

Seasons in the Vineyard by Craig Martinsen

Wintertime provides a great chance to reflect on the year's accomplishments and the accomplishments at Page Springs Vineyards have been no small feat. What once lay as a tranquil horse pasture has transformed into an active vineyard filled with vines, cover crops, trellis systems, and irrigation hoses.

Last winter our vines were waiting in a crowded nursery, ready for the chance to spread their roots and leaves, while we prepared their new home. The field was plowed, compost spread, end posts set, trellises strung, and drip line run.

In the spring the fields were literally crawling with volunteers who, on their hands and knees, prepared a special hole for each vine, planted both green growing and bare root vines, and put the bamboo in place to help the new vine climb onto the trellis system. The celebration feast at the end of our planting included a toast to vines who now had their work cut out for them.

During the summer the vines began their journey of exploring the soil with their roots and spreading their leaves to the sun. While the vines were growing vigorously we worked to train them onto the trellis system, control the weeds and pests, and establish cover crops to keep the vines company.

As fall began to approach the vines began to slow their growth and turn their leaves red and yellow. After our first major frost, early morning November 1st, our vines lost their leaves for the winter. As the vines slumber for the winter, with a little more room to stretch than last year, we are making plans for spring to make their home more hospitable.



Our Vineyard manager Craig Martinsen and his wife Allisone Scott at our Estate Vineyard in Page Springs.

Our first members Event of the year was a huge success!

Just as the grapes were coming in during the first week of September we were also celebrating with our own family of investors, our Inner Circle Members and all of our Family and Friends.

This unofficial gathering saw over 150 people gather at our vineyard during three beautiful Fall days.

The first night was an employee and investors BBQ replete with, of all fermented beverages, a keg of delicious Oak Creek Brewing Company's Amber. Day two was



a private Ribeye dinner and wine and cheese tasting on our River Deck for our Inner Circle Members. The finale was on Labor Day with over 100 people tasting several different wines paired with a wide variety of French & Italian cheeses. Nicole Marshall of Pangaea Bakery in Prescott baked a couple dozen loaves of some absolutely wonderful bread and the whole event was fueled by member volunteers. Many Thanks go out to everyone who attended and helped out!

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Winery Nears Completion & 2004 Crush Over

As we put the last wines from the 2004 crush to barrel, we are also watching the final touches being put on our new winery. I can't help but laugh when reflecting upon the fact that we just harvested and "crushed" 42 tons of grapes and processed and fermented them with the use of a generator as steel workers, carpenters, plumbers and electricians literally built the winery around us. I'm sure you have all had moments in your life when you said to yourself "Damn, this is really a difficult situation. Some day I'll look back on this and I'll be really proud and maybe, just maybe, this will be another entry in the annals of the Good ol' Days..." The perfect metaphor for this crush was one of those old plastic slide puzzles that kids play with. You know, the ones with one empty square that requires you to move all the solid squares around it ten times in order to move it from one side of the playing area to the other? I can't even tell you how many times we moved our barrels from one spot to another, and then back again, to accommodate construction. *It was ugly. But....it was also awesome.*



The historic barn on the right and the new winery building on the left. This view is from the East.

Yes, it was a great feeling to be making wines in our new facility. Just less than one year ago, this site was an empty slate (from a winemaking perspective, that is). I'm also happy to say that the 2004 vintage gave us some really nice wines. As usual the Old Vine Mourvedre (pronounced "More-vedd-drra") and Cabernet Pfeffer were excellent. Most exciting for me were the six batches of Syrah we brought in from six different vineyards. Here we have the same varietal, Syrah, grown in six distinct vineyards each with its own site characteristics. These sites range from cool and sandy to outright hot and chalky. The differences between them are shocking and really outline how a grape, and later the wine, really is shaped by site ecology. In fact, I'm so excited about these Syrahs that I may try to bottle an "Ecology Series" six-pack this year with a representative bottling from each of these vineyards. Of course, the effort will be accompanied by some rambling elucidating the soil, climate, and geographic differences between each of the vineyards.



View of the "Crush Pad" from the South. The white boxes to the right of the forklift are our grape fermentors.

Thanks again to everyone who has supported us this past year. I hope you're enjoying the wines and I look forward to sharing new and wonderful things with you in this year to come! Cheers!

2004 Crush Notes From the “Rented Mule” by Bill Fanning

For those of you who have not met Bill Fanning he is both our Tasting Room Manager and our Assistant Winemaker. Bill has Inner Circle Membership #001. He and I met while I was in residence at Echo Canyon Winery. E.S.G.

After a couple of months of moving fermentors full of grapes, taking temperatures, testing pH and sugar levels, and finally pressing the wine, I’ve made some observations about my favorite varietals. After looking at these grapes every day for weeks, I started to hallucinate about their (visual) qualities:

Cabernet Sauvignon (The Swamp Thing Slept Here) – one of my favorite wines; it’s tough to appreciate early in the fermentation due to green/vegetal (swampy!) flavors that mask the fruit. Thankfully, the green recedes into a more harmonious balance with the fruit that produces the distinctive cabernet flavor.



Petite Sirah (The Royalty of Grapes) – as soon as these grapes arrived, I knew I was in the presence greatness. The rich color of this grape was like blackberry jam at midnight and it never lost its intensity during fermentation. It was almost a shame to dump the grape skins over at the compost site after pressing since they still looked like they had more to give. I can’t wait to see how the Petite Sirah turns out after a few months in barrel.

Pinot Noir (But It Has a Great Personality!) – Since I don’t have much experience with this grape, Eric constantly had to remind me that these grapes would produce a great wine. The grapes were ugly when they arrived, and went downhill from there! I can only trust in Eric’s ability to make something beautiful from such a terrible-looking bunch of grapes.

Syrah (Like an Old Friend) – you always know what you’re going to get from Syrah. Despite the fact that each vineyard had different taste/aroma qualities, the Syrah looked pretty much the same throughout fermentation. I always liked to look at this after a disappointing peek at the Pinot Noir, just to know everything was right with the world of wine.

The Sales and Marketing Perspective by Joe Soderberg



Our owner/winemaker has just returned from Chicago, Illinois where he presented a tasting of six wines from the 2003 selections of Page Springs Cellars to over 100 Bankers, Investors, and Wine Enthusiasts. The results were like the good news / bad news jokes.

The good news is the wines received praises like “Superb,” “Fantastic,” “Outstanding,” and “Wow.”

The bad news may reflect on the sales and marketing staff (i.e. me...) since a large percentage of attendees said the wines were grossly under priced and even “TOO CHEAP.”

I was afraid when Eric returned to Page Springs that I would get a motivational talk about raising the prices. Instead, his comments fell into the category of really good news. He told me that we have been successful in performing within the guidelines of our Mission Statement and we will continue to make AFFORDABLE WINE FOR THE PEOPLE and not change a thing. We may be one of the only wineries in the country that has a mission statement, and you can find it in this newsletter. Please read it and know that this is our pledge to you.

You will also find a price list for your Membership Category and an order form to place Christmas orders now. Get in the SPIRIT and share the SPIRITS with your friends and loved ones !!!!! CHEERS!

What is Barrel Ageing all About? By Eric Glomski

Of all the tricks and tools of fine winemaking, oak barrels are undoubtedly the foremost icon. Every time I give a cellar tour, without fail, I am asked questions about barrels. And why not? The art of barrel making, or coopering, is a fascinating craft that is rich in history. It creates a vessel that is both beautiful and practical in its application that has been used by civilization for millennia.

The barrel is more than a storage vessel, though. The barrel plays a critical role in the ageing and maturation of wines as well as in adding a variety of flavorants to its cargo. First and foremost, the barrel acts as a semi-permeable skin for the wine it protects. Wine stored in barrels that are topped (full) and tightly bunged (the rubber stopper in the barrel hole) are well protected from exposure to oxygen. But, due to the nature of the oak wood’s cellular structure, alcohol and water do evaporate through the barrel walls. In a climate such as Arizona, I estimate that we can lose up to 5 gallons a year through this process. Because the alcohol and water evaporate in different proportions (favoring water), the wine does concentrate during ageing and the alcohol levels rise slightly. So, the barrel both protects the wine from overt oxidation and allows it to interact with its environment in a positive manner.



Our new barrel room, layer 1. After 3 years these barrels will be stacked 4-5 high. These barrels are filled with wines from the 2004 vintage.

Another major role the barrel plays in in flavoring wines. To quote a colleague from my past tenure at David Bruce Winery, “Barrels are the winemaker’s personal spice rack” from which we can pick from when looking for flavor compliments to the wines we make. For instance, here at PSC we purchase barrels from at least a dozen coopers that source their wood from France, Hungary, and North America. Within these countries, there are scores of forests supplying white oak. Each of these forests lends different flavor characteristics to the wood staves that ultimately become the actual barrels.

Additionally, the cooper also toasts the inside of the barrel and each cooper has their own way of doing this. Generally speaking, most coopers offer three to four different toasting levels for their products and the winemaker, too, can request custom toasting regimes for their barrels. In my time as a winemaker, I have seen barrels lend flavors such as vanilla, butterscotch, caramel, toffee, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, smoke, resin, and even tar.

And, really, the coverage I’m presenting here just scratches the surface. There are endless variations on a number of the variables I have mentioned. If you find this interesting, take a look at our next educational class. It will focus on these and other aspects of barrel ageing and we will even have a tasting that will allow you to take a look at the same wine aged in several different kinds of barrels. Then you can let your palate be the judge of whether any of this esoterica is real or not.