

## L'AVENTURE NEWSLETTER

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## Special Points of Interest:

- Go to [www.aventurewine.com](http://www.aventurewine.com) for upcoming events
- Don't forget Hospice du Rhone May 3-5
- Winemaker dinner at Matthews Downtown on May 18th
- Paso Robles Wine Festival May 18th through 20th



## "TRICKY 2006"

I caught Stephan as he set up the lab for the final tasting of the 2006 L'Aventure blends. "2006 was a little tricky," he states, "the growers that were patient, and waited out the cool end to the growing season will benefit. Those that picked too early, well, they could be in trouble."

In 2006, we had the equivalent of two harvests in one at L'Aventure. For example, Grenache & Mourvedre, two typically late ripening varieties, came in unusually late. In early November, at a time when we're usually finished with harvest, we were still picking fruit. And then just to keep it interesting, we picked Syrah at least 3 different times!

Our picking pattern was a little unusual in 2006. Syrah represents a great percentage of the L'Aventure plantation, and therefore is planted up and down the four hillside that make up our vineyard land. As the crowns of each hill mature, we send pickers across the hilltops for the first pick. It could be a week or two later before they descend on the middle band of vines. Finally, up to a month later, they will pick the bottom third of the hill, which retains more water, enjoys richer soil, and therefore matures fruit later. This was the pattern in 2006.

It is always a priority at L'Aventure that individual clusters arrive at the winery at optimum maturity. As you can imagine, this commitment to quality comes at a cost. It costs L'Aventure up to five



Stephan "sniffin' and swirlin'"

times the labor and production costs of most producers, in order that Stephan have available the fruit with which he can craft the artisan wines that have come to be his hallmark.

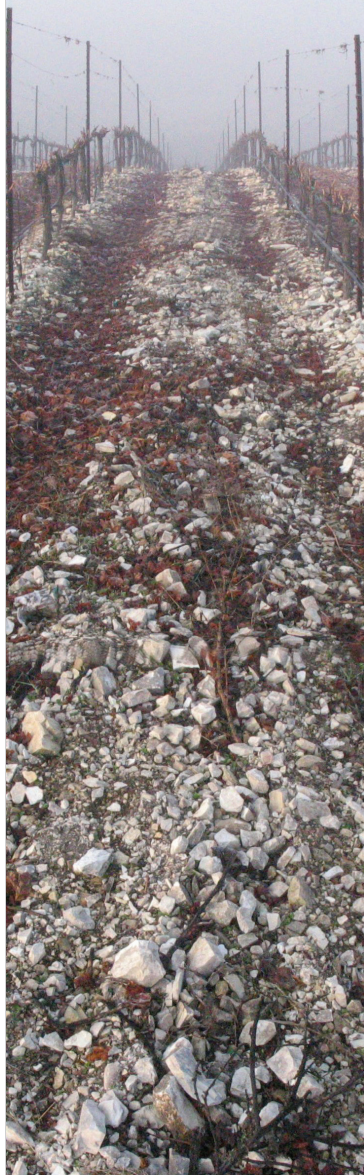
Sizing up the style of the 2006 vintage Stephan says, "Not massive, not typical, in-between California and classic styles. There is more contrast in fruit, more red fruit, certainly more diverse than 2004, which was archetypal 'Paso' in style. The thing that makes 2006 unique is the cool finish to the vintage. After a warm June, and hot July and early August, we had unusually cool weather the second half of August, through September. It took a long time for the grapes to truly mature, and, because it was so cool, we get some relatively low alcohols too. This will be a great vintage for

a few dedicated growers and producers."

Our yields in 2006 were 25% below the 2005 harvest, and as a result, we will have no Estate Syrah and very little Estate Cab. We have instead chosen to focus on our premier blends, the Estate Cuvée and the Côte A Côte. Both blends are wines of exceptional grace & elegance, with a wonderful complexity. Even though we had lower yields in 2006, the good news is that due to the quality of the fruit we will have 200 cases more of the Estate wines than we did in 2005. Sometimes less can truly be more.

*“All it took was one visit to Paso Robles, and I was hooked. On top of that, I finished the day at L’Aventure...I saved the best for last!”*

*Dan O’Brien*



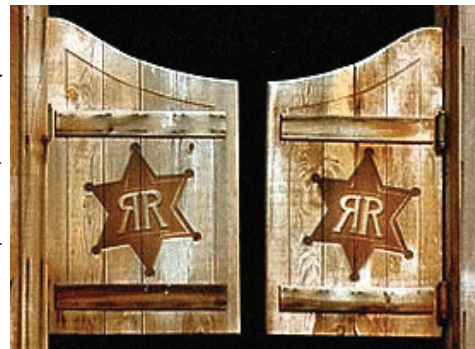
## PASO RANGERS

Most of us are familiar with the Rhone Rangers, the Northern California based association of wineries dedicated to furthering understanding and enjoyment of the grapes traditionally grown in the Rhone region of France. Recently, as a product of the collaboration between Executive Director Rusty Eddy and member of the Board of Directors Jason Haas of Tablas Creek, the Rhone Rangers Paso Robles Chapter has been created.

Our local Paso chapter will operate under the bylaws of the larger organization and will work to promote California Rhone style wines. The unique

and diverse terroir of Paso Robles makes our region not only a center of Rhone style wine production, but very possibly the center of this increasingly important movement.

The Rhone Rangers are currently planning docent events to take place primarily in the Central Coast. The 17 charter members on board include Eberle Winery, who’s founder Gary Eberle planted the first Syrah in the US, and Tablas



Rhone Rangers Paso

Creek, who has set the standard for Rhone blends. With this kind of company, the chapter’s activities merit attention. More to follow soon!

## ALEX AND DAN, OUR MEN IN BOSTON!

Boston Massachusetts has become a hotbed for Optimus business. And it’s all about the food!

A distinctive culinary culture presents innumerable options to the gourmet. Classic New England Seafood houses, traditional North End Italian restaurants, and fried clams at Fenway Park (not your best bet with our flagship blend) are a few staples among many. Think about the fact that, in 20 years, Chef Daniel Bruce of the Boston Harbor Hotel and Meritage Restaurant ,has never duplicated a dish for a wine maker dinner during his Boston Wine Festival....and he does around 45 a year! Then, there’s Stonehege Inn, just an hour out of town, where Lavant B. has created one of the most extensive wine cellars in the country. Lavant has two vintages of our estate wines in the cellar, the 2003 and 2004...they will not make it on to the list for another 4-5 years, given his passion for maturing wines to perfection for his customers! The

list goes on and on...Oh yeah, and then there are Alex and Dan.

On a recent visit to Boston, Stephan & I had the pleasure of dining at two relatively new restaurants. Both spots are run by entrepreneurial young men & both restaurants were favorites for very different reasons. Grille 23, one of the very best steakhouses imaginable, is one and Excelsior, on Boylston is the other.

At Grill 23, Alex Winter has assembled one of the most exciting and creative wine lists I have seen in a steakhouse. Grill 23 is, a great steakhouse with phenomenal steaks. Their special rub renders them truly mouth watering and they share the menu with possibly the best wedge salad ever. This is an adroitly crafted menu that will satisfy the discerning carnivore. Wine selections ranging from

Didier Dagneau, the most coveted Burgundy selections and L’Aventure Optimus are available to please wine devotees.

At the other end of the Back Bay, Dan O’Brien, an alumni of Grill 23, runs Excelsior. Excelsior sports a more contemporary menu and a chic “bumpin”



“Da Boys from Boston”

after hours clientele, the wine cellar is no less impressive. Housed in a glass tower visible from the elevator that carries diners to the upstairs restaurant are top producers from Burgundy and California. L’Aventure is well represented among the latter (let Jillian pour you a glass of Optimus in the bar downstairs!).

As your travels take you to Beantown, don’t miss the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality at both of these wonderful establishments.

## L'AVENTURE'S ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION PARTY



*"This is how all wineries should spend their marketing dollars!"*

*"Without a doubt, the best party I've been to all year!"*

*"Overheard at Member Appreciation Party"*

### Tasting Notes for 2005

**2005 Estate Cuvée:** 52% Syrah, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Petit Verdot. Deep ruby color, with intense aromas of blueberries, leather, tea leaf, anise, and so much more! The complexity of aromas and flavors in this wine are myriad, and require some time to unfold. Enjoy half of the bottle, cork it, come back two days later, and pick up the licorice, litchi nut, acacia, pomegranate, and so much more! Elegant, powerful, soft, and extremely complex. Fewer than 2,000 6-pack cases produced

**2005 Côte A Côte:** 34% Syrah, 33% Grenache, 33% Mourvèdre. Dense, intense aromas of ripe fig, mineral earth, black tea, and blackberry converge seamlessly. These aromas manifest themselves on the palate in a balanced attack, where they are joined by licorice, chocolate, and vanilla spice notes to form a long, rich finish. Lush, soft tannins make this a very unctuous, pleasing wine. 400 6-pack cases produced.

**2005 Estate Cabernet Savignon:** 100% Estate grown Cabernet Sauvignon. This is classic, Westside Cab, with brooding cassis and blackberries shooting fruit tendrils to the moon! Dense, rich palate of chocolate, wild blackberry, and black cherry, with subtle graphite nuances. Seductive and elegant, this is Paso Cab at its best.

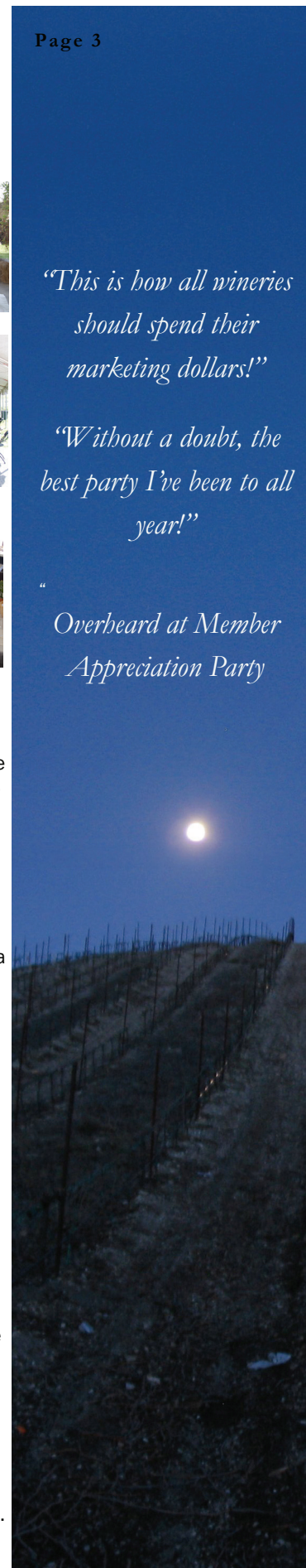
**2006 Estate Roussanne:** The color is bright straw. Aromas of honey, ripe melon, and white fruit are followed by a crisp attack on the palate of peaches and pears. Tightly wound yet elongated in the mouth, with a mineral finish. This is an elegant and complex wine, available to Club L'Aventure members only. 150 cases produced.

**2006 Rosé:** A full onion skin blush insinuates the rich flavors of this Syrah /Cabernet Rosé. Rosé and macerated strawberries on the nose confirm fresh, rich red fruit on the palate. Great acidity and balance make for a long, elegant finish. What are you waiting for....it's almost spring! 200 cases produced.

### 2008 Blending with Stephan Contest

Have you ever wondered Stephan puts his beautiful blends together? Well, if you are lucky you may find out! We will hold a drawing at the end of August 2007 from the list of our current Wine Club members. The winner of the contest will be invited to participate in the L'Aventure blending in March of 2008.

We will announce the results in the Fall newsletter. We hope to see you there!



Stephan Vineyards

L'Aventure Winery  
2815 Live Oak Road  
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Phone: 805-227-1588  
Fax: 805-227-6988  
E-mail: stephanvines@tcsn.net



Budbreak March, 2007

## DANS LE VIGNOBLE SPRING CLEANING

Over the winter, Dave and Guillaume take advantage of a little down time to catch up on repairs, clean up hazards created by winter storms, and ready the vines and vineyard for the spring. As Dave was climbing onto the Landini, I asked him where he was off to. With over 2950 hours on this tractor alone in his few years here, you never know! He mumbled something under the revolutions of the engine, and I had to grab him by the arm to get him to stop and give me a story. He jumped down off his tractor, and told me, with a sheepish grin, that he was going to fix some "tractor blight". I wasn't sure of what he meant, but as he and Guillaume broke into a hearty laugh at my expense, I soon realized that this was no natural pest they were after. "Time and again", Dave began, "Guillaume or myself will take a corner too sharply, or quickly, and voila, an end post gets nicked, or maybe worse". So, Dave was off to inspect the end posts for normal, and extraordinary wear and tear! Dave's good, but he's not perfect!

The noise of Guillaume's chain saw was testament to the fact that we needed a couple dozen posts replaced on that day. Just having vineyards on hillsides will create such attrition, even without hot-rod tractor drivers! Add the replacement of grape steaks and trellis wires to the list, and they'll be kept busy for a couple of months; there's no rest for the wicked! Add to this the fact that Guillaume and a team of our very best vineyard workers have been out pruning and tying for a month, and you can see that there really is no such thing as "down time" in the vineyards. Post pounder in tow,

After the January cold snap that saw six straight nights of freezing, single digit temperatures at the winery, the boys are combing the vineyard for broken



The hillsides of L'Aventure prepare for Spring Cleaning

pipes. "After the first night of freezing, we had so many breaks, that we just turned off the water. It's time to take inventory, and see where our leaks are and fix them before the vines kick in, because we might, at some point, want to exercise the option to irrigate".

The streak of freezing did do some damage to a few of our younger vines. "We lost some of the babies", Dave lamented. "When vines are as young and exposed as some in our second plantation are, successive nights of freezing, and the increasingly deep frozen ground, can kill them. As ground freezes at around a foot per night, and you get into a snap of 5-6 nights, a five to six foot deep layer of frozen earth can kill a young vine with a 2-3 foot root system. We lost around 3 acres of Petit Verdot and Syrah up on top, and will need to prune the vines back to the base.

This will give them a chance to reestablish a strong formation, and generate significant root structures for a long, productive life."

So, with end posts repaired, new stakes and wires set out and all the vines pruned and tied, we are prepared for the coming budbreak of spring. L'Aventure is a beautiful vineyard to view during the winter, you can see the work of man, the work of nature. It's also a good time to visit us, as it's less traveled and quieter than usual. Maybe you can get Dave to take you out on the tractor, to see it all for yourself!



The Landini waits for Dave to return