



# Carol's Bunch

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

**Sea-Zins greetings** to our loyal members of Carol's Bunch! We hope you are all well and safe from all of the insane coronavirus and weather-disasters of yet another crazy, messed-up year. It looks like we are coming out of these crises, albeit much slower than we'd all like. We really need this upcoming holiday season to regroup, to refill our souls and to savor our time with those we love over some great meals and happier times...and that means that we need to get this marvelous box of joyful libations into your eager paws early in the season, so we can make sure you have it in time for all of your feasts and celebrations. Let the festivities begin!

In this shipment you will find four new vintage releases and two second visits of old friends, plus the traditional tin of dark chocolates and a nice logo bag, useful for anything from groceries to gym clothes. Make sure you do not miss those items, since they are small and could get lost in your gleeful opening of your box.

As for the wines in this shipment...what a great assortment! We have the new release of **2018 Wild Thing Zin**, which is showing very well at the moment, and a revisit of the **2018 Rocky Reserve Zin**, our perennial flagship wine that has the elegant structure of Cabernet (with no Cab in it!) with Zin's rounder curves and rich berries. For new releases in this shipment—first, the **2017 Florence Petite Sirah**—it spent 2.5 years in barrel, and it carries the oak well...as demonstrated by its Best of Show honors as well as a nice 93-point score the from the Wine Spectator, and its wonderful berry jam fruit and vibrantly fresh acidity that makes it such a great food partner. Then we have the new **2018 Karma Zin**, the lovely field blend of Zin with Alicante and Petite Sirah from Bastoni Vineyard—with its tiny production (170 cases), its dense, spicy fruit just wowed us! The fourth and final new release is the **2018 Alicante Bouschet**, a barrel selection from the same Alicante that was blended into the Karma Zin (above). You will seldom see this “teinturier” (purple-fleshed, Google it!) variety bottled pure, as it is a bit lean and hard and lacks middle stuffing to support all of its abundant tannins. Carol has been working her magic on it and while still a wee bit chewy, it is a delicious version with fresh blueberry fruit



and cigar box spices. After 2.7 years in older barrels, the tannins are rounder and softer than it was going in...and will be a sturdy match for prime rib or a nice leg of lamb. We only bottled 159 cases of it, so if you want to get a bit more for your cellar, exercise your first grab soon! By the way, this wine is the first of the “black labeled claret” bottles to be released in our sexy new package—a clean white label branded with the “Coquille” scallop shell that represents the shells on the SHELton family coat of arms, plus a shell embossed on top of its matching red foil! We'd love to hear what you think of it, so drop us a line if you have an opinion to share. Last but ne'er least, we finish up the package with the decadent **2019 Black Magic Late Harvest Zin**, our slightly sweet dessert jewel—enjoy it on its own, with the dark chocolates we gift you, or paired with a food that is LESS sweet than it is, so the two do not fight each other...think tiramisu or flourless chocolate cake...or maybe the pork roast recipe included in this newsletter, if you dare?

### Winery News!

Now for news of the winery and harvest...2021 was the most intense and compressed Crush season I have seen in all of my 45 past harvests. We had no issues with fire or smoke at all, thank God, but the drought caused many vineyards to ripen early by about two weeks. The shoots on the vines were shorter and the berries smaller, resulting in a very much smaller crop across the board, especially in Carignane—we get this variety from three very different parts of California, and all three were at least 50% down in crop, if not more. Even the Wild Thing Zin was low in yield, so I had to bring in another vineyard or two to be sure we had enough fruit to make both the Wild Thing Rosé and its big brother Zin in the quantities needed to satisfy all of you thirsty Wild drinkers! Even with the short crop, it was wonderful to be able to once again take in the fruit I love from Rockpile, Dry Creek and even Cucamonga—since we had to reject the grapes in 2020, it was like greeting old friends after time spent apart. Flavors are very intense and concentrated, acids are very bright, and for once we had plenty of fruit from which to make our 2021 Black Magic Late Harvest Zin, since many lots came in very sweet. We even produced wine from a few varieties new to us—a spicy Barbera from Oakley and “Rose of Peru,” the latter made into a fortified wine that

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Here are the details on this box of deliciousness, listed in suggested tasting order!  
The total tab for this shipment is \$149.60, before any applicable tax & shipping.



## 2018 Wild Thing® Zin, Mendocino County

Our Signature Zin, your first look at this new 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" and more dangerously delicious!

*Organically Grown and Wild Yeast fermented*

**91 Points Wine Spectator, 90 Points Wine Enthusiast, 2 Double Gold and 5 Gold Medals**

78% Zinfandel, 14% Carignane, 8% Petite Sirah---99% Mendocino County

*Case Production: 9185 cases of 750ml, plus 572 cases of 375ml*

*Aging Potential: 5-7 years (best to drink sooner than later, as it requires no further age)*

*Price: \$20.00/ \$16.00 Club*

**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.



## 2018 Rocky Reserve Zin, Florence Vineyard, Rockpile

Our flagship wine, the very best Zin we produce every year. Carol was a co-founder of the Rockpile AVA with her grower, Jack Florence Sr., whose vineyard planted in 1997 at 1400 ft elevation is the star of the show. It lies above our morning fog and has a much more even growing season, which allows for it to develop very polished tannins and Cabernet-like structure...our "Zin with the Heart of a Cab."

**92 pts Wine Spectator, 6 Gold Medals**

86% Zinfandel, 12% Petite Sirah, 2% Carignane

98% Florence Vineyard, Rockpile AVA (all but the Carignane)

*Case Production: 578 cases*

*Aging potential: 5-20 years*

*Price: \$40.00 / \$32.00 Club **New release!***

**Carol's Tasting Notes:** Nice dark-red in color, big blueberry-blackberry fruit, spicy-chocolatey oak, nicely focused acidity enhances mineral flavors, elegantly structured tannins for aging, super plush looong finish!



## 2017 FLORENCE PETITE SIRAH Florence Vineyard, Dry Creek Valley

Our Rockpile grower, Jack Florence Sr, planted these vines in the valley below Rockpile, on the sandy banks of Dry Creek, not far from Preston and Bella Wineries. That sandy soil causes water-stress on the vines, and the resulting fruit has super bright acidity/low pH, which makes the "berry jam" fruit POP and lengthens both the finish and the aging potential. This wine is tricky to get into balance properly, but it wins such an extraordinary amount of accolades every year that it makes our efforts very worthwhile, indeed.

**93 pts Wine Spectator, Red Best of Show, 1 Double Gold and 3 Gold Medals!**

96% Petite Sirah, 4% Carignane---96% Florence Vineyard, Dry Creek Valley

*Case Production: 223 cases*

*Aging potential: 10-20 years*

*Price: \$40.00 / \$32.00 Club*

**Carol's Tasting Notes:** Inky blue-purple in color, sweet black razzberry jammy fruit—yum!

Dark chocolatey oak spice, super bright acidity but very juicy-supple, bit of warm vanilla at finish.



## 2018 Karma Zin Bastoni Vineyard, Fountaingrove District

This bottling marks our return to this wine after almost losing the Bastoni Vineyard in the Tubbs Fire of 2017, since it is located in the Fountaingrove District AVA, which bore the brunt of the fire's fury. The varieties in this "quasi field blend" were picked and fermented separately instead of blending in the field, then blended gradually as it aged in its barrels. We selected only our favorite seven barrels to bottle, to showcase the magnificent fruit interplay with fine oak.

**Gold Medal—did not make enough to enter in judgments, mostly!**

77% Zinfandel, 13% Alicante Bouschet, 9% Petite Sirah, 1% Carignane---99% Bastoni Vineyard

Case Production: 170 cases... *Tiny Production, gone soon!*

Aging potential: 10-20 years

Price: \$33.00 / \$26.40 Club

**Carol's Tasting Notes:** Very complexly layered spice and black fruits, lively! Dark chocolate, creamy oak, a bit of vanilla cola, brown spices-nutmeg/cinnamon. Rich in mouth, good structure for aging.

## 2018 "BLUE TOOTH" Alicante Bouschet Bastoni Vineyard, Fountaingrove District

Here is our second rendition of "pure" Alicante Bouschet, the tooth-staining Big Boy of our portfolio! Most red varieties have colorless juice and pulp, and all color is in the skins only; Alicante is one of the 7 rare "teinturier" grape varieties, those that have purple flesh and juice, as well as skins. With all that color comes a huge mouthful of tannin, so it usually requires blending to tame it, but with gentle handling and over 2½ years in barrels, this wine is a mellower example of the variety. It is still fairly chewy, but a lovely steak or prime rib would tame that nicely!

**Not yet Rated--did not make enough to enter in judgments, mostly!**

93% Alicante Bouschet, 5% Zin, 2% Petite Sirah,

96% Bastoni Vineyard, Fountaingrove District AVA

Case Production: 159 cases

Aging potential: 8-20 years **\*\*2.7 years in barrels!!**

Price: \$34.00 / \$27.20 Club **New release to Carol's Bunch ONLY!**

**NOTE:** This is the first of our wines to be released in our sexy new "shell for Shel-ton" packaging, other than the Coquilles. All wines that formerly carried a black label will now bear this one—whatcha think?!

**Carol's Tasting Notes:** INKY, tooth-staining color! (that's why it is "Bluetooth," get it?!) Ripe but mellow blueberry, black currant and elderberry aromas and flavors, wrapped in a spicy cigar box of cedar, clove, cardamom, a bit of soft pipe tobacco. Huge mid-mouthfeel, still pretty chewy in tannins, but will be gorgeous with some roasted meat or cheesy pasta.



## 2019 Black Magic Late Harvest Zinfandel Dessert Wine

We had to include this perennial favorite sweetie to make sure you all had it for the holidays, along with our legendary 72% cacao chocolate morsels in a tin, the perfect complement for the chocolatey-raspberry goodness in this tiny bottle—it is an enchanting dessert all by itself!

**90 points Wine Enthusiast, Double Gold and 2 Gold Medals**

32.4°Brix at Harvest – **6.2% RS and 15.2% alc**

85% Late Harvest Zinfandel, 15% Late Harvest Petite Sirah

100% Sonoma County: 60% Dry Creek Valley, 40% Fountaingrove District

Case Production: 920 half-cases produced, in 375ml bottles

Aging potential: 5-8 years, maybe more?

Price: \$20.00/ \$16.00 Club **LAST GRAB!**

**Carol's Tasting Notes:** Mocha, cherry cordial, a whiff of Raisinettes, lovely chocolate syrup with a slight touch of mint chip, black pepper, and orange peel on the nose. In the mouth are explosions of dark chocolate and coffee, with gorgeous jammy black raspberry with a slightly chewy texture and well-balanced sweetness. Be sure to pair it with a dessert that is less sweet than the wine so they won't fight each other—try to use darker chocolate or cocoa, like a flourless mocha cake or tiramisu!



## RECIPE

### Pork Roast with Spice Rub and Maple-Ginger Sauce

One 2-lb. Pork roast—I use a club roast or shoulder, but you can use tenderloin too.

**Spice Rub**--mix in a small bowl:

- 1 tsp. chili powder (more if you like more zing!)
- ½ tsp. dry ground ginger
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 t. fresh black pepper
- 1¼ tsp. salt

Rub mixed spices onto surface of pork roast. Let stand in refrigerator for 30 min or so.

Brown the pork roast on all sides in a heavy non-stick skillet over med-high heat—do not cook too long, just 3-5 minutes total, or you will overcook the meat.

Place roast on broiler pan (foil lined and oil-sprayed) and bake at 375°F for about 20-30 minutes, or until cooking thermometer reads 140°F.\* Let the roast stand, covered lightly, for 10 minutes before cutting into it.

**\*NOTE:** Mitch is very picky here—we always use a meat thermometer to be sure it does not overcook. It will continue to cook as it “rests” out of the oven, and it can become dry and tough if overdone. BTW,

the best thermometer in the world is from Thermopen, an instant read digital, and Mitch’s favorite grilling tool!

While pork is roasting in oven, make sauce and then keep it warm on low till you can eat!

**Maple-Ginger Sauce**

- 2 T. butter, melted
- 2-3 T. dried chopped onion (or 1 c. fresh chopped onion)
- 2 heaping T. bottled minced fresh ginger (do NOT substitute dry!)
- 1 cup chicken broth
- ½ cup maple syrup (the real kind, not the imitation!)

Brown onion in melted butter. Add fresh ginger and cook 4 minutes. Stir in broth and maple syrup, scraping pan to loosen any browned bits. Bring to a boil, and reduce down to about ¾ cup—about 10 minutes, stirring often.

P. S. you can make this less sweet if you do not boil down the sauce as much. If you cook it too long it gets too thick, almost like tar!

Serve pork slices with Maple-Ginger sauce over them, and carrots on the side. Smack your lips over a glass of Black Magic Late Harvest Zinfandel as a wonderful complement to the sweet sauce!

### Winery News! *Continued...*

will be snuggled away in barrels to round itself out for the next few years. Overall, I am quite pleased with this harvest and its flavors...

As most of you local folk know, we were able to re-open the tasting room on a limited basis by summertime this past year, tho Carolyn had a tough time covering seven days a week. We have now hired a new Tasting Room/Marketing Associate, Barbara Lyon, to cover weekends and a few weekdays as well. She is still getting accustomed to our wines and set up, but it won't be long till she is pitching in on writing email blasts, social media posts...and even this newsletter, God willing. We are excited to open up for this November's Wine & Food affair for the Wine Road, taking place on Nov 6-7, as well as the Winter Wineland event in mid-January. They will be a bit different in presentation, as it is not a free-flow walk-through event, but now with pre-reserved tasting times so that we can maintain a bit more social distancing. In addition, we are requiring vaccination certificates in order to reserve a spot...a bit controversial perhaps, but a decision we made with serious thought and concern for all involved, both our staff and the attendees.

Now some more good news...plans for our new winery are progressing, albeit slowly! Thanks to Mitch's perseverance, we have passed all the Use Permits for the Town of Windsor (no small feat—

yippee!), and we'll be moving on to get the Building Permit as soon as final working drawings are completed. With delays abounding and costs of supplies soaring, we are looking at breaking ground in the Spring, hoping that costs will settle down by then. For those who might have missed the news, our total plan is to build a 50,000 sq ft winery with a beautiful new tasting room and patio, plus a rooftop event center, all to be built in the middle of the “Windsor Beverage District,” which is full of other wineries, breweries, a cidery, and even a distillery, and a stone's throw from the new \$50 million facility of Russian River Brewing. I will be able to bring all of my wine production into one space at long last, and offer all of you a fantastic hospitality center. It will be wonderful to return to Windsor, because I developed much of my winemaking skills during almost 20 years at Windsor Vineyards. Our target date for completion is late 2022/early 2023...we will keep you posted as things progress!

We live with hope in our hearts that progress will be made against the new viral variants, and that life can return to some semblance of “normal” for the world as we know it. No matter where you find yourselves for the holiday season, we want to wish you safe and wonderful times with loved family and friends, lots of your favorite foods, and of course plenty of delicious Carol Shelton wines! From our crew to yours, Happy Holidays!

*Carol Shelton*