

L'AVENTURE WINERY

2014 NEWSLETTER

2012 VINTAGE & TASTING NOTES



" At the end of the 2012 harvest, I already had a feeling that the 2012 vintage was going to be very similar to the 2004 vintage, which was a beautiful vintage in my opinion. I hope that after tasting the final blends, you will agree as well. Both of these vintages were early harvests, sunny, very "California" style, which means, ripe, very dense, big, but yet very fruit forward with an exceptional silky texture. This will be a vintage with a very long aging potential. I am personally very proud of the 2012 Vintage and I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!"-Stephan Asseo

Estate Cuvée Blanc 2013

**40% Roussane, 40% Grenache Blanc, 20% Viognier
180 Cases Produced**

A brilliant lemon gold in color, the 2013 Estate Cuvée Blanc integrates the exotic aromas of fresh ginger, vanilla pod, lemon zest, and that difficult to define lychee. The mouth feel is impressive for a white wine, richly textured, **with a lot of minerality** and very long in the finish. Lemon, dried apple, and honey notes compliment the luxuriant fruit, and end in a subtle spice aftertaste.

Optimus 2012

**53% Syrah, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Petit Verdot
2465 Cases Produced**

Bright red and deep blueberry aromas underpinned by soft cola and faint graphite notes hint at the complexity that one finds on the palate. The fruit is seamlessly integrated, and the wine is long and well structured in the mouth. 40% new French oak and 60% one-year-old oak makes for optimal respect of the fruit.

Estate Rosé 2013

**39% Syrah, 27% Grenache, 26% Mourvedre, 8% Petit Verdot
448 Cases Produced**

A beautiful hue, somewhere between atomic tangerines and poppies. While softly muted in the nose, floral and fruit flavors explode in the mouth, strawberry, lavender, and candied raspberry among them. Enjoy this wine as a sipping wine with friends on the patio, or with food.

Estate Cuvée 2012

**60% Syrah, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot
1544 Cases Produced**

The most densely colored of all wines in a vintage of great extraction; Estate Cuvée 2012 exhibits a powerful perfume of anise, lavender candies, and dark fruit, with smoky accents in the background. The attack is impressive, with a velvety mouth feel from start to finish. Rich, robust blue and black fruit, with hints of cocoa, big, but with soft resolved tannins, give a "total" palate experience in the finish.

2012 VINTAGE TASTING NOTES CONTINUED

Côte à Côte 2012
60% Grenache, 30%
Mourvedre, 10% Syrah
825 Cases Produced

Maybe the “ultimate” Côte à Côte blend, as Stephan has envisioned this wine to be. Predominant Grenache aromas and fruit flavors are luscious, silky, and soft in the nose and mouth. Classic red hard-candy and bright red fruit flavors lay over a deep yet subtle set of smoky, meaty, and leathery notes. With a spicy and long finish this wine is an extravagant version of a great southern Rhône Styled wine.

Cuvée Chloé 2012
80% Syrah, 20% Grenache
200 Cases Produced

Easily the greatest of the “Members Only” cuvées, the 2012 Chloé is opulent and stunning. Rigorously selected Syrah from the McVey block at the west perimeter of the estate was co-fermented with the light bearing Grenache from the “Old Block”. This north facing Syrah block gives firm fruit with classic white pepper aromas. Blueberry and red fruit flavors are gently shaped by the French oak resulting a wine with a generous palate, rich fruit and a long finish all while retaining its finesse.



The Sibling 2012
50% Syrah, 50% Grenache
170 Cases Produced

The 2012 Sibling was designed to be the younger sister or brother (hence the name) to the Côte à Côte and has really started to mature as a blend and a permanent member in the L’Aventure family. We find a very floral nose with hints of cedar and cigar box, the attack is massive red fruit (thank you Grenache) and finishes with long very well integrated tannins.



Cuvée “Les Demoiselles” 2012
80% Mourvedre, 20% Syrah
122 Cases Produced

Les Demoiselles is a showcase of Mourvedre. From a fresh, pure vinous start, Mourvedre evolves through maceration and fermentation to assume a wonderfully austere style in bottle. In Les Demoiselles, this austerity is better perceived as a steely or flinty fruit quality, concise and well defined rather than extravagant. Densely colored, almost black at its center, it offers aromas of black cherry with a firm attack and a tight palate of black fruit and spice.

Cabernet Sauvignon 2012
91% Cabernet Sauvignon,
9% Petit Verdot
280 Cases Produced

Dense ruby colored, with a black center, this is an incredibly balanced and well-structured wine. Classic aromas of cassis and licorice soar over rich blackberry, red cherry, and blue fruit, extravagantly woven together in the nose. The attack is absolutely opulent, the fruit lush, the palate textured seamlessly, and the finish complex and long.

DANS LE VIGNOBLE

Our last couple of harvests have been partially defined by drought conditions, with desiccation in the fruit amounting to 10% to 15% loss in volumes. Not only a lack of rainfall, but the return of our infamous Paso Robles 100 degree plus July and August days (over 10 of them) contributed to an early harvest, lower than predicted yields and a mad scramble to bring in multiple varieties simultaneously, something that doesn’t happen at L’Aventure in most years. While these factors can have an adverse impact on a larger, economy of scale type producer, they actually play into Stephan’s strategy of lower yields, fruit concentration, and co-fermentation. Dave’s astute canopy management also played a role in delivering quality, contributing to our two pound per vine yields, which is roughly a third of what many farmers in the area aspire to produce. It is hard to believe but the 2013 vintage looks to rival 2012 in quality at L’Aventure.



Photo Credit: Jayme Burrows

POST- HARVEST 2013

In 2013, Viognier and Grenache were two varieties that greatly benefited from the lower yields of the vintage. Coming in at just over two tons per acre, the musts from these grapes were top quality, with great concentration and balance. Sensing a unique opportunity, Stephen co-fermented a small lot of each with Syrah reinforcing the intention of creating a new blend "for her" (aka his wife Beatrice...surprise for next year...). The strong character, unique perfume, and complex, deep fruit that this wine shows in barrel is testament to the special quality that co-fermentation can bring to the wines.

As always, the iconic Paso blends, Estate Cuvée and Optimus, are demonstrative of the very best wines that can be made in the AVA. Cabernet Sauvignon from this vintage is exceptional, and club members should keep an eye out for the small offering that will be made. In sum, the maturation of the vineyards, the dedication of the team, and Mother Nature have again conspired with the great west side *terroir* of Paso Robles, and that very special *climate* that is L'Aventure, to produce a world class vintage.



ANNUAL COOPER BARREL TASTING



Every year previous to the final racking of the vintage before bottling, Stephan invites representatives from each of the cooperages from which he purchases barrels to participate in a serious wine tasting at L'Aventure. At this blind tasting, the group evaluates wine aged in each of the cooper's barrels and rates them according to their preference. After 14-15 months in wood there is plenty to judge and among professionals nuances are not to be overlooked.

This tasting is not only informative for the L'Aventure team but the barrel coopers as well. While there is a competitive aspect to the tasting (obviously everyone wants to rank at the top), the most important aspect is that it helps Stephan fine tune the complexity of his barrel selection. Barrels add subtle nuances that can make an already interesting blend (like Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot) even more complex. This tasting helps further identify the specific traits of nine, ten or even eleven coopers, who take wood from several different forests from all over France and build barrels using many different methods. Eventually, the relationship built from this tasting can help Stephan and his coopers build a trust that can result in facilitation even finer tuning of forest selection, barrel head thickness, toast levels and many other subtle but important aspects of barrel cooperage.

CHLOE ASSEO JOINS THE L'AVENTURE TEAM

After twelve years, Michael Young has accepted a new position. We will miss him and wish him all the best in the future. We apologize in advance; the future tasting notes won't be as flamboyant as previous years. As Michael is leaving, Chloé Asséo, daughter of Stephan and Béatrice, joins the family business. She went to school in Los Angeles receiving a degree in Visual Communication. After finishing school, she made the decision to go back to France to build a commercial background. "It was never my goal to join the family business, yet like my father likes to put it 'I was born in the middle of the barrels', but I never saw it as a career plan. When I came back from France though, I saw L'Aventure in a different light. The potential that my father created is endless and I wanted to be part of it."

Chloé will become an "ambassador" of the brand, working on events, dinners, and tastings that communicate L'Aventure's story. She will also be in charge of sales and marketing. Most importantly, her role will also include making sure that we provide at all time a focused and educational experience to our tasters, giving them the opportunity of being "part" of our story.

"We have moved to "by appointment only" at the tasting room in December. That decision was made based on giving all our tasters a one-on-one experience with our tasting room staff. The future underground caves and new tasting room will only help nourish that move. We plan to put in place a flight tasting, giving everyone a chance to taste our wines side by side and compare. We also are planning on offering more special tours, where our guests will be able to do both barrel tastings and special vertical tastings in our caves. In addition, we are working on giving our wine club members more opportunities to come visit the winery, and making sure they are the first to know about anything special happening. Our goal is to broaden the content of our release party and give our wine club members a unique experience. Lastly, we are hoping to make more wine maker dinners locally and in select markets." We look forward to these upcoming years, with new and exciting projects.



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