

PRESTON FARM & WINERY

June 2023
The Yin and Yang of Farming

Dear Preston Wine Club Member,

There have been so many things going on here lately this letter may be somewhat of a mash up rather than the closed loop of thought I am wont to do and you are used to. I used to excuse our organic chaotic vineyards by declaring that organic is messy; so also are some Wine Club letters.

I want to begin by telling you about an unusual event we had here a couple of weekends ago. Susan's and my personal acupuncturist—Toby Daly from Cloverdale—asked us a while back if he could hold his acupuncture seminar at our farm. Well, we love this guy, and so we leaped at the opportunity not knowing, of course, what was involved. What we found early-on was that it was more than a workshop, it was a live streamed web extravaganza with professional cameras and sound system, and students both physically present and out there in Toby's special Zoom cosmos. We were telepuncturists for a day.

Why is acupuncture germane to thoughts of wine growing? Well, I began to challenge the dictates of modern farming at the same time as questioning the veracity of Western Medicine. They both had the aura of general acceptance and scientific determinism, and they were both ingrained in the fabric of modern society. But they both seemed to me to be flawed. Or short-sighted, unresponsive to individual needs.

A turning point for me on the farm was when I hired a young lady who had just graduated from the Summerfield Waldorf School that focuses on individual teachings aligned with Rudolf Steiner's Biodynamics. I remember her first day at work when she saw the compost pile. She immediately climbed up the pile and began to recite a poem. I think it was about energies from the cosmos that she summoned to invigorate the fermenting compost. I remember thinking "wow, I never learned that at UC Davis".

Another vivid memory early-on was attending a workshop on biodynamic farming at another Rudolph Steiner school. In the morning we studied "Anthroposophy" which to this day I have trouble both pronouncing and understanding. But afternoons we spent in the most magical of gardens studying just-sprouted bean seeds. Studying here is a loose term that includes watching it grow and twist and turn with the movement of the sun, recording on paper its stretching and reaching, maybe even talking to it. There we were on hands and knees like symphony conductors each with our own bean instrument. It wasn't scientific—it was personal. It wasn't agriculture—it was mind culture.

Chinese medicine: Yin and yang. Pressure points. Meditation. Balancing the flow of energy and life force. It has taken some time for it to sink in but for me working with the land is like working with the body, and Toby the acupuncturist has helped me make the connection. The University and industry can give us the tools but there's a knowledge we absorb through humility and intimacy that is more enduring.

An example I can offer you is in the way we have learned to work the ground in the vineyard. When I was at the University the usual practice was to clean-cultivate vineyards in order to reduce competition. Kill those weeds any way you can. Plow them, spray them, cultivate to create a fine "mulch" of lifeless soil around all the vines. My neighbors all practiced this as well. As soon as spring weeds poked their sprouts above the soil they would "fire up the tractor". I did this for a while too, and felt some misguided pride in how clean everything looked.

Today? It's chaos. We have the messiest vineyard in the Valley with absolutely no bare soil, a profusion of native grasses in some rows, insectary habitat plantings in others. I admit it eventually becomes orderly—at some point we do work the grasses to make them lay down—but there's life there, everywhere. It's taken me a while to get it, but farming is not about what you grow to sell—that's a by-product. The important thing you are growing is life: in the dirt, in the air, in the plants. Farming is tending an ecosystem.

Enough of that, I sound like I'm lecturing. Maybe I'll just append a photo so you can see it.

Next, I want to tell you about the summer camps we have been hosting on the farm the last few years. We work with a local non-profit, LandPaths, whose mission is to bring people together with nature in a way that is nurturing and instructional and preserving. For four weeks here in the summer we enjoy the sights and sounds of young people between the ages of 6 and 12 singing, chasing, swimming, farming, learning—all of it outdoors. It represents a mishmash of families from home-, public and private schools, and from all backgrounds and communities. The camp leaders are professionals with kids, cultures and ecosystems. It's amazing.

For me "Owl Camp" or el Campamento Buho is a true awakening of this land. I used to think our winery was a place for adults and decorum. Now we know it has to be a farm for families, a chaos of kids. There's a whole new vocabulary I've adopted for these young exploratory minds: it's bugs not insects; poop not manure; prunes not plums, bootleggers not oenologists. It's fun not work. We end the week with "Pizza Friday" when all 36 campers help me make pizza that we bake in the adobe wood-fired oven in the garden. For a magical 5 days I go by my nature name Llama Lou and Susan is Salamander Susie. While making pizzas we are all dough-smearred and flour-covered, joking and teasing. All week we are at one with the land.

Not strictly Preston news, but I recently joined the board of Farm to Panty, a Sonoma County non-profit whose mission is helping feed those who need help through gleaning, gathering and distributing excess farm produce and coordinating public resources. F2P, as we call it, recently had a

fund-raising dinner in a local vineyard—beautiful food well lubricated with local wines—and the highlight of the evening was our State Senator Mike McGuire auctioning off special dinners, unusual vacations and the like. Imagine this, your state senator chasing—literally running after—bidders to get them to up the anti. The excitement was huge, the money even huger. We were all winners, and it makes me happy to be part of it as a farmer and vintner and cheerer-on. In practice now, when we have extra we call up the gleaners!

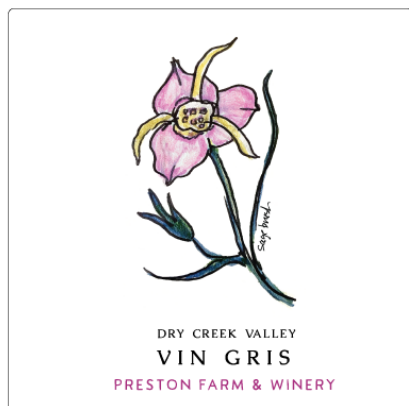
Wrapping up I can share with you general optimism for the year. We've had more than adequate rain this year and the weather so far has been moderate which bodes well for tasty wines and tomatoes. The County has taken extreme measures to reduce the fuel load along the highways and byways in preparation for fire season and we have no restrictions on water use. Post-pandemic Preston has opened up again to welcome winery and farm visitors with a new appreciation for families. So y'all come, ya hear?

Adios from Lou, your local bootlegger.



Chaos among the vines

PRESTON FARM & WINERY



2022 Vin Gris

Dry Creek Valley

Organically Grown

Estate-Bottled

50% Mourvedre | 30% Cinsaut

10% Grenache | 10% Zinfandel

12.6 % Alcohol

TA: 5.4 g/L

pH: 3.27

Aging: 6 months. 80% stainless steel, 20% neutral oak barrels

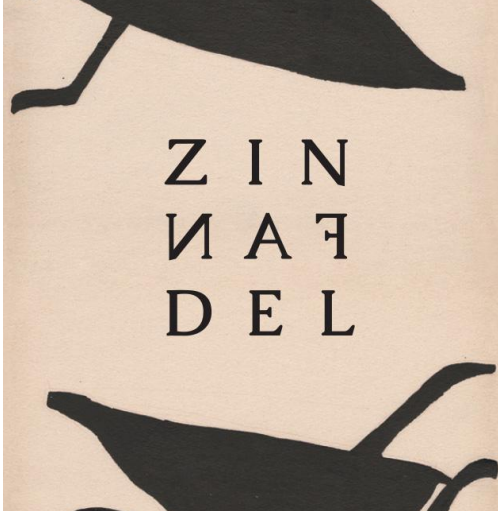
Cases produced: 665

Winemaker Notes

Our Vin Gris is a Provencal-inspired, dry rosé wine that we've historically made from Mourvedre, Cinsaut and Grenache. In 2021 we began an experiment with rose from Zinfandel grapes, and loved the rose-petal aromatics and lively acidity it brings, making it an easy decision to add it into the blend in 2022. As a result, it's the most vibrant and quenching Vin Gris we've made, which seem like great attributes for a summertime aperitif! On the nose the wine is quite generous, with aromatics of wild and candied strawberry, charentais melon, citrus blossom and climbing rose. The palate is focused and refreshing, with flavors of watermelon and its rind, some sweet citrus, and just-ripe strawberry. -GH

Grapes are certified organic (CCOF). Fermentation is initiated spontaneously without the addition of commercial yeast or malolactic bacteria.

PRESTON FARM & WINERY



2021 Zinfandel
Dry Creek Valley
Organically Grown
Estate-Bottled
92% Zinfandel, 8% Mataro
14.6% Alcohol
TA: 5.8 g/L
pH: 3.64
Bottling date: 2/15/23
Release date: 6/1/23

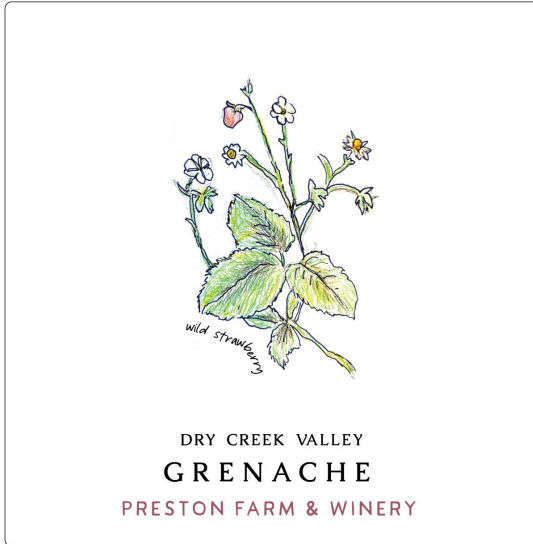
Winemaker Notes

Fruit for our Zinfandel comes from five distinct blocks on the property, with plantings ranging in age from 21 to 112 years old. In 2021, the standout batch of wine came from a mixed block of 80 and 40 year old dry-farmed vines right out at the corner of the property next to the guest house. On an alluvial bench elevated from the creek, the soils here are a beautifully structured loam which has kept these older beauties thriving for so many years, and helps produce a balanced zin with brambly berry flavor and plenty of acidity. In 2021 it forms the core of the Zinfandel bottling, at about 40% of the wine.

Vibrant and layered, the 2021 Preston Zinfandel shows briary, dark-red-berry fruit on the nose, with notes of plum, mocha powder, and peppercorn. The palate is deliciously lengthened by the addition of 8% Mataro (Mourvedre), which accentuates the plum flavor as well. Ripe red raspberry, tobacco and a signature note of blood orange show before the arrival of dusty Dry Creek tannins and a richly structured finish. -GH

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2021 Grenache
Dry Creek Valley
Organically Grown
Estate-Bottled

96% Grenache, 4% Mourvedre
13.8% Alcohol
TA: 5.0 g/L
pH: 3.78
Bottling date: 3/15/23
Release date: 6/1/23

Winemaker Notes

We have two blocks of Grenache on the Estate: the first planted in 1980 that produces a darker, fleshier wine, and one planted in the late 1990s which makes a lively, aromatic wine with a lighter body. We typically pick these blocks about a week apart, and ferment them in open top tanks for anywhere from 10 to 30 days – a longer maceration can often help tame Grenache’s aggressive tannin. In the southern Rhone tradition, a bin of Mourvedre is occasionally added for a co-fermentation, and the older block sees the inclusion of about 50% whole clusters in its fermentation. In 2021 a frost reduced the crop in the younger block, so the blend is weighted toward the old vines resulting in a deeply colored, weighty and rich wine.

The 2021 Grenache opens with crushed strawberry aromatics, accented by anise and other baking spices, and an inflection of cocoa powder, like red velvet cake. Notes of anise and licorice arrive in the mouth, complementing ripe and stewed red-berry flavors. The wine finishes with a joyous synergy of acidity and sweet tannin that’s unique to Grenache from a great vintage. -GH

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Preston Wine Club Discounts:

10% Less than 6 Bottles

25% Off Half Case

30% Off Full Case or More



Preston Wine Club Price List June 2023

White Wines	Regular Bottle Price	Case With Club	Discount
2022 Vin Gris	\$32.00	\$268.80	\$22.40/bottle
2022 Sauvignon Blanc	\$32.00	\$268.80	\$22.40/bottle
2021 Madam Preston	\$40.00	\$336.00	\$28.00/bottle
Red Wines			
2021 Nero d'Avola	\$42.00	\$352.80	\$29.40/bottle
2021 Barbera	\$38.00	\$319.00	\$26.60/bottle
2021 Grenache	\$40.00	\$336.00	\$28.00/bottle
2021 Carignane	\$45.00	\$378.00	\$31.50/bottle
2021 Zinfandel	\$42.00	\$352.80	\$29.40/bottle
2018 L. Preston	\$48.00	\$403.20	\$33.60/bottle

2022 Chaste Maiden Olive Oil \$30/375 ml
\$50/750 ml

Preston Farm and Winery

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