

Spring 2012 **Newsletter**

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Upcoming Events

April 28-29	Passport to Dry Creek Valley
May 16-26	Wine Cruise from Venice to Athens
June 9	Spring Wine Club Party
June 16	Pinot Days / Southern California
June 23	Chardonnay & Lobster Dinner #1
July 12	Campton Place Winemaker Dinner / San Francisco
July 14	Chardonnay & Lobster Dinner #2
September 1-2	Sonoma Wine Country Weekend
October 21	Pinot Festival

Winegrower Profile: Fred & Wendy Nunes

If you were to pick one word to describe Fred Nunes, it would be *passionate*. This man truly has a passion for the vineyards that he tends and the grapes that he grows. Fred's passion is instantly recognizable. We invited him to join us for our Barrel Tasting event one year. He arrived clutching a folder full of pictures and diagrams to share with our visitors. ~~Now that is a passionate grower.~~

Someone who shares our passion for exceptional grapes and the desire to produce the finest wine possible is just what we look for in a grapegrower. As Fred so eloquently puts it, he "provides the palette of colors so Winemaker Ben Papapietro can paint a portrait." The latest portrait using this color palette is our 2010 Nunes Vineyard Pinot Noir. With this being our third vintage from Nunes Vineyard, we thought it was time to give you a little background on the vineyard and its owners.

The Nunes Vineyard story starts years ago with Grandfather Fred Muzio. In 1951, Grandpa Fred purchased the 43-acre plot of land in what is now the Russian River Valley appellation, an ideal location to grow Pinot Noir. His

plans back then were to have a weekend place for the family to gather, and a place to farm hay and raise pigs, which is exactly what he did. It was on this farm that young Fred Nunes visited his grandparents. The vineyard came about much later.

Although raised as a farm boy in Salinas, California, Fred's path took him overseas—first to Vietnam as an Army helicopter pilot, and then to Iran to be a flight instructor. When he returned to California, he worked for the California Department of Forestry (CDF) for 21 years as a firefighting helicopter pilot. Along the way, Fred received a degree from San Francisco State University in Systematic Biology and Ecology. It was his love for science that first drew Fred into growing grapes.

After retiring from the CDF, Fred and wife Wendy moved to Grandpa Muzio's farm in the Russian River Valley. Soon after they arrived in Sonoma County, they signed up for a viticulture class at the Santa Rosa Junior College and were hooked! Growing grapes allowed Fred to combine his love of science and remain true to his family's farming roots.

Established in 2000, Fred and Wendy's vineyard is 35 acres planted to four different clones of Pinot Noir (114, 115, 667 and 777), which Fred specifically chose based on studies of soil and weather patterns. He continues to study his vineyard, refining his growing practices and paying close attention to each vine. Fred and Wendy have 32,000 ~~pinot noir~~ vines that they, along with some help from hired crews, farm and harvest each year.

Papapietro Perry's connection to Nunes Vineyard actually began with Wendy, a graphic designer. We hired her to do some work for us when we were getting started. In fact, it was Wendy who designed our original web site. At that time, Wendy and Fred had recently planted their vineyard. A few years later, as we began to look to expand our fruit sources, we called upon the Nunes only to learn that their fruit was already spoken for. As Fred is particular not only about his vineyard, but also in who receives his fruit, he called back a few years later to let us know they had grapes available and he wanted to work with us. As concerned for their reputation as we are, our growers are particular about who buys their grapes. Having a vineyard-designated wine is like wearing a badge of honor. We are both extremely pleased with the result of the Nunes' grapes, and proudly display a vineyard-designate on the bottle.

We can't say it enough, we are so fortunate to work with the growers that we do. Great wine starts out in the vineyard with the right fruit stock planted in the right place along with the right growing practices. And, Fred Nunes is doing it right! We look forward to continuing our working relationship with Fred and Wendy for many years to come.

Storage

Although most of you already know how to store your wine, we feel it's worth repeating for the less-seasoned collectors.

As wine is a living, breathing thing, it does need to be treated with care. Air, heat and light are its enemies. There are a few basic rules to follow to properly store your wine. First and foremost, store the bottle on its side. This is critical, as it will prevent the cork from drying out, and thus allowing air to get inside. Exposure to air will oxidize the wine and accelerate the aging process. This is the same principle that applies when you decant a wine. Decanting increases the wine's exposure to air, awaking the aromas and flavors. Exposing wine to air is great when you are ready to drink it, but not so great when you want to cellar it and to enjoy later.

Also, store your wine bottles in a cool, dark place. The storage temperature should range from 50° to 60°, and should remain as constant as possible. Extreme fluctuations in temperature can affect both how the wine matures and the pressure inside the bottle, which in turn shifts the cork and may allow air to enter, oxidizing the wine.

Wine should not be stored in direct sunlight or in an area where lights are on the majority of the time. Another thing to watch out for is vibration or disturbance of the bottles. You can think of it as sleeping—just like you it wants to sleep in a dark, quiet and cool place without a lot of movement. The absolute worst place to store your wine is in a rack on top of the refrigerator in a warm kitchen, which we're sure most of you have seen.

To accomplish the proper conditions, you don't necessarily need a fancy system. You might be able to store your wine in a basement, or under the house, if the temperature is cool enough and doesn't fluctuate much. If you have a large collection, you can even section off part of a garage or basement and install an air conditioning unit (such as Breezair) to keep the area cool. If you don't have a basement or live in an apartment, consider an interior-wall closet floor. ~~Not ideal, but can work in a pinch.~~ Not the best solution to store long term, however.

You might also consider investing in a wine refrigerator, which is different than a regular kitchen refrigerator in that it is slightly warmer and doesn't remove all of the moisture inside the unit. The highest setting a kitchen refrigerator can operate at is 40°, which is too cool to store wine as it doesn't allow for the wine to age. Also, a kitchen refrigerator is designed to remove moisture from the air, which can dry out a cork and allow air to seep inside.

If you can follow these simple rules, you will be able to cellar your wines and enjoy aged wines for years to come. However, if your storage options are

limited and you don't have the preferred storage conditions, just be aware that if you are jeopardizing the quality of the wine and will not be able to age it as long.

Another storage option? Just drink it! We like to think that every day is a special occasion to enjoy wine.

Meet Barney Marinelli, Assistant Tasting Room Manager

Barney Marinelli has been with us for almost five years, though it's difficult to imagine a time without him. Visitors to our tasting room enjoy his easy going personality and quick wit, as well as his insightful restaurant suggestions.

In those five years, Barney has not only become one of our best customers, but he and his wife, Lorraine, have become close friends and traveling companions with Bruce and Renae Perry. They not only dine together frequently, but they also play in a poker group where Barney will occasionally let his boss win just to keep his job here at the winery!

Hailing from the Philadelphia area, and originally a landscape gardener with San Francisco State University, Barney accepted early retirement and decided upon a second career in the wine industry. In doing so, he is able to combine his love of wine with his gift of gab and love of people.

In his spare time, Barney loves to cook, spend time with friends and travel. In his backyard, you will find a wood burning pizza oven. Many an evening has been spent there relaxing with friends, drinking great wine, enjoying pizzas, lasagna, whole pigs and more!

We consider ourselves lucky to count Barney as an employee and friend.

Recipe

Here's a little dessert recipe we know you'll enjoy. We all loved it when our chef, Jim May, made it for the winery crew. Yes, it's all part of the job! Taste wines, test out recipes that will pair with our wines...tough job, but someone has to do it!

BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE & CHERRY BREAD PUDDING WITH WHITE CHOCOLATE SAUCE

By Chef Jim May

Makes 2 loaf pans

Serves 8-12

8 cups bread (brioche or white bread with crusts removed), cut into ½” cubes
1 cup whipping cream
3½ cups whole milk
½cup sugar
8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped into pieces
5 large egg yolks
4 whole large eggs
6 oz. dried cherries, chopped medium
8 oz white chocolate

Preheat oven to 350°.

Combine 3½ cups milk, ½ cup cream and ½ cup sugar in heavy saucepan. Bring to simmer over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. Add 8 ounces of bittersweet chocolate, and stir until melted and smooth; let cool slightly.

Whisk yolks and eggs together in large bowl. Gradually whisk into the chocolate mixture.

Spray two 5” x 9” loaf pans with non-stick cooking spray. Add half of the cubed bread into each pan and sprinkle with cherry pieces. Pour half of the chocolate mixture over the top of each pan. Press cherries and bread cubes into chocolate mixture. Let stand at least 30 minutes.

Bake pudding in pre-heated oven for 45 minutes or until set and slightly crisp on top. Transfer pans to rack and cool slightly. Pudding can be prepared 1 day ahead and served at room temperature, or re-warmed in 350° oven for 30 minutes.

When ready to serve, bring the remaining ½ cup cream to simmer in heavy saucepan. Remove saucepan from heat. Add 8 ounces of white chocolate, and stir until melted and smooth.

Loosen the pudding by running a knife around pan. Invert each loaf on to a cutting board. Slice pudding into 1-inch thick portions and top with the warm white chocolate sauce.

Winemaker's Tasting Notes

2010 Elsbree Vineyard Pinot Noir

Appellation: Russian River Valley

Cases Produced: 525

Dark garnet color. The first scent of this wine is a combination of fresh raspberry, spice and cinnamon with just a hint of clove. On the palate, a clove essence leads into a blast of Bing cherry, raspberry, spice and a touch of cola. This wine has bright acidity and great balance with a long, rich cherry finish. The supple tannins will allow this wine to age gracefully.

Price: \$54

2010 Peters Vineyard Pinot Noir

Appellation: Russian River Valley

Cases Produced: 429

Brilliant garnet in color, and nothing but cherries, cherries, cherries right up front. This wine showcases the best of cool climate Pinot Noir. It delivers a juicy cherry finish and highlights the well-balanced acidity and fine-grained tannin. Another wine that will age well.

Price: \$54

2010 Nunes Vineyard Pinot Noir

Appellation: Russian River Valley

Cases Produced: 570

Dark garnet in color. A very seductive nose of ripe blackberry and black stone fruit with hints of orange peel and a mineral essence. On the palate, black fruit, plum, cardamom and anise leads to a very bright, clean, long and juicy fruit-driven finish. The velvety tannins will allow this wine to age well.

Price: \$54

2010 777 Clone Pinot Noir

Appellation: Russian River Valley

Cases Produced: 524

Dark garnet in color. Fragrant floral, rose petal, raspberry and vanilla aromas draw you in with their lively mix. The Royal Ann cherry flavors embrace the lively acidity and toasty vanillin essence. A lovely, long finish reveals hints of ripe cherry, chalk and minerals. Like the Energizer Bunny, the finish just keeps going on, and on, and on, and—well, you get the picture.

Price: \$70

2010 Campbell Ranch

Appellation: Sonoma Coast

Cases Produced: 473

Deep garnet in color. Wild berry, spice and floral hints meld with complex aromas of red cherry, pomegranate and anise. The aroma characteristics continue on the palate. A long opulent finish, highlighted by minerals, showcases the great structure and balance of this wine.

2009 Elsbree Vineyard Zinfandel
Appellation: Russian River Valley
Cases Produced: 1118

Medium ruby in color. Spicy berry with white pepper and lovely hints of toast round out the nose. Jammy blackberry and raspberry flavors are ramped up by a toasty, peppery finish, offering nice acidity and balance.
Price: \$38