

What is Co-Fermentation?

One thing we get asked a lot about in the tasting room is “what is co-fermentation.” You will see that term listed on the technical notes next to Chloé, For Her and Inspiraciòn, and this process is truly what makes these wines stand out. Most commonly each variety would be fermented independently and then blended. Co-fermentation is the process of fermenting two or more grape varieties together once harvested creating what is often referred to as a “field-blend.” This process has been used in France for centuries, most notably in Cote-Rotie where Viogner is co-fermented with Syrah, but it did not gain popularity in the States until around 2016. Our first use of co-fermentation began with the 2010 Chloé when we co-fermented Syrah from our “McVey Block” with Grenache from our “Old Grenache Block.” It is the location of these two blocks which promoted simultaneous ripening and allowed us to co-ferment.

While blending allows a winemaker opportunity to “tinker”, adjusting blends to achieve specific preferences, co-fermentation creates low intervention wines with remarkable results. Not only do we achieve enhanced color and structure by doing this, but the grapes interaction together during fermentation enhances their individual qualities. As Stephan says, “it is like a good marriage, on their own they are great, but as they work together during fermentation they become stronger and bring out the best in each other. I dont know what happens... MAGIC!! 😊”.

This process has worked so well for us that we now co-ferment three of our wine club exclusive cuvées: Chloé, For Her, and Inspiraciòn, achieving results for these specific wines that we could not have done by blending alone. If you have more questions about this process or these wines, please ask one of our tasting room attendants the next time you visit.

Meet Our New Full Time Employees



We are incredibly happy to welcome Nichole, our new Tasting Room Manager, Brandon, our new Tasting Room Lead, and Jake our new Vineyard and Cellar hand.

Nichole joined our team as Tasting Room Lead in November of 2019. A Central Coast native, she was excited for the opportunity to come home after spending years working in the Hospitality Industry in Las Vegas. She has a passion for both wine and guest experience and found L’Aventure to be the perfect fit to share her experience with us while learning more about wine, from vine to glass. Studying through both WSET and Wine Scholar Guild she will test this year for her Level 3 Award in Wines, French Wine Scholar Certification and Champagne Master Certification. As our new Tasting Room Manager, she is looking forward to sharing what she has learned with our guests, and curating wine-centric events for our members.

An Orange County native, Brandon has been in the Restaurant Industry for several years. He and his wife relocated to Paso Robles so she could get her graduate degree from Cal Poly and he could work in the wine industry. Brandon’s passion for wine developed because of its rich culture and history throughout the world. He is looking forward to growing with our team and getting to work so closely with an experienced and knowledgeable winemaker such as Stephan. Working at L’Aventure, where we are a small and family operated winery, allows him to be hands on and learn not just from Stephan but Dave and Patrick as well.

Some of you may have met Jake this last summer if you visited the Tasting Room before he began his Harvest Internship. Jake moved to San Luis Obispo from Southern Idaho, where he grew up, to attend college at Cal Poly where he studied Agriculture Business. After seeing his drive and versatility during harvest, Stephan decided he would make a great addition to the team and brought him on full time on the vineyard/production side. Jake has found an interest in learning all the subtle nuances in our terroir, which make Paso and specifically L’Aventure, special and which later develop in the barrel. Vineyard and harvest work can be tough, but Jake says it is worth it to see how the fruit develops from grape to wine.

L’Aventure

2021 Newsletter

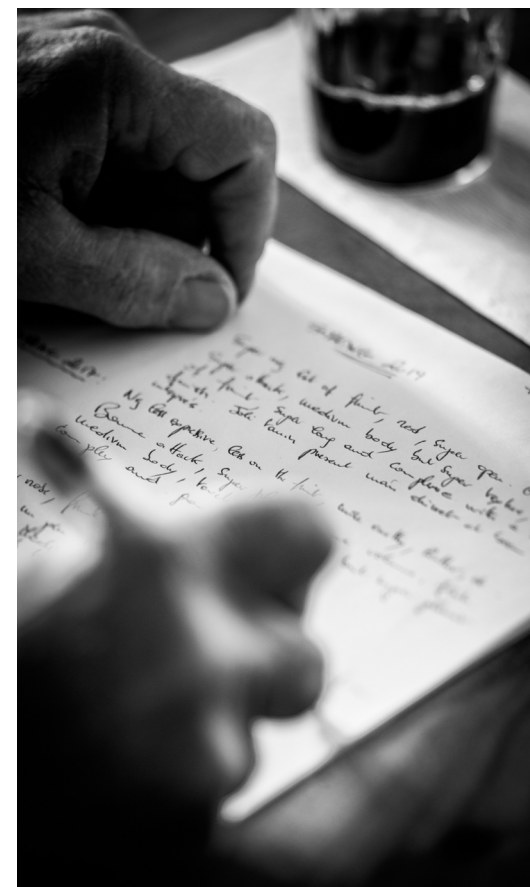


2019 Vintage

If you ask Stephan about the 2019 vintage he will tell you with confidence that it is his best vintage since moving to Paso Robles. If you walk through the caves, you will notice Stephan’s handwriting all over the barrels with messages like “best Côte à Côte ever!!” or “Super good” or our favorite “Miami, Miami” regarding the Estate Cuvée. Already during the blending process (the pictures above were taken during that week), Stephan, Patrick, Dave, Chloe and our French partners were blown away by the quality and the complexity these wines were showing. Throughout the week, they tasted anywhere from 4 to 8 blends for each wine, all blind, in order to make the best decision. With that said, it was tough to make a decision as each blend was top notch. Stephan is probably his worst critic, so hearing how much he loves his 2019s really means something.

When we asked Patrick what he thought about the 2019 vintage he said, “In terms of style, I would say the 2019 vintage is super classic. Tannins are very defined, wine is very balanced with some blends exhibiting exceptional varietal character. For example, the Estate Cuvée has some incredible complexity, but still incredibly approachable. The wine, being a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, exhibits a wonderful graphite nose with a background of black fruit. The wine has minerality and richness, a full flesh and velvety tannins. A long tight finish that ends on red and black fruits. What I particularly like about the vintage is the varietal character expression. You can almost pick out nuances correlating to each component of our blends this year”.

2019 was the first year we had the new crush equipment and optical sorter. We were able to be more selective and more accurate in pulling out any damaged or less than ideal fruit. It also allowed us to process more smoothly which meant we had more time to respond to the vineyard, allowing us to harvest more blocks at their ideal ripeness.



2019 Vintage Tasting Notes - Red Only

Please see below the tasting notes written by Jeb Dunnuck when he tasted the 2019 Vintage from barrels

Optimus 2019 57% Syrah, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot

The 2019 Optimus showed beautifully, displaying a soft, full-bodied, impressively textured style as well as the classic cassis and darker berry fruits along with the peppery notes this cuvée always shows. **Aging 1-10 years**

Côte à Côte 2019 34% Grenache, 34% Syrah, 32% Mourvèdre

The 2019 Côte à Côte might be the best yet, offering an incredible perfume of jammy blackberries, spice, and violets. The purity of fruit is stunning. It's full-bodied, has a seamless, elegant texture, and is just a heavenly wine in the making. The blend is similar to the 2013 and 2014 and is one-third each of Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvèdre. **Aging 1-20+ years**

Estate Cuvée 2019 50% Syrah, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Petit Verdot

Not far from the style of the 2018, yet possibly slightly more approachable, it has a killer bouquet of jammy black and blue fruit as well as notes of smoked earth, crushed rock, and peppery herbs. Super-rich, full-bodied, and loaded with fruit, it nevertheless has purity, balance, and structure. **Aging 1-20++ years**

Sibling 2019 45% Syrah, 26% Mourvèdre, 19% Grenache, 10% Graciano (not reviewed by Jeb Dunnuck)

Syrah driven, the Sibling 2019, shows lots of dark, black crushed fruit and red spice. Full-bodied, with textured, integrated tannins, this wine is incredibly well balanced and will drink beautifully now and for the next few years. **Aging 1-10 years**

Cabernet Sauvignon 2019 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot

The 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve got a big "Wow" in the notes and, along with Daou and Booker, l'Aventure is certainly making one of the best Cabernet Sauvignon from Paso Robles. Deeply hued, with lots of pure cassis fruit as well as classic Cabernet lead pencil and graphite, it's a full-bodied, tight, concentrated barrel sample that's going to benefit from 4-5 years or bottle age. **Aging 1-20+ years**

Inspiración 2019 38% Grenache, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Syrah, 4% Grenache Blanc

The 2019 Inspiración is another full-bodied red from this estate that shows a rare level of purity and finesse to go with a rich, powerful style. Lots of cassis and black raspberry fruits, a touch of flowers, and subtle background oak all emerge from the glass, and while the tannins are polished and silky, it's going to warrant some bottle age. **Aging 1-15++ years**

For Her 2019 56% Syrah, 32% Graciano, 12% Viognier Co-Fermented

Based on Syrah, Graciano, and Viognier, the 2019 For Her is another deeply colored barrel sample and has lots of deep blue and black fruits, full-bodied richness, silky yet present tannins, and complex, nuanced aromatics. It's in the same realm as the 2018. **Aging 1-20 years**

Chloé 2019 69% Syrah, 23% Grenache, 8% Viognier Co-Fermented

I always love this cuvée. The 2019 Chloé (two-thirds Syrah and one-third Grenache) boasts a deep purple hue as well as gorgeous notes of spring flowers, violets, ground pepper, and both blue and black fruit. More straight and focused than the Côte à Côte, which is slightly more exuberant and sexy, this beautiful blend will benefit from 2-3 years of bottle age and keep for 10-15 years or more. **Aging 1-20++ years**

New Cuvée: Epicé

100% Syrah

A new cuvée focused on cool-climate Syrah, the 2019 Special Cuvee offers a kiss of Côte Rôtie in its red and blue fruits as well as ground pepper, flowers, and spice-driven aromas and flavors. Along with its beautiful overall balance, it has silky tannins and a great finish. This complex, layered Syrah is going to evolve gracefully for 15 years. **Aging 1-15++ years**

If there is a wine that is standing out a little bit extra this vintage, it is Epicé which means spicy in English. The name was suggested by Dave, who after tasting the wine, was amazed by the black pepper nose. When asking Patrick about this cuvée, he said "It was so providential. We were processing our McVey Syrah (one of our good blocks of syrah, also used in the Chloé) but it was the end of the block and just happened to be going into a small segregated tank. This small (1 acre) triangle end of the (4acre) block did something incredibly unique to the rest of the block. The stem, as they came off of the destemmer, exuded such a pungent black and white pepper smell, it stopped me in my tracks. I immediately recognized the quality and signaled to Stephan my intention to keep the stems. It's important to note here: If this small end of the block had fit into the larger tank holding the rest of the McVey Syrah, these stems would have hardly played more than a nuanced role in the background of the wine. However, because we had to use this smaller tank, these stems were able to play a much larger role, and therefore, make an exceptionally interesting wine".

2020 Growing Season and Harvest



As Patrick explains, the 2020 growing season started 10 days earlier and ended 20 days earlier, compared to 2019. It wasn't so much the heatwaves, as much as it being consistently warm to hot, with no cool weather breaks. Usually, like in 2019, we get warm/hot weeks punctuated by cool breaks every few weeks which allows for a longer growing season. This year, those breaks never came. Due to the heat, Stephan, Patrick and Dave decided to be proactive and put up shade cloth early and almost everywhere. For the first time, they used shade cloth on both sides of the vines for a large portion of the fruit. As Dave explains, "with the increased temperatures over the last three years, it has made it a necessity and looks to be our new normal". On top of the shade clothes, they also tried some canopy management techniques to help produce more shade on the fruit. Overall, these two efforts helped protect the fruit from dessication due to heat and UV overexposure. On top of these efforts, Stephan does believe that the age of his vines "saved his ass" (excuse his French) as younger vines may not have given the same outcome. With that said, as the climate continues to challenge us we will continue to adapt using modern viticultural techniques and rethink traditional methods.

In 2020, we also completed the conversion to cane pruning for all the Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and some of the Syrah which will result in better consistency and more conformity. We also finally completed the Syrah Powerline Block using our Massale Selection, something that we have been working on for the past two years. Lastly, in 2020 we got our first fruit from our head trained Grenache (a longtime wish of Stephan's) which was planted in 2017.

Speaking of fruit, the 2020 harvest was definitely one to remember. As Patrick says, "it was a mad dash. Our initial start, the first week of September, was a little earlier than average, but not unique. It was hastened by our first and only real aggressive heatwave of the harvest season. After that heatwave, if you compare high temperatures between 2020 and 2019, you won't notice a big difference. However, 2019 had 10 days with highs below 85F and 4 days below 80F. On the other hand, 2020 had just 3 days below 85F! During this middle harvest window nearly everyday in 2020, we were between 90F and 95F. This meant we were constantly under the gun to harvest, picking day after day. Sometimes we were having to harvest multiple blocks in one day. Thanks to a good crush crew and some really top of the line crush equipment (thank you optical sorter), we avoided overripe fruit that would have ruined the potential of the wine".

In terms of style, Stephan says, "the 2020 vintage is in the same spirit as 2015 vintage, but with a different style. What I mean by that, is in fact 2020 was a very early vintage so we could expect big, ripe, sunny wines, but instead we are seeing wines with a very nice acidity, super brightness, low alcohol and therefore super balanced. Right now we just started the blend for each straight varietal (the final cuvée blend will be done in March) and I was surprised especially with the Syrah as to how well it was showing the different typicity of each block. I think this vintage will show very well the diversity of L'Aventure. We had a nice crop for each varietal and even though everything is showing beautifully, I will say that Mourvèdre and Grenache have amazed me the most for 2020. And let me tell you... to have these two grapes at the top of their game proves that the vintage is super nice and that the vines and winemaker are older and older and so better and better 🙌. As for the smoke taint, be reassured, L'Aventure didn't get any and it seems the same for all my colleagues in the Willow Creek district! Lucky Paso!"

