

Clubbing

2007 Grenache
2007 Zinfandel
2006 Syrah



Stack 'em high and watch 'em fly!

Many times we've been asked why we don't have a wine club. Many times we've used one, if not all, of the following excuses: we didn't have the appropriate Point of Sale system to easily manage automatic monthly shipments; inadequate staffing; didn't want to be like every other winery; too lazy. We now have a slick new POS system, and very talented folks working with us (Katie Akers and Alex Hill), and, I'm still lazy. But I would hate for people to receive wine they might not enjoy.

Since my days of buying wine for Safeway, I've had serious disdain for those who tried to jam wine down my throat (figuratively speaking, of course. Literally, I don't mind). It probably comes as no surprise to you that large wineries championed this sales technique. The sales reps were recent college grads with a degree in business, who were nicely coiffed, dressed in navy blue suits and sporting yellow neckties (not that there's anything wrong with yellow neckties). They were taught to discreetly ask only closed ended questions. "So how many cases of White Grenache would you like to buy, Mick? 5 or 10?" You can only imagine how well this went over with the snotty wine buyer known as yours truly.

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A great friend of the winery, Roger Eggleston, has a different way of explaining this phenomenon of forcing wine on people¹. While Roger was a wine buyer for Safeway, he received a notebook that a sales rep had accidentally left in one of the stores. Inside the notebook were profiles of various store managers and whether they were open to allowing the rep to build large displays of his wine. One manager was described as being "susceptible to loadation," meaning the manager would allow the rep to bring more cases into that store than necessary. All of which was a good thing for the rep. When he returned the notebook to that winery's sales manager, Roger slyly asked him what the term "loadation" meant, since he had never seen that word in the dictionary. Priceless. I've certainly incorporated it into my vocabulary ever since.

We definitely don't want to risk being called "loadatious," so we will not be establishing an Unti Vineyards Wine Club anytime soon. Instead, we are going to give those of you who are brave enough to be on our mailing list (and thereby subject yourselves to this drivel) an opportunity to buy our new releases, and respective preceding vintages, at a **20% discount when you buy a minimum of a 12 bottle case**. You choose the wines, not us. You can assort the wines to build up to a case. The discount will apply to the selected wines for one month. For example, you have until March 15th to purchase our featured wines at 20% off the regular price. Non-featured wines can be assorted in your case purchase and will receive our normal 10% discount.

Some of our highly limited wines, such as our 2008 Barbera, 2008 Sangiovese and 2007 Montepulciano will not be offered at the additional discount. However, mailing list customers will be able to purchase those wines before they are officially released. FYI, the above wines will be in our May newsletter offering.

So, as Dana Carvey doing George Bush Sr. would say, in summary:

1. No Loadation Wine Club. Not gonna do it. Wouldn't be prudent.
2. 20% discount on selected new releases and prior vintages
3. Stay the course. Thousand Points of Light.

BTW, the new releases are awesome, but you'll have to keep reading to find out why.

Mick

February mailing list discount offer:

Save 20% with the purchase of a case or more of the following wines, mix & match:

2006 & 2007 Grenache

2006 & 2007 Zinfandel

2005 Benchland Syrah & 2006 Syrah

¹ Roger worked with my dad at Safeway. He was the Alcoholic Beverage Marketing Manager for Northern California Safeway. Roger and wife Rosalee have worked every single bottling for us since we began in 1999. No small task. Furthermore, Roger has purchased countless cases of our wine. We are eternally grateful to Roger and Rosalee for their incredible support.

2007 GRENACHE



Every once in a while a great vintage comes along that re-stimulates my interest in a particular wine genre. Kind of like hearing a song from a beloved record I haven't listened to in ages.¹ It causes me to dig up that record and listen to it in its entirety (remember when that was the only way we could listen to albums?). I almost always notice elements in that "old music" I don't remember hearing before.

2007 is that kind of vintage, for both Southern Rhone wines and ours from Dry Creek.

Those of you who, like me, read wine publications before falling asleep at night (then stash them under your bed like they are Playboy magazines), know how much attention is being heaped on 2007 Southern Rhone wines. "Best vintage of our lifetime." "Worth taking a second mortgage on your house to stock up on these great wines." 101 point ratings. "Turns a sandwich into a banquet." Apparently, we can't live another day without having some '07 Rhones in our closet.

2007 may not be the "Vintage of the Century" in Dry Creek (after all, there are still quite a few more left before this century comes to a close), but across the board of our varieties, I can't remember a better vintage. That year, a very dry winter and spring caused most of our varieties to have small berries, leading to darker and more concentrated wines. Our Grenache in 2007 is the Unti poster-child for this outstanding vintage. Sebastien calls it "Chateauneuf-like." And I totally agree.

Sebastien points out that 2007 is the "perfect storm" for Unti Grenache. Not only did our Grenache vines provide concentrated flavors, we decided to employ whole-cluster fermentation (no destemming and only lightly crushing by foot), which seemed to give the wine serious complexity and structure. Basically, Sebastien acted *ala* Peyton Manning. He looked over the vintage (defense) and adjusted his winemaking approach (play called) to make a great wine (score a touchdown).² As mentioned in previous Grenache product sheets, stems add aromas and tannins to the wine. Forty percent of the final 2007 Grenache blend was made in this manner.

In any given vintage we vinify several separate lots of Grenache, Mourvedre and Syrah to make this wine. In 2007, almost every single batch of Grenache made it into the final blend, which has never happened before. Not only does this tell you how good 2007 vintage is, it also enabled us to make a little more than 1,200 cases. Nice problem. It is a classic blend of 80% Grenache, 10% Mourvedre and 10% Syrah.

We have been sampling some 2007 Chateauneuf du Pape and Gigondas wines. Most seem to be fruit forward, lush, ripe and in some instances a touch alcoholic - descriptors normally used for California red wines, especially in 2007. So, we had no choice. We simply *had* to compare our 2007 Grenache to some of our favorite Rhone wines.³ As I suspected, I've never seen our Grenache fit in so well with a flight of Rhones. Interestingly enough, our 2007 Grenache seems to have a bit more structure, both in tannin, acid and overall freshness, than the Chateauneuf du Papes we tasted. Maybe we simply need to conduct several more of these tastings to really come to some valid conclusions. Darn.

Lastly, this is perhaps our most age-worthy Grenache bottling ever. I can see this wine hanging just fine 7 to 10 years from now. If you drink now, let breathe in a big glass for a bit. The wine really opens up nicely.

I guess all of this is my long-winded way of saying "I really like this wine." So much so, that I have already consumed several bottles at home. To anyone who knows me, that is really saying something.

Mick

*1,205 cases produced, \$30
Magnums also available, \$65*



Saturdays With Sebastien.....

.....which is a step up from My Dinner with André.

Every last Saturday of the month, winemaker Sebastien Pochan will be available to take small groups through the cellar to taste a few wines in barrel, our current releases and at least one library wine. For those of you who haven't had the good fortune of meeting Sebastien, you will be impressed with his thoughtful perspective on wines in general and ours specifically. Sebastien has the mind of an artist, though he is much more practical than most. **Time slots are 11am, 1pm, and 3pm. Reservations must be made in advance as group size is limited.**

¹ Just did that with Pat Metheny's 80/81. The album features an awesome line-up of musicians including Charlie Haden, Michael Brecker, Dewey Redman and the incomparable Jack Dejohnette.

² I have a frightening visual of Sebastien wearing a white football helmet and speaking with a heavy southern accent.

³ If you're thinking we are good-for-nothing bums who will use any excuse to taste great wines from around the world, you would be right!

2007 ZINFANDEL
by Alex Hill



Zinfandel nowadays resembles James Cameron’s latest blockbuster, Avatar (which will surely be awarded an abundance of golden men). You’ve just strapped on the special glasses to prepare for the ride of your life, when all of a sudden it hits you, pow! I mean WOW, it’s practically jumping off the screen!

Likewise, the dominant style of modern Zinfandel (that wins all the golden medals) practically jumps right out of your glass! It has a blazing red color, luscious, viscous legs, the heady whiff of jammy fruit and alcohol, and the assertively sweet coconut flavor that only heavily toasted American oak barrels (and maybe a little residual sugar) can provide. Upon first sip it’s go time: The wine is thick, rich, and sweet. Everything the nose promised.

So what’s not to like? Well, like Avatar, the story needs some work. A lot of Zin is great for a sip or two but that’s where the similarities to “real wine” end. Try to pair that Zin with food and it becomes cloying. It just sits there on your palate like a pile of bricks. And in the morning you’ll feel like you’ve been hit over the head with that same pile of bricks. Unfortunately (IMHO), a lot of modern Zinfandel gives Port a run for its money.

That said, our 2007 Zinfandel is standing right on that precipice, peering over the edge, with enough sense to not go tumbling over. Maybe it’s the use of Burgundian oak barrels instead of American oak. Perhaps it’s the thick-skinned Primitivo clone which helps keep raisining to a minimum. Or maybe it’s the added touch of Barbera and Petite Sirah that keeps the wine structured and bright. Whatever it is, this wine remains in balance and finishes dry, while reflecting the warm 2007 vintage with its pure, lush boysenberry fruit, red licorice undertones, and silky texture.

2007 began with very little rainfall in the winter and spring, leading to an early budbreak and small berry size. Sunny, warm weather prevailed throughout the summer, without too many heat spikes, which ensured even ripening and a wine with fruit-forward personality. The stars aligned in ’07 to deliver a wine with exceptional concentration that now provides immediate enjoyment and will continue to drink well for 3 to 5 years.

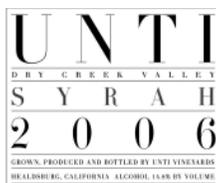
1,250 cases produced, \$26



Editors note: Alex Hill is in charge of everything retail here at Unti. He has been with us for over a year, so many of you have met Alex and enjoyed his comforting demeanor even when he is diligently explaining our reasons for using whole-cluster fermentation. Alex comes from a wine family and hasn’t diminished his genuine enthusiasm for the world of wine. He is a walking “wine encyclopedia.”

As a form of Dry Creek hazing, we have given him the task of writing on Zinfandel. We are really happy to have Alex in the fold. He possesses the unique ability to compliment George’s sincerity and Mick’s absurdity.

2006 SYRAH comes off the “Bench”



It seems like we don’t give Syrah the love we used to. What with the likes of Barbera, Grenache and Montepulciano around, who can blame us if our attention has strayed from “the one who brung us.” Our 2006 Syrah is more than a worthy reason to re-focus.

As you know, we have been incorporating some of our newer plantings of Syrah into our “normale” bottling. In 2006, we didn’t get the structure we expect from these vineyards. The cooler nature of the ‘06 vintage limited ripeness and phenolic (tannins) development of our winery block Syrah, so we took it old school, and used only fruit from our original Benchland Syrah block to make this wine. Let’s just say, Sebastien wasn’t afraid to go to his “Bench.”

That means this 2006 is a “Mini-Me-Benchland Syrah.” Our 2006 really shows deep blackberry and smoked meat character -flavors that we always seem to get from this vineyard. It reminds me of our 2001 vintage which BTW is drinking beautifully these days. Because most of this wine was slated for the Benchland bottling, our 2006 Syrah received the royal treatment, meaning it was aged in a higher-than-normal amount of our best new French oak barrels. The oak gives this wine a bit more complexity than it had in previous vintages.

So, for those fans of our Benchland or prototype Unti style Syrah, this represents quite a value. Only 690 cases produced, so it won’t be around for very long. **Mick**

690 cases produced, \$26

UNTI VINEYARDS

4202 Dry Creek Road
 PO Box 1899
 Healdsburg, CA 95448

2007 Grenache
2007 Zinfandel
2006 Syrah

Ordering Information: Mail this form to **Unti Vineyards, PO Box 1899, Healdsburg, CA 95448**; or, fax it to **(707) 433-5591**; or, order through our Store page at www.untivineyards.com; or, call us at **(707) 433-5590**.

Today's Date ___ / ___ / ___

Shipping Information:

Residence (add \$4/box to Shipping) Business

Name: _____

c/o Business: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

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

Zipcode: _____

Phone#: _____

Email: _____

Payment Information:

Charge to Credit Card below or Check enclosed

Visa/MC/Discover # _____

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.*

Available:	# Bottles	Price	Extension
2007 Grenache *.....		@ \$30 =	
2006 Grenache *.....		@ \$30 =	
2007 Zinfandel *.....		@ \$26 =	
2006 Zinfandel *.....		@ \$26 =	
2006 Syrah *.....		@ \$26 =	
2005 Syrah Benchland *....		@ \$35 =	
2005 Syrah Reserve.....		@ \$50 =	
2007 Petit Frere.....		@ \$20 =	
2007 Grenache Magnum *...		@ \$65 =	
2005 Syrah Benchland Mag...		@ \$75 =	
		Subtotal =	

(6-11 bottles = 5%, 12-35 = 10%, 36+ = 20%) Discounts = ()

New Subtotal =

(CA = 9%; Other states, call for rate) Taxes =

Use chart (+\$4/box for Residential address) Shipping =

TOTAL =

*** 20% off wines marked with asterisk when part of a case purchase**

SHIPPING TO A BUSINESS ADDRESS 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, AZ, CO, ID, NM, NV, OR, WA, WY	\$17 - Ground \$26 - 3Day \$32 - 2Day	\$25 - Ground \$45 - 3Day \$54 - 2Day
IA, MO, ND, MI, MN, TX	\$21 - Ground \$37 - 3Day \$49 - 2 Day	\$33 - Ground \$65 - 3Day \$79 - 2Day
CT, DC, FL, GA, IL, IN, LA, NC, NH, NY, OH, RI, VA, WI	\$23 - Ground \$42 - 3Day \$52 - 2Day	\$38 - Ground \$73 - 3Day \$89 - 2Day
AK, HI	\$55 - 2Day	\$89 - 2Day
Add \$4/box if shipping to a Residential address. *If your state is not listed, call for options.		