



## **FEBRUARY 2015**

Hello Bootleg Society Members!

Yesterday I attended a business meeting hosted by one of our largest customers for their California wineries. They operate 113 stores in 16 states and did \$2 Billion in wine, beer, and spirits sales in 2014. Granted we only make up a minuscule portion, but they are a great company, pay their bills on time, and sell lots of our wine. They began the meeting by sharing their 2014 performance and moved into plans for 2015 reviewing potential new stores, states, and product needs. I usually come out of these meetings with my head spinning, feeling both inadequate and inspired, and wondering where we fit in the overall beverage business.

A key part of their presentation was opportunities for 2015 where they look to partner with wineries on developing new brands to meet identified customer needs. With \$2 billion in sales they have a pretty clear idea what the customers want, and apparently one of those holes is a \$10 buttery chardonnay. This is clearly outside of our wheelhouse, and something I have no desire to make. To their credit, they shared the 8-month process of bringing a brand to market, submitting samples, refining flavor profiles, pricing, packaging, compliance, etc. It reminded me more of building a car than crafting a wine, and we had clearly moved very far from the vineyard where our wines our made.

While there is plenty of money to make selling \$10 buttery Chardonnay with some “lifestyle” label, this is not what we do. And fortunately we have a loyal following of customers like yourself that appreciate vineyard-driven wines that come from a specific place and moment in time.

The wine business is becoming ever more sophisticated with each passing day. Technology has given marketers immense amounts of data to refine wines to meet customer needs, but at the end of day, our little winery is fundamentally a farming operation, rooted in the vineyard, and living by the whims of Mother Nature.

I hope you enjoy this month’s Bootleg Society Wine Club selections. Included are three delicious Lodi appellation wines.

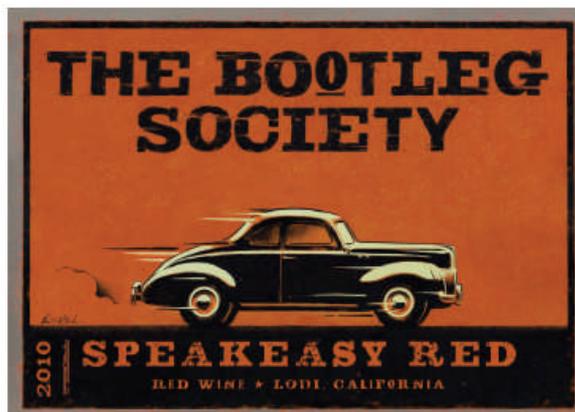
Cheers!  
Stuart Spencer  
St.Amant Winery

## FEBRUARY 2015 SELECTIONS

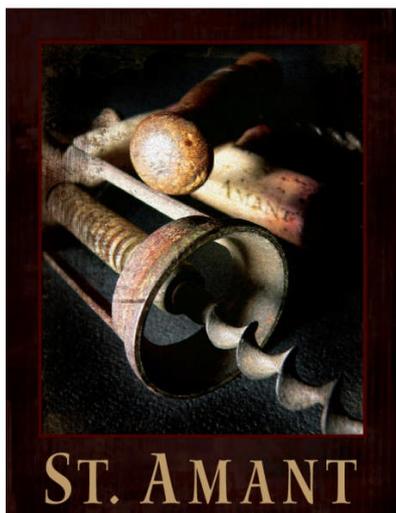
### 2013 Speakeasy Red - Lodi

Historically, some of the best wines from warm-climate regions like Lodi are blends. They give the vintner the flexibility to add layers of complexity by mixing varieties, and not being bound by some artificial rules (federal government labeling laws) that drive winemaking decisions. For us this is our 3<sup>rd</sup> vintage of Speakeasy Red, a wine designed, and crafted specifically for our wine club members. It allows us to take the opulence of Zinfandel, blend in some zesty Barbera, throw in a touch of Petite Sirah for color and grip, and finish it off with a secret ingredient or two. It's fun to make, and gradually becoming one of our most popular wines. For those

interested in the numbers, the 2013 is 70% Marian's Vineyard Zinfandel, 15% Barbera, 4% Petite Sirah, Souzao, and Tempranillo, and 2% secret ingredient. **\$24/Bottle, 496 Cases**



### 2013 Barbera - Lodi



In 1998 we asked our good friend and local winegrower Teddy Leventini to cook for my wedding. Teddy farmed grapes, was a volunteer fireman, and did catering primarily as fundraisers for local groups. He made delicious ribs-in-the-barrel, bagna cauda, and pesto. He agreed under the condition that we make a few barrels of Barbera from his vineyard. We reluctantly agreed, fearful that the last thing we needed was another oddball wine. Fortunately, that first vintage was a huge success, winning a top award at the State Fair and selling out in a couple months. 16 years later the Barbera is a staple of our winery, and a nice contrast to the more opulent Zinfandels we make. The 2013 is slightly riper than the leaner 2011 and 2012 vintages. It blends ripe red fruit flavors of cranberries and strawberries with earth undertones that go well with the lively acidity creating a refreshingly delicious wine.

**\$18/bottle, 514 Cases**

### 2013 Marian's Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel- Lodi

In 2012 and 2013 Mother Nature delivered an abundant crop of Old Vine Zinfandel. Marian's Vineyard, at the stately age of 112, produced nearly 4 tons to the acre, an incredible feat for such an old vineyard. In contrast, the crop of all our old Zins in 2014 plummeted by nearly 50%. But the ultimate question is what does this mean for the finished wine. Well it's clearly not some lab-concocted blend to meet the market needs, but a direct reflection of the vintage. 2012 and 2013 both show the spicier side of Marian's Vineyard with more red fruit character of raspberries coming through in the final blend. And as always, the vineyard delivered its characteristic suede-like tannins that provide a smooth but rich finish. **\$24/Bottle, 490 Cases**

