



Carol's Bunch

HAPPY SPRING!

Happy Spring everyone...it has been an “interesting” past 14 months, eh? It’s so great to see that we are finally emerging from this long dark tunnel of pandemics and politics, as more and more people are getting “vaxxed” and we can actually support our restaurants *indoors*, have a “careful” gathering that is not a “ZOOM,” and maybe even share a hug or two. Wow. Just wow. A good reason for *hope*, yes?! We also hope to be able to open for tastings again in mid-May—keep your eyes on your email for notice of that! Thank you all for your very enthusiastic support over the past year—it was the lifeline we needed to stay afloat.

Also emerging is your Spring club shipment! We have a couple of wines getting their last hurrah here (**2017 Wild Thing Zin** and **2017 Monga Zin**), but four brand new releases, starting with your customary bottle of my favorite, the **Coquille Blanc 2019**, seriously the best vintage yet, in my humble opinion. The **2019 Coquille Rouge** Rhône blend is a delicious sequel to the 2018 that you all received in your holiday shipment last fall. Then there is the **2017 Peaceland Zin**, which we thought was to be the FINAL year of existence for these vines, as they were caught in the middle of the Tubbs Fire shortly after this wine was harvested; thankfully about 60% of the vines survived and we *will* be able to produce my *favorite* Zin from 2019 onward! Last but ne'er least, the **Rockpile Reserve Cabernet 2016** makes its debut—it has been a few years since we sent you guys this classic Cab, which just was awarded a couple of Gold Medals. Quite a yummy selection of wines!

Our countryside here in Santa Rosa is bursting with vibrant greenery, but we have had a pretty dry winter here, so continued drought is inevitable once again. Barring frost damage if we get any, so far the crop looks like it will be abundant and hopefully of excellent quality,

but that remains to be seen after the rest of the growing season. The shoots are growing by leaps and bounds, especially after last weekend's 90°F weather, tho it will cool off again and maybe even drop a rare late season rain on us this coming weekend! Fingers crossed that we do not have wildfires and smoke this year—last year we had to make the tough decision to leave some of our best fruit hanging—we are really looking forward to having the Rockpile Zin, Pet and Cab, the Karma Zin, the Florence Pet and the OV Carignane back in our barrels again!

Plans for the new winery in Windsor are coming along slowly. We have received approval from the Planning Commission, and Mitch is now navigating the Building Permits phase while Carol and our bookkeeper Linda are working to get the banks all the information



Our new Winery-to-be in Windsor, hopefully open in LATE 2022!

they need to make us the best construction loan possible. It looks like we will still need to take on an investor or two, so if you know of a “Sugar Daddy,” send them our way! We need to break ground by June in order to make our target date of August 2022 for our first Crush in the new winery, and the new Tasting Room opening will follow a month or so later, most likely. We have plans for

a wonderful VIP hospitality area on the rooftop, and a kitchen that will be able to host winemaker dinners with guest chefs from all over the US!

So...come on and get some sunscreen onto your starved winter skin, warm up the grill and dust off those patio chairs. It's time to crawl out of your “Shelter-in-Place” isolation and open up some sunny new wines—enjoy!

We hope to be able to see you here really soon—cheers!

Carol Shelton



Here are the details on this box of deliciousness, listed in suggested tasting order!
The total tab for this shipment is \$146.40, before any applicable tax & shipping.



2019 COQUILLE BLANC WHITE Rhône-style blend, Paso Robles

This is the “best yet” vintage of Carol's all-time favorite wine; it is a “red-drinker's white,” a complex alternative to the more one-dimensional white varietal wines like Chardonnay and Sauvignon blanc. *Coquille is pronounced “ko-keel” and it is French for scallop, like the scallop shells on the Shelton family coat of arms, and now on our sexy new label!

Best White Rhône, Platinum Medal, 94 pts at BOTH the San Diego Int'l. Wine Challenge and the Monterey Int'l Wine competition, plus 91 pts from BOTH Wine Spectator and Wine Enthusiast!

40% Grenache Blanc, 25% Roussanne, 25% Viognier, 10% Marsanne

100% Barrel-fermented in French oak (15% new) then stirred weekly for 5 months.
About 35% of blend completed malo-lactic fermentation, so it retains crisp balance.

Case Production: 1362 cases

Aging potential: 5-15 years

*Price: \$26.00 / \$20.80 Club **New Release!***

Carol's Tasting Notes: Enticing nose of spicy pears and white peaches, almond paste/marzipan, a touch of honeysuckle perfume. Multi-dimensional (many layers), a hard-to-describe range of aromatics, intriguing, almost mysterious! In the mouth it is crisply dry, yet creamy and round and full-bodied, with nice almond paste on crisp-yet-juicy pear fruit.



2017 Wild Thing® Zinfandel

Our Signature Zin, your final serving of this vintage. As usual, Carol used only the yeasts growing on the skins of the grapes to do the fermentation, making it smoother and creamier than many other reds...as some new wine drinkers say—it's “less bitey”—dangerously good!

90 Points Wine Enthusiast, Best of Class, 2 Double Gold and 5 Gold Medals

76% Zinfandel, 15% Carignane, 9% Petite Sirah—90% Mendocino County, Cox Vineyard

14 months in American oak barrels, 20% new *Organically Grown and Wild Yeast fermented*

Case Production: 9170 cases of 750ml, plus 571 cases of 375ml

Aging Potential: 5-10 years

*Price: \$19.00/ \$15.20 Club **Last Grab!***

Carol's Tasting Notes: Aromas of black cherry, ripe plum and raspberry fruit combine with a hint of cigar box, and vanilla-oak baking spice loveliness. Smoothly textured in mouth, and the palate is very creamy and round, with a finish that is long, with lush jammy fruit.



2019 COQUILLE ROUGE RED Rhône-style Blend, Central Coast

The red wines of the Rhône Valley were the inspiration for this new blend, in which Carignane and Grenache Noir bring tangy red fruit, Mourvèdre fills in with savory gaminess, Alicante Bouschet adds spicy blueberry fruit and color, and Petite Sirah gives peppery backbone. These century vines were grown on their own roots in Oakley, in the sandy soils of the San Joaquin River Delta, producing a rich and spicy mouthful of deliciousness.

2nd vintage, new release—already won Gold Medal/94 points!

32% Mourvèdre, 17% each Carignane, Grenache Noir, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet

87% Central Coast (100+ year-old vines in Oakley), 13% Sonoma Co.

15 months in 50% American and 50% French oak barrels (mostly older)

Case Production: 640 cases

Aging potential: 5-15 years

*Price: \$26.00 / \$20.80 Club **2nd vintage of this new blend and label!***

Carol's Tasting Notes: Nose shows perfumey black cherry fruit, some savory leather notes and abundant sweet vanilla oak. Lively in mouth but super smooth and creamy, earthy flavors with brilliant cherry-berry fruit, richly textured and layered, pretty and elegant with a long finish.



2017 PEACELAND ZINFANDEL Peaceland Vineyard, Fountaingrove District

The name of the Peaceland Vineyard comes from the translation of its owners' German last name—Friedland. Three separate clones of Zinfandel each bring different flavor profiles, spiced up by a dollop of "Pet." The unique "tall-head" trained vines were planted in a wild fantasia of settings—steep hillsides, amidst groves of bay and live-oak, most with stunning vistas of the city of Santa Rosa far below. It was this woody setting that brought about its near-demise in the Tubbs Fire of 2017, when the vineyard was partially destroyed—we thought that this 2017 would be its very LAST vintage release, but we are über-excited to announce that it has come back from the fires and we will have a 2019 vintage and more!

90 Pts Wine Spectator, 2 Gold Medals on brand new release

88% Zinfandel, 12% Petite Sirah—100% Peaceland Vineyard

18 months in 50% NEW American and 50% 1-3 year old French & American oak barrels

Case Production: 459 cases

Aging potential: 10-20 years

*Price: \$36.00 / \$28.80 Club **New Release!***

Carol's Tasting Notes: Deep spicy jammy black raspberry, rich chocolatey oak, layers of loveliness! Juicy razzberry jam in mouth, bright acidity and good structure for aging. This baby packs everything that Zin should be and much more!



2017 MONGA ZIN Old Vine Zin, Cucamonga Valley

The grapes for our beloved Monga Zin are becoming more difficult to obtain with each year of drought that we have here in CA—this ancient vineyard is literally at the western edge of the Mojave Desert, with absolutely no irrigation possible, which makes crop yield about 0.15 tons/acre, about 7% of what we get from vineyards up north here. Struggle is good but sometimes we do not get ANY fruit at all. Keep your fingers crossed that we get some in 2021!

92 Points, Top100 Value Wines in Wine Spectator, Double Gold and 3 Gold Medals

100% Zinfandel, Lopez Vineyard, Cucamonga—planted in 1918, dry-farmed & *Organically Grown*

14 months in 25% NEW American and 75% older American & French oak barrels

Case Production: 1141 cases

Aging potential: 15-20 years

*Price: \$26.00 / \$20.80 Club **Last Grab!***

Carol's Tasting Notes: Deep black cherry fruit, dried cranberry, orange zest, like a berry patch in the sun! Dusty vanilla caramel oak, graham crackers and cocoa. Fragrant Moroccan spices or Chinese 5-spice. In the mouth it is super concentrated, creamy, with tangy bright cherry fruit, long lush finish. Fantastic with food!



2016 ROCKPILE RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Rockpile Vineyard, Rockpile AVA

At 2000 ft elevation, this vineyard has 360° exposure, which allows for steady, even ripening and delicious flavors. It was planted by Rod and Cathy Park, who had a lot of vision to go so far off the grid, planting the very first vines in Rockpile in 1992. When Rod passed away, his wife sold the vineyard to the Wilson family of wineries, who were gracious enough to continue our contract for this special fruit!

2 Gold Medals & 92 Points, right out of the gate!

97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petite Sirah—97% Rockpile Vineyard, Rockpile AVA

30 months (yes, 2½ years!) in 100% NEW French oak barrels

Case Production: 191 cases

Aging potential: 5-20 years

*Price: \$50.00 / \$40.00 Club **New Release!***

Carol's Tasting Notes: Dark-red in color. Black cherry-cola and cassis fruit, long and deep on nose and palate. Cedary oak spice and warm pipe tobacco aromas, dark chocolate with vanilla on finish, smoothly structured tannins for aging. Classic and stylish Cab.

RECIPE



Sunshine Chicken

4 - 6 Servings

We work lots of long days here at the winery, so we often get home after 8:30pm, and are still hungry for dinner before we toddle off to bed. This recipe is so easy to throw together but tastes like you slaved for a while over it! You can also double it for a crowd pretty easily, and you can get creative with different spices as you prefer.

- 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs, excess fat removed, then rinsed and patted dry
- 2-3 tsp. your favorite curry powder (I use Madras in the can, or Penzey's mildest one, but go as hot you like!)
- ½ tsp. salt & a dash of black pepper (more if you like)
- 1½ cups fresh squeezed orange (or tangerine) juice – at least 2 oranges, probably 3
- 1 cup chicken broth
- ½ cup dry white wine, not a super oaky one if possible—Viognier or Coquille Blanc would be excellent!
- 1 cup uncooked basmati rice (or jasmine, if you like)
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. mustard powder
- ¾ tsp. salt
- 2-3 Tbsp. orange zest, whatever comes off of the fruit you just squeezed!
- 1 cup frozen green peas (optional, the kind that are mixed with chopped carrots if you like)
- ½ cup golden raisins...or craisins or currants, whatever you have (optional)
- 1 green apple (Pippin), chopped into ½” bits (optional)



Combine curry powder and S&P and rub all over the dry chicken pieces—let them stand about 20 min while you get the rest of the stuff together. Once you have the oranges juiced/zested and all the ingredients (your “mise en place”) ready, then put just a drizzle of olive oil in a skillet (one that has a lid) and brown off the chicken pieces to get that yummy caramelization—don't cook all the way thru, just lightly brown them. Remove from pan to a plate and cover to keep warm. Add the next 8 ingredients to the pan (thru zest) and deglaze it, scraping off the browned bits that add so much depth of flavor. Add peas, dried fruit and apple (if using), then bring to a boil for a few minutes only. Then turn down heat, add chicken back to pan and simmer, covered, till chicken juices run clear—about 20-25 minutes. Remove from heat and let the skillet stand, covered, until all liquid is absorbed, about 5 minutes.

Serve with a nicely chilled glass of Wild Thing Viognier or Coquille Blanc and prepare to be delighted!

2021

Mark your calendars for these actual
“in-the-flesh” EVENTS in 2021

- May 24-31 “8 Days in May” (Wine Club Member for a Week at many Wine Road wineries. We will be open May 26-29 only. Reservations required). Get a ticket at www.wineroad.com
- June 5 6-9pm, Wine Dinner at Wine Sellar & Brasserie, San Diego <https://www.winesellar.com/>
- Mid-June Barrel futures! We will be offering futures (at nice discounts) and barrel tasting. Watch for email!
– BY APPOINTMENT ONLY –
- August 27-28 California Wine Festival, Dana Point, CA
- Sept 24-25 California Wine Festival, Santa Barbara, CA



Juan Nevarez in his vineyard
Photo by Carol Shelton

This newsletter is dedicated to the fond memory of Juan Nevarez, the proud grower of our Coquille Blanc grapes in Paso Robles.

Juan passed away from Covid-19 this past year, and his son Juanito will be trying to fill his shoes in the future. A gentle man who had abiding love for the land and his family, he is greatly missed by many, including Carol and Mitch.