



SPRING 2022

Hello Bootleg Society Members,

The morning of April 12, 2022 reminded me that Mother Nature is still in charge, and she can be a real bitch. The weekend prior temperatures reached 90 degrees. A small northerly storm passed through California that Sunday and Monday. As the storm cleared, the dew point dropped, and temperatures plunged across the valley and foothills that Tuesday morning. For most, this just makes for a chilly morning, but for those of us that grow grapes it brought the dreaded “F” word. Frost!

We saw extensive damage across our entire Amador County vineyard leaving young shoots wilting and turning black. The leaves, stems and little clusters were smoked. Literally burned by the cold. It's too early to tell the extent of the damage, and how impacted our 2022 crop will be, but it's likely to be 50-75% of normal. This is not the first time we've been frosted, but it is the worst I remember since being directly involved in farming our vineyard. It's depressing! But life goes on and you move forward.

Fortunately, we've diversified our grape sourcing, and our Lodi vineyards were unaffected by the freeze. At this point, we still have a good-looking crop of Old Vine Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Barbera. And we have some great wines from 2021 in barrel that we will bottle over the next year.

This month's club is full of fun and interesting wines that I hope you will enjoy. We are introducing a new wine under our Bootleg Society label – a 2020 Cabernet Sauvignon from our Amador County vineyard that is just delicious. We are also featuring our 2020 Marian's Vineyard Lodi Native that in my opinion is one of our best efforts. We also have our 2020 Tempranillo that is distinctively rich and concentrated and will likely disappear quickly. And finally, the 2020 Alicante Bouschet from Mohr-Fry Ranch delivers a riper and richer version of this historic variety.

I hope you enjoy this month's club selections!

Cheers!

Stuart Spencer

SPRING 2022 SELECTIONS

The Bootleg Society 2020 Cabernet Sauvignon, Amador

I've been told by those that knew my father well, that he's rolling in his grave at the thought of St. Amant bottling a Cabernet Sauvignon. You have to realize my dad hated all things Cabernet. It wasn't that it made bad wine, although there are plenty of bad versions, but to him it was overplayed and symbolized much that can be wrong with the wine business. Despite his misgivings, I went ahead and planted Cabernet Sauvignon in our vineyard back in 2012, and I am excited to announce our inaugural vintage of Bootleg Society Cabernet Sauvignon. Over the past decade we have experimented with producing wine from this block to create a wine that best represents the unique qualities of our vineyard and highlights the distinct varietal character inherent in Cabernet Sauvignon. The resulting wine is beautifully balanced with dark berry fruit, a subtle herbal note and supple tannins. This wine is certain to please the most cynical among us, and I even think my dad would have enjoyed the wine. **\$20/bottle, 206 cases**

2020 Mohr-Fry Ranch, Alicante Bouschet, Lodi

Alicante Bouschet played a pivotal role in Prohibition-era Lodi. The dark, thick-skinned grape was perfect for shipping by railcar for use by home winemakers on the east coast, and for blending with Zinfandel to enhance color and structure. When we became interested in working with Alicante, we turned to our friends at Mohr-Fry Ranch. Alicante Bouschet was first planted at Mohr-Fry in 1922 during the middle of Prohibition, and the vineyard was recently redeveloped in 2013 with a modern trellis system and more productive vines. Always a late ripener, we typically don't pick our Alicante until the last week of October! Despite this, most vintages fall below 14% alcohol. A long dry and warm October in 2020 growing provided ideal conditions for ripening, and we allowed the Alicante to ripen further than in any previous vintage. The resulting wine is more fruit-forward and brighter, yet still retains the elegant structure and minerality found in previous vintages. **\$21/bottle, 99 cases**

2020 Marian's Vineyard "Lodi Native" Zinfandel

We began producing the "Lodi Native" version of our Marian's Vineyard Zinfandel back in 2012 as part of a regional project to highlight the unique character of Lodi's old Zinfandel vineyards. The project ran for three vintages, but we've continued producing the wine because it's really good and really distinctive. Typically, we crush about 50 tons of Zinfandel over three weeks and break that up into 8-10 separate fermentations or lots. The "Lodi Native" bottling usually comes from our very first pick and is typically lower in alcohol and has much more expressive aromatics. I really like the 2020 vintage of this wine. At bottling last September, the aromas leaped out of the glass like no previous version, and as its aged the wine has taken on more concentration and depth. The wine is a real winner! **\$35/bottle, 112 cases**

2020 Tempranillo, Amador

There are certain varieties that have a natural affinity to specific vineyard sites, and Tempranillo seems to have found a natural home in our Amador County vineyard. Picked the first week of September, the 2020 vintage of Tempranillo was one of our lightest crops ever resulting in an incredibly concentrated and powerful wine. Aged for 18 months in 60-gallon French Oak barrels, the Tempranillo gets more new oak than any other wine we make. The oak helps balance the intense structure and complement the variety's natural aromatics. The 2020 is a very powerful, concentrated, and intense wine that will age well for many years, but many of our customers can't resist its youthful qualities. Tempranillo continues to be one of our most popular wines and has been selling out relatively quickly the past few years. We bottled up a few more cases this year, but it's sure to go quickly as well. **\$20/bottle, 727 cases**