herb texture, and it tastes like it has been on the skins, which I really like texture-wise. I agree that this wine begs for food.

COLLINS: I get the Grenache Blanc on the nose, which lends a leaner aroma than the Adelaida. I always love the texture of Grenache Blanc: greenness and an almost tannic structure that it brings. There is nice acidity that flattens on the finish. It has a pretty nose with some apple. I love the texture on this wine, and I don't perceive any oak.

FIorentINI: The nose has this minerality and some reduction from the Roussanne. I'd think the acidity would be higher with the weight of the wine, but it seems a lot less. There is more Roussanne coming through. It is enjoyable, but I wouldn't guess it to be a white Rhône.

JUSSILA: For me, Grenache Blanc usually reads as apple, but I'm getting more minerality on the nose, and the Roussanne feels more dominant on the palate. It almost seems kind of flat at mid-palate. I enjoy it, but it seems less acidic than it should be.

WEINTRAUB: I get a nice hit of lemon zest on the nose. There is almost a Chablis character here that combines reduction and oxidation. I had a hard time getting Roussanne in the nose at all. I got it in the mouth more. I also perceived less acid and lower alcohol than the Adelaida.

BARTON: I pick up the minerality with its signature limestone aromatics and esters. I get citrus notes with underlying floral, wildflowers and honey. Nicely framed acidity and then it fans out toward the end with a layered back end.

Adelaida Vineyards & Winery

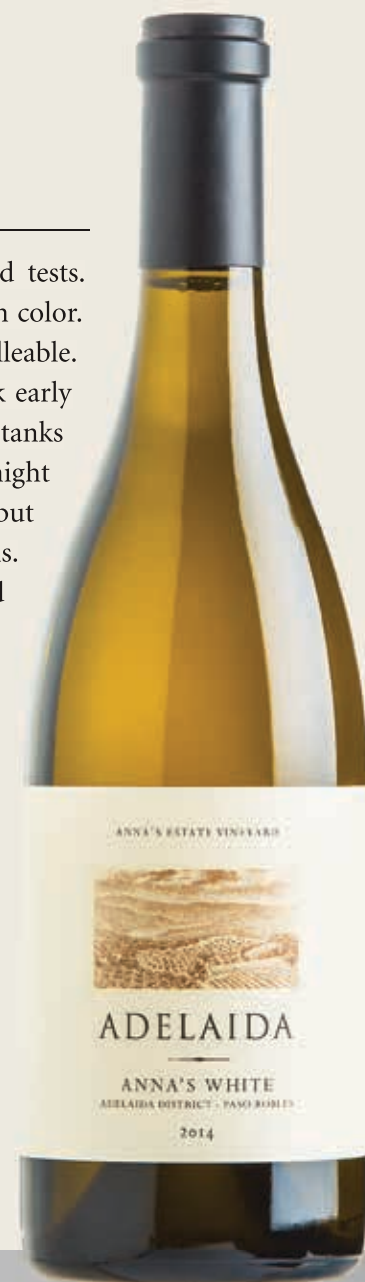
2014 Anna's White, 15.3% Alc., 227 cases, \$45, 63% Roussanne, 28% Viognier, 9% Picpoul Blanc

Jeremy Weintraub graduated from **Clark University** in Massachusetts. He got an M.S. in viticulture and enology from UC Davis. He served internships in Italy, New Zealand and Long Island, New York and winemaking positions in Santa Barbara and Paso Robles before taking a winemaker position at **Seavey Vineyards** in Napa Valley. He took over as winemaker for Adelaida Vineyards & Winery in 2013.



“To determine picking we go by flavor and tests. Roussanne berries should turn this ugly brown color. The Viognier flesh softens a bit and becomes malleable. We wait for acid drop in the Picpoul. We pick early to get cold grapes. We whole-cluster press to tanks with no SO₂ addition. The juice settles overnight at 50° F. We ferment the wine in puncheons, but the Picpoul ferments in 10-year-old barrels. We never make acid additions, but we add Fermid two days after pressing and again at one-third sugar drop. The wine ferments at cellar temperature without cooling, around 55° F. Roussanne is fermented in 20 percent new puncheons, Viognier in 20 percent new barriques and neutral barrels, and Picpoul ferments in neutral barrels. After fermentation, we go through a native malolactic fermentation, stirring the lees on the Picpoul Blanc to encourage that fermentation.

“We go through cold and heat stability, and cross-flow filter the wine. It is bottled after 10 months in oak and gets another nine months in bottle.”



According to Weintraub:

“We strive for aromatic complexity and a harmonious mouthfeel. Our alkaline soil gives an abundance of natural acidity, so it is vital that the mid-palate express weight and generosity. Roussanne provides richness and more phenolic character. The Viognier lends floral and fruit character with medium weight, and the Picpoul Blanc provides crisp acidity. We want the wine to coat the mouth but still finish clean, and we want to produce a wine that is age-worthy.

“Anna’s vineyard has calcareous shale and limestone clay. It sits at 1,750 feet in elevation and is planted with 10x4 foot spacings on 1103P rootstock, using Tablas Creek clones. We farm organically but are not certified. This block sees some limited irrigation, but a full third of our ranch is not irrigated at all. We have cross arms that allow the shoots to flop. The vines are vigorous, so we pull laterals. We use shade cloth on the south side of the canopy and prefer to have the clusters hang free without touching. Roussanne is a shy producer at about 1.2 tons per acre. Viognier is better with 2.3 tons per acre while Picpoul comes in around 3.4 tons per acre.



Tasting Notes

WEINTRAUB: Initially, I get honey, a little bit of hazelnut and a hit of fruit loops. I get some nice floral white flowers, a little green apple and some density in the mouth, along with some acid that coats the mouth. There is a very slight bitterness and a bit of cooking spice, maybe fennel. The finish is juicy with good weight.

JUSSILA: Roussanne comes in big. It is unmistakable. It is seductive and kind of voluptuous in the nose. There is almost a butterscotch character. I love the oily viscosity of the wine. There is a nice mid-palate spiciness and a long, beautiful finish, kind of like macadamia nut on the tail end of it. Very pretty wine.

FIorentINI: An interesting and enjoyable example of what Roussanne can do. Both the palate and the aromas are seamless. I appreciate the yin and yang of this wine, the acid and the waxy richness. The texture is beautiful on the finish. A complex white wine that red wine drinkers should love.

COLLINS: I felt the expression of oak was really nice with the Roussanne. There is a lot of honey and honeysuckle on the nose. I found the Viognier pretty dominant but nice. There is a big, weighty mouthfeel but balanced. There is phenomenal acidity, which I assume is the Picpoul coming in at the end. For a wine of this size it is really balanced and beautiful with just the right amount of oak for my palate.

WATHEN: I get a lot of clean, medium-ripe aromas, like pluot and Asian pear. It is a bit oxidized in a good way. On the palate I get ripe pear and a little bit of a spearmint quality with good texture.

GRAHM: Good call on the pluots. I get a very discreet diacetyl, buttery note. The texture is lovely.

BOWKER: It is rich and alluring. I get some white flower, maybe honeysuckle. There is a nice rich mouthfeel and a bright acidic tingle on the finish.

POE: There is a nice floral nose with some blood orange. It starts out subtle, then the weight comes on, and it finishes really nice with good length and a bit of mint.

BARTON: I get orange blossoms on the nose. There is a nice fragrance and almost some steely minerality. There is Roussanne richness and creaminess and yeastiness. In the nose it comes off like it is going to be this bright acidic wine, but it is really rich on the back end. It has a robust mouthfeel. It's a fun wine.

A Passion For Excellence for over 100 Years

Our French, American and European oak barrel collections have been elegantly designed to enhance your best wine.

Discover Our Collections
twboswell.com

TW | BOSWELL

Grey Wolf Cellars

2015 Sentinelle, 13.7% Alc., 120 cases, \$28, 38% Viognier, 25% Marsanne, 25% Roussanne, 12% Grenache Blanc

Grey Wolf Cellars was established by Joe and Shirlene Barton in 1994. Their son, Joe Barton, a fruit science graduate from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, is the current winemaker. He credits local winemakers for providing support and advice as an essential part of his winemaking education. Family participation is at the center of Grey Wolf Cellars, and their style has been to craft wines that are approachable young, but also have depth and complexity for aging potential.



According to Barton:

“Our model is Châteauneuf-du-Pape white wine with its far-reaching finish and aromatics, along with weight and body. Each varietal has a function in this blend. Our approach was to center the wine around Marsanne and Roussanne for a dense texture, while using the Viognier as the focus for the aromatics. Grenache Blanc brings acidity and mineral content to give balance to the finish and overall bouquet. We’d also like the wine to be under 14 percent alcohol to go better with food.

“The grapes for this blend come from several different vineyards, most of them on calcareous and siliceous soils. Elevations run between 900 and 1,300 feet. Most of the vines are planted in 8x5 foot spacings on 1103P and 110R rootstock, using Tablas Creek clones. The Viognier is dry-farmed, and the rest have irrigation. We farm organically and sustainably, depending on the vineyard.

“Since our goal is to attain a balanced fruit load, we try to create space in the canopy to provide circulation and handle fungal concerns, while trying not to expose the fruit to too much sun or danger from seasonal heat spikes. Because these are low vigor sites, we average just 1 to 2 tons per acre.

“We determine when to pick mostly by phenolics and taste. Acidity is our biggest concern after flavor. We want to capture acidity with concentration. We sample weekly once we hit 20° Brix. We’ll pop berries and check the seeds and pulp. We want the Roussanne to lose some of its bitterness, and we wait for the Grenache Blanc to drop some acidity and turn fresh. We watch pH closely and pay attention to the weather.

“We pick into half-ton bins. If necessary, we have sorting tables. If possible, we’ll press the Marsanne and Roussanne together, give skin contact to the Viognier and whole-cluster press the Grenache Blanc. We add 30 ppm SO₂ pre-fermentation. Settling lasts overnight at 50° F. We rack off the lees, aware that we need to retain some solids for aromatics, especially in the tank fermentors. We go cleaner into the barrel fermentations. If needed, we will add acid up to 1g/L, and we usually make one Fermaid addition. The wine ferments at 55° F to 62° F.

“Everything is fermented in separate lots. We use both 500-liter puncheons and 60-gallon barrels, along with some concrete tanks, which seem to soften aggressive phenolics. About 25 to 30 percent of our oak is new. We agitate the lees weekly. We start malolactic with native bacteria but will inoculate to finish if necessary. We will rack for clarity after ML; but once the wine is in barrel, we won’t rack until bottling. The wine remains in oak for 11 months. The wine is both heat- and cold-stabilized and then membrane-sterile filtered. It receives six months’ bottle-aging before release.”



Tasting Notes

BARTON: The Viognier presents itself nicely with some dried apricot and peach components; then it really lays into the Marsanne and Roussanne with their creamier toffee notes. You do get the barrel signature and the sur lie component. There is good power and richness. The Grenache Blanc helps wrap the acidity into the wine. The alcohol is pretty low and doesn't get in the way at all.

BOWKER: This is a big, fat wine, maybe a bit oxidized. It is a big, heavy white wine, and the flavor continues to linger in my mouth.

GRAHM: I am very attracted to the nose. It is floral with citrus and licorice. The palate was not as impressive. I got some heat, and it seemed like it was acidulated, so the acid wasn't integrated into the wine.

WATHEN: I get nectar and anise in the aroma. In the mouth it is like sap and peach juice with a kind of discombobulated finish.

POE: I get a little smokiness and a nice orange or vanilla yogurt. Probably saw some time in barrel.

WEINTRAUB: I get Viognier on the nose with a potpourri of apricot and dried fruit and dried flowers. I like the mouth. The mouth blurs the lines between the varietals with less acidity than I expected based on the nose.

COLLINS: Tastes like Viognier to me with mandarin peel; rich and voluptuous. It has nice acidity, but it is a bit overwhelming, big and round. It is nice wine. I would have guessed it as a single varietal, not a blend. It almost tastes like a ripe Viognier grape in the vineyard.

FIorentINI: There is lots of bright Viognier, which reminds me of gummy bears from my childhood. It is super showy aromatically. The palate is juicy with more flavors from the other varieties. I think this would be super fun to drink. It is younger, which lends more freshness.

JUSSILA: I get some big apricot, almost like preserve. I think it is very showy and nice on the attack. It is solid wine but lacks evolution as the wine finishes, but it is still a very pretty wine.

Oenosylva[®]
BOIS POUR L'ŒNOLOGIE

Oenosylva offers a range of œnologic oak products sourced from the most prestigious forests in France. All of the products are manufactured from stave-quality oak that has been naturally seasoned in the open air. Oenosylva products are finely calibrated to provide the perfect organoleptic contribution of oak during the winemaking process. A range of proprietary techniques and three consistent toasting methods give the wine a subtle range of aromas.

Office:
1285 Foothill Blvd
Cloverdale, CA 95425
Ph: (707) 224-2377
Fax: (707) 224-2390
www.oenosylva.com



Tobin James Cellars

2012 GSM, 14.8% Alc., 2,610 cases, \$58, 48% Syrah, 32% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre

Jeff Poe began his wine career in 1987, working harvest at **Clos Du Bois**. After a second harvest at **Seghesio Winery** and a year as a lab technician at **Simi Winery**, he decided to pursue winemaking as a career. He completed his degree at **Fresno State** in 1993, found employment as an associate winemaker at **Lockwood Vineyards** in southern Monterey County and moved to Paso Robles. In March 2001, he assumed the position of head winemaker at Tobin James Cellars.



According to Poe:

“Our goal was to create a full-bodied Rhône blend. We had to tame the Syrah component, which was very meaty with big tannins. We wanted to tone down that meatiness and the tannins, but capitalize on the structure. The Grenache and Mourvèdre were medium-bodied and loaded with black currant flavors. By blending these three components, we brought down the tannin levels to a pleasant level, while maintaining structure and a velvety texture.”

“All three varieties come from the same vineyard but from different areas within that vineyard. The Syrah grows on Linne-Calodo, the Grenache on Balcom-Calleguas and the Mourvèdre on Nacimiento Silty Clay. The elevation is 1,400 feet, and the vineyard is terraced with two rows per terrace. Vine spacings are 4x8 feet. All of the rootstock is 1103P. The clones are SY99, MV1 and GR224. The vineyard is traditionally farmed and has irrigation. We shoot-thin the vineyard twice, drop fruit at veraison and again as needed. We leaf-pull on the north side. We average 2 tons per acre on this vineyard.”

“We pick based on flavor and appearance, as well as test data. With the Syrah we look for tannin development and a bit of shrivel. We wait for color development in both the Grenache and Mourvèdre and never get shrivel even though we pick around 27° Brix.”

“We make three separate wines and then blend together later. Grapes are picked into half-ton bins. We add 30 ppm SO₂ at the crush pad where the grapes are destemmed and crushed. We cold-soak at 45° F for two to three days, looking to extract softer tannins. We inoculate with Pasture Red and/or Hanson Melody. We will add tartaric acid, as needed, prior to fermentation. We use Superfood prior to fermentation and DAP to 250 ppm, adding half prior to fermentation and the balance at 15° Brix. We pump-over during cold-soak once a day then twice a day as fermentation starts. At peak fermentation, we pump-over four times daily, backing off to twice daily to finish. We ferment between 75° F and 82° F.”

“We press at dryness and inoculate for malolactic or, in the case of the Syrah, at the beginning of its three-week extended maceration. We are looking for the tannins to soften, and we keep the tank topped with argon at that time. The wine is racked to oak barrels with 60 percent French, 40 percent American and 60 percent new. The wine sits sur lie for four months and then gets racked three times during aging, roughly once every five or six months. We barrel-age for 23 months, cross-flow filter to 0.65 micron at bottling and bottle-age for two to three years before release.”



Tasting Notes

POE: On the nose I get black peppercorn. There is some meatiness from the Syrah, along with hints of sage and vanilla. The wine is well-balanced but still has some tannin, which dries out the finish a bit.

WATHEN: I get a lot of warm meaty aromatics: plum, white pepper and kind of hot macadam pavement. In the mouth there is sweet plum and dark berry. For me, it is a blend that works, meaning that the sum could be better than the individual components.

GRAHM: I get a lot of ripe flavors of cherry and plum. The dominant flavor to me was Mourvèdre, which lent a meaty, blood-like character. It was savory with a hint of rosemary.

BOWKER: There are vibrant red and blue fruits on the nose. I get some pleasing spiciness of white pepper and asphalt. It has firm tannins on the palate, along with lingering fruit. There was some mid-plate astringency, which should go away with more time. It finishes with another burst of red and blue fruit flavors.

COLLINS: This definitely comes from ripe fruit and feels a bit more old-school Paso. Candied fruit nose. The acidity and length are nice. The tannins are discreet.

FIorentINI: I get real ripeness on the nose, almost Port-like with licorice and ripe fruit aromas. On the palate it has surprisingly good acid, and the texture is nice. It is not overblown.

JUSSILA: It is Port-like, and you can feel the age. I really like the mid-palate on it. It is spicy with nice length, spiciness and acidity. It kinda grows on you.

WEINTRAUB: The nose is a bit muddled with an older barrel character in the nose but not in the mouth. I like the acid. It didn't have the weight that I would have expected from the nose.

BARTON: The nose is pretty brambly with mixed fruits and an underlying earthy tone from the Syrah and Mourvèdre. There is big pumpkin spice. It is fresh up front with a little heat on the end. It has a savory mid-palate, and it is juicy. I like it.

For more than a decade Tonnellerie Berthomieu has been part of Groupe Charlois, the only cooperage group that is completely integrated from forestry operations to the finished product.

Benefiting from the reputation of the Groupe Charlois, its knowledge of oak and savoir-faire offer a unique advantage. Located in one of the most renowned oak forests in France, the cooperage distinguishes itself by its unique steam bending process and by its exceptional selection of oak from France's most prestigious forests.



berthomieu
TONNELLERIE

Office:
1285 Foothill Blvd
Cloverdale, CA 95425
Ph: (707) 224-2377
Fax: (707) 224-2390
www.berthomieu.com

C-Line
EXPRESS

Trucking Services to the
Wine Industry Since 1946

Your Logistical Partners
Todd Walker - todd@c-lineexp.com

P.O. Box 540
Napa CA 94559
ph: 707-553-6041
800-834-3457
fax: 707-553-6053

Foxen Winery

2014 Cuvée Jeanne Marie, 14.4% Alc., 240 cases, \$40, 81% Grenache, 19% Mourvèdre

You learn all you need to know about Bill Wathen from his email moniker, “farmer in flip flops.” Born and raised in San Luis Obispo, he graduated from Cal Poly in 1975 with a degree in fruit sciences. By 1978 he had secured the job of vineyard manager for **Chalone Vineyards**, working with **Dick Graff** and learning traditional French winemaking techniques. He returned to Santa Barbara to start Foxen Winery in 1985. He is officially the founder and co-owner, working as both the winemaker and viticulturist.



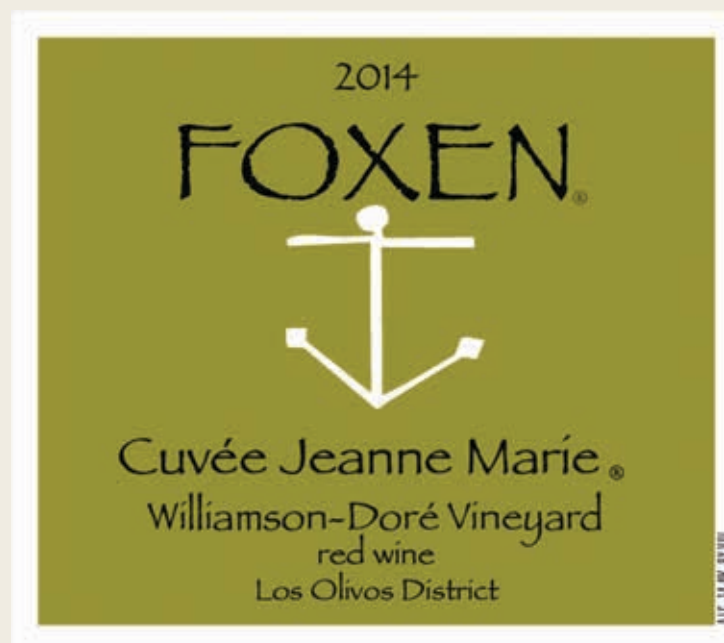
According to Wathen:

“This wine is a blend of the two grape varieties grown on a small section of our Williamson-Dore vineyard named for my mother, **Jeanne Marie**. We are after pomegranate and light tarry plum from the Grenache, and we use enough Mourvèdre to provide spice and some watermelon rind character. We are always looking for medium-smooth tannins.

“The vineyard sits at 600 feet and is comprised of very shallow Ballard clay loam. Vines are planted 8x4 feet, which accounts for 1,814 vines per acre. The clones are from Tablas Creek, and they are planted on 101-14 rootstock. We are sustainable and traditionally farmed. We have drip irrigation but use it sparingly. We shoot-thin early and remove laterals with no leafing to prevent bleaching. We cluster-thin where there are crowding issues. In 2014 we harvested 1.5 to 2 tons per acre or 1.7 to 2.5 pounds per vine.

“We pick when the juice tastes good, usually between 23° and 25° Brix. We want the juice to color up, and we want ripe pomegranate flavors and watermelon. Usually some of the seeds are still green. We pick very early for cool grapes and destem using 100 percent whole berries, trying to capture more fruit. We sort, after destemming, to fermentors. We use a two- to four-day cold-soak at 55° F to 60° F. We make no acid additions but will add Fermaid with the onset of fermentation and again at one-third Brix depletion. We ferment in open-top tanks, punch-down twice daily and keep peak fermentation temperatures around 80° F. Fermentation is carried out by the house yeast floating in the winery. We press at dryness, adding malolactic starter in the fermentors. We press directly to barrel, ostensibly keeping the press fraction separate but will usually blend it in later.

“We use 500-liter French oak puncheons, usually once- or twice-filled. We use no new oak. We age the wine for 20 months and rack three times: once out of the fermentor, late winter of the following year and finally for bottling. The wine is unfiltered and gets what bottle age we can muster, depending on inventory.”





We provide the highest level of professional expertise and customized service to meet our customer's wine storage and distribution needs.

Temperature Controlled

Bay Alarm Security

AMS Software

Fire / Automatic Sprinkler System

Tax-Paid and TTB Bonded Storage

3 Convenient Locations in American Canyon

175 Tower Road • 644 Hanna Drive, Suite B • 75 South Kelly Road



VALLEY WINE WAREHOUSE

P.O. Box 11056 • Napa, CA 94581 • 707-259-0250

ValleyWineWarehouse.com ~ facebook.com/valleywinewarehouse

Tasting Notes

WATHEN: Aromatically, I get dusty, subtle red fruits, along with fruit rind. In the mouth, flavors are on the delicate side with plum and pomegranate and a little bit of light asphalt, along with medium tannins. It should be age-worthy.

GRAHM: I like this wine a lot. I also get pomegranate, strawberry, rhubarb and pie tones. It has soft texture and soft tannins. It is elegant and quasi-Burgundian.

BARTON: This has high-tone aromatics with strawberry, raspberry, almost like Kirsch. I expect some whole-cluster because of the heightened carbonic aromatic content. It is juicy and soft, almost like Pinot Noir. It is not aggressive. I like the acid, and it is well-balanced.

BOWKER: I also get the pomegranate characteristics, along with a big red fruit, tart character. In the mouth there are ever-present black tea flavors, and then a present, but really gentle tannin structure that was fun to have in your mouth.

POE: I get a hint of pepper with plum. I liked this wine on the palate a lot. It had medium body with silky complexity and some orange rind on the finish. Very nice wine.

JUSSILA: Very fruity with almost a sweetness on the nose. It has nice tannins and a very spicy focus of strawberry and earth. It is a tight wine. It is pretty wine.

WEINTRAUB: There is a candied fruit bouquet with nice perfume in the nose. It reminds me of cool-climate Grenache. The mouth is nice and clean with medium weight. The acid is good.

COLLINS: Pinot Noir guys have the ability to transfer their style to other wines. This is super fresh, and supple and clean. It is really nicely balanced with pretty, bright red fruits. There is a stylistic elegance here.

FIorentINI: I like this a lot and get a lot of Grenache character. There is a spiciness on the nose, especially. It was ripe, especially on the palate. It is very seductive wine.



Wine & Must Pumps



Model Sizes 1.5" - 3"
1 or 3 Phase
Wireless Remote

www.americanwinepump.com



McFinn Technologies, LLC
Kenosha, WI
John McGinn (262)-909-7267



WINERY	Caliza Winery	Tobin James Cellars	Epoch Estate Wines
Wine	2013 Azimuth	2012 GSM	2013 Ingenuity
Blend	40% Grenache, 40% Mourvèdre, 20% Syrah	48% Syrah, 32% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre	54% Syrah, 21% Mourvèdre, 16% Grenache, 9% Petite Sirah
Winemaker	Carl Bowker	Jeff Poe	Jordan Fiorentini
Style Goals	We want vibrant fruit up front with full, rich mouthfeel and mid-palate with a long impressionable finish. Development of "wine texture" and moderate weight is very important, as is respect for the character of the three varieties.	Syrah was tannic and meaty. We wanted to capitalize on structure, but tone down the tannins and meatiness. Grenache and Mourvèdre had chocolate, sage and vanilla with black currant and medium to light tannins. Blend balanced all elements.	We try to harness the personality of our two vineyards without producing a wine that is too fruity, too ripe or too much of one thing. We promote fruit and power with minerality and earthiness, with mouth-filling texture and an elongated finish.
AVA	Paso Robles Willow Creek District	Paso Robles Willow Creek District	Paso Robles Willow Creek District
Vineyard	Caliza Estate Vineyard	N/A	Paderewski and Catapult Vineyards, all estate-grown
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Shale and limestone	Linne Calodo, Balcom-Calleguas, Nacimiento silty clay	Limestone with some shale
Elevation	1,500 to 1,800 feet	1,400 feet	1,100 to 1,300 feet
Vine Spacing	Syrah and Mourvèdre 7x4 feet, Grenache 3x8 feet	4x8 feet	7x3 to 7x5 feet
Rootstock	Mourvèdre SO4, Syrah and Grenache 1103	1103	Mixed, mostly 420A and 110R
Clones	Syrah 174, 470, 383; Mourvèdre 369; Grenache 362	Syrah 99, Mourvèdre 1, Grenache 224	Mixed
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Drip available but used sparingly	Irrigated	Very careful and deliberate about timing and quantity of irrigations
Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)	Sustainable practices with heavy organic leanings	Traditional	Practicing Biodynamic farming since 2011 but not certified
Production	3 tons per acre	2 tons per acre	2 to 2.5 tons per acre
Vineyard Practices	Canopy management to allow light and air flow into fruit zone; no leaf-pulling; adjust crop to target 3 tons per acre; no herbicides or poisons used	Shoot-thin twice; fruit drop at veraison and as needed; pull leaves on North side	Drop fruit with none to little leaf-pulling; no hedging or trimming; trim cluster bottoms
WINEMAKING DATA			
When to Pick	Taste first, taste second, then skin and seed maturity, pH and Brix	Appearance, flavor, pH, TA, Brix	Flavor tasting for tannin ripeness and watching the vines and weather
SO₂	After completion of ML	30 ppm at crush pad; maintain 0.5 molecular	15 ppm at crusher; maintain 15 to 20 ppm free during aging
Crush Format	Grenache and Mourvèdre destemmed and partly whole-cluster; Syrah destemmed; no crushing for any fruit; whole berries to fermentors	Destem and crush to tank	Sort pre- and post-destemming; whole-cluster stem inclusion on Syrah and Mourvèdre, rarely on the Grenache
Cold Soak	5 to 10 days at barrel room temp of 58° F	2 to 3 days at 45° F	5 to 7 days at 52° F
Yeast	All start with indigenous yeast; if necessary, cultured yeast to finish fermentation	Pasture Red, Hanson Melody	Start native, then 1/3 to 1/2 through inoculate with D254, D80 or D21
Fermentation Temperature	75° F to 80° F; no cooling jackets	75° F to 82° F	70° F to 85° F
Fermentation Technique	Daily punch-downs, up to 3 times daily during most active phase; occasional délestage at tail-end of fermentation to build mouthfeel and mid-palate	Pump-over daily as juice then twice daily to 24° Brix; 4 times daily to 2° Brix then twice daily to finish	Pump-over twice a day until 17° Brix with délestage 3 times; switch to 3 punch-downs daily, dropping to 1 per day, depending on extraction levels
Nutrients	Fermaid at 1/3 Brix reduction	Superfood prior to fermentation, DAP to 250 ppm, 1/2 prior to ferment, balance at 15° Brix	Run YANs and react accordingly
Acid addition	None	Tartaric, as needed, prior to fermentation	None
Malolactic	Inoculate only if needed, usually goes native in barrel	Add to must at dryness for extended maceration	Native in barrel
Racking	First rack at 12 to 15 months for blending then when wine goes to tank for bottling	Sur lie for 4 months then rack 3 times during aging	Rack at blending around 8 to 10 months and again to bottle after 18 months
Oak Program	100% French oak; Grenache and Mourvèdre 30% new; Syrah 50% new	60% French oak and 40% American oak with 60% new	100% French oak with 49% new
Barrel-aging	18 months	23 months	18 months
Filtration	None	Cross-flow, 0.65 micron at bottling	None
Bottle-aging	1 year	2 to 3 years	18 months
Tanks	Stainless tanks with 8 to 10 percent barrel-fermented in neutral oak, chestnut wood barrels and acacia wood barrels	Stainless steel	Stainless tanks with 15% to 20% 2- and 3-year-old French oak barrels

WINERY	Kukkula Winery	Lone Madrone Winery	Foxen Winery
Wine	2014 Noir	2014 Oveja Negra	2014 Cuvée Jeanne Marie
Blend	89% Syrah, 11% Counoise	50% Mourvèdre, 25% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 5% Counoise	81% Grenache, 19% Mourvèdre
Winemaker	Kevin Jussila	Neil Collins	Bill Wathen
Style Goals	Looking for elegance, finesse and complexity while keeping the alcohol in check. To elevate and intensify aromatics and mouthfeel. A sense of earthiness, chocolate, coffee and black licorice seems to be signature of our terroir.	We're trying to make wines in the traditional Rhône style. We want wines that are clean, elegant and balanced that also age well. We prefer that the wines have relatively low alcohol.	We are after pomegranate and light tarry plum from the Grenache with spice and watermelon rind from the Mourvèdre. We are always looking for smooth tannins.
AVA	Paso Robles Adelaida District	Paso Robles Willow Creek District	Los Olivos District
Vineyard	Kukkula Estate Vineyard	Old Oak Vineyard	Williamson-Doré
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Linne and Ayers	Calcareous clay	Very shallow Ballard clay loam
Elevation	1,550 to 1,700 feet	1,400 feet	600 feet
Vine Spacing	12x12 feet	11x11 feet	8x4 feet
Rootstock	1103	1103	101-14
Clones	Tablas Creek	Tablas Creek	Tablas Creek
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed	Drip irrigation used sparingly
Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)	Organic	Traditional/Organic	Sustainably traditional
Production	Close to 2 tons per acre	2 tons per acre	1.5 to 2.5 tons per acre
Vineyard Practices	Thin shoots after bud break; drop fruit and cut off shoulders on Grenache and Counoise after flowering; remove laterals; minimal leaf-pulling	Drop fruit to balance the fruit load; keep space between clusters; pull some leaves if there are mildew problems	Shoot-thin early and remove laterals; no leaf-pulling; cluster-thin where there are crowding issues
WINEMAKING DATA			
When to Pick	Visual clues from canopy, lignification, seed color, skins and tests	All available tools: taste, observation, feel, numbers, etc.	Look for good taste and for the juice to color up; want pomegranate and watermelon flavors
SO₂	35 ppm after destemming	30 ppm at crusher, 25 ppm to bottle	25 ppm at crusher, 25 ppm after winter racking
Crush Format	Whole-cluster sort, destem and then berry-sort; will crush portion of Syrah and saignée some of Counoise	1/3 of each variety is whole-cluster, balance is destemmed but not crushed; we add stems to certain lots	100% whole-berry after destemming
Settle	5 to 7 days in low 40° Fs	None	3 to 4 days at 55° F to 60° F
Yeast	Native yeast	Feral yeast fermentations	Native house yeast
Fermentation Temperature	75° F to 85° F at peak	Below 80° F	Peak at 80° F
Fermentation Technique	Pump-over 2 to 3 times daily with délestage	Pump-over twice daily; leave them alone on Sundays	Punch-down twice daily
Nutrients	Minimal	None	Fermaid at onset of fermentation and again at 1/3 Brix depletion
Acid Addition	Minimal	None	None
Malolactic	Native in barrel but inoculate new barrels	Native malolactic	Inoculate in fermentors
Racking	Rack to blend at 9 to 10 months and again to bottle	Rough rack after ML and again pre-bottling	Out of fermentor, late winter of following year, prior to bottling
Cold/Heat Stability	100% French oak, 60% new and 40% one-year for Syrah, Counoise 50% new, 50% one-year	Neutral French oak	500 L French oak puncheons with no new oak.
Barrel-aging	18 months	18 months	20 months
Filtration	None	3 microns	None
Bottle-aging	1 year	6 months to a year	What we can based on inventory
Tanks	Stainless steel tanks with 25% in older French barriques	Exclusively French oak barrels with 33% new	Stainless steel, oak (new and used) ceramic and concrete

WINERY	Grey Wolf Cellars	Bonny Doon Vineyard	Adelaida Vineyards & Winery
Wine	2015 Sentinelle	2014 Le Cigare Volant Blanc	2014 Anna's White
Blend	38% Viognier, 25% Roussanne, 25% Marsanne, 12% Grenache Blanc	66% Grenache Blanc, 34% Roussanne	63% Roussanne, 28% Viognier, 9% Picpoul Blanc
Winemaker	Joe Barton and Ryan Pease	Randall Graham	Jeremy Weintraub
Style Goals	Our model is Chateauneuf-du-Pape white wine. We center the wine around Marsanne and Roussanne for dense texture, use Viognier for aromatics and Grenache Blanc for acidity and minerality.	These varieties produce a fairly unctuous wine. We attempt to introduce a certain lightness. We get aromas of pome fruit, quince and fennel. It is rich in tannin and needs time to develop. It demands food.	We strive for aromatic complexity and harmonious mouthfeel. We have loads of natural acidity, so we need mid-palate to express weight and generosity.
AVA	Central Coast	Arroyo Seco	Paso Robles, Adelaida District
Vineyard	Various	Beeswax Vineyard	Anna's Vineyard
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Calcareous and siliceous	Gravelly	Calcareous shale, limestone
Elevation	900 to 1,300 feet	N/A	1,750 feet
Vine Spacing	Most 8x5 feet	6x10 feet	10x4 feet
Rootstock	1103 and 110R	Unknown	1103
Clones	Tablas Creek	Unknown	Tablas Creek
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Viognier is dry-farmed, the rest are irrigated	Irrigate in center of row diamond pattern	1/3 not irrigated, some limited irrigation
Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)	Organic sustainable	Sustainable	Non-certified organic
Production	1 to 2 tons per acre	Grenache Blanc 4 tons per acre; Roussanne 2.5 tons per acre	Roussanne 1.2 tons/acre, Viognier 2.3 tons/acre, Picpoul 3.4 tons/acre
Vineyard Practices	Create space in the canopy for circulation, without exposing fruit to sun or danger from seasonal heat spikes	Thin for uniformity; discrete North side leaf-pulling for better light penetration for Roussanne	Use shade cloth on south side, clusters hang free without touching; use cross arms and allow shoots to flop over
WINEMAKING DATA			
When to Pick	Phenolics and taste; after flavor, biggest concern is retaining acidity; pop berries and check seeds and pulp	Flavor, flavor and flavor; look at balance, potential alcohol, logistics and guidance from the Biodynamic calendar	Roussanne berries should be brown; Picpoul acid should not be painful; Viognier shouldn't be overly sugary
SO₂	30 ppm pre-ferment; 30 to 60 ppm post-ferment	45 ppm initial add to juice	40 ppm after settling
Crush Format	48-hour skin soak on Viognier; everything else whole-cluster pressed	Grapes are sorted and then whole-cluster pressed	Whole-cluster pressed without sorting
Settle	24 to 48 hours of settling before racking off heavy lees	Settle 24 to 48 hours at 45° F	Settle overnight at 50° F
Yeast	Native	Indigenous from pied de cuvée	Mix of native and QA23
Fermentation Temperature	55° F to 60° F	Low 50's, looking for 1° Brix drop per day	Cellar temperature, about 55° F
Fermentation Technique			
Nutrients	1 addition of FermAid	FermAid after first drop in Brix	FermAid 2 days after pressing and again at 1/3 sugar
Acid Addition	1g/L, if needed, after first rack	Sometimes 1g/L on Roussanne to lower pH	Never
Malolactic	Native to start; sometimes inoculate to finish	Inoculate post-fermentation	Native malolactic
Racking	Once after ML, then to bottle; stir lees weekly	Typically only once; stir lees weekly in tank, every two weeks in barrel	Rack to tank one month before bottling
Cold/Heat Stability	500 L puncheons, 60 gallon barrels and concrete tank; 25 to 30% new oak	Half in neutral puncheon, half in stainless	All French oak; Roussanne in 20% new puncheons; Viognier 20% new barrels; Picpoul neutral barrels
Barrel-aging	11 months	10 months	10 months
Filtration	Membrane sterile-filtered	Cross-flow filtration	Cross-flow filtration
Bottle-aging	6 months	2 years	9 months
Tanks	Stainless and neutral oak tanks	750-gallon Portatank, cigars (barrels), stainless steel drums, old Burgundy barrels, new box oak	Stainless steel tanks with 12% to 20% in neutral oak barrels

Caliza Winery

2013 Azimuth, 15.5% Alc., 300 cases, \$58, 40% Grenache, 40% Mourvèdre, 20% Syrah

Carl Bowker grew up in Hawaii and graduated from the **University of Hawaii** before moving to California to work in the corporate world. He got the wine bug on a trip to Europe in 2001. He and his wife started thinking about giving the wine business a try. He studied viticulture and enology at **Napa Valley College**. In 2003 he and his wife **Pam** purchased land in Paso Robles and planted their vineyard dedicated primarily to Rhône varieties in 2006.



According to Bowker:

“Our goal with this wine is to make a Paso Robles version of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. I want it to grab your attention with vibrant fruit up front, a full, rich mouthfeel and then complete with a long impressionable finish. The development of wine ‘texture’ is very important as is respect for the three varieties and the place they are grown.

“Our estate vineyard lies between 1,500 and 1,800 feet and consists of shale and limestone soils that hold moisture. Syrah and Mourvèdre are on VSP trellis spaced at 7x4 feet. Grenache is head-trained to goblet but at 3x8 foot spacings. Syrah is a combination of clones, including 174, 470 and 383, primarily on 1103P rootstock. Mourvèdre is clone 369, also on SO4. The Grenache is clone 362 on 1103P. We farm sustainably with heavy organic leanings. In short, I farm organically philosophically, but I still need to be practical when it is demanded. We use no herbicides, baits or poisons. We manage the canopy to allow light and air flow in the fruit zone. We remove laterals only on the morning side of the vine. We do not leaf-pull. We fruit-drop twice to manage crop down to about 3 tons per acre, once after set to separate clusters and then a green drop.



“We pick based on the following: taste, skins, seed maturity, pH and Brix. I look for lignification of the seeds and sugar development. I want green flavors to go away and want to chew ripe seeds that are less springy and taste nutty.

“We pick early at night into 1.5 ton bins. Grenache and Mourvèdre are partly destemmed and partly whole-cluster. Syrah gets destemmed but without crushing. All fruit goes to fermentors as whole berries. We use no SO₂ during this process. We use a five- to 10-day cold-soak, covering the grapes with dry ice. Temperature is about 58° F in the barrel room. We tread the grapes daily during cold-soak. Once fermentation begins, we move the fermentors out into the sun to warm up. All ferments start with indigenous yeast, but we will add cultured yeast to finish fermentations if necessary. We make no acid additions. We use Fermaid at one-third Brix reduction based on YAN.

“We have no heating or cooling capabilities, so we just try to keep the must in a reasonable temperature range, usually 75° F to 80° F. We punch-down daily, up to three times daily at peak fermentation. Occasionally, we délestage at the tail end of fermentation to build mouthfeel and mid-palate. We press at dryness, mixing both press and free run fractions into a tank, and then distribute to barrels. We inoculate malolactic in the barrel if needed. After malolactic we will add SO₂. The wine ages in oak for 18 months in 100 percent French oak cooperage. The Syrah is 50 percent new, while Grenache and Mourvedre are 30 percent new. The wine is racked twice: once about 12 to 15 months post-harvest for blending, and again for bottling. It is bottled unfiltered and receives a full year of bottle age before release.”



Tasting Notes

BOWKER: I get a lot of blue fruit along with some red fruit and a spicy, potpourri floral characteristic. I get dried herbs in the mouth, along with a really rich fruit character. There is an ever-present mouthfeel that lingers for a significant amount of time.

POE: I get a soft, clean meatiness that I like with an earthy banana and a hint of chocolate. The wine is velvety and glides across the palate. It has dense concentrated berry without being sweet. Smooth tannins pull chocolate and earth through the finish.

WATHEN: This is seamless both aromatically and in the mouth. It is hard to pinpoint individual parts, because it is so well blended. I get lavender, dark plum and a bit of graphite.

GRAHM: This is not my style. I am not a big, ripe kind of guy. This is definitely a good New World example of the riper style. It is plummy, peppery and minty with very good persistence. There is a bit of heat from the higher alcohol. Oak is well integrated. There is a suave, seamless texture to the wine.

WEINTRAUB: It has deep color. It is pretty and in a Paso style without being over-ripe. It has nice fruit with a Mourvèdre character of herbal fruit. There is a wild character that adds to the wine. It has a nice mouthfeel and I like the tannins.

COLLINS: It is nice with red fruity characters. I like it. It has hefty tannins, but not dry or grippy at all. It has nice balance and acidity while being fresh and bright. There is some nice oak there. Pretty, well-made wine.

BARTON: This is brambly on the nose and like a berry patch with earth with herbal notes. There are mint or lemon notes. Wow! Cherry mocha deep in the middle. Lies on the front palate, savory on the back. Baking spice on the finish with coffee mocha. Not overly tannic.

JUSSILA: I like the Mourvèdre-Grenache interplay. It is really nice here. There is some intense spice, and it is pretty focused with a roundness and density to it. There is almost a creamy cola quality to it. There is a meaty herbal quality, but it has a really nice persistence to it and a nice finish. It is an intense wine.

FIorentINI: I love the wine aromatically. There are so many different notes: oak and bay leaf. Here is a lot of complexity. It is definitely ripe but not overdone. There is a bit of heat, but it has great texture.

Kukkula Winery

2014 Noir, 14.6% Alc., 200 cases, \$50, 89% Syrah, 11% Counoise

Kevin Jussila started as a home winemaker with friends, making wine for their own consumption. A trip to Provence in 1995 introduced him to the owners of **Beaucastel**, who told him of their project in Paso Robles. In 2004 Kevin and his wife **Paula** sold their Topanga Canyon home and purchased their property in Paso Robles. On what used to be a walnut orchard, they now have a thriving vineyard primarily focused on Rhône varietals.



According to Jussila:

“We want to produce a wine that is concentrated, complex and elegant. I try to emphasize the Syrah’s sense of earthiness, chocolate, coffee and black licorice that seems to be the signature of our terroir. We want fruit, structure and softness while intensifying the aromatics and mouthfeel.

“This wine comes from our estate vineyard and spans an elevation of 1,450 to 1,900 feet. The higher elevations are Linne, and most of the remainder is Ayers. The vineyard is steep and rocky, planted to a 12x12 foot diamond, all on 1103P with Tablas Creek clones. We are organic and dry-farmed. Vines are head-trained to 3½ feet for the Counoise and 6 foot stakes for the Syrah. We leave five to six spurs on the shorter stakes and 12 to 14 spurs on the Syrah, with two shoots per spur and one cluster per shoot.

“We thin shoots around the first of May after budbreak is well established. We drop fruit and cut off shoulders on varieties like Counoise and Grenache after flowering. We do minimal leaf-pulling but do remove some laterals. We try to raise the canopy at least 2 feet off the ground. The vineyard is very vigorous, so we have to drop lots of fruit, coming in around 2 tons per acre on these two varieties.

“Harvest decision is made mostly through visual clues of the canopy, lignification, seed color, skins and finally pH, TA and Brix balance. I want to still be able to taste the acid, so we usually harvest 25° to 26° Brix, but heat spikes can drive it higher. I look for brown seeds and pulp that pull away from the seeds.

I taste for the amount of skin tannin.

“We whole-cluster sort, destem and then berry-sort. We will crush some of the Syrah, and we saignée 5 to 15 percent of the Counoise. We add 35 ppm SO₂ after destemming. We cold-soak for five to seven days in the low 40°s. We employ native yeasts and minimal nutrient or acid additions. We try to keep pH below 3.8 post-malolactic. We wet the cap once a day during cold-soak and sparge with CO₂. During fermentation, we pump-over and délestage typically two to three times daily, tapering off at low sugars. Total maceration is typically 30 days, with peak temperatures progressing to 75° F to 85° F.

“We press both free run and press fractions to tank for two days; then we rack to barrels for malolactic, only inoculating the new barrels. All of our oak is French. The Syrah is 60 percent new oak barrels and 40 percent one year old. The Counoise is in 500-liter blended oak, half new and half once used oak. Post-blending, at nine to 10 months, all is aged in 225-liter barrels. This wine was aged 18 months. We rack only at the time of blending and then again to bottle. Wine is bottled with no fining or filtration and receives one year of bottle age before release.”



Tasting Notes

JUSSILA: I definitely get a sense of red and black fruit, along with notes of graphite and anise or licorice. There are chocolate, mocha notes and a nice spiciness. The tannic structure is chalky, not too grippy. There is nice length and a long finish. I'm happy with the level of oak.

BARTON: A lot of black fruit, almost tarry. It is fat with some soy, which makes me expect a long finish. It is salty and briny in a good way. There is some toasty sweetness on the end. There is some heat, but it is pretty seamless from front to back. There is power there, but it is pretty light on its feet.

WEINTRAUB: This is very much on the savory end of the spectrum for me. It has medium weight in the mouth. I got a lot of dried red fruit and a spice rack of Vegemite, along with some dark reduced character from Syrah, smoky and juicy in the mouth with tannin.

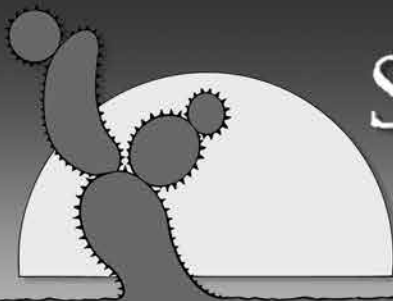
COLLINS: I get some meaty reduction with lots of savory character. I would guess more stem inclusion than you said. I don't see a lot of oak. If there is oak, it is pleasant. There is nice acidity and weight and balance. It is not big or over-bearing. I think there is elegance and nice structure. The tannins are in balance.

FIorentINI: Umami, savory, earthiness abounds in this wine. I don't get a lot of oak on the palate, but I do get it on the nose. It is cool along all those earthy aromas. It is plush on the front palate and very gentle and textured on the finish. There is forest floor, umami and yummy.

WATHEN: I get a lot of oaky camphor and plum. There is sweet oak in the mouth and a tannic bite at the end for me.

BOWKER: The wine is significantly oaky, but it has an aromatically appealing character to it. You get a lot of fine tannin in the mouth that counter-balances that appealing character.

POE: There is an herbal, dry forest-like nose, along with sweetness on the front palate. I like oak, so this doesn't bother me. A little bit of fruit stays with the finish.



St. Patrick's of Texas

50,000 square feet of Stainless Steel



Letina tanks,
sanitary valves
& fittings.



StPats.com



Lone Madrone Winery

2014 Oveja Negra, 14.5% Alc., 346 cases, \$45, 50% Mourvèdre, 25% Syrah, 20% Grenache, 5% Counoise

Neil Collins has been working in the wine industry for 27 years, spending time at **Wild Horse Winery** and then Adelaida. In 1997 he moved his family to the vineyards of Châteauneuf-du-Pape in southern France where he spent a year learning the cellars and vineyards of the famed Château de Beaucastel. When Beaucastel opened their new Tablas Creek winery in Paso Robles, they tapped Neil as their winemaker and vineyard manager. Lone Madrone is Neil's personal project in partnership with his wife **Marci** and sister **Jackie**. Started in 1996, Lone Madrone works with most any local farmer who grows exceptional fruit while farming sustainably.



According to Collins:

“We are looking to make wines that are more traditionally Rhône in style. We want wines that are clean, elegant and balanced, but still show the promise for longevity. We'd like to make these wines and still have relatively low alcohol. We tend to make the individual varietal lots separately and then blend those lots for flavor.

“This vineyard is at 1,400 feet with calcareous clay soils. Vine spacing is 11x11 feet, and the vines are eight to nine years old. Rootstock is 1103P, and



the clones are all Tablas Creek. The vineyard started with irrigation, but it has been removed. We farm traditionally but are moving toward organic. We drop fruit to balance the fruit load and to keep space between the clusters. We pull some leaves if we see evidence of mildew. We are dealing, like most people, with Red Blotch. We average 2 tons per acre at this site.

“Pick decisions are made by all available tools: taste, observation, feel, numbers, etc. We look for balance in the berries between fruit and acid. We look at the seeds and want the flesh of the berries to move toward softening. Hand-picked grapes come into the winery where they are destemmed but not crushed. We add 20 ppm SO₂ after destemming. Lots are kept separate by variety and each gets about one-third whole cluster. We also add some stems to certain lots, which gives us the structural benefits, but with less carbonic effect on the fermentations.

“We do not add nutrients and very rarely make any acid additions. Fermentations are carried out by feral yeast with temperatures kept below 80° F. We generally do two daily punch-downs, and leave them alone on Sundays. We press directly to barrel at dryness, sooner if the must develops oxidized aromas. We will often have lees and berries in the barrels where native malolactic occurs. All of our barrels are neutral French oak and are either 60 or 132 gallons. After malolactic, we perform a rough racking to make our blends, usually including the press fractions. Then we rack one more time pre-bottling. The wine is barrel aged for 18 months and then filtered at 3 microns for bottling. We bottle age the wine for six to 12 months before release.

Tasting Notes

COLLINS: I get nice red fruit and a nice savory character. I find the balance with a lot of good spiciness. I get that vegemite, umami character, which is very stem-related to me. There are more red fruits than black fruits for sure. The finish is long and juicy and not overly tannic.

FIorentINI: I get red fruits of strawberry, raspberry, rhubarb along with some earthy, forest floor, crushed vitamins on the nose. It is soft on the palate with nice fruit and texture. It has a cool salinity to it and nice fruit sweetness without being sweet. It is yummy and gentle.

WEINTRAUB: This is like a field of lavender along with some Jolly Rancher candy. There is fennel, lots of red fruit and a great mouthfeel. The acid was plentiful, but really well integrated. I like the tannin as well.

BARTON: This is very floral and perfumed with watermelon and cinnamon. Soft on the palate. Breezes into the glass, captures you with the fruit and then has layers of chalkiness on the back end. There are no big tannins. It has a supple, soft finish.

JUSSILA: I love this wine. The fruit is intense on the nose immediately. There is a kind of mandarin quality as well, but definitely red fruit and rhubarb along with cooking spices. It has intense spiciness and a vanillin quality. It's dry with a warm, long finish. Really pretty wine.

WATHEN: I get a lot of bright aromas of boysenberry and Rainier cherry along with a bit of pine bark. There are a lot of seamless blackberry and boysenberry flavors and really smooth tannins. Well done.

POE: I got a dark, blueberry aroma and a lot of earth. I get the same on the palate with subdued berry and earth. I like the silky mouthfeel. The tannins don't overpower, but carry the flavors through to the end.

GRAHM: I didn't get the fruit that Bill got. In fact, I'd like to see more primary fruit. I was getting more dried herb and earth and some slightly stewed flavors. There is a bit of heat. There is good persistence.

BOWKER: It is an aromatic wine with a toasty note. There is a bit of heat on the nose. It has medium body and some spiciness on the palate.

EUROPEAN CRAFTSMANSHIP STAINLESS STEEL WINERY TANKS IN STOCK, READY TO SHIP



Harvest is on the horizon. You need tanks and you need them now, but compromising on quality to get them fast is not how great wines are made.

We're ready. Our Letina stainless tanks – jacketed, single wall, variable, you name it – are built in Europe and in stock in our Pacific Northwest warehouse, ready to ship.

Want more info? Call us today, or visit: agertank.com/winery

(503) 222-7079

AGER TANK &
EQUIPMENT CO.

AGERTANK.COM



*Where Experience is
a Tradition*

- ENTAV Licensee
- 2010 Protocol material available
- Certified virus and disease test protocol

21208 State Road 113, Knights Landing, CA
Phone: 530-735-6821, Cell: 530-379-5007
www.guillaumenurseries.com

Epoch Estate Wines

2013 Ingenuity, 15.8% Alc., 1,380 cases, \$70, 54% Syrah, 21% Mourvèdre, 16% Grenache, 9% Petite Sirah

Jordan Fiorentini grew up in Georgia. After graduating from **Dartmouth College**, she went to California and earned a degree in enology and viticulture at UC Davis. Her work experience includes stints at **Araujo Estate**, **Cuvaion** and **Markham Vineyards** in Napa Valley. She worked at the **Antinori-Tenuta Tignanello** experimental vineyard in Italy. She was director of winemaking for **Chalk Hill Estate Vineyards** before joining Epoch in 2010.



BRITTANY APP

According to Fiorentini:

“Because this wine combines our two finest estate vineyards, I try to harness the incredible personality they provide. At the same time I don’t want the wine to be too fruity, too ripe or too much of one thing. I try to promote fruit and power with minerality and earthiness. We want rich fruit, a lush mid-palate and mouth-filling elongated texture that leads to a long-lived finish.

“The Paderewski Vineyard is primarily limestone with shale, and the Catapult Vineyard is shale. Elevation is between 1,100 and 1,300 feet. Vines are planted to either 7x3 or 7x5 foot spacings. The rootstock is mixed, but is mostly 420A, 1103P and 110R. The clones are mixed. We have used Biodynamic practices



2013 Ingenuity

EPOCH ESTATE WINES

since 2011 but are not certified. We wanted to allow some leeway if necessary, but that has not been necessary in the six years we have farmed biodynamically. We have irrigation, but are careful and deliberate about the timing and quantity of irrigations due to a lack of water availability.

“We focus on soil health as the key to vine health. We do not have huge foliage issues. We remove some laterals with an eye to sun protection. We do very little leaf removal, and we rarely hedge or trim. We will trim cluster bottoms, sometimes wings and then perform a green drop after set. We target 2 to 2.5 tons per acre.

“We pick based on flavor while watching the vines and the weather. We taste for tannin ripeness and look for the texture and feel of the berries. We prefer no grape shrivel, and we like ripe seeds. We watch weather carefully and sometimes have to pick quickly to avoid shrivel or sugar spikes in the grapes.

“We sort pre- and post-destemming. We use whole-cluster inclusion on Syrah and Mourvèdre, sometimes Grenache. We add 15 ppm SO₂ at the crusher followed by a five- to seven-day cold-soak at 52° F. We run YANs to see where we are in tank and feed fermentation gently during the first half to ensure yeast are strong enough to finish fermentation. We rarely make acid additions. We start fermentations with native yeast, and then if it is a warm year, we’ll inoculate one-third to one-half of the way through with D254, D80 or D21.

“We ferment in concrete, stainless and wood. We saignée both the Mourvèdre and the Grenache. We try to délestage three times before punch-downs, and we pump-over twice a day until we can punch-down, usually around 17° to 15° Brix. Once we can punch-down, we go from three daily to one, depending on the desire for extraction. The fermentation occurs between 70° F and 85° F. We press at dryness to tanks with only a portion of the press fraction going into the free run, and that is determined by taste. From there we go to barrels, which are all French with 49 percent new oak. Native malolactic occurs in barrels. The wine gets racked at eight to 10 months for blending and then again at 18 months for bottling. The wine is aged in barrel for a total of 18 months and is bottled unfiltered. We bottle-age for 18 months before release.”

Tasting Notes

FIorentINI: This has a briny reduction, along with bright fruit and acid that perfectly represents our two vineyards. It's got everything I am looking for in terms of mineral elements and earth, as well as fruit. On the palate there is lots of juicy, gushy fruit; but as the wine flavors develop, I notice more textural elements coming through. The whole-cluster stems and the Petite Sirah lend some peppery tannin on the back. Everything is young and needs some time to come together. Flavor-wise there are tons of red and black fruits and tar, olive and earth.

JUSSILA: There is definitely intense fruit on the nose: black and blue fruit. The blueberry comes out with air. The wine is concentrated and tight with a tarry, graphite element. It has nice tannins. It is beautiful, powerful wine.

COLLINS: Lots of dark black fruit and a bit of blueberry. The palate is juicy and fresh. The tannins on the finish are nice but still a bit hard. There is beautiful mouthfeel, long and clear and ripe. It is deep and rich, but ends so gracefully. Acid is a wonderful thing.

WEINTRAUB: I thought it was really pretty with candied blue fruits and black berries, smoke and a little bit of wild savory smoked meat. I was expecting the wine to be even bigger in the mouth, but the length was really nice, and the acid brought a lot of freshness with good tannin length.

BARTON: This is like allspice. I get peppercorn and juniper with more flavors in the mouth. It is generous with dense cinnamon spice, vanillin cacao with layered tannins. This has aging potential out the wazoo. It is powerful and dense with a showy finish.

POE: I get anise and hazelnut on the nose. Some sweet oak tannin hits you pretty hard on the front palate, and the flavors linger throughout to the finish. It is really well-balanced wine.

BOWKER: I get a lot of dark plum with black licorice. The taste is rich, dark, assertive and powerful. It has big fruits up front and definitely lingers on the finish.

WATHEN: I get muddled rhubarb, plum and figs on the aroma. In the mouth, sweetness is my first impression. It is plush and velvety but a bit big for me.



TERRAVANT

WINE COMPANY



TRULY INNOVATIVE CUSTOM WINE SERVICES



**CUSTOM
CRUSH**

Central Coast Expertise
\$30 Million State-of-the-Art facility



**SHINER
PROGRAM**

60+ On-Going Domestic &
International Wines



**GLOBAL
PORTFOLIO**

Sourcing wine spanning over 9
different countries



**CREATIVE
DESIGN**

In-house Team with 10 awards
from prestigious competitions

Take a virtual tour @ www.terravant.com

Contact us: joe@terravant.com | 805.686.9400 x406

BUELLTON - CALIFORNIA

Agricultural Finance

Your Lender of Choice for Farm and Ranch Capital

- Agricultural real estate for 100 years
- Long-term fixed or adjustable rate mortgage financing
- Real estate secured revolving line of credit
- Competitive interest rates
- Flexible terms and structuring

Rates are attractive—contact us today.

559.435.0206 | www.metlife.com/ag



 **MetLife**

© 2017 METLIFE, INC.



BRITTANY APP

SOME GRAPE VARIETIES are distinctive and carry all of the components to make great wine by themselves. They have enough fruit and complexity, body, acid and tannin to make scrumptious, balanced wines. Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon and Riesling would be good examples of varieties that can work out just fine by themselves. Still, winemakers often can't help themselves and might blend in small amounts of another variety to improve the finished wine and make it more interesting. Perhaps a bit of Merlot might soften up those tannins in a Cabernet Sauvignon, or a mix of different clones could make a delicious Pinot Noir even more enjoyable.

Then there are varieties that are appealing and interesting, but rarely capable of carrying the whole show alone. At the risk of insulting hundreds of winemakers, I think, to a large extent, that is the case with most Rhône varieties, especially the whites. Marsanne and Roussanne have great body and lend weight to the mid-palate, but the fruit character is not bright and lively, preferring to show pome, quince and honeyed character. Viognier is full of aromatics, like peach and other stone fruits, but lacks a certain weight in the mid-palate. Picpoul and Grenache Blanc can be acidic to the point of distraction, and even their green apple brightness can fail to win you over.

Among the red varieties, Syrah is the most likely king. Not only can it exhibit blackberry, blueberry and jammy notes, but it can be loaded with meaty, tobacco or black pepper character. Syrah can definitely hold its own, but it lends itself as a welcome partner in blends with other Rhône varieties. Grenache has lovely and lively candied fruit and spice character, but tends to be light in color and lack acid. Mourvèdre can be an explosion of dark fruits, pepper and meaty character. It is inky but can be overly tannic.

So over time from their birthplace in France and as they spread across the world, Rhône varieties have traditionally been blended. The interesting thing about this Varietal Focus was the broad range of styles presented

even though all of the wines came from the Central Coast and tended to use combinations of the same varieties for their blends.

The Bonny Doon Le Cigare Volant Blanc was unctuous but balanced in a sort of classical way. The fruit did not jump out of the glass, rather it oozed into your consciousness and over your palate until it won you over. Adelaida's wine was more in your face with a gorgeous blend of fruit, mouth-feel, creaminess from oak, and a wonderful acidity that kept everything flowing. Joe Barton's Sentinelle used Viognier for aromatics, Marsanne and Roussanne for texture and Grenache Blanc for acidity. Then he complexed everything with techniques, using some whole-cluster, concrete tanks, sur lie and malolactic. All of these wines were white Rhône blends but couldn't have been more different from one another.

On the red side, all of the wineries used some combination of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre except Kukkula, which went with Cunoise as the only aid to its Syrah, and Foxen, which eschewed Syrah completely. The Caliza Azimuth was well on its way to its stated goal of being Châteauneuf-du-Pape from Paso. The Epoch Ingenuity exhibited a precise lushness. The Foxen showed a bright, almost Pinot Noir-like crispness, full of red fruit, while the Lone Madrone shined with red fruit, along with savory notes. Rustic fruit with graphite and mocha notes defined the Kukkula's Noir, and Tobin James wowed with meaty, peppery dark fruits, along with balanced acidity and tannins.

Tasting these wines made it hard to believe that they were all produced from the same varieties because they tasted so completely different. Paraphrasing Bill Wathen during one of the tastings, "A good blend should be better than its individual parts." These wines showed great complexity in a wide range of styles, and more than that...they were fun. Each new bottle tasted provided another revelation. Who knew that Rhône blends had this much potential to surprise and still represent their individual varieties? **WBM**