

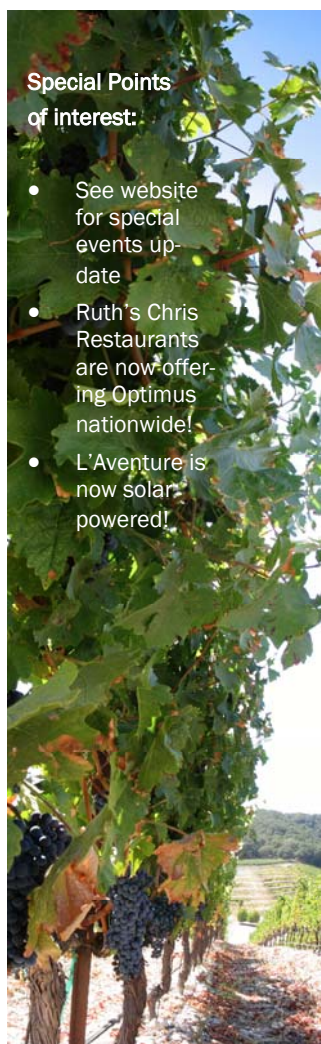
L'AVENTURE NEWSLETTER

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Special Points of interest:

- See website for special events up-date
- Ruth's Chris Restaurants are now offering Optimus nationwide!
- L'Aventure is now solar powered!



STEPHAN'S 2006 HARVEST NOTES

When Stephan made his first wines at Domaine de Courteillac in 1982, he was "bottle washer, winemaker, and slave", as he likes to say. Some things never change!

While speaking with him on the winery floor, estate Syrah was coming in, and Stephan was simultaneously overseeing the sorting table, watching the destemmer crusher turn, and focusing a very attentive eye on his newest high tech toy, "the giraffe". He took a few moments to comment on this year's harvest.

"First", he says, "Coming from Bordeaux, the harvest in Paso is a piece of cake. The weather here is like a dream. But still, you discover every year a new vintage, and you watch to see what will be the style of the wine. Even though weather is consistent in Paso, each vintage is different. So far in 2006, we have had a good season, a long season. And because of the late picking date, the season will be good for people with early varieties like Merlot, as well as for people like me that have late ripening varieties, like Grenache, Mourvedre, and Petit Verdot. For people who did their job-managed their canopy and crop size- this will be a good vintage".

"I think that the wines from this vintage will be big, but not as soft as in riper years. This is more of a European, or 'classical' vintage, as I call it. The tannins will



Estate grown Syrah waits to be sorted and destemmed

be a bit tighter, and the acidity will be excellent, and the alcohols will be a little lower. The wines will age very well, I think. This is the kind of vintage I love."

Dave DeBusk, our vineyard manager, jumps off the Landini tractor that he calls home, and overhears the conversation. He comments, "A very cool September has been the key reason for the vintage getting drawn out. After the heat wave of late July/ early August, we had pretty normal weather- high eighties/ low nineties- until we hit September. The cooling trend has really delayed the last stage of maturity in the grapes, by ten days, at least. The vines are real healthy", he adds. "The solid rains of the '05 - '06 winter again allowed us to put off irrigation until well into the summer."

"And we're even getting a

little fruit -around half a ton per acre- from our new plantings from 2004. And as far as the older plantings go, we're right on schedule. So far, we're right at 2.5 tons per acre on the Syrah, and the Cabernet will come in at a little less. That's eight clusters, or, just one bottle per vine!"

Since 2001, L'Aventure has been blessed with five terrific vintages in succession. Stephan cautions that we must wait until we get the wines into barrel before making any serious claims. But so far, with the long harvest season and the low yields, it looks as if our sixth estate vintage is going to be just as terrific!

GUILLAUME ET MARIE SONT ARRIVES!

Two recent arrivals from France have become a big part of the L'Aventure team this vintage. Guillaume, who spent part of 2004 and 2005 with us, is back, joined by Marie, a sweet blonde who spends much of her time on the quad, monitoring vineyard and grape development. Between them they are lending a hand in the lab, taking grape samples, working the sorting table and helping Stephan on the floor during winemaking.

They say; "More and more French are coming to the New World to study winemaking, and the business of wine. Everything in France is so

small, and there are so many traditions, that there is little room for change or growth."

Guillaume comes from a wine making family in Bordeaux, and would eventually like to make his own wine.

Marie is an Agromics major at University, with a specialty in winemaking. She saw Stephan in a "60 minutes" style story on French Television on L'Aventure, and hoped to better both her wine making and her English with a visit to California. And unlike Guillaume, she does not



Marie & Guillaume

come from a winemaking family. "In France, most people that go into wine making are born into it.. This will help me to make my own wine someday." We are fortunate that both youngsters are young-stars!

PASO ROBLES SUB-AVA DISCUSSIONS UNDERWAY

As Paso Robles matures as an American Viticultural Area, and the wine field encompasses more area, it is logical that certain areas within the greater Paso Robles AVA seek differentiation in order to distinguish their wines from others, based on differences of terroir. In a region as large as Paso Robles (600,000 acres), it becomes necessary for the growers and wine makers to identify and recognize the AVA sub-regions. From a geological, geographical, and topographical standpoint each AVA

sub-region offers something unique.

Recently a group of forty growers and winemakers, including Stephan, formed the Paso Robles AVA Committee. While the Tax and Trade Bureau is the sole body charged with making such decisions, our growers group has done a lot of homework in preparing their case and presentation for the government, in an effort to make more clear and precise the strengths and differences that characterize the wine growing area.

"The process is at the beginning", Stephan explains, "and could take 2-3 years to be approved. We thought the debate to limit Paso to East versus West was fake. Paso is more complex than that. Each sub AVA deserves its own specificity, and identity. Though it is not yet official, we ended up with the following being defined as sub AV Areas: Templeton Gap, Adelaide, San Miguel, El Pomar, Paso

Estrella District, San Juan Valley, Creston District, and Santa Margarita."

While Paso Robles will always be our main focus, and will always remain as the primary name on the wine label, it's important to producers and consumers alike to be able to identify a wine as specifically as possible, so we all know just what we are getting.

In an AVA that is growing as fast as is Paso Robles, there are inherent quality differences that such a system can both rationalize and explain. The group has hired consultants to evaluate and describe soil differences, historical precedents, and climatic profiles. They are taking a scientific approach in order to depoliticize a potentially controversial issue.

Stephan concludes, "This work will find its influence in one to two generations, but it is important that we lay the groundwork now. These changes could have huge consequences."

"We thought that the debate to limit Paso to East/ West was fake. Paso Robles is more complex than that."

-Stephan Asseo



WINE "ADVOCACY"

As many of you know, Robert Parker recently re-viewed our 2004 estate wines, and Optimus 2003, in the August 29 issue #166 of the Wine Advocate. While Mr. Parker has always praised Stephan's wines, the superlative tenor of his most recent reviews were the most complimentary to date, and resulted in our selling out the vintage! Club members that took a strong position last May as the wines were released are indeed sitting pretty!

Of the Cabernet Sauvignon 2004, Mr. Parker said "it could pass as a California version of 2003 or 2005

Mouton Rothschild." Of the 2004 Estate Cuvée, "It reminded me of 2005 L'Evangile....on steroids. A wine that must be tasted to be believed." For the 2005 Côte à Côte he uses the words "compelling", and "exuberant." For a full sense of the Parker scores, check out issue #166.

Estate Cuvée 2004- 98 pts
Côte à Côte 2004- 97+ pts
Estate Cab 2004- 95+ pts
Estate Syrah 2004-96+ pts
Optimus 2003- 93 pts
Syrah 2003- 91 pts



Estate Cuvée 2004

"These are brilliant wines from a Frenchman who has captured the magic of Paso Robles."

- Robert Parker

A VIGNERON'S LUNCH

Around harvest time, you will often hear around the winery that, "It takes a lot of beer to make wine." And, while we do enjoy our share of the suds, after a long, 30 bin day we particularly look forward to our *vignerons* luncheon. Typically, this could be a selection of artisan cheeses and meats with some good bread, or Stephan's signature scallop and crevettes salad.

Recently, Beatrice wowed everyone with a traditional Galette de Pomme de Terre- Potato Galette- and one of her specialties, Pork Tenderloin Farci. Here are the recipes for a sumptuous luncheon, under any circumstances!

Galette de Pomme de Terre

Start w/ two medium potatoes per person, olive oil, butter, salt & pepper, to taste, and thyme.

Rinse and peel potatoes.

Shred potatoes, and do not pat dry. Mix potatoes, thyme, salt and pepper in a bowl, and set aside. Heat olive oil and butter in a skillet, around medium, and add potatoes. Cook for roughly half an hour on each side, using skillet top to turn and return galette to skillet. Check center with knife at one hour to see if the galette is done.

Enjoy L'Aventure Estate Roussanne while preparing, and eating this addictive dish!

Tenderloin of Pork Farci

Start with multiple pork tenderloins, salt, pepper, thyme, olive oil, white wine, soy sauce, sliced onions and a few rashers of bacon.

Butterfly the tenderloin, and stuff with bacon and onions. Tie the tenderloin back together with cooking twine, and set in a baking dish. Rub

with salt and pepper, thyme, olive oil, white wine, and soy sauce to taste, and bake in the oven at 420 degrees, for roughly one hour. Be sure to pre-heat oven, and to turn and baste with olive oil, white wine, and soy sauce 3-4 times during cooking. Let stand for 5 minutes before slicing. Each tenderloin feeds 2-3 guests.

This delicious dish is well accompanied by a L'Aventure Syrah (We recommend the 2002), as well as by older vintages of Optimus. Add a simple green salad, and a few artisan cheeses, and I guarantee you that you will not go back to work!

Enjoy!



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DANS LE VIGNOBLE

Tom Rice, Professor of soil Sciences at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, recently made a visit to the winery to check – in, say hello, and tour the *vignoble*. As he, Stephan and Dave were out along the north-east rim of the vineyard, Tom observed that there was something “fishy” about our famous Calcareous soils in that quadrant.

As you know by now if you have been following the L'Aventure story, or that of our west-side neighbors, the soil base out here is primarily calcareous chalk, with some clay admixture. To the untrained eye, the contour and rock base of the wine field can look pretty consistent. However, when it comes to dirt, Mr. Rice has an eye for detail and, after striking a pause, he exclaimed that he thought that a good portion of our soils were not calcareous at all, rather, siliceous (that's siliceous, not salacious...our dirt's not filthy!).

He noticed that there is a clear breach between the calcium carbonate formation in the vineyard, and a finer silica cement. These soil types *both* derive from the maritime geological history of the area, but are from distinctly different time periods. Our younger calcareous soils (expressed locally as Linne Calodo and Nacimiento types, primarily), are a product of the decay and sedimentation of whale bones, piniped bones, crustaceans, coral, etc. This layer comes from the Pliocene Period, dating back 15 to 20 million years ago, and was once the shallow sea bed in a shallow embayment similar to the Sea of Cortez.

The older silica cement (Lockwood type) was created previously, during the Miocene Period, some 20 –30 million years ago, and is composed mainly of fish scales and plankton exoskeletons,



Vineyard manager Dave DeBusk analyzes the soil at block # 3

and is the product of a deeper, off shore sea bed.

Tom informed me that at the time of the formation of these layers, this enlarged, shallow estuary was located near present day Baja California, and has drifted northward to it's present location over these millions of years. These soils are in fact identified with sub-tropical regions! Through faulting and folding, they have thrust-up to form our present day surface soils here on the west side. In Tom's travels, he has seen very similar soils in France- in the Cote de Beaune in Burgundy, in Chablis, and in the central Rhone, as well as in Tuscany, Italy, that have all derived from the same uplifting phenomena.

The calcareous soils demonstrate Ph levels of 6-7, while the siliceous

soil is around 8+. The difference in the acidity of the soils could lead us to consider distinct rootstocks and varieties for each, as we undertake replanting in the future. And certainly it will have an impact as to soil management in the short term.

Tom and a team of senior students from Cal Poly will visit L'Aventure in the Spring to carefully map out the estate parcel by parcel. And as the results are in, and Stephan has a chance to analyze the data, it will be interesting to see how radically the micro nuances of soil might effect our short and long term vineyard strategies.



Mapping Soil Pits at L'Aventure