

SPRING 2024 TASTING NOTES

WINE SELECTIONS BY CLUB

AMPHORA WINERY

2018 Tempranillo

Gold | Platinum | Concierge

2019 Grenache

Gold | Platinum | Concierge

2016 Merlot

Gold | Concierge

2018 Syrah

Gold | Platinum

2017 Mourvèdre

Gold | Platinum

2019 Cabernet Franc

Platinum

2017 Cabernet Sauvignon

Concierge

2018 Tannat

Concierge

2019 Sagrantino

Concierge



Springtime color in the vineyards

The annual cycle of the vineyards features a changing palette of colors. The beginning of the year, in certain sites, can be the most dramatic, as the **wild mustard** storms into bloom in mid-winter, painting the vineyards a golden-yellow. Supposedly mustards (there actually are several species) were introduced to California in the Mission era, but true or not, it has naturalized over most of the state. In vineyards and orchards, it is encouraged as a cover crop during the rainy season, and then plowed under or mowed just as the vines begin to grow in spring. There are many different plants besides mustard that are sown, or encouraged as cover crops: vetch, fava /bell beans, oat grasses, etc. All of them protect the vineyard from erosion caused by winter rains, and when tilled-in in spring, all can contribute biomass to the soil, and

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2018 TEMPRANILLO | CLARKSBURG

310 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2029

It's easy to see why this varietal is one of our most universally popular: juicy dark berry fruit, lush texture, and sweet aromas enhanced by aging in American oak barrels (which is traditional in the finest Spanish renditions of their most famous grape). The flavors in this wine bring to mind ripe blackberry and dark cherry, and the mouth-feel is smooth and plush. We've been crafting this fruit into wine for over ten years, and the vineyard is very consistent vintage to vintage. The 2018 vintage was partially fermented in *amphorae*, and that dialed-in just enough tannin to lend weight, and to work well with food. Overall, this is a satisfying and enjoyable red that would play equally with homemade burgers, or a traditional *paella*.

LIST PRICE 37

Enjoy Amphora Tempranillo with paella at our annual **Paella Party**, on the evening of **Saturday, May 18th**. (see our website for details!)



2019 GRENACHE | DRY CREEK VALLEY

111 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2028



Once again we fermented our Grenache in terracotta amphorae, with a significant percentage of whole-clusters included. That partial carbonic maceration regimen yields a wine that greets you with a perfumed, sweet violet nose that carries through to classic Grenache strawberry fruit, and finishes with a flourish of black pepper “stemmy” character. All in all, it has a very “Rhônish” profile. The 2019 shows the lighter, more delicate side of the varietal, and yields a wine that’s wonderfully pleasant to sip on with a handful of toasted almonds, but that is still substantial enough to stand up to hearty fare such as *cassoulet*.

LIST PRICE 38

2016 MERLOT | DRY CREEK VALLEY

143 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2033

These grapes are grown a “stone’s throw” from the winery, just across Dry Creek Road. This wine greets you with very appealing aromas of raspberry liqueur and freshly fallen autumn leaves. In the mouth, this wine is round and full, and the dark fruit notes linger long after a sip. There are red fruit hints, too, as well as a subtle sweet spice. For fun, pour this wine (brown-bagged), for your friends who profess to dislike this varietal, and gauge their honest perceptions. Rick likes to do this at the winery, and he’s won over many “Merlotphobes”. Some winning food recommendations for this one would include roast ham with a fruit glaze, or grilled Portobello mushrooms brushed with a fruity olive oil.

LIST PRICE 55

2019 CABERNET FRANC | DRY CREEK VALLEY

94 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2034

This is our second vintage of Cab Franc grown on the heights of Bradford Mountain, on the west side of Dry Creek Valley. The wine showcases the intensity of mountain-grown grapes with concentrated dark fruit character, spiced with characteristic Cabernet Franc notes of cedar and chaparral. The overall impression is rich and chocolatey, with the riper aspects and dark blackcurrant/blackberry fruit taking center stage, with the green notes typical of this variety woven in seamlessly. The 2018 was great, but this one is even better! Food pairings that come to mind include grilled lamb kebabs seasoned with thyme, or *farinata** with a nice plucking of fresh rosemary.

LIST PRICE 58

*For a great *farinata* article and recipe, scan this QR code,
or see:

<https://www.seriousseats.com/farinata-italian-chickpea-pancake-recipe>



BEST of CLASS, Harvest Terroir Challenge 2023

DOUBLE Gold, *San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition 2023*

Gold, *Sunset International Wine Competition 2023*

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 the 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

2019 SAGRANTINO | SONOMA COUNTY

117 CASES PRODUCED | ENJOY NOW THROUGH 2040

This is Amphora's first vintage of this rare and mysterious Italian varietal. Sagrantino originates in central Italy's Umbria region, and while there are small plantings elsewhere throughout the winemaking world, nowhere is it common.

Even in its homeland, there are probably less than 500 acres of it planted. For comparison, consider that there are 95,000 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon planted... just in California! This is a big, deep wine: blue-black in color, with a concentrated blackberry fruit character with dark chocolate hints, and a very sturdy tannic structure. In fact, Sagrantino is inherently one of the most tannic red varietals. Rick's decades of experience crafting another inherently tannic varietal (Petite Sirah) with balance and finesse served well in nurturing his first Sagrantino. If you open this wine now, it will benefit from some aeration, and will shine with hearty fare. It will undoubtedly reward aging!



LIST PRICE 58

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



Springtime color in the vineyards, continued

the legumes contribute nitrogen as well. Mustard makes an additional contribution, as it can act as a ‘biofumigant’ to deter destructive nematodes in the soil. The same pungent compounds that make the mustard on your hot dog spicy are among the ones that act against the tiny soil-borne nematodes. But perhaps mustards most important contribution is to bring a much-needed splash of color to the drab winter vineyards! As an added bonus, when the conditions are just right, the mass of mustard blossoms can loft a sweet, almost-indescribable aroma into the wind during the first warm and sunny days of late winter and early spring.

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.

LIST PRICE 65



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?

LIST PRICE 42

Coming Soon! **2023 Rosé**

Our deliciously dry rosé of Grenache (in the 3-Liter box only!)
will be available to enjoy beginning in early spring...we'll be in touch!



Upcoming Events

see amphorawines.com for additional info

April 6th: **Wine Club Party**

April 17-24: **Amphora Wine Cruise on the Rhine and Moselle**

May 18th: **Paella Party**

July 20: **Amphora Luau**

October 12: **Wine Club Harvest Party**

November 2-3: **Food and Wine Affair Along the Wine Road**

November 29: **Bubbles and Oysters**

SPRING 2024 CLUB WINES

	Retail	Concierge	Platinum	Gold
2018 Tempranillo	37	27.75	29.60	31.45
2019 Grenache	38	28.50	30.40	32.30
2016 Merlot	55	41.25	44.00	46.75
2018 Syrah	45	33.75	36	38.25
2017 Mourvèdre	35	26.25	28	29.75
2019 Cabernet Franc	58	43.50	46.40	49.30
2017 Cabernet Sauvignon	65	48.75	52.00	55.25
2018 Tannat	42	31.50	33.60	35.70
2019 Sagrantino	58	43.50	46.40	49.30



To re-order, please call us at 707.431.7767 or email us at 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.