



Carol's Bunch

HAPPY SPRING!

Happy Spring everyone...it has been a doozy of a spring so far, with a heavy early April frost doing damage to vines in the Central Coast, plus some later season rain and snow here in the North Coast and the Sierra, which have replenished enough of our precious groundwater to declare us "drought-free" for the loooong dry summer ahead. It is an interesting year all over America, with the elections and portentous trials and protestors of 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!



Zin clusters (or most grapes) about mid June, before veraison (color change to dark blue/purple berries)

Let's chat about a brighter topic...your Spring club shipment! Among your six bottles, we have just one wine getting its last hurrah here--a reprise of the **2021 Coquille Rouge**, with its Double-93-point score, a Best of Show and heaps of Double Gold and Gold Medals. Then we have **FIVE brand new** releases, starting with your customary spring bottle of my favorite, the **2022 Coquille Blanc**, seriously the best vintage yet, IMHO—I know it sounds a bit cliché, but

that blend just keeps getting better every year...and the wines age beautifully, producing an exotic honeyed-almond nectar (not sweet) with which I am quite smitten. Several of you lucky 'Bunch members were able to get some of the 2016 vintage of this wine on our "add-in specials," and I'd love to hear what you think of it when you receive it! Fingers crossed that we will be able to get grapes for the 2024 vintage of this wine, as our vineyard sources in Paso Robles were hard hit by the above-mentioned frost. After the two Coquilles, you will have your first look at four lovely vineyard-designated Zins, all 2021's and all winners of multiple Gold Medals



Beautiful Zin bunch ready for harvest at Collins Vineyard

already. The **2021 Karma Zin** from Bastoni Vineyards' quasi-field blend is earthy and spicy and softly jammy all at once, for a delicious mouthful. We did not take their fruit in 2020 due to smoke taint issues, so we are skipping from 2019 to '21 with this release—we still have lots of 2019 left, but you are getting first grab on the '21. The **2021 Wally Zin**, from Rod Wallstrum's Alexander Valley vineyard, is dense in peppery, ripe berry fruit, while the **2021 Albini Reserve Zin** is super vibrant and bright with chocolate-covered black cherry flavors. Last but ne'er least for sure...we are releasing a Zin from a brand new (to us) 1908 Old Vine vineyard on Limerick Lane, the **2021 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. This 6-pack is quite a yummy selection!

Now, everyone keeps asking us...what is the progress on our potential new winery building in Windsor? Well, we are a bit stalled by the super high costs of building materials, labor and of course the high cost of money (interest rates). At this point, with the economic outlook a bit gloomy all over the world, we are treading water a bit and reaching out to potential partners for the construction...or we will have to sell the project and just stay in our cozy warehouse winery instead. For now, watch for further news of the project, but just keep coming here to our Coffey Lane home, ok?



Vineyard manager Andrew Harwood, sorting Collins Zin grapes in harvest bin



Gnarly old vines planted in 1908 at Collins Vineyard on Limerick Lane

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 \$164.00, before any applicable tax & shipping.



2022 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-kee(l)” and it is French for scallop, like the scallop shells on the Shelton family coat of arms, and now on our sexy new label!!

92 pts from Wine Spectator, plus two Best of Class awards (Best White Rhône), Four Double Gold Medals, plus two more Gold Medals!

40% Grenache Blanc, 30% Roussanne, 20% Viognier, 10% Marsanne

87% Paso Robles, 13% 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 3 more months on lees.

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

Case Production: 1049 cases

Aging Potential: 5-15 years

Price: \$28.00 / \$22.40 Club

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.



2021 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 in the blend were grown on their own roots in Oakley, in the sandy soils of the outer Sacramento River Delta, producing a rich and spicy mouthful of deliciousness.

93 pts from BOTH Wine Spectator AND Wine Enthusiast, plus “Editor’s Choice”

Overall BEST of SHOW Sweepstakes, five Best of Class (Best Red Rhône) and Double Gold Medals, plus eleven more Gold Medals!!

22% each Mourvèdre, Carignane, Grenache Noir & Petite Sirah, 11% Alicante Bouschet, 1% Viognier

91% Central Coast (76% from 100+ year-old vines in Oakley), 9% Sonoma Co.

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

Case Production: 1274 cases

Aging potential: 7-15 years

Price: \$28.00 / \$22.40 Club **Your “second look” at this vintage so you can make a last 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



2021 KARMA ZIN® Bastoni Vineyard, Fountaingrove District

Since it is located in a fairly deep valley, the Bastoni Vineyard was spared destruction in the Tubbs Fire of 2017, although it is located in the Fountaingrove District AVA, which bore the brunt of the fire’s fury. The 2021 vintage shows the best this vineyard can offer in layers of rich fruit and spice. 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.

Two Double Gold Medals and one more Gold Medal so far!

80% Zinfandel, 10% Alicante Bouschet, 10% Petite Sirah – 95% Bastoni Vineyard

16 months in 30% new / 2nd fill Hungarian and 30% new / 2nd fill French and 40% new American oak barrels

Case Production: 246 cases

Aging potential: 7-18 years

Price: \$36.00 / \$28.80 Club **FIRST grab!**

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.



2021 WALLY ZINFANDEL **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.

Two Double Gold Medals so far!

100% Zinfandel – 95% Wallstrum Vineyard

19 months in 28% each new Hungarian and American oak, and 44% older American oak barrels

Case Production: 193 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??



2021 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 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, richly berry-fruited wine that is phenomenal with food.

A “Triple” Gold Medal and two more Gold Medals so far!

100% Zinfandel – 95% Albini Vineyard

18 months in 28% each new Hungarian and American oak, plus 44% older French and American barrels

Case Production: 193 cases

Aging potential: 15-20 years

Price: \$38.00/ \$30.40 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.



2021 COLLINS RESERVE ZIN

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!

Best of Class (Best Zin) and two Double Gold Medals so far!

100% Zinfandel “field blend” – which means that it is a fairly wild mix of Zin and its companion varieties like Carignane, Petite Sirah, Alicante and who knows what else!

18 months in 20% each new Hungarian and American oak barrels, 60% older French and American barrels

Case Production: 202 cases

Aging potential: 15-20 years

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

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!

EASY ASPARAGUS PIZZA/TART

I just made a cool new easy-peasy recipe with 5-7 ingredients. It is an "asparagus tart" tho actually it seems more like a fancy pizza. My Gruyère was nicely aged so it was a bit strongly flavored—if you prefer, use a milder cheese like an asiago or tangy cheddar, or cut back on strong cheese and mix with a milder one. You can also add many things to this—think of it like a pizza, use feta cheese, or chopped sun-dried tomatoes, green olives, maybe even a bit of tiny cauliflower florets?

- 1 roll of crescent roll dough (or puff pastry if you must be fancy)
- 2 T. Dijon mustard
- 2 c. freshly grated gruyère cheese (or fontina or asiago)
- 1 lb. very skinny asparagus, tough ends snapped or cut off, then cut into 2" lengths
- ½ c. freshly grated parmesan cheese
- A squeeze of fresh lemon juice and its zest (optional)
- A sprinkling of Herbes de Provence (optional)

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Flatten out crescent roll dough into a rectangle (approx. 12"x9") on parchment paper on a sheet pan. Prick it all over with a fork (called "docking it"). Spread the mustard evenly over the docked dough.

Sprinkle grated gruyère over crust, avoiding edges so it won't bubble over the edges when hot.

Lay asparagus over the bed of cheese and sprinkle herbs, parmesan and lemon juice/zest on top. If you want to get fancy you can make a nice pattern with the asparagus pieces (herringbone, anyone?!)

Bake at 400°F for 15-20 min or until pastry edges are brown and crispy and cheese is melted.

Cut into squares and serve – top with a squeeze of balsamic glaze if desired.

Serve with a nice chilled Coquille Blanc or Rosé and a green salad for lunch, or as a side dish with grilled lamb chops like we did!



Happy Spring! *Continued...*



We are excited to announce that we have found a wonderful new tasting room employee, Abby Selby! She has been with us for several months now and is contributing so much to help our Carolyn get out from under her heavy workload, especially the weekend coverage of the tasting room. She is training up on how to "run the club" and many other chores, including calling many of you with questions

about add-ons, credit cards, shipping issues...she is becoming quite the pro, and is a joy to have on staff here!

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

2024

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

- May 4 Historic Vineyard Society tasting
1– 4pm, Fort Mason, San Francisco
www.eventbrite.com/e/historic-vineyard-society-in-the-city-tickets-847696853107
- May 11 At the winery – Spring Wine Trail on the Wine Road
www.wineroad.com/events/springwinetrail/
- June 15–16 Monterey Wine Festival, Monterey
www.montereywine.com
- June 15 North Coast Wine Challenge awards tasting
Luther Burbank Center, Santa Rosa
<https://lutherburbankcenter.org/event/pd-ncwf24/>
- June 15 Sit. Stay. Sparkle.
<https://canine.org/location/northwest/event/sit-stay-sparkle-northwest/>
- June 28–29 California Wine Festival Carlsbad
www.californiawinefestival.com/
- July 19–20 California Wine Festival Santa Barbara
www.californiawinefestival.com/
- Nov. 8–9 San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival
Grand Decant (Friday night) and Grand Tasting (Saturday)
www.sandiegowineclassic.com/events/