



February 2014 Newsletter

Vintage Report and Kitchen Update

The 2013 vintage is behind us now, and it honestly could not have finished any better. The grape quality was amazing, the rain never came, and the sun still has not stopped shining. The growing season was long and consistent, and though it was dry, the fruit came through in exceptional condition. We even have a few new grape varietals in the works as well, which is always exciting and provides more learning opportunities for us. The spread between the lighter and heavier grape styles is excellent and all are showing great typicity already with lots of the structure that Lake County fruit is famous for. In addition to a harvest that saw every single tank, container, and drum full at the same time, we also managed to bottle all of the 2012 wines, including a new House Red.

As we move through this frighteningly dry winter, we are also anxious to wrap up the kitchen project and get back to some serious cooking. We have our contractor lined up and the various Lake County departments have been very helpful and encouraging.

With that in mind, I would personally like to ask for your input on the future direction of our food. The 4-course dinners will continue indefinitely, (thank you ticket holders!!!) and though cooking every weekend is not possible due to time constraints, I think we can add another monthly food event or something with a different format. Any input on the following questions would be appreciated.

Do you like the different ethnic themes for the dinners like we have been doing or would you prefer a more focused and consistent menu?

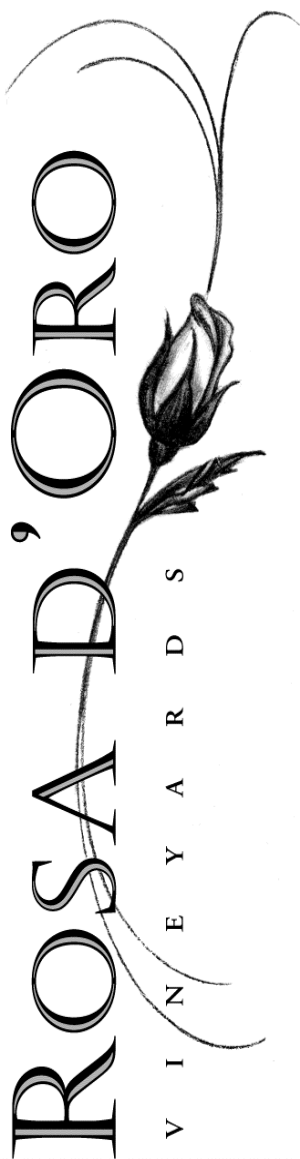
Is 6pm too early for the first seating?

Would you be comfortable if we provided more seating for more customers during the dinners or do you feel that space is already getting tight?

Would you like to see more dinners or more frequent lighter events like appetizer parties if time allowed?

Is there any interest in monthly educational classes, like exploring a specific region of Italy with other wines and small plates?

Once again, a huge thank you to all who contributed to the kitchen project or attended a dinner. We will get rolling again soon. - Pietro



Wine Club Reorder Special
2011 & 2012 Montepulciano
\$14 per bottle and \$150 per case

Tasting Room Business Hours
Wednesday - Saturday 11am - 6pm
Sunday 11am - 5pm

Wine Club Selections

We have selected two vintages of Montepulciano for February. Many of you have tasted the 2011 already, and it has been very popular. Our 2012 Montepulciano unveils a new label design as well as a new vineyard source. Late-ripening Montepulciano is widely grown throughout Central and Southern Italy where heat is necessary, but incredibly rare in California. It produces a relatively soft wine by Italian standards, weighty and dark but with moderate acid and gentle tannins. Our California version features rich plum and dark berry fruits, a dose of espresso and a hint of violet with just enough acid to balance the lush palate. Best drunk within 5 years. Recommended pairings include roasted meats, earthy vegetables with whole grains, tomato-based ragus, cassoulet, or mushroom pizza.

Retail price \$20 per bottle. Wine Club price \$16 per bottle. Reorder Special \$14 per bottle or \$150 per case.

2011 Montepulciano - 100% Montepulciano from Mt. Oso Vineyards in the Tracy Hills. Mount Oso, a 3,360 foot peak in Stanislaus County, is part of the Diablo Range. Tracy Hills is a large viticultural area straddling both San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties in northern California. It is on the east side of the Altamont Pass and is a very deep soil region with a special mitigating climate due to the Pacific winds which keep it cool during the day and warm at night. The growing season started slow and continued to be cool and moderate throughout with clear weather and pleasant warmth in summer. The real story was three inches of rain right at the beginning of harvest. Early and mid-ripening cultivars were hit hard and the unseasonably cool and highly humid conditions necessitated extra care. Those who were diligent in the field enjoyed good acid levels, low alcohol and savory tannins. The rain in Tracy Hills was only moderate, only slowing ripening without stunting it while Montepulciano's thick skins added a layer of protection.

Winemaker's Notes: Harvested October 27, 2011 from Mt Oso Vineyards and fermented in bins for 9 days. Aged 12 months in neutral oak barrels, gravity racked once, unfiltered & unfiltered. 13.8% ABV. 120 cases.

2012 Montepulciano - The 2012 vintage is considered one of the most perfect vintages a winemaker might ever hope to see. Just enough rain fell over the winter, the Spring saw little frost, fruit set was strong and the steady ripening warmth in Lake County was perfect and consistent. Even harvest took place under ideal moderate conditions. After a cold and wet 2011, 2012 was a gift.

Winemaker's Notes: 100% Montepulciano with 55% from Mt. Oso Vineyard in Tracy Hills and 45% from Adobe Creek Vineyard in Lake County. Harvested mid-October and aged in neutral oak. Unfiltered & unfiltered. 13.8% ABV. Hand bottled 196 cases August 29, 2013.

Label Image: The Chimera was, according to Greek mythology, a monstrous fire-breathing creature of Lycia in Asia Minor, composed of the parts of three animals - a lion, a snake and a goat. Usually depicted as a lion, with the head of a goat arising from its back, and a tail that ended in a snake's head, the Chimera was one of the offspring of Typhon and Echidna and a sibling of such monsters as Cerberus and the Lernaean Hydra. The Chimera of Arezzo bronze statue dates back to 400 BC, and is without doubt a true gift from the Etruscan civilization. Much like the Chimera, the Montepulciano grape seems to have been indigenous to Tuscany, being named after that very town only 25 miles away from where the Chimera was discovered. After its Medieval silence it reappeared in Abruzzo in 1557, where it has since found true success and combines the same noble, fighting nature with a touch of the ferocious and tragic.



Recipe

Just as Abruzzo means Montepulciano, it also means lamb. Of course it also means pasta alla chitarra and spicy seafood on the coast, but the lamb pairs with Montepulciano very well. Crespelle – or crepes – are well known in the region, and add a delicate touch, and just like cannelloni can feed a couple of people or an army.

Lamb Crespelle with Sauce

First: Braise several lamb shanks and gently pull apart and clean meat while reserving braise liquid after pressing vegetables through a fine sieve and skimming excess fat off. A few pointers: brown the lamb well first, use chicken stock in the braise and a little Montepulciano, brown onions well for the braise also, cut a head of garlic in half and add to braise with skin, add bay and thyme, do not let boil by keeping oven temperature under 250 F, let the lamb cool in liquid to retain moisture before cleaning, keep meat in good-sized chunks, and remove veins or silver skin. Reduce skimmed braise liquid by at least half.

Crespelle batter: Make the day before and let rest in refrigerator. The flour wants to hydrate.

1 cup milk, ¾ cup AP flour, 2 beaten eggs, 2 tbl. melted butter, dash of salt. Whisk ingredients together and then strain to remove lumps. After lamb is cleaned cook crepes in medium-size non-stick pan over medium heat with butter, pouring about 2 ounces of batter at a time and spreading across pan. They should be thick enough to hold fillings. Flip when browned and stack on plate and cover with towel.

Lamb filling: After cleaning lamb add back a bit of the braise liquid, some olive oil just to keep the meat moist, salt if necessary, a bit of oregano, enough chili flake to be a little warm and a little very finely chopped fresh rosemary. Gently fold in one cup of sweet, fresh, drained, full-fat ricotta.

Sauce: Sauté finely chopped garlic and shallot in olive oil just until browned. Add about 1 cup of white wine to arrest browning and reduce by at least half. Add about a cup of the braising liquid and about 1 cup of ripe, seeded and chopped tomatoes. Do not cook too much – the tomatoes should keep their texture and acid. Check seasoning and adjust if necessary. It should be bright, yet meaty, have a light, not-thin but not-thick consistency, and be deeply flavored.

Assembly: Fill crepes with lamb, roll and place seam side down on a non-stick surface. Bake/Broil for a few minutes until browned at 425 F. Carefully place in a wide serving bowl, spoon two or three ounces of warm sauce over crepes and grate pecorino cheese over the top.

New Release

2012 Dolcetto Semi-sweet Red Wine - Dolcetto is the third most popular red grape in Piedmont, Italy, yet it is rarely grown in California. It also has an unfortunate name that leads people to believe it is sweet, so in 2012 we took up the challenge of making a semi-sweet Dolcetto. It maintains the firm and grippy, rustic tannin and clean dark red fruit with spice notes that the grape is famous for, but it is tempered with 3% residual sugar. It can seem large at first but is decidedly medium weight and flexible in its food friendliness, having both structure and sweetness. Here it is at its best without any hint of oak at all. Recommended pairings: hearty braised red meats with roasted vegetables, barbecued and smoked foods with sweet sauces, and charcuterie.

Winemaker's Notes: 100% Estate Grown Dolcetto harvested October 6, 2012. Unoaked. 312 cases produced. 12.5%ABV. Bottled October 1, 2013.

Retail Price \$16 per bottle. Wine Club price \$12.80 per bottle or \$134.40 per case.

Upcoming Events

February 8, 2014 - Wine & Chocolate... and more! - 12:00 PM - 4:00PM

Enjoy an afternoon of wine and food tasting at Mt. Konocti Winery while supporting the programs and services of Lake Family Resource Center. Find Rosa d'Oro Vineyards and virtually every other Lake County winery pouring in one location, 2550 Big Valley Road Kelseyville. Tickets are \$35 in advance (get yours at Rosa d'Oro) or \$40 at the door. www.LakeFRC.org

February 9, 2014 - Wine Club Pick Up Party - 1:00 PM - 4:00PM

Wine Club members enjoy a complimentary sampling of our newest releases with appetizers and the February Club selections will be available for pick up. Guests are welcome for \$10 per person. Call 707-279-0483.

February 12, 2014 - North Berkeley Gourmet Ghetto Valentine's Wine Walk - 4:00 PM - 8:00PM

Located throughout Shattuck Avenue from Hearst to Rose and on Vine Street to Walnut Square and with merchants offering wine samples, finger foods and special treats. Find Rosa d'Oro Vineyards pouring in one of the shops! Purchase on-site tickets for \$25 or advance tickets for \$20 via the website. www.SRESproductions.com

February 13, 2014 - Union Street Has A Crush On You Valentine Wine Walk - 4:00 PM - 8:00PM

Stroll the shops on Union Street from Gough to Steiner and on Fillmore Street from Union to Lombard in San Francisco to enjoy wine tasting and appetizers along the way. Find us pouring Rosa d'Oro wines in one of the shops! www.SRESproductions.com

March 1, 2014 - Venetian Masquerade - 6:00 PM - 8:00PM

Join us in the Rosa d'Oro Tasting Room for a celebration inspired by the Carnevale of Venice, Italy. Enjoy wine tasting and appetizers. Masks are optional but encouraged! Prizes will be awarded for the best masks! \$10 per person. \$5 for Wine Club members. Call 707-279-0483.

March 8, 2014 - The Great Train Robbery Mystery Dinner - 12:00 PM - 8:00PM

Enjoy an interactive clue hunt (Find one of the clues at the Rosa d'Oro Vineyards Tasting Room!) followed by a chuck-wagon dinner, live music, and more at the Featherbed Railroad Bed & Breakfast Resort, 2870 Lakeshore Blvd. Nice, Ca. \$50 per person. Call (707) 274-8378 for reservations. www.FeatherbedRailroad.com

March 15, 2014 - San Francisco Chocolate Salon - 10:00 AM - 6:00PM

Experience the finest in artisan, gourmet & premium chocolate in one of the world's great culinary metropolitan areas. The event is held at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center, featuring a delicious selection of over 40 chocolatiers, confectioners, wineries, and other culinary artisans. You can find Rosa d'Oro Vineyards there! www.SFChocolateSalon.com

April 12 & 13, 2014 - SF Vintners' Market - 12:00 PM - 4:00PM

San Francisco Vintners' Market is back again at Fort Mason Center's Festival Pavilion April 12th and 13th. Come by to taste wines from up to 200 wineries, including Rosa d'Oro Vineyards. At this event you can actually buy wines on the spot and take them home. www.SFVintnersMarket.com