



Carol's Bunch

HAPPY SPRING!

Happy Spring everyone...phew! It has been yet another wild climate year so far, all across the US, with weirdly early warm weather spells all mixed up with ice storms and frigid temps in places where they are not common. Here in Sonoma County, it was a rather wet winter, with later season rain in the North Coast and late snow in the Sierra, both of which have replenished enough of our precious groundwater to just about declare us "drought-free" for the loooong dry summer ahead. It has also been a challenging year in the economy and government, with the tariffs and trade wars looming, scary times for immigrants and wars all around the globe... I am sure we all are wishing for a bit of peace and stability to head our way soon. Hang in there, everyone!

Let's chat about a brighter topic...your Spring club shipment! **ALL SIX** of these beauties are **brand new** releases, starting with your customary spring bottle of my favorite, the **2023 Coquille Blanc**, this time with a bit different spin on it; due to late frosts and the replanting in our original Nevarez Vineyard, we had to reach out to other sources of white Rhône grapes and re-arrange the varietal percentages to align with grapes received. The resulting wine carries the "San Luis Obispo County" appellation (vs our original Paso Robles AVA) and is comprised of 50% Viognier, 30% Grenache Blanc and 20% Roussanne, with NO Marsanne! This makes for a lovely -tropical floral driven blend, perhaps a bit less mineral and green apple fruit than is our norm...but it is a fabulous take on our perennial favorite, and it is racking up lots of ultra-high honors in competitions this year. The **2022 Coquille Rouge** has been a "Top Dog" fresh out of the gate with its 93-point

score, **TWO overall Best of Show** awards and heaps of Double Gold and Gold Medals to boot. It still carries a "Central Coast" (CC) appellation due its vineyard sources in Contra Costa County, where the Sacramento River meets San Francisco Bay, which is actually the northernmost point of the CC AVA. Century vines were planted on their own roots on the sandy shorelines in five different "Rhône" grape varieties, which we "co-fermented" in one larger tank, then aged in older oak to respect the old vine character of the fruit. We have been refining this blend each year since the first vintage (2018) and, by George, I think we've nailed it this time! Layered and complex, fruit forward but earthy, with firm tannins and plush finish...it is a wine of contrast and harmony, GREAT with food, especially hot off the grill!



See how Alicante "bleeds" blue-purple juice while Zin has colorless juice?

After the two Coquilles, you will have your first look at three lovely vineyard-designated Zins, all 2022's and all winners of multiple Gold Medals already. The **2022 Wally Zin**, from Rod Wallstrum's Alexander Valley vineyard, is dense in peppery, ripe raspberry fruit, while the **2022 Albini Reserve Zin** is super vibrant and bright with chocolate-covered black cherry flavors. Then you have our second vintage of Zin from a 1908 Old Vine vineyard on Limerick Lane, the **2022 Collins Reserve Zin**, which shows off its field blend style with layers of complexity, incredible depth of brambly fruit and a touch of spice and earth. The **2019 Alicante Bouschet**, usually a big part of our Karma Zin from Bastoni Vineyards' quasi-field blend, has earthy, spicy blueberry fruit aromas and its huge chewy mouthfeel is screaming for a nice big cut of BEEF or lamb...sorry vegans, this one needs some FAT to tame it down!

We are so excited about our Ama Waterways River Cruise in France next March-April 2026! We are starting our first 7-day voyage in Lyon at the northern edge of the Rhône and chugging our way up the Saône River to Dijon in the heart of Burgundy. Along the way we will have my wines on the ship for two educational tastings (like comparing our own wines to those of the local talent) and a fabulous wine-paired dinner, as well as other meals on the ship. Our travel agents, Donna and Greg, came up with the idea of a "Part Deux" in which we now are planning to jump on the train as soon as we disembark in Dijon on April 2 and zip across France to Bordeaux in order to board another Ama ship for a tasting tour of Bordeaux and surroundings! You are most welcome to

join us—we have over 65 friends already joining us in Burgundy, and we are getting close to 20 for the newly added Bordeaux trip, so there is plenty of room for more on either or both! There is a bit of an early-bird discount if you book before June 30, 2025, so don't delay or you will miss your chance for a "Rendezvous Romantique en la Belle France!" For more info, please send an email to **dhisey@expediacruiises.com** or call her at (714) 801-7674 (you need to go thru Donna to join our group!)

So...come on and get some tomato plants in the ground, warm up the grill and dust off those patio chairs. It's time to 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 **\$164.00**, before any applicable tax & shipping.

2023 COQUILLE* BLANC **White Rhône-style blend, San Luis Obispo County**



This is a new riff on Carol's all-time favorite wine, our "red-drinker's white," a complex alternative to the more one-dimensional white varietal wines like Chardonnay and Sauvignon blanc. Due to a challenging crop in Paso, we shifted the blend to have a larger % of Viognier (vs Grenache Blanc and Roussanne). It now features a lovely floral-honeysuckle nose with a silky mouthfeel that still has that wonderful crisp edge of acidity to encourage food pairing.

* *Coquille* is pronounced "ko-kee(l)" and it is French for scallop, like the scallop shells on the Shelton family coat of arms!

FOUR Best of Class awards (Best White Rhône), Five Double Golds, plus four more Gold Medals!

50% Viognier, 30% Grenache Blanc, 20% Roussanne

80% Paso Robles, 12% Dry Creek Valley, 8% Mendocino County

100% Barrel-fermented in French oak, (older ones so the oak does not overpower the delicate fruit) then stirred weekly for 5 months, followed by 2 more months on lees.

About 50% of blend completed malo-lactic fermentation, so it stays nice and crisp.

Case Production: 1022 cases

Aging Potential: 5-15 years

Price: **\$28.00 / \$22.40 Club *FIRST grab!***

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, round and full-bodied, with nice almond paste on fresh, juicy pear fruit.

2022 COQUILLE* ROUGE **RED Rhône-style Blend, Central Coast**



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

93 pts from Wine Enthusiast, plus "Editor's Choice"

TWO BEST of SHOW Overall (Sweepstakes) and three Double Gold Medals, plus 13 more Gold Medals!!

24% each Mourvèdre & Carignane, 20% each Grenache Noir & Petite Sirah, 10% Alicante Bouschet, 2% Viognier

92% Central Coast (80% from 100+ year-old vines in Oakley, balance from Paso), 8% Sonoma Co.

7 months in 40% American and 60% French & Hungarian oak barrels, almost all 2+ years old

Case Production: 792 cases

Aging potential: 7-15 years

Price: **\$28.00 / \$22.40 Club *FIRST grab!***

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.

2022 WALLY ZIN **Wallstrum Vineyard, Alexander Valley**



Rod Wallstrum, known as "Wally" to his many friends, was the Agriculture teacher at Healdsburg High School, and as such, is a fixture in the local Ag community. Actually, Wally is such a character that we cannot resist buying his fruit! His small 45-year-old Zinfandel vineyard in Alexander Valley is cordon-trained on trellis wires and is untilled between the vine rows, the better to preserve the soil's moisture and to maintain a healthy, undisturbed population of earthworms, microbes and nutrients as well. It yields luscious fruit, full of spicy raspberry flavors and vibrant acidity.

Triple Gold /Best of Class plus one Double Gold, one Gold Medal so far!

100% Zinfandel--96% Wallstrum Vineyard, Alexander Valley, Sonoma County

17 months in 43% new/2-yr Hungarian, 30% new French and 27% older American oak barrels

Case Production: 167 cases

Aging potential: 7-15 years

Price: **\$35.00 / \$28.00 Club *FIRST grab!***

Carol's Tasting Notes: Spicy-peppery black raspberry fruit, right off the top, with gorgeous roasty-vanilla oak caramel, and a bit of dusty black cherry. Mouth offers chocolatey oak, creamy vanilla and tart cherry, with a dense middle and pleasing fruit and spice through its long finish. Does it get a Gold Star for being the teacher's pet??



2022 ALBINI ZIN **Albini Vineyard, Russian River Valley**

Don Albini and his wife Beth nurtured their backyard planting of Zin vines for their own label, Albini Family Vineyards, until they decided to give it up and sell the fruit to local wineries and rest on their winemaking laurels. The vines are about 30-35 years old, about 75% trellis/cordon trained and 25% head-trained. Our first vintage (2020) of the fruit was a real “sleeper,” earning 96 points in the Wine Enthusiast and placement as #34 on their list of Top 100 Wines of 2023! This fruit produces a deep, bright, richly berry-fruited wine that is phenomenal with food.

One Double Gold Medal so far--new release!

100% Zinfandel--95% Albini Vineyard

17 months in 22% each new Hungarian and French oak, plus 56% older French and American barrels

Case Production: 227 cases

Aging potential: 15-20 years

Price: \$40.00 / \$32.00 Club **FIRST grab!**

Carol's Tasting Notes: Beautiful nose of sage, blackberry and milk chocolate, touch of caramel and cedar from the oak, bit of dusty earth. Almost Cabernet-like in its profile, from the kiss of green herbs to nicely structured tannins. Bright acidity while still creamy, and a plush, long finish.



2022 COLLINS RESERVE OLD VINE ZIN

Collins Ranch, Russian River Valley

Collins Ranch on Limerick Lane has long been one of Carol's favorite old vine Zin vineyards, so when its fruit became available in 2021, she jumped on the opportunity to work with these old geezers, planted in 1908. They are a field blend but not too crazy with oddball varieties, and the grapes have a very distinctive soft, spicy red raspberry fruit quality, with a depth of flavor that is quite appealing. Here's to many more years of Collins Reserve in our future!

One Gold Medal so far—new release!

100% Zinfandel “field blend”—which means that it is a fairly wild mix of Zinny varieties!

17 months in 40% each new and 1-year-old Hungarian and American oak barrels, 20% older American barrels

Case Production: 237 cases

Aging potential: 15-20 years

Price: \$40.00/ \$32.00 Club **FIRST grab!**

Carol's Tasting Notes: Soft red raspberry-cherry nose, nice spice cabinet and a touch of dusty earthiness. A juicy mouthful of vibrant raspberry fruit, a bit of cigar box—cedar and clove, a nice mellow cocoa-oak quality that respects the old vine fruit. Long and bright in finish, smooth and elegant tannins. This one will age very gracefully but would be great now with a nice steak off the grill!



2019 BLUETOOTH ALICANTE BOUSCHET

Bastoni Vineyard, Fountaingrove District

The deep blue-purple color of the Alicante Bouschet grape, juice and all, makes it a frequent contributor to old vine field blends with Zin and friends, but it is sometimes lacking in depth and finesse on its own...until now. In rare vintages like this one, it bursts with blueberry fruit flavors and a real kick of astringent tannins...tamed well when enjoyed with a nice rib-eye! Don't be afraid to age this one a while longer yet; even though we have given it extra-long barrel age as well as bottle age already, it will only improve with more time in the bottle.

96 points and Two Double Gold Medals

92% Alicante Bouschet, 4% Zinfandel, 4% Petite Sirah---96% Bastoni Vineyard

2 YEARS + 6 months in older French and American oak barrels

Case Production: 125 cases

Aging potential: 7-18 years

Price: \$34.00/ \$27.20 Club **FIRST grab!**

Carol's Tasting Notes: : Ripe blueberry fruit, lots of white pepper with a bit of black pepper. Massive mouthful of chewy tannins and very bright blueberry fruit. Slightly tart, long chewy finish—gimme a nice rib-eye!

2025 Events

Mark your calendars for these actual "in-the-flesh," upcoming EVENTS:

- May 10 **Historic Vineyard Society tasting,**
1-4pm, Fort Mason, San Francisco
<https://historicvineyardsociety.org/events>
- May 10 **Spring Wine Trail for Mother's Day on the Wine Road**
11am-4pm at the winery
<https://www.wineroad.com/events/spring-wine-trail/>
- June 14 **North Coast Wine Challenge awards tasting,**
1-4pm, Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, Santa Rosa
www.northcoastwineandfood.com/
- June 14 **Canine Companions 50th Anniversary Gala**
5-10pm, *Independence is Golden Gala*
- June 20-21 **California Wine Festival,** Carlsbad
www.californiawinefestival.com/
- July 19-20 **Monterey Wine Festival,** Monterey
www.montereywine.com
- September 6 **Winesong in the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens** in Fort Bragg, CA
www.mchfoundation.org/winesong-2025/
- October 24 **Winemaker Dinner at the Inn at the Tides,**
Bodega Bay CA
<https://innatthetides.wpengine.com/winemaker-dinner-series/>
- November 1-2 **Wine & Food Affair Weekend on the Wine Road**
<https://www.wineroad.com/events/wine-food-affair/>
- November 7-8 **San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival,**
Grand Decant (Friday night) and
Grand Tasting (Saturday)
www.sandiegowineclassic.com/events/
- November 15-16 **Palm Springs International Food & Wine Festival**
<https://palmspringsfoodandwine.org/>

Recipe

TERIYAKI CHICKEN PASTA SALAD

This one of Carol's all-time favorite summer salad meals—nice and cool and refreshing, yet very complex in flavors. This would be quite tasty with our Coquille Blanc, the Coquille Rouge or any of our Zins!

Salad Dressing/Marinade—blend in blender or food processor:

- ¾ cup canola oil
- ¼ cup toasted sesame oil
- ⅔ cup rice vinegar (or white if preferred)
- ⅔ cup teriyaki sauce (your brand of choice)
- 6 Tbsp sugar

16-oz. package of Farfalle (bow-tie pasta) or any other style you like, cooked in salted boiling water till barely al dente.

2 cups of cooked chicken meat, off the bone—use a pre-cooked rotisserie chicken If it's HOT outside

1 bunch of green onions, whites and lower greens sliced thinly

1½ cups honey roasted peanuts (yum!), lightly chopped

1 cup cashew halves & pieces, lightly chopped if desired

3 small cans of mandarin oranges, drained

1 cup dried cranberries

2 cups red or green seedless grapes, cut in half

18-oz. bag of prepped salad greens--spinach and/or butter lettuce are my faves

After cooking the pasta, add chicken meat and marinate in dressing overnight or at least 2 hours. Add all other ingredients just before serving, toss and serve salad chilled with a glass of Carol Shelton Coquille Blanc or Rouge.

 AMA WATERWAYS



HOSTED BY
**CAROL
SHELTON**

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