



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 insanity of these intense weather climates, from 3-digit heat for months on end (looking at you AZ and TX!) to hurricanes and flash flooding. Global warming is, indeed, an "inconvenient truth" and one we need to cope with the best we all can. What we really need this upcoming holiday season is 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!



Bastoni clusters

In this shipment you will find five new vintage releases and one reprise of an old favorite, plus a special Carol's Bunch apron, a popular gift that newer members of our 'Bunch have not yet received. Make sure you do not miss that, since it could get lost in your gleeful opening of your box. As for the wines in this shipment...it is a very exciting new batch! We made a tough choice to **NOT** include the usual bottle of **Wild Thing Zin**, instead bringing up the next bottling of a wine that is also a bit lighter in body, the **2022 Grenache Noir**. This youngster

stands out for its easy-drinking, sunny personality, and we thought it'd be a great match for so many holiday feasts. ...only 132 cases produced so you'd better hop on it if you want some more before it is gone! Another brand new release in this box is the **2022 Barbera d'Oakley**. We jumped at the chance to play with the fruit from these 130-year-old vines, growing at the outer edges of the Planchon Zinfandel vineyard in the tiny town of Oakley. Barbera's ripe black cherry fruit is the core, complemented by spicy Zin and mellow Merlot. The 2022 shows a bit more of the tangy acidity for which Barbera is famous, which makes it a great food companion—try it with the Ragout recipe on the last page, especially the zesty "relish!"

Another new vintage here is the **2020 Oakley Zin**, from that same 130-year-old Planchon Vineyard that is the source for the Barbera d'Oakley above. These old geezer "bush" vines are practically lying on the ground, not standing upright as one would normally see vineyards grow. They grow on their own roots in 3-4 feet of sand, which brings

out lovely bright acidity and rich caramelly qualities in the fruit flavors. A reprise of a club favorite, we have the **2019 Karma Zin**, which you first saw in the April 2022 shipment. It has opened up beautifully since then, so all of the layers of flavor from all those blended varieties are singing some pretty sweet harmonies right now. It is prime for pairing with heartier dishes like a rich lasagna or leg of lamb, tho for sipping pleasure it is tough to beat!

A new and super exciting "one-off" (unicorn wine?) is the **2020 Bacchi Reserve Zin**, from the Bacchi Vineyard on Limerick Lane that was planted in the old field blend style in 1908. Another winery has hogged the contract on this fruit for over a decade, but we got a tiny opportunity for a one-year-only deal for 4 tons! This is a classic "OVZIN" in every positive way, super spicy, layered, earthy and jammy, with incredible structure to help it age well for a couple of decades to come. After lusting after the fruit from this sexy "destination ZIN street" for many years, it is wonderful to finally have the chance to experience its pleasures. If you like this wine, remember that it is ne'er-to-be-repeated, so grab some NOW!

Last but ne'er least, we finish up the 6-pack with the new vintage of the **2018 Florence Reserve Petite Sirah**, a perennial house favorite and currently Ms. Carolyn's pet. Most Petite Sirahs are massive in tannins, but we have aged some of that out for you, by leaving it in its barrels for over 2½ years...an unheard of usage of space and overhead dollars, but well worth it to produce a smoother yet delightfully fruit forward and eminently drinkable mouthful of joy!

Winery News from Carol!

2023 has been a truly WEIRD harvest—the latest I can remember in my 47 harvests so far. We had the wettest winter we have seen in many decades, which has filled our reservoirs, our vine-root systems and even caused a few floods. As yet we have had no issues with fire or smoke at all, thank God, and we did not lose any crops to the frosts that hurt us badly in 2022. That means that our beloved Damiano Viognier (used for the Wild Thing Viognier) was the first grape thru the gate, only 1-2 weeks late on August 26 and Sept 2. Monga Zin came in on September 8th, a full month later than 2022's early start! Since then we have received most of the components of the Coquille Rouge from Oakley and Coquille Blanc from Paso Robles, and even a piece of the Wild Thing Zin from Mendocino County, but as of this writing not one berry of Sonoma County fruit! I suspect we will begin them all next week, which means we will have an avalanche of Zin coming in all at once, as everyone tries to beat the onset of our late fall rains. So far the quality level is very good to excellent, and it looks like the longer "hang time" on the vine has allowed flavors to develop and taste more

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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 \$165.60, before any applicable tax & shipping.

2022 GRENACHE NOIR **Central Coast**



Grenache Noir is the only dark-skinned member of the Grenache family, which also includes green-skinned Grenache Blanc and mauve-skinned Grenache Gris—it is often just referred to as “Grenache” (or Garnacha in Spain), although that is sort of like just saying “Pinot” instead of Pinot Noir or Pinot Blanc/Gris. In any case, the variety is clearly color challenged, but it produces such lovely delicate red fruit that we can forgive that! Originally destined for the Coquille Rouge blend, this 5-barrel lot was selected because Carol was charmed by its easy-drinking vivacity—enjoy!

Double Gold/Best of Class, 93 pts and 2 more Gold Medals

75% Grenache Noir, 5% Petite Sirah, 6% each Zin, Carignane & Mourvèdre, 1% Alicante, 1% Viognier!

94% “Central Coast” (90% Oakley in SF Bay area, 4% Paso Robles), 6% Sonoma County

7.5 months in barrel—all older, 60% French, 40% American

Case Production: 132 cases

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

Price: \$27.00 / \$21.60 Club **First AND Last Grab (there are only 132 cases total!)**

Carol’s Tasting Notes: The color is only a bit darker than our Rosé! The nose shows delightful ripe strawberry aromas and some peppery spice, along with a bit of black cherry fruit, and of savory leather notes in the background. Lighter-bodied in mouth, but super soft and creamy with a nice tangy finish. This would be fantastic with any lighter dishes like poultry or fish, or vegetarian meals, especially with lots of mushrooms! Also fantastic with turkey or ham and cranberry relish on your holiday table!

2022 BARBERA D’OAKLEY® **Planchon Vineyard, Contra Costa County**



The 130-year-old Planchon Vineyard in Oakley (where the Sacramento River meets SF Bay) is the source of this interesting “Italianate blend.” The wine’s name is a play on the famous “Barbera d’Asti” blend with Dolcetto, though in this case a Bordeaux variety (Merlot) adds structure and elegance to the straightforward black cherry and blackberry fruit of the Barbera grape, the Old Vine Zin chimes in with its own bright raspberry and spice notes, and a pinch of 2021 Angelica of Rose of Peru (aka Mission grape) added a nice nutty roundness.

Gold Medal/Best of Class, 93 points

75% Barbera, 10% Merlot, 13% Zinfandel, 2% Rose of Peru

7 months in barrel—30% 1-yr-old Hungarian and 70% older French and American

Case Production: 256 cases

Aging potential: 7-10 years

Price: \$32.00 / \$25.60 Club **New release!**

Carol’s Tasting Notes: Vibrant nose of tart black cherry and blackberry, with a kiss of green herbs and earth, black peppery spice and vanilla oak. Mouth shows some nice tart cherry and pomegranate, and mouthfeel is silky smooth, almost dangerous in how easy it is to drink. This wine would be delicious with tomato-sauced pastas, harder cheeses, and grilled things, especially portabello mushroom caps! Buon appetito!

2020 OAKLEY ZIN **Planchon Vineyard, Contra Costa County**



The 6-acre Planchon Vineyard was planted in 1902 in alluvial sand with no irrigation, at the mouth of the Sacramento River Delta, in the town of Oakley. These gnarly old head-trained vines are growing on their own deep roots, and they produce fruit with immense character and round, spicy, caramel flavors. The Barbera (and its blender Merlot) are planted at the edges of this property, where the sands are so deep that is it not easy to walk!

92 pts Wine Enthusiast, Double Gold-99pts, a Best of Class/Gold-95pts, plus 4 more Gold Medals

89% Zinfandel, 9% Petite Sirah, 2% Carignane---95% Planchon Vineyard

19 months in barrel, all older American—old vines like older barrels, not to be drowned in OAK

Case Production: 185 cases

Aging potential: 7-15 years

Price: \$32.00 / \$25.60 Club

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. Great with brown sugared ham and yams...cranberry relish and turkey too.

2019 KARMA ZIN[®] Bastoni Vineyard, Fountaingrove District



The Bastoni Vineyard is located in the hills east of Santa Rosa, in the newer AVA called Fountaingrove District which the growers, Russ and Martha Messana, helped to create. 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 barrels to bottle, to showcase the magnificent fruit interplay with fine oak.

95 pts + Editor's Choice Wine Enthusiast, 92 pts Wine Spectator, 2 Double Golds and 7 Gold Medals

85% Zinfandel, 12% Alicante Bouschet, 3% Petite Sirah

95% Bastoni Vineyard, Fountaingrove District AVA

18 months in barrel—60% new oak: Hungarian (30%), French (20%) & American (10%), 40% older French

Case Production: 390 cases

Aging potential: 7-20 years

Price: \$36.00 / \$28.80 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, still a little bit chewy in its youth. Fantastic with Rich Lasagna or a beautiful Prime Rib roast!

2020 BACCHI RESERVE Old Vine Zin, Russian River Valley



Century vines planted in 1908 in the old head-trained, field blend style are the source of this marvelous gem of a wine! Brenda Bacchi maintains the 115-yr-old family vineyard with loving care, so we felt very fortunate to be able to obtain a few tons of her precious fruit in 2020 only. This “Bacchi Reserve” will be our 2020 stand-in for our beloved “Rocky Reserve” Zin, whose grapes we did not harvest in 2020, since they were severely affected by wildfire smoke. Nice substitute, eh?

93 pts Wine Enthusiast, plus a Double Gold / 98 pts and 5 more Gold Medals

??% Zinfandel – it's a field blend of Zin with Carignane, Petite Sirah, Alicante and a few mystery grapes?

95% Bacchi Vineyard, Limerick Lane, Russian River Valley—dry-farmed and head-trained 1908 vines

16 months in oak barrels: 33% New French, 17% NEW American and 50% older American & French

Case Production: 296 cases

Aging potential: 15-20 years

Price: \$40.00 / \$32.00 Club **New release – we only produced this ONE vintage!**

Carol's Tasting Notes: Oh YUM!!! The nose grabs you immediately with layered oaky spice and a deep mix of red and black fruits! Mocha-cocoa, creamy vanilla oak, a bit of brown spices-nutmeg/cinnamon. In the mouth it is bright and focused with lively blackberry/black raspberry fruit, rich oak toast and long chocolatey finish. Amazing food wine—red meats, grilled stuff, very versatile and also very ageworthy.

2018 FLORENCE RESERVE 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 spent over **2½ years in barrels** and over a year's bottle age, so it is very drinkable but still has many lovely years ahead of it!

94 pts + Cellar Selection Wine Enthusiast, Double Gold / 97 pts and 4 more Gold Medals

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

2 YEARS+8 months in American oak barrels: 40% new, 60% older

Case Production: 296 cases

Aging potential: 10-20 years, maybe more?

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

Carol's Tasting Notes: Inky blue-purple in color, sweet black razzberry jammy fruit—yum! Dark chocolatey oak spice, bright acidity but very juicy-supple, bit of warm vanilla at finish, structured tannins for aging. This would be great with cheese platter including both a hard cheese like dry jack or aged Gouda and a blue like Gorgonzola or Stilton—or any meaty/smoky dish you have in mind!

Our chef and best friend, Greg Hallihan, is preparing this recipe for the Wine Road's Wine & Food Affair event on Nov 4-5, 2023. Since most of you cannot attend, we thought we'd share the opportunity to partake of its warming flavors at home. You can use any very good red wine, of course, but using Carol Shelton wine means it will be an even better pairing at your dinner table. The Relish brings a tangy freshness to counter the richness of the braised meat, and it would be an incredible complement to our Barbera d'Oakley.

BEEF RAGOUT WITH CHERRY-CURRENT RELISH

Serves 6

CHERRY-CURRENT RELISH

1 cup dried red currants, chopped fine
 ½ cup diced shallots
 1 cup Carol Shelton red wine—Barbera, Zin or Coquille Rouge
 ½ cup good red wine (or cider) vinegar
 1 cup frozen (or fresh if you can get them!) pitted cherries, chopped medium size
 ⅓ cup crystallized ginger, chopped fine (spray Pam on your knife to keep ginger from sticking!)
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1 cup brown sugar, packed
 Pinch each of ground cloves and ground cinnamon

Cook currants and shallots in wine and vinegar, reducing liquid by half. Then add cherries and ginger and simmer 5 minutes. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer until it becomes thick and fragrant. **SET ASIDE AND LET COOL**—can be made a day or more ahead of time and stored in the fridge.

Winery News from Carol! *Continued...*

mature at lower sugar levels than we usually see... a very good thing in my book, as I am always fighting high alcohol levels and the imbalance they create in mouthfeel and even in aromatics. An interesting year... but aren't they all?!

Our Tasting Room Associate, Heather Schultz, has decided to move into a position outside of the wine industry, so we are looking for a replacement for her weekend hosting coverage as well as her great social media skillset. Until we hire someone, we are actually closing the tasting room over the weekends—Carolyn is a SuperWoman, but even she needs to take a break sometimes to restore her super powers! Hopefully she will have some help very soon, and you will hear a new voice answering our phones or calling you for a new credit card number.

In this season of hope, we pray that humanity will soon awaken to a new world of understanding and compassion, bringing housing and comfort to those who lost so much in places like Maui and Florida, peace and healing to the war-torn regions like Ukraine and Syria, and sanity to the leaders of Russia, China and North Korea. 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

BEEF RAGOUT

3 T. olive oil
 2 lbs. chuck roast, cut into ½-inch cubes
 Salt & pepper to taste
 2 large carrots, divided
 2 onions, divided
 4 ribs of celery, divided
 2 bay leaves
 3 cloves garlic, crushed
 1-14-oz. can of crushed tomatoes
 3 cups Carol Shelton red wine—Barbera, Zin or Coquille Rouge
 3 cups beef broth
 1 small sprig of fresh rosemary
 3 sprigs fresh thyme



Preheat oven to 350°F.

Season the chuck roast chunks with salt and pepper. In a Dutch oven, brown meat (not fully cook) in olive oil over medium high heat. Remove meat and set aside. Add one diced carrot, one onion, and two ribs of celery to the Dutch oven and sauté for 4 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for three minutes, then add crushed tomatoes, wine, beef broth and all other ingredients to Dutch oven. Cover with lid and bake in a 350°F oven for a total of 2¼ hours*.

*After 1½ hours of braising in the oven, add one more carrot, one more onion and two more ribs of celery, all medium-diced. Check seasonings at this point. Let cook another 45 minutes till veggies are tender.

Serve with your choice of starch (buttered egg noodles, mashed potatoes, polenta or rice) with a light sprinkle of Parmesan and garnish with the Cherry-Currant Relish on top. It will pair wonderfully with any Carol Shelton red wine, especially the one you used in its preparation!

2023 / 2024 Upcoming Events

- Nov. 4-5 **Wine & Food Affair**, 11-4 daily, at the winery
<https://www.wineroad.com/events/wine-food-affair/>
- Nov. 11-12 **San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival (Carol)**
 at the Embarcadero Marina Park North
<https://www.sandiegowineclassic.com/events/>
- Nov. 11-12 **California Wine Festival—Huntington Beach (Carolyn)**
 at the Pasa Hotel & Spa
<https://www.californiawinefestival.com/huntington-beach>
- Jan. 13-14 **Winter Wineland**, 11-4 daily, at the winery
<https://www.wineroad.com/events/winter-wineland/>
- March 2-3 **Barrel Tasting Weekend**, 11-4 daily, at the winery—
NOTE it is just Sat & Sunday, no Friday this year, and only one weekend!
<https://www.wineroad.com/events/barrel-tasting-weekends/>