



MAY 2016

Hello Bootleg Society Members!

This month's selections include three wines – 2014 Touriga, 2014 Lodi Native Marian's Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel, and 2012 Trousseau. This is the first time we've bottled the Trousseau as a varietal table wine, but we have a long and interesting history with this relatively obscure grape.

Trousseau is native to the Jura region of Eastern France, but showed up sometime in the late 1500's in Portugal where it became known as Bastardo. My dad had once read (or made up) a story about the bastard son of a French Duke getting married off to a Portuguese princess. Upon arriving in Portugal the Duke was dismayed with the quality of Portuguese wine so he sent an underling back to France to retrieve some French grapevines. When the vines showed up at the port, the dockhands were asked what these were, and they responded that those are the bastard's vines.

It's also quite possible that Bastardo earned its name for being a real bastard to grow. It's thin-skinned, rots easily, the birds love to eat it, and it ripens very unevenly, and can result in poor quality wine without judicious care. We've been growing it in our Amador County vineyard since 1980 when my dad got bud wood from UC Davis for potential port production. Since then, it's played a small but key role in our Vintage Ports.

Bastardo was also a pre-phyloxera Madeira variety in the 1800's, but wasn't replanted much after the notorious root-louse devastated the vineyards of Madeira. For us, Bastardo has played a central role in our Tawny Ports comprising up to 100% of the blend in some lots. I've always found it to be a fascinating wine – at first, it is pretty uninteresting, but after several years in barrel it starts to develop a distinctive nuttiness and complexity that make it delicious. What's even more interesting is that this done through benign neglect – we essentially ignore the wine, never topping, racking, blending or making any adjustments. We hide it and walk away.

Such was the case in 2012 when we had an extra ton of Bastardo, and I decided to make it as a table wine. At first, I hated the wine, put it at the back of the room, and forgot about it. After about 20 months of barrel aging, I tasted it one day, and was blown away. Although dramatically light in color, the wine had this distinctive cherry, plum, spice aroma that was very compelling. I decided to bottle it as a stand-alone wine. It then took me another year and half to figure out a label, and as much as I wanted to call it Bastardo, I was required to use the federally approved French synonym Trousseau.

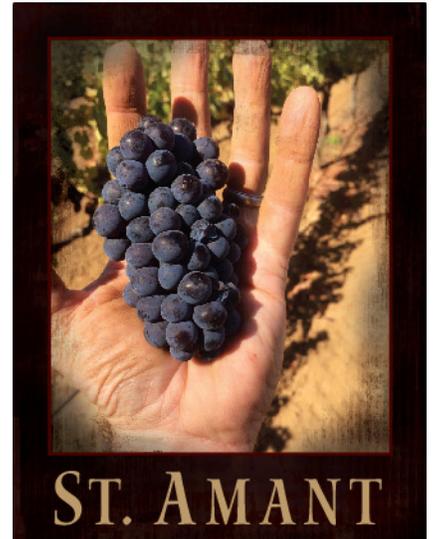
I hope you enjoy the wine, and the other two offerings in this month's club.

Cheers!
Stuart Spencer

MAY 2016 WINE CLUB

2012 Trousseau - The Little Bastardo

Trousseau is a relatively obscure variety native to the Jura region of France. It would appear it showed up in Portugal sometime in the late 1500's where it became known as Bastardo. This variety has been a component of our vintage ports since 1981 and the principal component of our Tawny Port. In 2012 we produced two barrels to see what it would do as a table wine. At first, I wasn't impressed, but after two years in barrel it developed this very distinct crushed berry spicy quality that was very charming. It's an extremely light colored wine but has turned out to be quite interesting. **\$21/bottle, 45 Cases**



2014 Lodi Native Marian's Vineyard Old Vine Zin

Noted wine writer Alder Yarrow called our Lodi Native Project, "One of the most exciting things to happen to California wine in years."



The Wine Enthusiast gave the 2012 Marian's Native 92 points and the 2013 93 points. And guess what? I think the 2014 is the best yet! The Lodi Native Zin is part of a collaborative project I undertook with five other local winemakers to shine the spotlight on some Lodi's heritage Zinfandel vineyards. Each of us produced a few barrels using minimalist winemaking protocols that included native yeast fermentations, no new oak, water, acid, or any other conventional winemaking practices. The wines were designed to be a pure expression of the vineyard rather than varietal character or brand. We obviously chose Marian's Vineyard to work with, and the 2014 is spectacular. Vibrant fruit with a silky texture that just lingers on the palate. **\$35/bottle, 61 Cases**

2014 Touriga- St.Amant Vineyard, Amador

Touriga (Touriga Nacional) is arguably Portugal's most prized variety forming the backbone of their great port wines. In 1980 we planted Touriga in our Amador County Vineyard to produce port-styled wines. Over the years, we have occasionally produced a dry version blended with other varieties called Tres Cachos, but in 2006 we bottled our first varietal Touriga. It was a big hit winning "Best Other Variety" at the CA State Fair. Touriga is an extremely late ripening variety and tends to benefit from warm vintages with light yields which 2014 delivered in spades. This wine is a bigger and more robust version, but still retains the fresh floral and crushed berry qualities that make it such a distinct wine. **\$18/bottle, 100 cases**

