

# AUTUMN 2023 TASTING NOTES

## WINE SELECTIONS BY CLUB

# AMPHORA WINERY

### 2017 Petite Sirah

Gold | Platinum | Concierge

### 2018 Tannat

Gold | Platinum

### 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon

Gold | Platinum

### 2017 Barbera

Gold | Platinum | Concierge

### 2017 Aglianico

Gold

### 2016 Aglianico

Platinum | Concierge

### 2018 GSM

Concierge

### 2017 Mourvèdre

Concierge

### 2018 Syrah

Concierge



## ***It's almost fermentation time!***

That magical, aromatic transformation whereby grapes become wine will soon fill the cellar with wonderful aromas. This harvest is on track to begin later than any for the past ten years or so, due to a cool, wet Spring and moderate early Summer. As we write this in mid-August, *veraison* (when the red grapes begin to get color, and both red and white varieties begin to ripen) has barely begun...and it's roughly 60 days from veraison to harvest. So when you read this in October/November we will probably be knee-deep in grapes! Regardless of when the grapes are ready, the fundamental aspect of fermentation is the same: yeast consumes the sugar in the grapes, and transform it into alcohol, CO<sub>2</sub>, and a generous amount of heat. At Amphora, we employ

***Continued on page 5***

## 2017 PETITE SIRAH | BEVILL/WOLCOTT VINEYARD

170 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2035

True to form, our 2017 Petite Sirah delights with sweet and spicy aromatics, abundant dark fruit flavors, and the structure to develop in the bottle for years to come. Scents of violet, black peppercorn, and vanilla greet you, and are followed by ripe blackberry and dark plum flavors. The finish lingers with a hint of sassafras (i.e., a hint of root beer). The Bevill/Wolcott vineyard is so close to the winery that we can observe it while driving past on Dry Creek Road. This 2017 vintage was harvested on September 7<sup>th</sup> of that year. This vineyard is very consistent in quality and timing, but the cool spring of 2023 means that this year's harvest will likely be in late October. Regardless of when we pick, we anticipate beautiful and uniform clusters from this site. Enjoy this 2017 with rich, soft-ripened cheeses, or sautéed mushrooms served over creamy polenta.

LIST PRICE 45

## 2018 GSM | SONOMA COUNTY

294 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2032

41% Grenache, 45% Syrah, 14% Mourvèdre



The incomparable wines of France's Rhône River valley are among winemaker Rick's very favorite wines, and his benchmark for the art of crafting blends that are greater than the sum of their parts. Since Rick's first GSM (in 2012), this delicious blend has proven to be both a staff and guest favorite every vintage. In the 2018 vintage Grenache contributes a lovely strawberry and easygoing texture. Syrah anchors the blend, with tannic structure, dark fruit flavors, and weight. Mourvèdre adds spice and mineral. All together, they create a wine that is a pleasure to sip by itself, but that shines with a good meal. The flavors of the south of France come to mind: garlic, lemon, rosemary, and olive...

**Double Gold, 97 points, *North Coast Wine Challenge 2022***

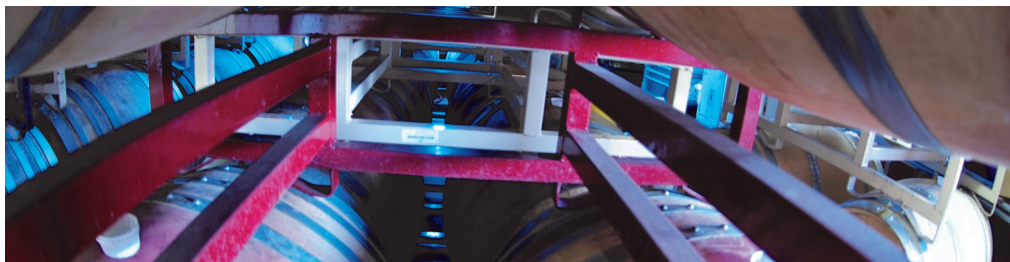
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## 2016 AGLIANICO | CLARKSBURG

145 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2030

Aglianico (pronounced ah-YAH-nee-koh) is one of the best-regarded red grapes of southern Italy (Campania and Puglia). It is still rare in California, but plantings are increasing here, especially in growing areas that share some climatic similarities to the varietal's warm and arid homeland. Our 2016 vintage, like previous ones, was aged in our terracotta *amphorae*, and the influence of the clay lends an old-world profile to this wine: bracing yet gentle tannins, a clean minerality, and subtle red fruit notes. The character of this varietal works well with the clay influence, and makes for a food-friendly wine. This one will age elegantly for years, and if you plan to enjoy it in the short-term, be sure to aerate it. Delightful pairings include *cacio e pepe*, and grill roasted lamb with rosemary and garlic.

LIST PRICE 40



## 2017 BARBERA | CLARKSBURG

224 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2028

This vintage expresses the more subtle aspects of a varietal known for dark color, and fruit-forward flavors. This vineyard consistently presents a delicious combination of savory notes and dark fruit character in Barbera, and our 2017 is no exception. Aromas of cherry compote, clove and mushroom greet you in the glass. The wine is bright and lively, with a lighter body than some of the previous vintages, and a solid emphasis on red fruits. The loamy, savory aspect typical of this site is present, with the counterpoint of tart cherry. The mouth-feel carries a nice brightness and moderate tannins round out the profile. This wine could pair well with tomato-based dishes, and work with the bold flavors of garlic and Mediterranean herbs.

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## 2017 CABERNET SAUVIGNON | TIMBER CREST VINEYARD, DCV

145 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2030

The Timber Crest Vineyard is our go-to for Cabernet Sauvignon that expresses the complex character of the varietal, while also showing the easygoing and approachable qualities so common in Dry Creek Valley red wines. Our 2017 greets you with a ripe Bing cherry and black currant nose that seamlessly lead through to the finish. You might sense a hint of red licorice and mint alongside the dark fruit, and a dusty note, too. Summer puts us in mind of pork ribs, and lightly –smoked ribs (hold the sticky-sweet sauce!) with a rub of paprika and thyme could work superbly with this wine.

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## 2017 AGLIANICO | CLARKSBURG

92 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2030

Of all the Italian varietals we produce, our Aglianico is perhaps the “Italianate” in character. In this wine, the fruit flavors are subordinate to the structure: fine-grained tannins let the wine stay present while mingling with rich foods, and the red fruit flavors show more on the finish, than on the entry. Aging in *amphorae* gives a subtle minerality to the mouth feel, and the aromas evoke sandalwood and wet stone. The flavors are blend of red currant and black cherry, and the overall impression is complex and interesting. Try this with sliced fennel bulb dipped in extra-virgin olive oil, or the dishes mentioned in the 2016 vintage notes (on page 3).

LIST PRICE 40

## 2018 SYRAH | SONOMA COUNTY

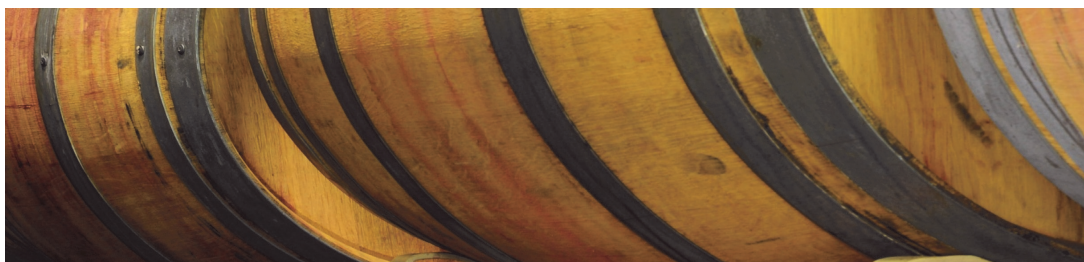
196 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2032

The 2018 Syrah is true to the spirit of this Rhône varietal: it is blue-black in color, with deep-noted aromas of blackberry, allspice and licorice root embraced in a substantial core of black fruit flavors and firm tannins. The 2018 vintage was partially-fermented in *amphorae*, which serves to enhance its already robust structure. This wine definitely has the heft and depth to age beautifully for years. For more immediate enjoyment, decant or aerate a bottle, and have it with smoked sausages, Duck *Confit*, *Cassoulet*, or braised shortribs. We invite you to dive deeply into our latest rendition of this noble Rhône varietal, and renew your enchantment with this most enigmatic of wines.

LIST PRICE 45

### ***It's almost fermentation time!, continued***

small, “open-top” fermentation vessels (including terracotta amphorae) which allow the excess heat of fermentation to dissipate. The CO<sub>2</sub> generated by fermentation raises a cap of grape skins above the liquid, and the open vessels also allow us to manually “punch down” that cap, and keep a close watch on the wine-in-progress. Our collection of terracotta amphorae are ideal for a very specialized type of fermentation called carbonic maceration, which we use for certain Rhone varietals in order to enhance the complexity of our GSM blend. In this technique, we hand select whole clusters of grapes, and gently pack them into the amphora, and then flood the amphora with CO<sub>2</sub> and seal it up. Those whole clusters, which are living, breathing plant tissue-undergo an internal, metabolic fermentation that adds a particular fruity, stemmy character to the resulting wine, and really spices up the blend. After a few weeks, we take the clusters from the amphora, de-stem them, and let the yeast finish the fermentation in an open bin. It's extra work, but the results are well worth the effort!





## 2017 MOURVÈDRE | CLARKSBURG

144 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2025

Mourvèdre often presents a wild range of flavors and aromas, with meaty and animalistic notes nestled amidst spicy aspects, and dark fruit underlying it all. Our 2017, just like the 2016, features more of sweet and spicy side of the spectrum. It greets you with lovely aromas of Darjeeling tea, with a hint of black pepper. The red berry flavors are juicy, and invite a second sip. The wine is medium in weight, with just enough tannic structure to carry it for a few more years, and to play well with food. Try this one with a mushroom-centric dish, or roast pork with a cherry glaze.

LIST PRICE 35





## 2018 TANNAT | CLARKSBURG

193 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2030

This somewhat obscure grape originates in southwest France, in particular from the Basque regions, and a Basque immigrant introduced the grape to Uruguay, where it has come to dominate their red-grape plantings. Tannat has a reputation for producing big-structured, tannic wines, but when handled a deft touch (see Petite Sirah!) its more intriguing aspects (or as Rick refers to it: ‘my honeysuckle-raspberry baby’) take center stage. Our 2018 is a bit bigger in structure than the 2017, and would benefit from another 1-2 years in bottle. If you open it sooner, a little bit of aeration would open and soften the wine. This wine could handle rich fare, perhaps tea-smoked duck or beef wellington?

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# AUTUMN 2023 CLUB WINES

	Retail	Concierge	Platinum	Gold
2017 Petite Sirah	45	33.75	36	38.25
2017 Cabernet Sauvignon	65	48.75	52	55.25
2017 Barbera	36	27	28.80	30.60
2017 Aglianico	40	30	32	34
2016 Aglianico	40	30	32	34
2018 Tannat	42	31.50	33.60	35.70
2018 GSM	42	31.50	33.60	35.70
2018 Syrah	45	33.75	36	38.25
2017 Mourvèdre	35	26.25	28	29.75



To re-order, please call us at 707.431.7767 or email us at [jim@amphorawines.com](mailto:jim@amphorawines.com) as many of these wines are exclusive to our club members and do not appear on our website. Remember, Concierge and Platinum members receive shipping discounts of 50% and 25% respectively.