

Blog Therapy for Vin-scent Press-leees

Oh Mama

Can this really be the end?

To be stuck inside a wine blog

With the sensory blues again

Therapist: Good afternoon Vinny. How was your week? Did you work on some of the things we talked about during your last visit?

Vinscent: Yes. In fact, it was fine early on. I started reading a book, as you suggested, which provided a nice diversion for awhile. But by the end of the week, I was back at the computer 4 to 6 hours a night.

Therapist: Okay. Well, that's a start. What are you reading?

Vinscent: *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Therapist: Oh yes. Steinbeck is one of my favorite authors, but I prefer *East of Eden*. Perhaps you can find a book whose story has nothing to do with your "issue."

Vinscent: You mean something by Hugh Johnson or Jancis Robinson?

Therapist: I was thinking more along the lines of Ken Kesey or Gabriel García Márquez. I'm assuming your computer time was spent updating your wine blog?

Vinscent: Yes. I try to do other activities, but I just can't help myself.

Therapist: Well, that *is* why you are here. Why do you suppose you can't stay away from blogging?

Vinscent: They need me.

Therapist: Who needs you?

Vinscent: Wine enthusiasts all over the land. Do you know how many good and bad wines are out there? Do you know how easy it is to make a mistake when ordering a wine or visiting a winery? It could ruin your wine country weekend! It is my civic duty to share my wine experiences so the world can be a better and safer place.

Therapist: Do folks who read and respond to your blog see it that way? I mean do they know your credentials?

Vinscent: Yes. They know that I have been to Copia Food and Wine Museum in Napa, that I watch the Food Network

every day and that I'm a non-snob who likes to go wine tasting. It's all listed on my blog, under Sam Swirl.

Therapist: Speaking of clever fictitious names, why haven't you signed your actual name to your blog wine reviews?

Vinscent: Oh, heavens. I can't do that. You never know who might be reading my stuff. I might actually have to meet someone face to face and have an old-fashioned discussion with non-verbal communication and all that weird stuff. It's much better for all parties involved to stay anonymous.

Therapist: I see.

Therapist: Aren't there well known wine critics and publications that already provide that service?

Vinscent: I guess, if you can call it a real service. People such as Robert Parker and *The Wine Spectator* do, but I don't always agree with their opinions, and besides, they charge money for their service. I bet you didn't know Parker started out as an attorney who began writing about his hobby, wine, and now he is the world's most recognized wine critic.

Therapist: It might help if we stick to talking about Vinscent. What did you write about this week when you fell off the wagon?

Vinscent: I had just visited this cool little winery in the Dry Creek Valley called Unti. I met first with George Unti, then his son Mick, and their winemaker Sébastien. While we were tasting their newly released 2004 Zinfandel (which I review in my latest blog), I realized these guys are just like me. They have very strong opinions on things that most people don't give a hoot about. George was a little icy at first, but my girlfriend asked him about the map of Italy on the wall and you couldn't shut the guy up. Then Mick called the 2004 Zin the most over-the-top Zin Unti had ever made. I think he even used the word 'slutty' in his description. What a goof! I think he needs more sleep. Sébastien heard me say I've been to Montpellier and he was all over me like Gomez Addams is when his wife Morticia speaks French.

Therapist: I see we have some more work to do. To help you gain perspective on the importance of wine blogging, I'd like you to listen to the following CDs before our next session: *The Best of Dr. Science* from Duck's Breath Mystery Theater, and Monty Python's *Argument Clinic*. See you in a week?

MU

Biodynamique

In 2005, we decided to try something new in the vineyard. For over a year we had stopped using chemical pesticides and were farming virtually organically. Then, we were approached by Philippe Armenier, a big bear of a French man from Château-Neuf-du-Pape who piqued our curiosity. With a thick accent (mine is nothing compared to his), he told us about growing grapes the “biodynamique” way, using natural cycles of the moon to time work in the vineyard¹—just like the good *Old Farmer’s Almanac*—plowing, weeding, suckering, spraying natural homeopathic preparations and compost teas on the ground and the vines².

The goal is to bring a more diverse microbial and insect life into healthier soils to enhance the root system of our vines so they grow deeper into the subsoil. Gradually the vines become more independent from irrigation, developing stronger defense mechanisms against pests and environmental stress³. Perhaps more importantly, a deeper root system and less dependent vine also increases the expression of “terroir” (or characteristics linked to soil and microclimate) in the wines.



The difficulty for us is that these perfectly sound principles come packaged in a pretty esoteric vocabulary. Words like *etheric energy*, *cosmic forces*, *dynamization*, keep popping up. Biodynamics as a spiritual science defends the idea that we develop our farms as living organisms, as ecological symbiotic communities.



To some of you, this is going to sound a little woo-woo but the thing is, it works. Before going into this, we did our homework, and we found an impressive list of famous wineries worldwide that have adopted biodynamics. Some independent scientific evidence is slowly being published, showing healthier soils and stronger, more balanced vines in biodynamic vineyards.

It is a little early to tell but soil structure in our experimental blocks seems to be improved and grapes from these vines turned out great last year. As I told George, the worst that can happen is that people will say we are crazy. But we will get to know our vineyard better by paying more attention to it.

In the end, the message of biodynamics is quite simple: We are what we eat and drink. As physical beings, we depend on what the earth provides. Our duty as farmers and winemakers is to grow grapes and create wines that not only give pleasure, but are also made with respect for the people who drink it, care for the land and the life on that land. Sounds good to me.

Sébastien

¹Scientific research has shown that plant germination and growth rate are affected by the moon cycles.

²Drs. Carpenter-Boggs and Reaganold at Washington State University found that biodynamic composts are more active with higher nitrate levels. That shows that biodynamic preparations are not only effective, but effective in homeopathic quantities (where the concentration of an active element is so low it is negligible).

³Dr. Harry Hoitink at Ohio State University has established that composts and compost teas indeed activate disease resistance genes in plants.



2004 ZINFANDEL
We're Jammin'

As we mentioned in previous newsletters, our grapes in 2004 needed 50spf sunscreen protection. We call it “the dried bunch” vintage. Zinfandel was particularly hard hit. Zin’s thin skin (sounds like a perfect name for the house band at the Dry Creek General Store) makes it prone to shriveled berries in ideal conditions, let alone the relentless sun we experienced in August of 2004. If you have wanted our Zins to be more mainstream, ripe, *jammy* and a little higher octane, as they say in Mendocino County this time of year, this bud’s for you.

Similar to the 2003 vintage, our '04 Zinfandel had gobs of ripe fruit qualities but, like me, the wine lacked balance or elegance as a stand alone varietal. Fortunately, we have enough Petite Sirah to compensate for these kinds of vintages, and we leaned heavily on the black stuff by using a winery all-time high 20% in the final blend (I wish I had something to make me more balanced). Why so high you might ask? The structure and body Petite brings to this Zin helps the wine carry its almost 15% alcohol. Despite this gaudy number, the wine is still in the Unti style: balanced and fruity but not sweet. One side effect to blending this much Petite Sirah is that it will take this wine a bit more time to really drink well. By that I mean 18 months from today instead of 12.

2004 ZINFANDEL	
Harvested: 9/13-10/1/04	Blend: 80% Zinfandel, 20% Petite Sirah
Total Acidity: 0.60g/100ml	Aging: 11 mo. in French oak (25% new)
pH: 3.85	Bottled: 8/31/05
Alcohol: 14.9%	Cases Produced: 1250 (12/750ml)

INTRODUCING LEVI GLENN

In March, we had the pleasure of welcoming a new member to the Unti dream team. Levi Glenn is a fine young man whom we got to meet when he worked crush in the cellar with Sébastien in 2004 and survived the experience. He has a strong background in viticulture and, after almost losing his soul to the dark side of the force (big vineyard management company in Napa), he was able to see the light, and come back to where his heart lies, the Dry Creek Valley. He is taking on the daily responsibilities of running 60 acres of vineyards and managing, in fluent Spanish, the four great guys (Filiberto Zúniga, Adrian Aguado, Romelo Aguado, and Raul Zúniga) who tend to them all year long.

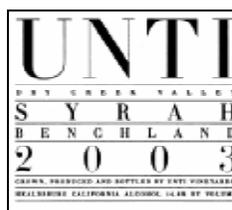


2004 PETIT FRERE
Segromigno's Provençal Cousin

After a one vintage hiatus, Petit Frere returns with a non-varietal designation. You may recall that our previous vintage of Petite Frere rose straight to the top of the wine charts in Turlock, California. They love us in Turlock, and we love them for that.

This 2004 version is predominantly a Grenache/Mourvedre blend, and, as such, is more like a Côtes du Rhone Villages with a bit more depth and tannin. The nose has the fragrance of Grenache (ripe raspberries) and Mourvedre (meat and cherries). Syrah adds some depth, color and body. Is it as classy and elegant as our Grenache? No. But at this price it doesn't have to be. Only 475 cases produced.

2004 PETIT FRERE	
Harvested: 10/13-10/18/04	Blend: 40%Grenache, 37%Mourvedre, 23%Syrah
Total Acidity: 0.60g/100ml	Aging: 13 mo. in neutral French oak
pH: 3.82	Bottled: 12/5/05
Alcohol: 14.5%	Cases Produced: 475 (12/750ml)



2003 SYRAH
'BENCHLAND'
MAGNUMS 1.5L

Hard as it is to believe, we still have a few cases of our best Syrah ever at Unti in magnums. If I were to select any of our Syrahs for long-term aging, it would be this 2003 Benchland Reserve. It is very concentrated, with solid tannin structure and nicely balanced with acidity—a hallmark of the 2003 vintage. If you have had the wine in the 750ml format, you know it takes this wine quite a while to open up. In the magnum size, this Syrah will hang for an easy 7 to 10 years. If you have it earlier, because you are having a teeth staining party, I'd recommend decanting it first. Please note: we are already sold out of the 750ml bottles, and the mags are going fast.

2003 SYRAH 'BENCHLAND' MAGNUMS	
Harvested: 9/21-9/24/03	Blend: 100% Syrah
Total Acidity: 0.61g/100ml	Aging: 14 mo. in French oak (40% new)
pH: 3.75	Bottled: 12/11/04
Alcohol: 14.8%	Cases Produced: 50 (6/1.5L)

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 4202 Dry Creek Road
 PO Box 1899
 Healdsburg, CA 95448

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 SANTA ROSA,
 CA



New Releases:

- 2004 ZINFANDEL**
- 2004 PETIT FRERE**
- 2003 SYRAH 'BENCHLAND' MAGNUMS**

Ordering Information: Mail this form to **Unti Vineyards, PO Box 1899, Healdsburg, CA 95448**; or, fax it to **(707) 433-5591**; or, email us from the Store page at www.untivineyards.com; or, call us at **(707) 433-5590**. Use the same methods to contact us for **scheduling tasting appointments** and purchasing on-site.

Today's Date ___ / ___ / ___

Shipping Information:

Residence (add \$4 Shipping) Business

Name: _____

c/o Business: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

ST: _____ DOB req'd for HI & WI ___ / ___ / ___

Zipcode: _____

Phone#: _____

Email: _____

New Releases	# Bottles	Price	Extension
2004 Zinfandel	<input type="text"/>	@ \$24 =	<input type="text"/>
2004 Petit Frere	<input type="text"/>	@ \$16 =	<input type="text"/>
2003 Syrah Magnum 1.5L	<input type="text"/>	@ \$75 =	<input type="text"/>

Current Releases

2004 Grenache <i>SOLD OUT</i>	0	@ \$26 =	00.00
2003 Syrah	<input type="text"/>	@ \$24 =	<input type="text"/>
		Subtotal =	<input type="text"/>

(6-11 bottles = 5%, 12-35 = 10%, 36+ = 15%) Discounts = ()

New Subtotal =

(CA = 7.75%; Other states, call for rate) Taxes =

(Use chart--add \$4 for Residential address) Shipping =

TOTAL =

Payment Information:

Charge to Credit Card below or Check enclosed

Visa/MC # _____

Expiration Date: ___ / ___ / ___ Ver#: _____

Signature: _____

Billing Address (if diff. from above): _____

*Purchasers must be 21 or older.
 An adult signature will be required at delivery.
 Shipping only to states where permitted by law.*

SHIPPING TO A BUSINESS RATES (Subject to change)		
State	6 Pk Box (4-6 btls)	12 Pk Box (7-12 btls)
Northern CA	\$14 - Ground	\$19 - Ground
So. CA, CO, ID, NM, NV, OR, WA, WY	\$17 - Ground \$25 - 3Day \$28 - 2Day	\$25 - Ground \$42 - 3Day \$49 - 2Day
IA, MO, NE, ND, MN, TX	\$21 - Ground \$34 - 3Day \$43 - 2 Day	\$33 - Ground \$58 - 3Day \$71 - 2Day
CT, DC, FL, GA, IL, LA, NC, NY, OH, VA, WI	\$23 - Ground \$38 - 3Day \$43 - 2Day	\$38 - Ground \$64 - 3Day \$74 - 2Day
AK, HI	\$47 - 2Day	\$79 - 2Day
Add \$4 if shipping to a Residential address. *If your state is not listed, call for options.		