



OCTOBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

For us, every month feels like Italian-American Heritage Month, but October actually is, so please join us in celebrating by enjoying our wines with good food and good company. Our wines are our tribute to our heritage and we are so pleased to share a piece of it with you. Salute!

Wine Club Releases

2012 Primitivo - Primitivo is the Italian Zinfandel grown in the area of Puglia in Southern Italy. Though they are genetically identical Primitivo is considered to be more feminine and rustic with earthy undertones. The characteristic red raspberry, chocolate and black pepper with plum characteristics are apparent with a little rose petal and savory earthiness. The palate features a bit of powdery tannin and low acid that is balanced by a touch of French oak. Though it is ready to drink now it will age gently for at least 5 years. Recommended pairings: most medium-weight dishes, pasta with fresh tomato, roasted chicken, low-spice Mexican food, Chinese beef dishes.

Label Image - This famous interior image from a drinking cup (known as a kylix) tells the story of Dionysus sailing across the sea, possibly bringing Primitivo to the New World where it will begin a new life as Zinfandel in California. Made in 535 BC and found in a tomb outside Vulci, Italy, the detailed ship not only "sails" as one drinks from the cup but has huge eyes on the exterior, protecting the drinker while their attention is diverted.

Estate grown and bottled, Kelsey Bench – Lake County, 94% Primitivo and 6% Petite Sirah. 414 cases made. 14.5% ABV. Harvested early-October, aged in 2-3 year old barrels, unfinned, and unfiltered.

\$24.00 Retail. Club Price \$19.20. October Club Reorder Special Price \$16.00.

2012 Sangiovese - We are stubborn traditionalists when it comes to Sangiovese. We have the grippy medium-weight palate, the dusty strawberry and black cherry is front and center while orange peel, black pepper, and clove anchor the texture. Moderate ripeness keeps alcohol low and sings with food. We respect Sangiovese's high-strung, nervous tannin by using neutral oak. This Sangiovese in the Classico mold will continue to evolve elegantly for another five years. Recommended pairings: pasta dishes, minestrone, roast pork, steak tagliata, pizza with red sauce. 92 points, editor's choice, Wine Enthusiast magazine.

Label Image - The Roman eagle image was powerfully linked to military ventures and the rapid rise of the Empire, but its lineage extends back at least to the Greeks who took the Eagle and Snake to be a portentous sign sent by Zeus himself. This particular incarnation was created under Justinian, who sought to reunite the Eastern and Western Roman Empire and found the eagle to represent enlightenment and victory in a unified Christian state. Less politically, the eagle and snake echoes the duality of Sangiovese, which is both light and dark, fruity but dry, tart yet sweet, and slightly mystical in its duality.

86% Sangiovese, 7% Nebbiolo, 7% Cabernet Franc from Amador, Yolo and Lake Counties. 330 cases made. 13.5% ABV. Aged in neutral oak barrels and unfiltered.

\$24.00 Retail. Club Price \$19.20. October Club Reorder Special Price \$16.00.



Nick's Harvest Update

It seems that this year more people than ever before have come to me with questions. Two questions have dominated the conversation about the growing season this year. The first is how the drought has affected us. My answer is simply that we were drought-ready from the beginning. When I started planting our vineyard twenty years ago, I knew we had very little water to work with. Our winery and vineyard is situated on the Kelsey Bench AVA and the bottom of the winery's well is actually at a higher elevation than Main Street in Kelseyville. Our grapevines were planted on drought-tolerant rootstocks and each row has an individual faucet to control drip irrigation row by row. The grapevines, by their intelligent design, actually shut down and conserve water at high temperatures. So, the drought hasn't affected our vineyard as much as others.



Apparently the turkeys and squirrels have decided to pool their resources and share the Petite Sirah.

Our Estate grown Refosco,
harvested September 24.



The other dominant question is regarding harvest timing. We will probably finish our harvest season only one week early. We had an early bud break and a virtually frost free spring. We only had to frost protect one time, which we do by wind machine to keep the air circulating. We have had an almost perfect growing season with only moderate disease and pest pressure. We were able to control mildew easily using organically registered sulfur and light mineral oil applied at minimal rates. Pietro was able to do shoot thinning in a timely manner, followed by crop thinning later in the season. Although the growing season looked about a month early, three hot weeks actually set that back, rather than thrusting harvest forward. As I am writing this, we have already pressed Dolcetto, Sangiovese, and Primitivo. Currently fermenting are Refosco, Negro Amaro, Petite Sirah, and Cabernet Franc. Yet to be harvested are Nebbiolo, Barbera, and Aglianico always comes in last.

We make our harvest decision not on sugar or acid levels but on taste and maturity of the grapes. One measure of maturity is the state of the grape seeds. We look for brown, crunchy seeds rather than green, soft seeds which impart tannin and bitter, unripe flavors. I also like to chew the skins looking for flavor and tannin. The berries have good color and flavor showing well developed maturity. This looks to be a very good year for grape quality thanks to a longer growing season with steady, moderate growth.

October Wine Club Reorder Special

2012 Sangiovese

2012 Primitivo

\$16 per bottle

Tasting Room Business Hours

Wed - Sat 11am - 6pm & Sun 11am - 5pm

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas,
New Year's Day, and Easter.

Upcoming Events

October 23, 2014 - Grapes of Past - 6:00pm - 10:00pm

Enjoy this "Vintners in the Vaults" wine tasting with food and music while exploring the 1874 Old Mint in San Francisco with docents, presentations, a raffle, and VIP tickets available. \$35 to \$120 admission. www.SFhistory.org/flipside

October 25, 2014 - Primitivo Release Party - 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Join us in celebrating Italian-American Heritage Month as we release our award-winning 2012 Primitivo. Enjoy wine tasting, appetizers, and trivia with prizes. \$10 admission. Free to Wine Club members. RSVP 707-279-0483.

October 31, 2014 - Italian Grapes on American Soil - 9:00am - 10:15am

Rosa d'Oro Winemaker, Pietro Buttitta, presents a tasting history of Italian grapes at the American Wine Society's National Conference in Concord, North Carolina. www.AmericanWineSociety.org

November 22, 2014 - Fall Chocolate Salon - 10:00am - 5:00pm

The Fall Luxury Chocolate Salon participants include over 30 chocolatiers, confectioners, wineries and other culinary artisans. At San Francisco's Fort Mason Center, the Fall Chocolate Salon is the perfect place to find the perfect gift, while tasting and savoring the chocolate lover's experience. www.FallChocolateSalon.com

November 22 - 23, 2014 - San Francisco Vintners' Market - 1:00pm - 4:00pm

This Fall SFVM will be home to upwards of 150 wineries ready for you to try and buy their wines on the spot at Fort Mason Center. Many wineries are offering great deals, so don't miss this event. \$70 - \$150. www.SFvintnersmarket.com

November 29, 2014 - Small Business Saturday - 11:00am - 6:00pm

First there was Black Friday, then Cyber Monday. Founded by American Express, Small Business Saturday is the day we celebrate the Shop Small movement to drive shoppers to local merchants across the U.S. Register any eligible American Express Card to get a one-time \$10 statement credit when you spend \$10 or more in a single, in-store transaction at a qualifying small business that appears on the Small Business Saturday Map. For details and to register your American Express card visit www.SmallBusinessSaturday.com.

December 4, 2014 - Noe Valley Holiday Wine Walk - 4:00pm - 8:00pm

Located throughout 24th Street from Diamond to Chattanooga in San Francisco and with merchants offering wine samples, finger foods and special treats. Attendees wishing to participate in the sampling program may purchase tickets in advance for \$20 or on site for \$25 cash only. Participants will receive a wine glass and map with all of the tasting locations. www.SRESproductions.com

December 5, 2014 - Christmas in the Country - 5:30 pm - 8:30pm

Enjoy a merchant open house with holiday treats beginning at 5:30, Parade of Lights on Main Street beginning at 6:30, followed by the Christmas tree lighting at the Firehouse, and photos with Santa at WestAmerica Bank to kick off the winter holiday season in Kelseyville. Rosa d'Oro will be open until 8:30pm for your holiday shopping and sampling pleasure! Www.VisitKelseyville.com

December 5 - 7, 2014 - Give the Gift of Wine Holiday Open House - 11:00am - 5:00pm

Sip, Savor, and Shop! Whether you are looking for that special gift, spending an afternoon of wine tasting, or just pampering yourself, don't miss the annual holiday open house weekend at Lake County's wineries! They will be decked out in their holiday best and looking forward to welcoming you. www.LakeCountyWineries.org

Recipe

Kasu Salmon by Pietro Buttitta

Sake kasu is the lees left over from fermented sake. Just like wine or beer lees, the sake lees are yeast cells primarily that have a complex aroma and flavor with lots of savory and sweet components. They are very high in naturally occurring amino acids and glutamate in particular – the natural MSG component producing umami flavor plus pleasant alcohol note that adds some lift to the flavor. The kasu is used just like a brine or curing rub, and many flavor combinations are possible.

The recipe below is one I have used many times, though my original restaurant cooking encounter with it at Terra in Napa Valley used a good amount of sake and soy for a lighter and had a more soy/sugar driven profile. The recipe quantities are approximate - tasting the mix is the best way to make sure you are pleased with the balance of ferment-y/salty/sweet. The big question is whether to add salt at the end or at the beginning – salt at the end if feeling lazy and short of time, or by submerging fish for 30 minutes in a cold saltwater brine before applying the mixture if you are a perfectionist. The miso contains salt so keep that in mind. The cure allows the fish to be cooked to medium-well while remaining juicy if necessary.

Cure recipe for 2-4 lbs. of salmon

8-12 oz. sake kasu lees – available at a good Japanese grocery store

4 oz. white miso

approximately 4 oz. mirin

light brown sugar to taste

a bit of white wine or sake to taste



Clean, skin, pinbone and portion fish as desired – small fillet, whole loins or chops all work well. The kasu may be very hard and lumpy – if so moisten it with mirin and possibly a little water and mix until it forms a smooth paste. A Kitchenaid or food processor may be helpful. Mix the remaining ingredients in to produce a smooth, somewhat sticky paste. Coat all surfaces of fish with the mix to at least ¼” depth – more will not hurt but too little will not give you the proper curing effect. Cover and refrigerate overnight or up to two days. It can also be frozen in the cure and thawed for later use.

When nearing serving time, turn on your oven’s broiler and use your hands to scrape away most of the marinade, but be careful to leave a thin layer on top of the fish. Place on a heatproof pan or oiled baking sheet, and let temper to room temperature if possible as this will shorten the cooking time. Lightly salt the fish if you haven’t yet, remembering that the marinade has some salt already, so use maybe half of your normal amount. Broil the fish carefully. The marinade has sugar in it, so it can burn easily. If the top cooks too fast simply move to a lower rack to slow cooking. Serve immediately, with grilled leeks if possible, and our 2012 Muscat.

Welcome Back, Emily!

Chances are that if you’ve been to the tasting room in the last few months, you’ve met Emily Buttitta, the youngest of the Buttitta family. She was only 4 years old when the family moved to Lake County. Her earliest memories of the winery are watching Nick do a barrel transfer with the Chardonnay in '98. She also prepared grow tubes for the Primitivo when she was 12 years old. Emily’s experience lies in the front of the house and she particularly enjoyed her time as a barista. Her true passions are her performance art, writing & her health. She's picked grapes, olives and even bottled, but prefers to accommodate your visit to the tasting room in a way that reminds you of the true joys of being part of a family.