

SARAH'S VINEYARD WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER



Friends,

Spring has finally arrived, though the general weather and temperatures don't seem to agree yet. But we know that Spring is here, because finally, a month late, we have budbreak. The gnarly twisted vines have finally woken up enough to send out their tender little green stuff, a reliable signal to all grape ranchers that all is well, and the new vintage has begun - my 23rd vintage as a grape rancher and winemaker. I am a seasoned old hand at this now and have seen a lot.

The vines are quite late waking up and look a little cranky and put out after their long winter nap. In addition to the massive dose of wet stuff, it was also quite a cold winter, much colder than usual, and it stayed cold a lot later than usual. Truly a La Niña year. What can we predict for the coming year? Firstly, we have the weather, by which I mean the heavy winter rains. Our dirt is thoroughly saturated with water. The vines will get off to a roaring start once the weather warms up. They'll be eager to grow and be fruitful, and this year we could have an abundant crop. If the weather is good to us during fruit set, these vines will have a huge load of grapes on them.

Secondly, we have the weather, by which I mean the unusually low temperatures. I expect the trend will stay cool all year. Oh, we'll have our normal two or three 100-degree heatwaves, but we expect that generally this year will trend cooler than normal.

Taken together, this can be a big problem for the grape grower. The heavy fruit load will extend the ripening time; the generally cooler and damper weather will extend the ripening time; and uncautious growers may find themselves with a huge load of unripe grapes in the late season when the rain comes again. Or worse, the huge fruit load and damp weather may bring grape diseases like powdery mildew or bunch rot to infest the vineyard.

So at Sarah's, we will be very strict with the vines this year - they've had their play time and their nap, now it's time for them to be serious. We're not aiming to get the biggest crop we can get, we want the best quality, fully ripe grapes we can possibly grow. We'll drop excess grapes on the ground in late June to make sure our vines can ripen up the remaining fruit fully, hopefully before the end of October when it generally gets quite cold at night. We'll be keeping the vines trimmed of excess growth to keep the humidity around the grapes as low as possible. And we'll be keeping an eagle eye on the grapes, looking for signs that any mold or mildew has taken hold. The winters' welcome rain will have all dissipated by the end of June, and when we begin our irrigation we'll be cautious with it, giving the vines enough water to stay healthy and ripen up their grapes, but not a drop more. This will control the vine's tendency towards wild growth after a very wet winter. That's our plan, at least. Nature will take its course, independent of our fondest hopes and dreams, and none of us can predict the future.

We have an exciting new wine we've been preparing since 2021, and I think we can start talking about it now. As you're all aware, we've been making sparkling wines for some years now, working with a large sparkling winery up north in Sonoma. They've been great partners for us, but I've always felt a little funny about using their vineyards for grapes and having them make the wine for us and bottle it. Champagne style wine is an enormous effort and requires special tools and techniques, so I've swallowed my pride and continued the effort; but it's always bothered me that we haven't been using our own local grapes and making it ourselves.

That approach changed in the 2021 vintage, when we finally decided that it was time to take the project in-house. Over the last 20 months, we've been working not-so-secretly on making sparkling wine ourselves. Our inaugural 2021 vintage just went through the final bottling two weeks ago, a beautiful sparkling rosé that will be ready to drink in July. Locally grown grapes from our own Estate, handmade into wine in our winery, and lovingly tended by our hardworking crew - we are justifiably proud of this effort and the excellent results. I believe we're already planning a Release Party to introduce this wine, the Rosé d'Ella Rae (proudly named for our little daughter Ella).

*Tim Slater
Winemaker / Proprietor*



New Spring & Summer Releases



We are excited to share that we are releasing some very small lots of wines exclusively in the Tasting Room over the next couple months. The 2022 Estate Picpoul Blanc was just released in April with just a few cases remaining; our

new 2022 Vin Gris Rosé of Pinot Noir will be released just in time for Mother's Day, 2021 Albariño will be out in June, and our 2021 Estate Sparkling Rosé d'Ella Rae is coming up later this summer! Check your emails for details on these new wines that will pair perfectly with warm spring and summer evenings. Being small production wines, they won't last long. Be sure to check your emails to purchase them once released, before they sell out.

Wine, Dine & Dance 2023!



We are so thrilled to announce that our summer music series will be making its return Friday evenings, June 16th through September 29th. Included in this release is a schedule for the summer series

including the musicians and local caterers. These are 21+ events, no outside food or alcohol is allowed. Doors open at 6:00 pm and music is from 6:30-8:30 pm. Be sure to check your emails and the website for the full line-up and details on the music series and all our fun upcoming events.

Sundays at the Vineyard



We have invited local chefs from our wonderful community to join us on Sundays this spring and summer offering delicious food, along with acoustic soloists and duos to make your Sunday afternoons enjoyable. On

these Sundays, from June 4th to August 27th, we will take reservations for patio tables and offer wines by-the-glass and bottle. Please check the events portion of our website for line-up updates and details.

Tim's Blog



Interested in hearing about what's going on in the vineyard or at the winery? Tim's Blog is located on our website in the 'Life' section and you will find recent posts there about the latest happenings, new releases, and some insights

into the day to day happenings at Sarah's Vineyard.

MEMBERS' SPRING RELEASES



2021 Chardonnay, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands

Tondré Alarid established a vineyard on his family's historic ranch in Monterey's Santa Lucia Highlands. In the hands of his son Joe Alarid, the estate has become one of the S.L.H.'s best known properties. The Highlands' sparse mountainside soils and windy Monterey Bay-influenced climate produce some of the country's best Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The combination of a perfect site and meticulous farming makes for truly great wines. The '21 Tondré Grapefield Chardonnay displays enticing aromas and flavors of white flowers, citrus, and pastry crust. Time in the glass offers up golden apple, pear, and lemon curd flavors and a long finish of spice, vanilla, and peach. The balance of bright acidity and a hint of creaminess from the primarily neutral French oak barrels make this wine a great match for Tim's recipe for Shrimp Tacos with Mexican Street Corn.

Only 194 cases were produced | Tasting Room List Price \$38



2021 Pinot Noir, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands

The unique location of Tondré Grapefield, in the distinguished Santa Lucia Highlands appellation, allows the grapes to have an extended hang time, meaning more sunlight on the vines, more grape ripening and sufficient cool-down in the evening to firm up the fruit's natural acidity. Literally next door to famed Garys' Vineyard, Tondré shares the same well-drained hillside soils and crop-limiting afternoon fog and cool winds from nearby Monterey Bay. We employed traditional Burgundian techniques in dealing with the superb Pinot Noir fruit from Tondré. Eleven months aging in French oak barrels, one quarter being new wood, added polish and length. The '21 Sarah's Vineyard Tondré Grapefield Pinot Noir has cellared beautifully and has delicate dark red fruit and spice with a lovely floral bouquet of violet notes in the glass. On the palate, the rich raspberry and plum fruits are complemented by baking spice, white pepper, and a hint of vanilla with smooth, silky tannins. This delightful Pinot Noir pairs wonderfully with grilled chicken and mushrooms over wild rice.

Only 275 cases were produced | Tasting Room List Price \$52



2020 Charbono, Estate

Charbono was originally introduced to California in the Napa Valley by early Italian immigrants; the grape itself hails from France's Savoie region. There is now very little acreage left in the state of this once widely planted variety, which accounts for its almost legendary cult status. We started making Charbono in 2007, buying from our friends who had an acre of it planted just down the road near Santa Teresa and Hecker Pass. That land was sold to build houses on, and we planted an acre of it on our estate. While our little estate Charbono was developing, we bought some from Pear Valley Vineyard in the Paso Robles area, where the bold heat gets Charbono very ripe and lighter in color. Beginning with the 2018 vintage, our Charbono is entirely estate grown and sees 18 months in 10% new French oak barrels. The '20 Charbono displays an intense fruit presence of lush dark berries: dark cherry, brambly blackberries, cassis, and rich ripe blueberries – think of a spiced berry pie. This wine also expresses hints of licorice and baking spice, and pairs well with curried potatoes.

Only 165 cases were produced | Tasting Room List Price \$42

WINE CLUB SHIPMENT CONTENTS

Sarah's Wine Club

- 2021 Chardonnay, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands
- 2021 Pinot Noir, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands
- 2020 Charbono, Estate

All-Red Wine Club

- 2021 Pinot Noir, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands
- 2020 Charbono, Estate

All-White Wine Club

- 2021 Chardonnay, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands
- 2019 Viognier, Estate

Pinot Noir Only Wine Club

- 2021 Pinot Noir, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands