

# SARAH'S VINEYARD WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER



*Hello Friends,*

February is always a pleasant time in the winery and vineyard. The hectic harvest season is over, the wines have been finished and put to bed in their barrels to rest, the vines are still slumbering, and everyone has taken some time off to recharge and rest and look forward to the coming year. February is the time we start to prepare for the new year. Pruning the vineyard. Making wine blends. Ordering labels, bottles, and corks.

By this time of year, most of the adventures and excitement of the previous harvest is absorbed into the back of the mind and misty, but people fresh back from vacation will bring up some stories. Do you remember the blah blah blah at the back end of the crush pad, I thought we'd never get that cleaned up. Oh, and what happened with Whatsisname and his ton of Cab? Hey, don't forget to call Whosis and get those bins back! Those sorts of things. With those stories in mind, what is there to say about that most memorable of unmemorable years, 2023?

For both the vineyard and the winery, 2023 was very strange. An unusually cool year, all the grapes ripened very late, and since we never have minded waiting for perfection, the harvest was also very late. In my mind, the later the harvest the better; but 2023 was so very late that there was a lot of worry involved. On a few varietals, we waited until the second week of November to harvest - that is generally past the point where the grapes will still ripen, but the rain wasn't threatening, and we worried that the grapes weren't going to have the full ripe flavors we wanted. The patience, with some relief, was rewarded; 2023 Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache are really awesome wines, and even the cranky and crotchety Charbono, a lover of warm years, is happy. Pinot Noir was harvested in excellent condition in October, with really remarkable results. So, we are relieved and happy and looking forward to putting 2023 into the bottle.

A few years ago, we started working with a new vineyard in the lovely Santa Rita Hills, "Rancho La Viña". They're up in the hills near Lompoc (the area made famous by the movie Sideways). Releasing our second vintage with RLV in this Wine Club Shipment, the winery crew (and knowing Wine Clubbers) are huge fans, and we look forward to working with Rancho La Viña for a long, long time. This is such a great vineyard and produces such great fruit that it rivals our exalted home estate for excellent Pinot Noir.

OH! That reminds me. Speaking of our exalted vineyard, we have recent additional gushing praise from noted Wine Enthusiast magazine, who spotlighted our 2021 Estate Pinot with a well-deserved 93 point rating! Thank you for believing in us and trusting us to bring you the best wines the Santa Clara Valley can produce, and we hope this professional accolade helps to confirm your high opinion.

Be well,

*Tim Slater*  
Winemaker / Proprietor

## Winter Recipe Pairing



Coq Au Vin is an old and popular French dish, traditionally a tough old rooster braised or stewed in Pinot Noir with the classic garnish "grand mère" of mushrooms, onions, and bacon. This quick version tastes great and is easy to make. Use a dry Pinot Noir, if possible, but any red wine works. Also, free-range type chicken from your local supermarket is well worth it for better flavor. Serve with small, boiled fingerling potatoes and sliced baguette. Great warming comfort food for a cold night. It goes great with Pinot Noir – this quarter's 2021 Rancho La Viña Pinot Noir would be perfect alongside this meal. We love hearing about what you're creating in your kitchens to pair with your favorite SV wines. Enjoy!

## Sunset at Sarah's



Every other Friday night we are excited to share a new unique tasting flight with you at our Sunset at Sarah's. These evenings feature a focused tasting flight – each one with a different theme, varietal, regional focus, or vertical tasting. Bring your snacks and enjoy an educational tasting experience with us! Be sure to check our events page on our website for the upcoming tasting themes. We also will be posting soon the events we have planned for 2024. We look forward to seeing you all here this year!

## Latest Press



We are excited to announce that our Fall Wine Club release wines were all recognized by Wine Enthusiast: 91 Points for the 2020 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, 91 Points for the 2021 Estate Chardonnay, and 93 Points for our 2021 Estate Pinot Noir! While the great reviews are appreciated, what truly matters is that our members love our wines. Thank you as always for your support! If you've already enjoyed your estate fall wines and would like to purchase more, they are available at the SarahsVineyard.com online shop or by contacting us at the Tasting Room.

**93** POINTS | 2021 SARAH'S VINEYARD  
ESTATE PINOT NOIR

*"This is a powerful Pinot Noir, beginning with aromas of ripe cherry, plum, alpine strawberry and sage brush on the nose. The palate approaches blackberry and boysenberry flavors, as nutmeg and gingersnap elements add spicy nuances."*

– Matt Kettmann | Wine Enthusiast, February/March 2024

# MEMBERS' WINTER RELEASES



## ***2021 Madame Blanc, Estate***

The S.V. Madame Blanc is our take on the traditional white wines of the southern Rhône Valley. It is named for local Mount Madonna and is a marriage of California soils and climate to a classically styled blend of estate-grown, Rhône varieties. In the vineyard, we worked hard to limit vigor to help the vines focus on fruit production. With no threat of harvest-time precipitation, we safely let the fruit hang well into the fall for full phenolic ripeness. We hand-harvested and whole cluster pressed the fruit from the home ranch on multiple pick dates in late September and early October. Fermentation took place in neutral French oak barrels. The wine was fermented in stainless steel and transferred to neutral oak barrels for maturation after dryness for seven months, with stirring of the lees every two weeks. To create our estate Madame Blanc, we actually make 4 individual wines, then blend them carefully to make the best wine we can. In the 2021 vintage, the final cépage was 53% Roussanne, 21% Grenache Blanc, 21% Clairette Blanche, and 5% Picpoul Blanc. The '21 Madame Blanc displays a burst of citrus aromas and flavors of Meyer lemon and lime zest. The wine is bright and crisp with notes of white nectarine and honeysuckle with balanced acidity and a touch of creaminess on the palate. The 2021 Estate Madame Blanc would pair well with ceviche or grilled swordfish with a lemon and caper sauce.

*Only 187 cases were produced | Tasting Room List Price \$32*



## ***2022 Pinot Noir, Rancho La Viña, Sta. Rita Hills***

This is the fifth release for Sarah's Vineyard with fruit sourced from the Santa Rita Hills, and our second release from the Rancho La Viña vineyard. Located in Santa Barbara County, the Sta. Rita Hills is part of the larger Santa Ynez Valley AVA. The hills of the district run east to west, which allows cool ocean breezes from the nearby Pacific Ocean to enter the valley, providing fairly cool microclimates – perfect for growing top-flight Pinot Noir. Dense morning fog gives way to sunny afternoons, and loamy soils make Rancho La Viña an incredible, cool climate growing site. In addition to 34.5 acres of top-quality Pinot Noir wine grapes, a variety of other crops are also grown on the ranch, which includes 126 acres of the best walnuts in California. We are excited to have been invited to work with this small, quality grower who really takes pride in their work – and feel that this vintage is a truly excellent wine. The wine spent eleven months aging in French oak barrels, one-third being new wood, which added polish and length. The '22 Sarah's Vineyard Rancho La Viña Pinot Noir has a vast bright red fruit presence of cherry, raspberry, and strawberry. Along with the freshly picked red fruit aromas are hints of cinnamon and herbs. On the palate, all these elements come together and are complemented by baking spice and a hint of vanilla, reminiscent of a strawberry tart with a flaky pastry crust. This wine is well-balanced with smooth, silky tannins. The 2022 Rancho La Viña Pinot Noir pairs wonderfully with the enclosed recipe from Tim for Coq Au Vin.

*Only 143 cases were produced | Tasting Room List Price \$55*



## ***2020 Madame, Estate***

The Sarah's Vineyard 2020 Estate Madame reflects its southern Rhône heritage through a blend of the region's traditional red varieties: 64% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, 12% Syrah, and 4% Counoise. Yields at harvest in our Rhône blocks were about average. We hand harvested the fruit at the end of September and the beginning of October. After destemming the whole berries, we fermented at low temperatures in small lot vats. Hand punch downs were used prior to pressing to French oak barrels for eighteen months aging in primarily neutral cooperage to preserve the exceptional, complex fruit character of the blend. The '20 Madame displays a rich dark fruit presence full of dark cherry, blackberry, and blueberry along with savory notes of leather, sage, clove, and cocoa powder with a peppery finish. The estate Madame will pair perfectly with hearty braised short ribs.

*Only 204 cases were produced | Tasting Room List Price \$38*

## WINE CLUB SHIPMENT CONTENTS

### ***Sarah's Wine Club***

- 2021 Madame Blanc, Estate
- 2022 Pinot Noir, Rancho La Viña, Sta. Rita Hills
- 2020 Madame, Estate

### ***All-Red Wine Club***

- 2022 Pinot Noir, Rancho La Viña, Sta. Rita Hills
- 2020 Madame, Estate

### ***All-White Wine Club***

- 2021 Madame Blanc, Estate
- 2020 Chardonnay, Tondré Grapefield, Santa Lucia Highlands

### ***Pinot Noir Only Wine Club***

- 2022 Pinot Noir, Rancho La Viña, Sta. Rita Hills