



PETER MICHAEL
WINERY

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NATURAL WINEMAKING: THE REDS

Every bottle of Peter Michael Wine bears our simple six word credo: “Mountain Vineyards, Classical Winemaking, Limited Production.” In this issue we explain a little about how we interpret these six words in our red wine making.

The “Mountain Vineyards” part is pretty self-explanatory. When developing our estate vineyards, Sir Peter sought to emulate the European practice of growing vines on steep slopes. This established our winery as one of the pioneers of mountain viticulture in California. Similarly, the “Limited Production” part is easy to explain. We hand farm our vineyards, producing only the finest quality fruit. The production is limited to the fruit the vineyard gives us in each vintage. However, “Classical Winemaking” is the most open to interpretation and therefore requires the most explanation.

—Continued on page 2

The final stage of sorting for red fruit. 16 to 20 pairs of hands pick out all but the most perfect berries; leaving what winemaker Nick Morlet calls “the caviar.”

NATURAL WINEMAKING: THE REDS

—Continued from page 1

Since our first vintage in 1987, the Family's vision has been to make wines in California that express their own terroir in the same manner that the great wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux express theirs. To this end, we have chosen to employ the traditional techniques of these French regions to make our wines. The essence is to allow the wine to go through a set of natural processes with minimal intervention. Ironically, this "laissez-faire" approach requires a great deal of expertise and attention from the winemaking team. Otherwise, not even the finest fruit will necessarily result in great wines.

The grapes for all of our wines are hand harvested into small 20-pound fruit lugs. This ensures that the fruit arrives at the winery in pristine condition. Once at the winery, all red fruit passes through a three stage sorting regime. The whole clusters are sorted by hand on a conveyor belt sorting table, removing any fruit that does not meet our exacting standards.

The clusters are then passed through the destemmer, a piece of equipment that gently removes the individual berries from the stems. The second stage of sorting is a device called "Le Trieur", (literally "the sorter" in French), developed, in part, here at Peter Michael Winery. A specially configured vibrating screen separates the perfectly formed berries from smaller unripe berries (shot), over ripe berries (raisins), and the fragments of stems (jacks) left behind by the destemming process. These could introduce unwanted bitterness and "green" flavors into the wine.

On a final conveyor belt, a crew of up to 20 picks through the individual berries, removing anything that is less than perfect. The end result is what our winemaker Nicolas Morlet calls the "caviar", the most pristine, perfectly formed berries. These are gently transferred into our custom designed tanks to start maceration and fermentation.

The Bordeaux varietals, Cabernet Sauvignon, Mer-



lot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, are fermented in closed top stainless steel fermenters following Bordeaux tradition. All fermentations are done with indigenous yeasts, as opposed to commercially cultured varieties, and start slowly and gently. While fermenting, the wine is "pumped over." Wine from the bottom of the tank is sprinkled gently over the floating cap of grape skins. This keeps the cap moist and helps extract color and tannins

from the skins. Winemaker, Nicolas Morlet, determines the pump over regime for each lot of fruit based on his tasting and experience. Often, the wine is retained in tank after fermentation for a period of "extended maceration" to further polish the tannin structure. The tank is then drained and the wine transferred to French oak barrels for aging. While we do press the remaining skins, the resulting "press wine" rarely makes it into the final blend.



Nick punches down a fermenting tank of Pinot Noir. The pneumatically assisted punch down device might make the task a little less back breaking, but it is still a labor-intensive, time consuming process. The technique is the key to the gentle extraction of color and tannin from the skins of this delicate grape variety.

Each vineyard lot is kept separate until blending. Following Bordeaux tradition, Nick assembles the blend for Les Pavots, L'Esprit des Pavots and Au Paradis about six months into the aging. Once blended, the wines are returned to barrel for an additional year of aging before being bottled.

Following Burgundian tradition, our Pinot Noir is fermented in open top fermenters. As with all of our wines, fermentation is accomplished with indigenous yeasts. However, instead of pumping over to promote extraction, the cap is "punched down", forced under the surface of the wine. This gentle process matches the Pinot Noir's delicate nature, and is traditional for this varietal. As with the pump overs, the punch down regime for each lot of fruit is determined by the winemaker's tasting impressions and experience. From the fermenter, the wine is transferred to French oak barrels for aging. As the wines are from a single varietal and single vineyard, blending is reserved until the end of aging.

Both the Cabernet and the Pinot Noir wines are bottled without any filtration or fining. We feel that less manipulation is an asset and we are proud to deliver our wines to you in as natural a state as possible. Santé! ■

PETER MICHAEL FOUNDATION UPDATE

The Peter Michael Foundation is successfully engaged in:

HELPING prostate cancer patients with information and referrals to the best hospitals and doctors in the US.

UNDERWRITING innovative, patient-centered research for the improved identification and non-invasive treatment and management of prostate cancer.

CREATING collaborative programs of the leading international radiologists and urologists resulting in the exchange of knowledge and peer-reviewed papers published in recognized medical journals.

Please visit www.petermichaelfoundation.org to learn more or contact walter@petermichaelfoundation.org for assistance.



AN AUSPICIOUS MEETING

It is no secret that wine critic Robert Parker has been a fan of our wines for quite some time. While Mr. Parker has visited the winery regularly to taste new releases, Sir Peter had actually never met him. Their visits simply never coincided. This changed when the critic brought his "World Tour" to London last February. As part of the event, Sir Peter had the pleasure of attending the "Gala Hedonist's Dinner" at the Michelin Two-Star restaurant, The Ledbury, in Notting Hill. There, he and "Bob" finally got to shake hands and share a pleasant chat.

The soirée included a sumptuous menu prepared by The Ledbury's chef Brett Graham, and paired with rare wines, all of which had received perfect scores from Mr. Parker. Sir Peter was particularly proud that two of the nine wines served were his own. 2012 Cuvée Indigène was served alongside Scottish langoustine wrapped in shitake, with mandarin orange and ginger. 2010 Ma Danseuse was paired with aged pigeon with rhubarb, beetroot and olives.

2015 FALL RELEASE

2012 AU PARADIS

Estate Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

With a deep red ruby color, Au Paradis 2012 offers elegant notes of black currant, black cherry, chocolate, licorice, clove, cinnamon and an exotic touch of orange. In the mouth, the texture is velvety and loaded with black currant, liqueur of cassis, game, black cherry liqueur and plum eau-de-vie and an iron-like minerality. Round, refined, complex, meaty and incredible length are the best words to define the mouth feel and finish of the 2012 Au Paradis. It will continue to age gracefully for three decades or more.



2012 L'ESPRIT DES PAVOTS

Estate Vineyard Cabernet Blend

Spectacularly rich and intense, the 2012 L'Esprit des Pavots characterizes the Les Pavots terroir, featuring blueberry, vanilla bean, licorice, chocolate, cedar and coffee. The fruit of younger vines brings additional aromas of black cherry, black currant, plum, leather, tobacco and gray and white pepper to the complex bouquet. The palate is full-bodied, rich and concentrated, exhibiting abundant, supple tannins and a lingering finish. Fruit forward and enjoyable at release, this wine should age for a decade or more.



2014 L'APRÈS-MIDI

Estate Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc

Very intense and multi-layered, the bouquet is dominated by passion fruit, mangosteen, guava, yellow nettle blossom, honeysuckle, lemon, lime, white peach and white currant completed by touches of dry honey and candied anise. Rich and zesty, the flavors are reminiscent of the aromas with additional fresh almond and nougat notes. The strong mineral



background, balances the overall richness, giving a superb refinement. The finish is layered, very long and elegant. The wine will benefit from two years of cellaring and will age gracefully for a decade or more. The 2014 L'Après-Midi is an exotic expression of our Knights Valley Estate terroir.

2013 MA DANSEUSE

Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir

Ma Danseuse charms the eye with its red crimson color. The nose exhibits a bouquet of roses, raspberry, Griotte cherry, strawberry, forest floor and a subtle note of violet. Delicate, fragrant, complete and refined, 2013 Ma Danseuse has on the palate a wonderful concentration of red fruits, red rose blossoms, with subtle notes of Asian spices, hazelnut, mineral and pheasant fur, which embraces a silky texture and lingering aromatic finish. It will continue to express its potential for two decades.



2013 CLOS DU CIEL

Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir

Offering elegance, complexity, richness and ability to age, the 2013 Clos du Ciel is an exceptional wine. It delights the eye with its red ruby hue tinged subtly with purple. The nose is filled with aromas of raspberry liqueur, black cherry, strawberry, black truffle, earthy and leather notes. Balanced and rich in the mouth, the notes of red forest fruits and violets are stunning. Earthy and gamy components complete the intense mouth feel. The texture is sensual, silky and stylish with impressive length. It will require a couple years of cellaring to develop its bouquet and remarkable potential.



2013 MON PLAISIR

Estate Vineyard Chardonnay

True to its name, the wine is indeed a pleasure: intense and per-



fumed. Mon Plaisir 2013 displays an exquisite bouquet of lemon cream, fresh butter and candied grapefruit, with subtle notes of spring flowers. The palate is rich, full-bodied and creamy with beautiful hints of fresh lemons, pear, grapefruit, jasmine, Mirabelle, vanilla, whole nut and brioche. A mineral character with hints of pain grillé and hazelnut complete the mouth feel of this wine and its long finish. Enjoyable now, it will age for a decade and more.

2013 MA BELLE-FILLE

Estate Vineyard Chardonnay

The 2013 Ma Belle-Fille is spectacularly intense, boasting aromas of ripe peach, white rose, tangerine blossom, golden apple, nectarine and pastry elements such as Napoleon cake, accented with oyster shell minerality. Generous in the mouth, rich and concentrated, the wine displays flavors of William pear, honey, dried almond, meringue, dry chamomile, orange rind and notes of baked Reinette apple. The wine is tactile and gourmand with extreme purity. Layered and seductive, the finish is very long. Ma Belle-Fille 2013 will age gracefully for two decades.



2013 POINT ROUGE

Estate Vineyard Chardonnay

Offering elegance with complexity as well as richness, the 2013 Point Rouge is an exceptional wine. The nose is filled with aromas of ripe apple, citrus oil, orange rind, William pear, almond and acacia honey. Seamless and rich in the mouth, notes of coconut, greengage, crème brûlée, honeysuckle, chestnut skin, vanilla and white truffle are framed with an oyster shell minerality. The wine offers a rare harmony, as well as extraordinary tactile persistence. Already refined, the wine will gain even more complexity in 4-5 years and should continue to age gracefully for three decades.



“Mountain vineyards, classical winemaking, limited production”



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