

June 2013 Newsletter

Friendly Fine Food & Wine

First, a deep and heartfelt thank you to everyone who has visited us for our Flight Night series. It has been a real adventure for all of us bringing food into the tasting room. It adds depth to what we do at Rosa d'Oro, it benefits the wine itself and the winemaking by adding a more vibrant and immediate context, and for me personally it is an exciting adventure reconnecting with food in a measured and personal way. So thank you for your trust and faith.

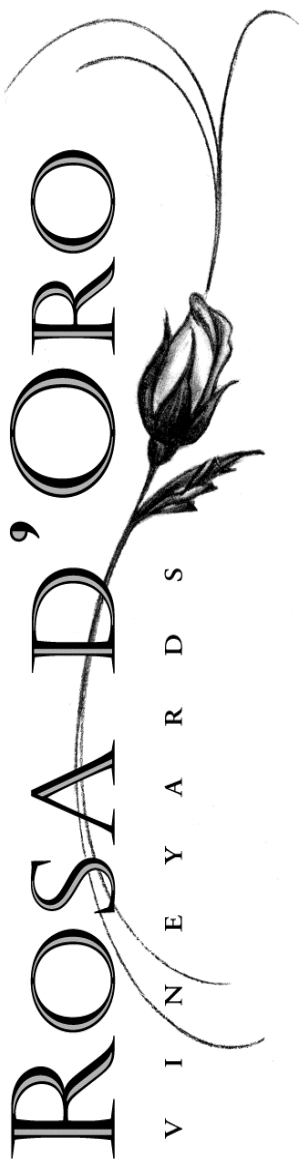
A little over a year ago we began to cook a bit of food in our tasting room. First there were small appetizer parties to celebrate new releases, and then it grew to 4-course wine pairing menus. At first there were 12 guests, then we had to buy more chairs. At 25 guests we went to two seatings. Then there were 50 reservations for the Flight Night series and we expanded to two nights, and then 80 people meant two seatings for both nights. All on one induction burner. We want to continue growing and sharing our best with you, and at this point we need your help. We are going to launch a kickstarter campaign in June to raise part of the funds for an upgrade.

Not many wineries have a winemaker who is also a chef. We do. I am the third generation of the Buttitta family in agriculture, and I am proud that my additional experience as a chef is helping to drive Rosa d'Oro as a premier food and wine destination in Lake County. We can proudly say we have built it from the ground up and we are continually learning and evolving along the way. Our food is no exception to this, and it has added a unique dimension that few wineries can offer. Though the goals for our wine is lofty (to be the best Italian varietal winery in California), and we will get there eventually, our Kickstarter goal is modest: to upgrade the kitchen to fulfill basic needs.

The food is refined rustic with an eye toward historical and cultural flavor profiles. My culinary background is in fine dining, but I enjoy most culture's food and do not want to get too fussy or contrived so though we may be based in Mediterranean themes we have had Thai, Moroccan and Mexican menus as well and I plan to have a few in historical modes like Ancient Roman or Renaissance-based menus. These are paired with our Italian varietal wines that have an immediacy and authenticity to them that demands something hearty and soulful with some polish that is not too arty or abstract. The comfort zone for me is intellectually based but with honest and immediate flavors and textures.

To continue cooking, we need to upgrade our kitchen though, and we are asking for your help. Our estimate to install a hood system and improve the plumbing, electrical and fire suppression systems is \$29,000 before adding any equipment costs. We are hoping to raise a portion of that and will be offering rewards to investors including olive oil, wine club vouchers and flight night tickets. We will send out an email once our Kickstarter.com campaign is live and pledges will be handled through Amazon. So please consider pledging, and thank you!

-Pietro Buttitta



Wine Club Selections

Nick on Barbera: This month the Barbera Festival takes place at the Cooper Ranch in Amador County. What does that mean to Rosa d'Oro Vineyards? It means that Barbera wine as a varietal is finally getting some of its long awaited and well deserved recognition. Two of my wine industry heroes were Barbera advocates. August Sebastiani, who always made his Barbera with Sonoma County grapes and always complained he could not get enough grapes to make as much wine as he wanted, and Louis Martini, who's Barbera carried the Lake County appellation on the label even 20 years ago. Interestingly, English wine author Jancis Robinson singles out the Louis Martini Barbera as an outstanding example of California Barberas. So it was only logical that Barbera would be one of the first selections in the ground for Rosa d'Oro Vineyards.

Barbera, with its high acidity, moderate tannins, and bright flavor, is famous for pairing with a broad variety of foods. In the vineyard, the vines have a natural tendency to produce an abundance of water sprouts and suckers as well as fruiting canes. This leads to a great deal of hand work to keep excess growth in check and limit crop production so that the flavor may fully develop. We are proud of our Barbera and the recognition it has gained in years past, and we hope you will continue to enjoy it.

2011 Barbera: Vibrant plum fruit and bright freshness with red and black berries, sage and a hint of violet in the spicy and clean finish. Aged 11 months in 2-4 year old oak to allow the fruit flavors to shine. Hand harvested 10/28/11 at 24.6 Brix. Unfined and unfiltered; 264 cases produced, 13.6% ABV.

2011 Barbera Retail Price \$20; Club Price \$16. June Reorder Special \$14 per bottle or \$140 per case.

Pietro on Aglianico: Aglianico is our most mysterious grape. It is conspicuously absent on our blog, largely because I still don't feel like we really understand its nature yet. Unlike the Barbera, Dolcetto, Sangiovese and Nebbiolo, it is not an aggressive canopy grower. In fact about half of the vines tend to have weak, short canes that need to have fruit removed. Often a single vine will have a couple large and healthy canes and many short and stubby ones, and this is entering their 10th year – usually a time when growth becomes consistent and predictable. We have two clones, one of which is pretty virused, turning bright red in October and sporting much more compact clusters. The vines don't show water stress as it is a quiet, self-contained grower – until you walk out and all the leaves have fallen. In a way it invites its own neglect by speaking quietly.

Aglianico wine is not for everyone either. It is not fruity or boldly aromatic by any stretch. It prefers to speak with earth and mineral rather than raspberry or rich plum. It has some of the black and red fruit characteristics of Cabernet Franc in a much more intense, dark, and ancient-feeling package. Aglianico when well made has legendary aging capability, due in part to its naturally high tannin levels and moderate acidity, and also it is just an extremely robust grape with dark color and loads of natural extract. Ted Seghesio told me he has tried every fermentation style to limit his Aglianico's tannic brutality. He now limits fermentation to five days and doesn't release the wine for five years. In general most Taurasis, the quality benchmark for Italian Aglianico, would never be considered ready to drink in the first 10 years. We can get more favorable fruit ripeness in Kelseyville, but it is still dicey. We harvested the last vintage on November 9th for example, still very tannic at 2 tons for the acre. And, I am happy to say that the last two vintages are just about as varietally correct as you will find anywhere in the U.S.

2011 Aglianico: Savory red cherry and black fruit backed by dark spice, firm tannin and acid, with mineral and classic undertones of graphite, iron, mint, herb and earth. Rustic yet refined, and very food friendly with a robust meal. Potential aging 10 years, improving all the while. 90% Estate Aglianico (10% Cabernet Franc) harvested 11/2/2011, aged 1 year in 2-4 year oak, unfined and un-filtered. 180 cases produced, 14.4% ABV.

*2011 Aglianico Retail Price \$24; Club Price \$19.20.
June Reorder Special \$17 per bottle or \$170 per case.*



Recipe

Irish Cream Crème Brûlée

(from our March Flight Night) Recipe by Pietro Buttitta

13 oz. heavy cream

13 oz. milk

10 oz. Irish Cream (Baileys or other)

½ tsp. vanilla extract

2 oz. Kahlua or similar coffee liqueur

15 egg yolks

9 oz. sugar

small pinch of salt

couple drops of lemon or lime juice

Large crystal Raw Sugar for brûléeing

Makes approximately 10 5oz. servings in 6oz. ramekins

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Have one or two tall-sided pans that can hold 10 ramekins (or 5 ramekins in 2 pans) and can be filled with warm water reaching at least half way up sides of ramekins.

Heat cream and milk just until scalded. Then add Irish Cream to milk mixture. Whip sugar and egg yolks together until light and tripled in volume. Slowly add the hot liquid to the egg yolks, being careful to not shock them. When all milk mixture is incorporated add Kahlua and vanilla, then a couple drops of lemon or lime juice to balance and a few grains of salt and mix until dissolved. Strain. Mixture can be stored for up to 2 days if it is quickly chilled over ice.

Ladle mixture into ramekins and fill holding pan with warm water up to level of liquid in ramekins. Bubbles can be dabbed off with a paper towel. Bake just until set using the jiggle test – around 45 minutes but you must watch closely, and the slower they cook the better. Remove each ramekin the moment it has set. If it rises at all it is overcooked and is now a soufflé. Let cool at room temperature for at least half an hour then wrap individually and refrigerate when cool. You don't want any condensation forming. They can be stored for several days once cooked.

Sprinkle enough sugar to cover all of surface and use either a torch or carefully rotate underneath a broiler to carefully caramelize.

Enjoy with our Carmen dessert wine of Dolcetto and Petite Verdot made in the Port style.

Rosa d'Oro Vineyards Wine Club

Wine Club member benefits include first notification of new releases and upcoming events, special pricing on new releases, extra discount on sale prices, 20% off wine purchases, 30% off case purchases of wine, plus 10% off olive oil and wine accessories. Members can also enjoy their club discount when ordering wine from our online store by logging in to their member account. We offer three levels of membership:

Famiglia – 2 bottles shipped to you 6 times per year (February, April, June, August, October & December). This option includes a mix of red, white, rose, and dessert wines, plus the April shipment will include one bottle of wine and one bottle of estate grown extra virgin olive oil. Special discounted shipping rate of \$5 in California and \$10 outside California per two-bottle shipment.

Amici – 4 bottles of red wine 3 times per year (February, June & October) shipped to you or available for pick up at the tasting room.

Vicini – 2 bottles of red wine 3 times per year (February, June & October) shipped to you or available for pick up at the tasting room.



Upcoming Events

June 20, 2013 - Kickin' in the Country Street Dance

Enjoy a country-style street dance on Main Street in Kelseyville from 7 to 10pm featuring music by The Lake County Diamonds. A raffle will be held and local businesses will be open. The Rosa d'Oro Tasting Room will be open during the event. Presented by the Kelseyville Business Association. www.VisitKelseyville.com

June 22, 2013 - Art & Wine in the Park

Find Rosa d'Oro Vineyards along with other local wineries and artists at Library Park in Lakeport in support of the Clear Lake Performing Arts organization. For ticket info visit www.ClearLakePerformingArts.org or buy your tickets at the Rosa d'Oro tasting room.

July 5 & 6, 2013 - Art & Wine Reception

Join us at the Lake County Wine Studio on Friday from 5 to 8pm and Saturday from 4 to 7pm for their monthly Art & Wine reception featuring Rosa d'Oro wines paired with appetizer bites. \$10 admission. 9505 Main St. Upper Lake. Call 707-275-8030.

July 27 & 28, 2013 - Lake County Wine Adventure

A two day passport event county wide. Participating wineries, including Rosa d'Oro, will offer tastings, food, and specials to ticket holders. www.LakeCountyWineries.org

August 10, 2013 - San Rafael Food & Wine Festival

This free event is held from 1 to 5pm at the Falkirk Cultural Center, 1408 Mission St. San Rafael. Find Rosa d'Oro Vineyards pouring wine there! Tasting is \$25. Buy tickets online at www.SRESProductions.com.

August 17, 2013 - Toga Party!

Join us in the Rosa d'Oro Vineyards Tasting Room from 5 to 8pm for wine tasting and appetizers. Togas are optional but encouraged. Prizes will be awarded for best dressed guests. \$15 per person; \$10 for Wine Club Members. Please RSVP to 707.279.0483.

August 22, 2013 - Noe Valley Wine Walk

Walk the shops on 24th Street from Diamond to Chattanooga in San Francisco and enjoy tasty tidbits with wine tasting from 4 to 8pm for \$30. Find Rosa d'Oro wines being poured in one of the shops! www.SRESProductions.com

August 24, 2013 - Taste of Lakeport

Find Rosa d'Oro and other wineries along with restaurants and caterers on Main Street in Lakeport with live music, local shopping, and antique vehicles on display from 5 to 8pm. Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the event. www.LakeportMainStreet.com

August 24 & 25, 2013 - Italian Family Festa San Jose

Enjoy authentic Italian foods and entertainment along with merchant booths at Guadalupe River Park in San Jose from 11am to 8pm. Find Rosa d'Oro pouring in the wine tasting garden. www.ItalianFamilyFestaSJ.org



Wine Club Reorder Special

2011 Barbera - \$14 per bottle and \$140 per case

2011 Aglianico - \$17 per bottle and \$170 per case

Tasting Room Business Hours

Wednesday - Saturday 11am - 6pm

Sunday - Tuesday 11am - 5pm