

2009 Barbera (Here today.....)



We are very excited to release our 2009 Barbera. A great vintage, but the subject of Barbera is somewhat bittersweet for me.

The 2009 vintage was really a textbook growing season for almost all of the varieties we cultivate. A trouble-free spring during bud-break was followed by a moderate summer, featuring very few of the drastic heat spikes we often experience here in the Dry Creek Valley.

Our '09 Barbera really illustrates the attributes of such a vintage. It has very dark color, rich wild fruit, and a juicy palate. Both Sebastien and George think it is our best Barbera yet and I can't really argue with their assessment. So, why the mixed emotions?

While we produced a moderate amount of Barbera in 2009 (620 cases), this is nowhere near your demand for the stuff. Over the past four years we've tried to address this issue (we aim to please here) by planting four more acres of Barbera, giving us a total of six. Normally six acres would yield approximately 1,100 cases. But it seems Mother Nature has had other ideas.

Unfortunately, we are starting to realize that Barbera might be a somewhat fragile vine, at least in our vineyards. In 2008, we lost two-thirds of our fruit to spring frost. Last year, the famed August heat spike fried almost 90% of our Barbera clusters. Despite our increased plantings, we only managed to make a measly six barrels (or 150 cases). I feel like a scrappy point guard who finally has a clear path to the basket for a lay-up, only to have my shot swatted away by a guy twice my size (let's just say my empathy rings true here).

I guess all of this is a polite way of trying to avoid that age-old sales technique often repeated in the Tom Waits song *Step Right Up* (ACT NOW)! if you want to have our Barbera around for the next couple of years. We won't really have a decent supply until the spring of 2013 — assuming Dwight Howard isn't hanging around the vineyard.

100% Barbera; 620 cases produced; \$30

Cuvée Blanc (Sebastien's take)

To start, let me apologize for the name "Cuvée Blanc" which is grammatically incorrect ("cuvée"— which means "special blend"— is a feminine noun and the adjective should be its feminine form: "blanche"). Being French, I have absolutely no excuse for this blunder; it was just easier to say, and here at Unti we like easy. I will just have to cringe each time I say "Cuvée Blanc" for the rest of my life, no big deal, honey badger don't care.

The idea of producing an Unti white wine was born after an eye-opening tasting of various Southern French varieties seven years ago at Novavine nursery in Kenwood. George, Mick, and myself were so impressed by Grenache Blanc, Vermentino, and Picpoul — in that order — that we decided to plant all three grapes the following spring. Since then, the original one-third of an acre block has expanded to just over one acre, which should give us about 400 cases when it's all said and done.



Honey badger doesn't always drink white wine, but when he does, he prefers Cuvée Blanc

Like its darker sibling Grenache, Grenache Blanc is grown in the south of France, mainly in the Languedoc-Roussillon region and is often part of white Châteauneuf-du-Pape blends. Its rich fruit and full-bodied texture gives it solid ageing potential.

Vermentino, also known as "Rolle" in Provence can be found from the north-western coast of Italy (Liguria), all the way to the Spanish border in Roussillon. It is the flagship white grape of Corsica and Sardinia. Aromatic and lively, it maintains a crisp acidity in warm climates.

Picpoul (or Piquepoul) is rooted in the coastal area around the small town of Pinet in the Languedoc. Oysters are farmed in the pond of Thau, just a stone's throw away. The zingy acidity and lemon flavor of Picpoul is the perfect match for a dozen on the half shell.

Seven years ago, we had a collective hunch that these three could play well together and guess what? We were right! I'm pointing this out because it doesn't happen all that often.

There is definitely some neat interaction between these grapes and the wine shows complexity, richness, and vibrancy. Call it tri-winning.

2010 Cuvée Blanc (Mick's take)



This is our third official vintage making Cuvée Blanc and I can say with utmost confidence, the wine is vastly superior to its name.

2010 was one of the coolest growing seasons we have ever had here. Those of you who live in the City are now painfully aware of Mark Twain's over-used observation: "The coldest winter I ever experienced was a summer in San Francisco." What was torturous for SF Marina-ites still hoping they live in Santa Monica was fortunate for our white wine.

It seems our whites, particularly the Vermentino express more of a mineral flavor profile in 2010. I'm not sure if this is due to a cooler vintage or simply a reflection of harvesting the grapes at lower-than-normal sugar (because of the cool vintage). If you've ever had Vermentino from Sardinia, where the summer heat rivals that here in H-Town, you know the wine can be almost as perfume-like and fruity as Viognier. Sometimes Vermentino can be a bit too fruity for my taste. Not so with this 2010.

Our Vermentino has the bracing acidity and mineral character we expect from Picpoul — and that's saying something. It really compliments the richness of our Grenache Blanc. Good thing, because the August heat spell, that burned many Zinfandel grapes, also took its toll on our Picpoul, which is down to only 7% in this year's model.

No barrel fermentation or oak aging for this guy. We didn't want this pristine wine to taste like, well, buttah. It is clearly my favorite CB to date.

48% Grenache Blanc, 45% Vermentino, 7% Picpoul; 349 cases produced; \$24

2008 MONTEPULCIANO



This also our third vintage making Montepulciano — a grape you may not be familiar with, but should be on your watch list. In baseball terms Montepulciano is definitely a "top prospect."

As stated in earlier newsletters, we are kind of gung ho on Montepulciano. In fact, we now have 2.5 acres of it planted, which is likely 2.5 acres more than anyone else here in Dry Creek Valley. We thought it would be appropriate to give you a bit more information behind this grape from Central Italy. Ordinarily I relish the opportunity to bore you with such details. Instead, I commissioned our resident super-taster Alex Hill to provide a Montepulciano primer course.

The Grape: As a vigorous-growing plump grape with lots of juice, Montepulciano can make good quality low-priced wine if farmed for high yields, or, very intense and age worthy wine when yields are kept low. It contains extremely high levels of color pigment (anthocyanin) and high levels of tannin, but they are sweet tannins. It also offers generous levels of extract resulting in wines that are dark, rich, and fruity. Due to the late budding nature of Montepulciano it requires extra-long hang time and we generally pick it in late October.

Landscape: Montepulciano is prominently planted on the Adriatic side of central Italy, although it is often (understandably) confused with the town called Montepulciano in Southern Tuscany where Sangiovese is grown. In the coastal regions of Le Marche and Abruzzo, that culturally resemble Italy's humble south, Montepulciano is the primary grape used for red wine.

Conero in Le Marche encompasses only about 1000 acres on and around the slopes of Mount Conero in Marche's Ancona province between the Adriatic Sea and the Apennines. It offers a unique terroir comprised of intense heat, poor soils, low humidity, and cool evenings on well-ventilated steep slopes. Here, Montepulciano grapes develop more slowly than in points farther south so they retain more complexity and acidity.

Abruzzo is a flatter and hotter landscape, with the best wines coming from its northernmost reaches, specifically Colline Teramane (DOCG) and Controguerra (DOC). The most structured Montepulcianos come from the Teramo hills, while the wines from inland Abruzzo near Ofena, Capestrano and Popoli tend toward the elegant side of the variety. Southern Abruzzo is a larger growing area with more industrial-sized wineries that pump out serviceable Montepulciano in the \$6 to \$10 price range. Usually labeled "Montepulciano d'Abruzzo" (DOC), they tend to be plummy, jammy, and lower in acid.

Dry Creek Valley has an ideal hot and dry climate for growing quality Montepulciano. However there is also significant cooling in the evenings so the wine holds its acidity and structure, resembling counterparts from Conero more so than Abruzzo.

100% Montepulciano; 195 cases produced; \$30

Notable producers of Montepulciano

Le Marche

Oasi degli Angeli – Viticulture extremists who crop-thin their tiny biodynamically farmed vines down to almost nothing (yielding literally only two grape clusters per vine) to create an ultra-concentrated pitch black elixir called *Kurni*. Winemaking methods include a 200% new French oak treatment that cycles the wine through 2 rounds of brand new French oak barrels during aging. *Kurni* delivers the powerful essence of ripe Montepulciano distilled down to a rich core of Cassis, chocolate, and spice flavors in an over-the-top hedonistic style. It’s a crowd pleasing monster that is served every year in the wee hours of the Unti harvest party.

Moroder – (Harry Potter’s bunk house?) A pioneer with the Montepulciano grape and one of the first in the region to craft 100% Montepulciano wines. Dry, fleshy, and concentrated with anise, cherries, and sweet spice notes. Moroder’s *Dorico* bottling offers tremendous complexity and ageability.

Fattoria Le Terrazze – A modern style producer whose Montepulcianos show well-measured balance and elegant definition. Their *Sassi Neri* bottling is extraordinary stuff. Plus, the owner is a huge Dylan fan — naming one of his blends after my favorite song *Visions of Johanna*.

Lanari – On the hills that overlook the Adriatic Sea, Lanari is a consistent producer who fashions a well-made traditional style, showcasing vineyard fruit. They make a wine called *Fibbio* that is George Unti’s favorite Conero.



The periodic table of elements according to George Unti

Abruzzo

Illuminati – Known for a clean and modern style of Montepulciano that is reasonably priced and well made. Their *Zanna* bottling is excellent and widely considered the best Colline Teramane produced.

Il Feuduccio – An impressive winery to visit with an underground vinification cellar carved through five layers of pure rock. Their wines are decidedly modern showing flavors of black cherry and currant fruit intermixed with licorice, scorched earth and tar. Ripe, pure, and dense.

Centorame – A producer of very intense and powerful Montepulciano in the Teramo hill territory.

Valle Reale – Producing a range of quality levels, Reale’s wild-yeast fermented wines are elegant and refined, with silky tannins and layers of berry fruit and spice. *San Calisto* is their most consistent bottling.

Edoardo Valentini – The most highly regarded traditional producer of Montepulciano, Edoardo’s son Francesco now runs the family winery which has been operating since the 1600’s. He was recently awarded Winemaker of the Year in the 2011 Gambero Rosso Wine Guide, where all of the Valentini wines were given tre bicchieri rankings. Flavors in Valentini wines are extremely complex, showcasing black cherry, tar, truffles, and underbrush with big tannic structure. Extremely expensive, and it is almost impossible to find, but worth the effort.

Emidio Pepe – Very traditional and eccentric style, from grapes that are said to be actually crushed by hand. Animal, dried cherries, cigar tobacco, earth and cocoa. Pepe is difficult to find and appreciate, due to miniscule production levels and the challenging style of a wine whose artistic character is derived from what some might call “flaws.”

Summer Shipping Solution

This summer we are excited to offer Fed Ex’s new temperature controlled wine shipping service. It ensures that your wine is transported and stored safely during hot weather, in refrigerated trucks and hubs. The shipping rates usually run \$10 to \$20 per case **more** than ground rates. Please call the winery for more information on this service (707) 433-5590.

UNTI VINEYARDS

4202 Dry Creek Road
 PO Box 1899
 Healdsburg, CA 95448

2009 Barbera
2010 Cuvée Blanc
2008 Montepulciano

Ordering Information: Conveniently **order online** through our secure store page at: www.UntiVineyards.com or **call us** at (707) 433-5590 or **fax us** this form to (707) 433-5591 or **mail us** this form to Unti Vineyards, PO Box 1899, Healdsburg, CA 95448.

Today's Date ___ / ___ / ___

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 Address: _____
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 ST: _____ DOB req'd for OH, GA, MI, & WI ___ / ___ / ___
 Zipcode: _____
 Phone#: _____
 Email: _____

Payment Information:

Charge to Credit Card below or Check enclosed

Visa/MC/AMEX/Discover # _____
 Expiration Date: ___ / ___ / ___ Ver#: _____
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 Shipping only to states where permitted by law.*

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New Releases:	# Bottles	Price	Extension
2010 Cuvée Blanc.....	<input type="text"/>	@ \$24 =	<input type="text"/>
2009 Barbera.....	<input type="text"/>	@ \$30 =	<input type="text"/>
2008 Montepulciano.....	<input type="text"/>	@ \$30 =	<input type="text"/>
2008 Grenache *.....	<input type="text"/>	@ \$26 =	<input type="text"/>

Also Available:

2010 Rosé	<input type="text"/>	@ \$22 =	<input type="text"/>
2008 Zinfandel	<input type="text"/>	@ \$26 =	<input type="text"/>
2007 Syrah Normale.....	<input type="text"/>	@ \$26 =	<input type="text"/>
2007 Syrah Benchland...	<input type="text"/>	@ \$35 =	<input type="text"/>
2007 Syrah Benchland Mag 1.5L	<input type="text"/>	@ \$75 =	<input type="text"/>

Subtotal =	<input type="text"/>
(6-11 bottles = 5%, 12-35 = 10%, 36+ = 20%) Discounts =	(<input type="text"/>)
New Subtotal =	<input type="text"/>
(CA = 9%; Other states, call for rate) Taxes =	<input type="text"/>
Use chart (+\$4/box for Residential address) Shipping =	<input type="text"/>
TOTAL =	<input type="text"/>

* 20% off new release wines marked with asterisk when part of a 12-bottle 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 - 2Day	\$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