

Carol's Bunch

IT'S A Wild WINTER!

Wow! Best wishes to members of Carol's Bunch for some relief from the recent winter weather excesses all across the US! So many records have been broken in temperatures, precipitation, and wind...we hope your winter has not been quite like the craziness we have had here in California, where we have been drenched in NINE "atmospheric river" rainstorms between Christmas and mid-January, that totaled about *32 trillion* gallons of water being poured on northern California alone! With the soils getting super saturated, the vineyards were knee deep in floodwaters, though they are slowly receding now. It also has been much colder than usual here (even though 28°F is not that bad for you guys with the Arctic snaps lately), so bud-break may again be later than in some recent years. This is good because our current freezing nights would be extremely damaging to tender young buds as they emerge. The vines are still dormant until things warm up, so the excess water is not really a problem unless it causes some hillsides to slip, taking vines with them. The good news is that the full reservoirs and record Sierra snow-pack are forcing state officials to declare that



Rockpile Vineyard barn in light snow

our long drought is over at last...at least for now! But it ain't really over till it's over, you know what we mean? Let's just hope that stupid groundhog was wrong and winter ends soon for all of us...and in the meantime, let us bring you a taste of spring in a glass, ok?

As always, your February club shipment has some really special goodies! To start with, try the new vintage of **2022 Wild Thing Rendezvous Rosé** of Carignane (plus Zin and Petite Sirah this year!), which gives you a teasing taste of Spring with its crisply dry, mineral-strawberry delight. Compare that with a last look at our **2018 Oat Valley Carignane**, made from old vines in the northern reaches of Alexander Valley—with its lively razzberry fruit and vibrant

acidity, it is a natural complement to slow-cooker suppers of just about any kind...or for the Cioppino recipe on the back page, sent in by a long-time club member. Next up we have the perennial favorite of folks across the US, the **2020 Wild Thing Zinfandel**, making its first appearance in your club shipments. It is fresh out of the chute, and it has already won a **BEST of SHOW**, with many more accolades to come, for sure! Following that up is the brand new **2020 Cox Reserve Zinfandel**, a blend that we produce in good vintages to honor Jack

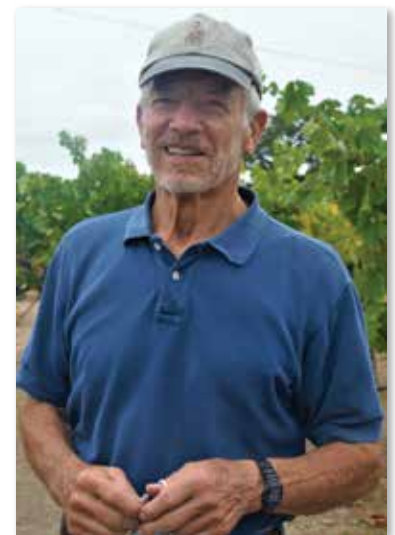


Carol in Cox Vineyard

Cox, the late grower of our Wild Thing Zin in Mendocino. Like those first two tribute bottlings, this is a tiny selection from the barrels of the same vintage of Wild Thing Zin—see what a difference the barrel makes when you taste

the two side by side, bottled exclusively for Carol's Bunch members. Another favorite wine in this shipment is the new vintage of the **2017 Rockpile Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon**, with 2.5 years in all new French oak plus 2.5 years of bottle aging already done for you!. Its elegant restraint and powerful Cabernet-cassis fruit will warm you up on these long cold evenings with a nice roast in the oven.

Last of all, we are releasing the **2020 Albini Reserve Zinfandel**, from a vineyard we had never used before, not far from our future winery in Windsor. It is not "old vine" but its low crop yielded the "sleeper star" of the 2020 vintage for its vivid berry fruit and deep chocolaty oak, and for its concentration and vibrant acidity. Try this one soon because we only bottled 188 cases, which means that there is not much to go around after the initial club shipment is complete. It will not last long--yowza!



Don Albini

Continued on back page...



Here are the details on this box of deliciousness, listed in suggested tasting order! The total tab for this shipment is \$148.00, before any applicable tax & shipping.



2022 Wild Thing® Rendezvous Rosé, Mendocino County

Created by “delayed saignée,” or bleeding half of the “pink” juice off of red Carignane, Zin and Petite Sirah grapes a full two days after crushing them, it is fermented cold like a white wine to retain every delicious drop of crisp strawberry fruitiness. A bit darker than the pale Provencal style of Rosé, this is much deeper in flavor and stands up well to just about ANY food you pair with it, even a nice grilled steak!

Organically Grown

50% Carignane, 30% Zin, 20% Petite Sirah

Case Production: 1,516 cases

Aging Potential: 3-5 years

Price: \$19 / \$15.20 Club **Brand New Release!**

Carol's Tasting Notes: Light cranberry color, delightful mineral and juicy strawberry fruit aromas, nice lift of fresh orange zest, tangy vanilla crème fraîche on strawberry shortcake! Refreshingly crisp and dry, mouth-watering actually. Great with almost any food, from sushi to salmon to BBQ!



2020 Wild Thing® Old Vine Zinfandel, Mendocino County

This is consistently our best-selling favorite in the tasting room and at events, and in retail and restaurants. The wild yeast ferment makes it super creamy and boosts the wonderful berry fruit from our Mendocino grower, and the blend with Carignane and Petite Sirah fills in any “holes” in the flavor profile, adding acidity and spice.

Organically Grown and Wild Yeast fermented

BEST OF SHOW!! Triple Gold Medal!

76% Zinfandel, 10% Carignane, 9% Petite Sirah, 5% mixed reds

11 months in oak barrels, 10% new American and 90% older, mostly American

Case Production: 8,007 cases

Aging potential: 5-7 years

Price: \$20 / \$16 Club

Carol's Tasting Notes: Aromas of black cherry, ripe plum and raspberry fruit combine with a hint of cigarbox, 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.



2020 COX RESERVE Old Vine Zinfandel, Cox Vineyard, Mendocino County

The Cox Vineyard of Zinfandel and Carignane was planted in the rolling coastal hills NW of Ukiah by Jack Cox in 1956. This special tribute reserve is a careful 10-barrel selection from the many barrels of the 2020 Wild Thing Zin above—it expresses deeper oak character without eclipsing the wonderful fruit coming from his vineyard. We only produce this wine in vintages that really showcase Jack's vision for his organic inland Mendocino vines.

Organically Grown and Wild Yeast fermented

87% Zinfandel, 5% Carignane, 8% Petite Sirah — 100% Cox Vineyard, Mendocino County!

18 months in all American oak barrels, 50% new and 50% 1-2 years old

Case Production: 238 cases

Aging potential: 5-10 years

Price: \$30 / \$24 Club **Very Limited NEW Release – WINE CLUB ONLY!**

Carol's Tasting Notes: Deeper and darker blackberry fruit, almost jammy. More roasty caramel-dark chocolate oak and vanilla-mocha latte, a bit perfumey like red roses and ripe raspberries. Round sweet oaky vanilla cream in mouth, delicious blackberry and spice, great depth of flavor and fruit. Very supple, soft finish. Like a blackberry crumble à la mode!



2018 OLD VINE CARIGNANE **Oat Valley Vineyard, Alexander Valley**

Back to the future at last! Carol used the vibrant red Carignane from these 70+ year old dry-farmed and head-trained vines at her 20-year stint as winemaker at Windsor Vineyards, and now they have come “back home to mama!” Because good red Carignane requires very ripe grapes to calm the acidity and bring a rounder mouthfeel, these are our last grapes to harvest every year, but the resulting wine is well worth the wait, and it is one of Carol’s personal favorites!

Sustainably Grown

1 Double Gold/Best of Class, 6 Gold Medals

97% Carignane, 3% Petite Sirah

17 months in barrels—80% new American, 20% 2-year-old American

Case Production: 222 cases

Aging potential: 8-10 years

Price: \$30 / \$24 Club

Carol’s Tasting Notes: Wow—big smoky-caramel oakiness on a deep razzberry fruit core. Creamy in mouth, a bit of brown spices-nutmeg/cinnamon, with lively acidity, good depth of fruit without being jammy or overripe. Lingering razzberry-chocolate finish, great with pork tenderloin, strawberry salad or even grilled salmon.



2020 ALBINI RESERVE ZINFANDEL **Albini Vineyard, Russian River Valley**

Don Albini nurtured this backyard planting of Zin vines on Jensen Lane in Windsor for his own label, Albini Family Vineyards, until they decided to give it up and sell the fruit to local wineries and rest on their laurels. The vines are about 30 years old, 75% trellis/cordon trained and 25% head-trained, and the fruit was a real “sleeper” from the 2020 harvest, producing a deep, richly berry-fruited wine that is phenomenal with food!

Sustainably Grown

96% Zinfandel, 4% Carignane

18 months in barrels—25% new Hungarian, 25% new American, 50% older French and American

Case Production: 188 cases

Aging potential: 10-15 years

Price: \$36 / \$28.80 Club **New release!**

Carol’s Tasting Notes: Inky color, super concentrated nose of blackberry fruit and peppery spice, with a lovely strap of leather that follows the creamy oak all the way thru the long and vivid finish—bright acidity keeps the berries singing well into the zingy finish. This will pair wonderfully with grilled steak or tomato-sauced pasta!



2017 ROCKPILE RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON **Rockpile Vineyard, Rockpile**

The Rockpile Vineyard lies ‘way off the grid at 2000 foot elevation, with superb 360 degree exposure to the sun. It is graciously styled with black cherry-cassis fruit and a nice hint of tobacco and cedar-spice, with the long smooth creamy finish and touch of minerality that is so characteristic of Rockpile reds.

Sustainably Grown

95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petite Sirah

30 months in 100% new French oak barrels

Case Production: 192 cases

Aging potential: 10-15 years

Price: \$50 / \$40 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, vanilla at finish, smoothly structured tannins, just a touch of minerality.

RECIPE

Our wine club member Kathie H. from Atascadero CA, sent us her favorite recipe for Cioppino, which she enjoys with either Coquille Blanc or Coquille Rouge. Since it is currently CRAB season here in California, we think that right NOW would be a great time to enjoy her Cioppino with our Wild Thing Rendezvous Rosé, Wild Thing Zin, the Old Vine Carignane...or any of the wines in this shipment!

NOTE: We'd love to hear from ANY of you with your favorite recipes and ways to pair them with our wines—we will even share them in our newsletters and/or on our website—credited to you, of course!

Kathie's Cioppino (Tomato-based Fish Stew)

Serves 6

Sauce Ingredients

1 medium onion, chopped fine
3 cloves garlic, chopped fine
6 sprigs parsley and/or cilantro, chopped fine
¼ pound thick cut bacon (or salt pork), chopped fine
1 stalk celery, chopped fine
1 cup dry white or rosé wine
1 lemon, sliced thin
½ stick of butter
One 14.5-oz can tomato sauce



Place the following in layers in a large roasting pan:

1 crab (Dungeness if you can get it!) - cooked and cleaned, chopped into pieces in shell
2 pounds raw prawns - in shell (or just tail-on if you prefer)
1.5 pounds littleneck or cherrystone clams, in shells
1.5 pounds boneless, white-fleshed fish (like rockfish, cod, snapper, halibut), cut in 3-4" chunks.

Salt well over the top of all the fish in roaster, then place in hot oven 450°F for 10 minutes. Pour sauce over fish, then bake 1½ hours at 350°F. Serve in bowls over cooked pasta or rice, with warm French bread on the side and lots of napkins...and of course, a nice glass of Carol Shelton vino!

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE...

New winery update! Plans on the new winery building are creeping along. The use permits are all in place and approved, and we submitted the building permit documents to the Town of Windsor in mid-December...just before they all shut down for the holidays. Now it is time to wait for their list of concerns, get them settled/ fixed, and then the search for the financing begins in earnest, from big investors to banking partners. We have learned a lot along the way on this journey, not only about construction and winery design, but especially about the value of good timing and perseverance. We are so looking forward to moving out of our cramped quarters here on Coffey Lane to our new home in Windsor...as of this time it looks like that will happen in the middle/ end of 2024, if we are able to break ground in summer of this year. Don't worry, we will keep you posted on the progress as things ooze along at this snail's pace!



Chris and Michael

We **do** have much for which to be thankful. The winery is growing in both sales and employees—we added Michael to work with Cellarmaster Chris Malone on our cellar crew year-round, and many of you have talked to Heather on the phone or in the tasting room—she is covering sales on weekends and when Carolyn is away. We are selling our wines through distributors in 43 states at this point, managed with passion by National Sales Manager Steve Situm. Holding it all together somehow is our office manager/bookkeeper, Linda McNeill, who keeps Carol from going absolutely nuts. Many thanks to them all, and of course to Carolyn, who is celebrating over 12 years with us!!...and many thanks to all of you, for your loyalty and enthusiasm—you are our "raison d'être!"



Heather

Cheers,

Carol Shelton

2023 UPCOMING EVENTS

March 3-5 **Wine Road Barrel Weekend** - Taste 6 delicious wines from the barrels and buy futures on them at great discounts! www.wineroad.com

March 25 **NorCal Public Media Food & Wine Awards**
6-9pm Luther Burbank Center, Santa Rosa CA
norcalpublicmedia.org/support/norcal-public-media-food-and-wine-awards

April 14-15 **California Wine Festival**, Dana Point
www.californiawinefestival.com/dana-point

June 2-3 **Monterey Wine Festival**
11-3pm <http://montereywine.com/>

June 3 **Sit Stay Sparkle Tasting, Canine Companions**
Santa Rosa campus
<http://www.cci.org/locations/northwest/events/sit-stay-sparkle-santa-rosa.html>

June 17 **North Coast Wine Challenge Food & Wine Tasting**
LBC, Santa Rosa, CA
<https://lutherburbankcenter.org/event/pd-north-coast-wine-food-festival23/>

June 23-24 **California Wine Festival**. Carlsbad CA
<https://www.californiawinefestival.com/carlsbad>