



May 2018

Lightning Strikes Twice

For the second time in three years one of our wines won the Best Red Wine of California at the State Fair Wine Competition. This time it was our 2016 Touriga that was chosen from among 3,000 wines entered in the competition. Two years ago, it was our 2014 Tempranillo that received the honor. The Tempranillo sold out in three months, and the Touriga is essentially sold out upon release. Our club members are getting it all.

For me, the best part about this recognition, is that it's a validation of our vineyard. My parents purchased the property in 1970. Knowing nothing about wine, grapes or the business they planted the vineyard to Zinfandel in 1972. Along the way my dad fell in love with Portuguese ports and wanted to see how these esoteric varieties might do in our California vineyard. So, in 1980 he grafted a couple acres over to five traditional Portuguese varieties including Touriga Nacional.

It's been a long and arduous journey to get here, but our persistence and vision has paid off. These Iberian varieties, native to Portugal and Spain, thrive in our Amador County vineyard in the Sierra Foothills. Part of the success was luck. The vineyard makes all the difference in the world in crafting exceptional wines, and we were fortunate enough to pick a site that seems ideally suited to these Iberian varieties.

But the vineyard site can only take you so far. It's our 40+ year history farming the vineyard and making wines from it that give us an intimate understanding of how to make the best wines. It all begins in the vineyard, and with each passing season, we perfect our craft, becoming more in tune with how the vineyard will perform under the current season's conditions. The goal is to consistently produce balanced flavorful fruit that expresses the vineyard. And in some years, like 2016, all the pieces came together to make a glorious wine.

One of the ironic things, is that the best years, are often the easiest years. They require the least amount of effort to craft a great wine. They almost make themselves. We just need to make sure we get out of the way, and let the wine be itself.

I hope you enjoy and thank you for supporting our family's efforts to make wines of a place.

Cheers!
Stuart Spencer

May 2018 Wine Club

2015 Trousseau – St.Amant Vineyard, Amador

This is the 3rd vintage of our Trousseau, a relatively obscure variety native to the Jura region of France. This variety has been a component of our vintage ports since 1981 and the principal component of our Tawny Port. We like to call it by its Portuguese name, Bastardo. A name it earned because of its difficulty to farm. The 2015 Trousseau is characteristically light in color with a distinct spicy cherry quality. It's very much on an ugly duckling variety – at first glance it doesn't look like much, but after tasting it has depth and complexity. **\$21/bottle, 58 Cases**



2016 Touriga– St.Amant Vineyard, Amador

Our Touriga (Touriga Nacional) is arguably one of our most distinct and interesting wines we make. Touriga is Portugal's most prized variety forming the backbone of their great port wines, and more recently making outstanding dry wines. We've been growing it since 1980, and started making a "Touriga" in 2006. Touriga is an extremely late ripening variety and tends to benefit from warm vintages with light yields. 2016 was an ideal vintage for Touriga. A long warm growing season allowed it to fully ripen while still retaining a lively freshness. The wine is a fairly robust version, but still retains the fresh floral and crushed berry qualities that make it such a delicious wine. **\$21/bottle, 132 cases**



2016 Tempranillo – St.Amant Vineyard, Amador

Our Tempranillo has become one of our most popular and consistent wines we produce. And in all honesty, delivers and incredible value. Tempranillo seem completely at home in our vineyard. It grows extremely well and consistently ripens without many issues year after year. The 2016 is once again a real winner. At bottling the wine was beautiful – bright, fresh and aromatic with layers of flavors; incredible concentration and a delicious lingering mouthfeel that goes on forever. I think this vintage is one to keep, although it's hard to resist in its youthful exuberance. **\$18/bottle, 875 cases**



2016 Lodi Native Marian's Vineyard Old Vine Zin

This is the 5th vintage of our Lodi Native Marian's Vineyard Zinfandel. A collaborative project I started with five other local winemakers to shine the spotlight on Lodi's historic Zinfandel vineyards. We each choose an old zin vineyard and make the wines in a non-interventionist style to highlight the unique attributes of each vineyard site. The wines have received incredible critical acclaim. Wine Enthusiast has scored our 2012 92 points, 2013 93 points, and 2014 93 points. Our 2016 is just as good with has vibrant fruit, floral aromas, luxurious berry flavors and a layered texture that seems to melt in the mouth. **\$35/bottle, 112 Cases**

