

L'AVENTURE NEWSLETTER

TANKS A LOT!

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Special points of interest:

- Club L'Aventure is closed and the waiting list is growing daily!
- Go to www.aventurewine.com for upcoming events
- 2007 Harvest began on August 31st

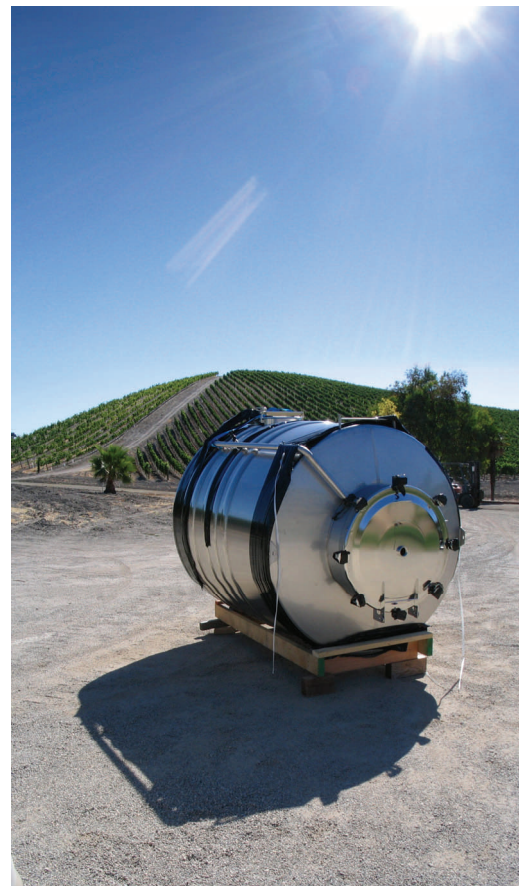


This summer we received four new stainless steel tanks at the winery. To have them installed we called upon the resources of our friends Joel and Ken from Coast Winery Systems. They worked almost daily to painstakingly plumb, wire, measure, taper, gauge, fit and finally install the tanks. Two of the tanks hold 63 hectoliters, while the third holds 62 and the fourth holds 80. The type 316 stainless steel tanks are conical in shape. This *tronconique* configuration makes for a wider, thinner cap as the must ferments. The thinner cap facilitates punch downs and makes for a better distribution of juice to the cap during pump-overs. This allows for greater extraction of color, aromas and flavors in the wine; everything that L'Aventure stands for!

These smaller tanks also give Stephan the ability to ferment small lots separately, giving him more control over the final blends. Next year, Stephan will have Joel and Ken install three more tanks, giving us a total of twenty five tanks. This amount is not a coincidence as we have identified twenty five distinct parcels in the vineyard. Given that our *raison d'être* at L'Aventure is the crafting of complex blends, it is desirable to have more components available for the assemblage. It is a great advantage to the winemaker to have as many options as possible available to them concerning the management of the nuances and complexities of a vintage. This final installation of tanks will bring Stephan to his ideal balance.

So, do more tanks mean more blends? Yes and no. It does mean that the final blends of Estate Cuvée, Côte à Côte and Optimus will benefit from an increasingly refined approach. It also means that Stephan can separate small lots with unique characteristics that might be destined for a members only Cuvée.

With perhaps the best Cabernet Sauvignon on the west side (according to some critics), and ten acres of Petit Verdot planted, the stage could be set



One of our new tanks enjoying the Paso sunshine

for a Cuvée Bordeaux Redux! This, however, will depend entirely on what we get from Mother Nature over coming vintages, and how Stephan decides to manage the bounty. With quantities of Petit Verdot (Stephan's acclaimed "Joker") and Mourvèdre rising, Club L'Aventure members can rest assured that in most years, Stephan will set aside a tank just for them!

BLENDING CONTEST WINNER!

You may remember that we announced a "Blending With Stephan" contest in the Spring newsletter. We drew a name randomly from our complete list of Club L'Aventure members and the winner is:

Mark Waller

Congratulations Mark, we'll see you in spring 2008!

(If we don't see Mark in spring we will pick the next name from our runner-up list, so keep checking your email)

CUVÉE LES DEMOISELLES

"I think Mourvèdre will become one of the "King" varieties in Paso Robles"

-Stephan

Members that have included Cuvée Les Demoiselles in their fall wine club shipment are in for a real treat! When our young cellar man Guillaume was asked if it was named after the famous Picasso painting "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" for its angular structure, and powerful grace, he quipped "Why not?!". "Actually," he continued, "the Mourvèdre, for me, is very soft, supple, and elegant...like a woman". The cuvee is a blend of 80% Mourvèdre, and 20% Syrah, and was designed for Club Members.

Mourvèdre goes by the name Mataró in Rioja and is lovingly referred to in France as Estrangle-Chien ("dog strangler"). It is a staple in the southern Rhône Valley and Languedoc-Roussillon. It is also the grape featured in the wines of AOC Bandol.

After Stephan created the blend for the 2005 Côte à Côte, he had several barrels of very fine Mourvèdre left in hand.

Seeking to showcase the Mourvèdre, he started blending in small amounts of estate growth Syrah. At 20%, he stopped, seeing the same woman in the wine as Guillaume I suppose!

The resulting blend, Cuvée Les Demoiselles, is exceptional in its depth and opulence. Dark, almost ebony in appearance, the nose suggests myrtle and blueberries still on the bush. The attack on the palate is luscious and soft, offering layers of wild blackberry, cassis and licorice that carry long and finish in a spicy, juicy cascade.

Stephan recommends that the wine be cellared for "no less than 6 months", and that 2 to 3 years will be necessary before it is able to present itself at it's best. A decade of enjoyment will follow!

Total production of the Cuvée Les Demoiselles was only 1100 bottles, so it will not reach everybody. Stephan says of the



A portrait of a beautiful woman

limited offering, "While I make the best wines with the best fruit, I cannot control the quantity of the grapes that nature provides year to year...only the quality". The good news is that for the upcoming 2007 vintage, we are at 80% Estate fruit and that means more special bottlings!

MARION BASTIEN: THE APPRENTICE

Marion Bastien is our new *stagiaire*, or apprentice, who has come from France to help us with the 2007 harvest. A native of Corsica, she is a student of Agronomy at the University of Toulouse. Her courses deal with all aspects of farming: animal husbandry, agriculture, marketing of farm products and environmental management to name a few. Having completed two years of schooling, she is now spending the first half of her year of oenology studies here at L'Aventure, helping Stephan, Dave and Guillaume. As



Enjoying September in California

fruit...just about anything and everything.

Marion chose to do her internship in California so that she could improve her English & visit a country she had never before experienced. She was happy to find a crazy French guy like Stephan to study with! She says "I love California. Everybody is so nice". While here, she hopes to visit Hollywood, the Sequoia National Forest, and Las Vegas. California Dreamin'...why not?

Stephan's intern, her duties include: analyzing fruit, cleaning bins, taking must temperatures, washing equipment, sorting

JULIEN IN PARIS

After three laborious years at the Lycée Hotelier de Gascogne in Bordeaux, Julien Asseo spent the Summer of 2007 as apprentice chef pâtissier at the vaunted Vista Palace in Monaco. He caught a late summer break in Paso Robles with family and friends before returning to the mother country.

Having installed himself

in a flat in Paris, Julien is commencing his professional career in gastronomy as Sous Chef at La Fontaine De Mars. He describes La Fontaine as a typical Bistrot -Brasserie à la Française, which serves around 150



Julien Asseo

for lunch, 250 for dinner. If you should find yourself in the 7th Arrondissement in Paris (and hungry), look for the landmark Fontaine De Mars, the restaurant (and Julien) will be just there!



CULINARY CORNER ARTISAN RESTAURANT

As Club L'Aventure members that frequent Paso Robles already know, Artisan Restaurant has become a draw for culinary devotees here in town. While Bistro Laurent remains a bastion to the classic gourmand, and Chris and Tom at Villa Creek push the envelope on "local and fresh", Chris and Michael Kobayashi have quietly set up their own culinary corner at Fourteenth and Park Streets, two blocks off the Park. Artisan, which turned 1 year old on October 14, continues to please visitors and regulars alike with a diverse menu specializing in a global palate and approach to contemporary American cuisine. I guess that means that "anything goes" as long as it is creative, aesthetically pleasing and sumptuous!

Michael Kobayashi relates that even as a youth, his brother Chris exhibited tremendous talent in the kitchen. It was no surprise that after Chris catered a wedding for friends in Bishop, California (their home town) at the age of twelve, the two brothers started talking about how they wanted their first restaurant to be....when they



A delicious corner of Paso

grew up!

Having tailored his craft at Roy's and Asia de Cuba in San Francisco, as well as Brix in Napa, Chris took Robin's in Cambria to the top of the coastal culinary charts before targeting Paso Robles as the site for their childhood dream. With degrees from both The California Culinary Academy in San Francisco, and Culinary Institute of America in Napa, Chris brings a broad and varied application to his art. Brother Michael, a music industry veteran, runs the front of the house with a big picture flair that makes the dining experience at Artisan sing! Michael's wife

Shandi directs the wine program, which features Paso Robles' best (including a vertical of Optimus!), as well as gems from elsewhere. The family vibe at Artisan is unmistakable, and results in friendly, seamless service, with no pretension and lots of class.

Appetizer selections ranging from Smoked Gouda and Porter Fondue to BBQ Baby Back Pork Ribs could create indecision in any diner. Relax...have another glass of wine. There are entrées like Snake River Farms Kobe Top Sirloin or Pan Roasted East Coast Day Boat Scallops to give one pause. Then there is everybody's favorite side of Jalapeno Cornbread with Lavender Butter! And who could pass on a Chocolate Peanut Butter Tart with House-made Guinness Ice Cream?!

SF Magazine, LA Times, and many other publications have all urged diners to enjoy the "globally styled, sophisticated fare".

What are you waiting for? Artisan Restaurant is located at 1401 Park Street, Paso Robles, California, 93446. Please call ahead for reservations at 805-237- 8084.

TASTING NOTES FALL 2007 RELEASE

2004 Syrah: The rich garnet color of this wine suggests the spicy notes and flavors to follow. Aromas of *viande*, tar, graphite, and a spicy bouquet of violet *pastilles* awaken the senses. Soft entry on the palate with raspberry and young blackberry. Bright pomegranate notes dance to a soft tannin finish. This wine is imminently drinkable, and will continue to be so for 5-7 years to come.

2005 Optimus: (51% Syrah, 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot) This wine is deep ruby, from center to edge, with the classic Optimus nose of cassis, blueberry and cola. Broad flavors on the palate of tar, dark berries and licorice, with a long, delicious finish. This Optimus is incredibly complex and elegant and will drink well for the next 10 years.

2005 Cuvée Les Demoiselles: (80% Estate Mourvèdre, 20% Estate Syrah) Dark, almost ebony in color, it is complex in aromas, with *pain grillé*, raspberry sauce and fresh myrtle harmonizing enchantingly on the nose. The palate is intense, characterized by a soft attack of opulent fruit. Pomegranate, fresh figs, cassis and blackberry follow sharp graphite and new leather, as the spicy finish is carried on and on by bold, soft tannins.

2005 Estate Syrah: The color is succulent; a deep inky robe with bright purple edges. A tremendous nose of wet river stones, worn leather, fennel sausage and licorice prepare the palate for a bold attack. Rich raspberry sauce, fresh currants, pomegranates and plums sail upon a deep sea of blueberries and blood. Immense, soft tannins cloak the wine in a gentle, lingering finish.



"My first impression of 2007 is that it will be another huge 2004 California style vintage"

-Stephan

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DANS LE VIGNOBLE

THE BIG DIG

Dr. Tom Rice, Soil Sciences Professor at California Polytechnic Institute in San Luis Obispo, led a group of ten senior students on a 10 week long soil survey of L'Aventure vineyards during April and May of this year. As readers know, we have always spoken enthusiastically of our calcareous soils and their critical role in our west side terroir. When Tom (a Club L'Aventure Member, we are proud to say!) contacted Stephan and asked him to volunteer L'Aventure for the senior project "dig", Stephan was happy to seize the chance to have such a professional and scientific analysis done. This represented a great opportunity to find out something new about our "dirt", as well as to corroborate our common understanding of the soil configuration on the estate.

Week after week, the team dug soil pits with the backhoe and augers (where the terrain wouldn't allow backhoe access). Eighteen soil pits and more than 50 auger holes were dug throughout the vineyards. They were each evaluated to obtain soil properties and to establish soil map unit boundaries. Using rounded shovels to scrape pit faces and sharpshooter shovels for transect confirmation, the students measured soil depths, identified and classified soils and tested soil pH in the field. They also utilized hand held GPS to document location latitude and longitude and hand held clinometers to measure slope gradient.

This collective information was used to classify the soils into 9 different soil groups using soil Taxonomy. The surface soil textures and slope phases were then determined in order to group similar soil types located throughout the vineyards. These groupings were divided into 10 different soil map units which were mapped and delineated on aerial photographic base maps. Soil map boundaries were digitized onto an aerial photograph from SLO County files, and vineyard block boundaries were de-

termined by a hand drawn map provided by L'Aventure.

The results revealed new data that was sometimes surprising yet also confirmed Stephan's intuitions about our soil types at L'Aventure. In effect, all ten soil types identified derive either from calcareous (40%) or siliceous (60%) soil models, both of which are of maritime origin, and similarly feature weathered shale parent material. The ten soil series vary in depth, with the siliceous soils being somewhat lower in pH.

While the distribution and number of soil series on the estate was a surprise to us, it is fascinating that, over these 9 years, Stephan and Dave have identified maturation schedules that correspond to soil type, depth, and distribution patterns on the new maps. We have been picking the hillsides from the top down, sometimes weeks apart, in response to the maturation of fruit in a particular soil band as they run across the hillside surfaces. So far, so good.

Looking ahead, will this new information impact the way we farm grapes? "The study confirms that we know something about the timing of maturity already", Stephan offers. "We need to look at this data a lot more, for sure. There is a lot of information there that can help us with irrigation strategies, and, of



The bucket at work in our rocky soils

course, with root stock and varietal plantation consideration. We could end up doing some varietal grafting, and root stock replacement, as the evolution and maturation of the vineyard allow".

To view the Soil Survey Report in detail, go to www.aventurewine.com, and click on the report, which is on the front page.



Calcareous soils see the light of day