

## L'AVENTURE NEWSLETTER

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## 2008 VINTAGE NOTES

2008, somewhat like 2007 and 2006, produced very good quality from a "split vintage". A very warm start, followed by a long, cool finish to the growing season, gave us wines that are lush, wound well around a tight core, and finish with great length. This being said, there were a couple of mitigating factors around the vintage.

First, a small frost in the spring thinned crops. Second, and greatest in impact, was the shatter that occurred in mid June. Shatter is a temporal phenomenon resulting from extreme temperature changes during flowering. The effect is that the varietal that is flowering at the time of this radical temperature change fails to fertilize or propagate fruit. This reduced our Cabernet crop 80%. Shatter also effected our Grenache and Mourvedre, at closer to 20% loss.

Given the shatter issue during this vintage, there will be no "straight" Cabernet Sauvignon. While this loss of fruit means less L'Aventure from the 2008 vintage, the quality of the wines is very good, characterized by a supple elegance.

This is our first 100% estate produced Optimus. Remember that Optimus was Stephan's Cabernet Sauvignon /Syrah prototype, and therefore, originally made from all purchased fruit. Ten years later, voilà, 100% estate fruit.

**Optimus 2008** is simply luscious. Integrated aromas of fir, graphite, and acacia make an excellent nose. A



focused attack of crushed flowers, geranium oil, cherries, and plums wash over the palate, and finish with orange peel and toast. Best Optimus ever?

**Côte à Côte 2008** features tea and tobacco leaf, *garrigue*, and *jambon* in the nose, as well as blueberries and pencil shavings. The mouth is full of spicy berries, licorice, and red currants. This wine is impeccably integrated.

**Estate Cuvée 2008** is purple/black, with aromas of cedar box, wild blackberries, black cherry, and fresh, raw beef. Anise and cola flavors ride the big attack, resolving themselves in tight flavors of blueberries and acacia in the enormous middle palate, finishing long with orange rind and spice.

**Le Grand Verdot 2008** is a special Petit Verdot based cuvée for the 2008 vintage. Purple! Juicy, vinous aromas of

currant, blackberry preserves and licorice marry with the floral notes of crushed violets and "*garrigue*". Mineral notes (chalk, graphite) in the aroma also lead the broad, soft attack on the palate, followed by leather and *viande* wrapped around peppery, dark berry fruit. The mouth feel is dense and satiny.

**Estate Roussanne 2009** is perhaps Stephan's best Roussanne ever. Straw/green in color, the aromas of stone fruit and minerals are intense, with honeysuckle notes on top. A massive attack of winter fruit and dried stone fruit on the palate lingers long, finishing in vanilla and cardamom. A winner!

**Estate Rosé 2009** is a playful treat in very limited production that you must come to the winery to try. Buy some for the summer heat wave; you'll be glad that you did!



## ARTFUL FACELIFT “DAZELLES”



*Dazelle is “Lively and Pure, an artist who’s got character”*

*-Le Magazine des Arts*



Visitors to the winery will notice that the façade now sports a fresh, lively look in the form of an original “Live Performance” painting by renowned French artist Erwin Dazelle. The depiction of wine flowing into a glass is an integral theme throughout Dazelle’s work to be found in his first American Exhibition “A La Tienne” that debuted in Paso Robles October 12– 18 at the Paso Wine Center. While Mr. Dazelle was in town, he spent a few days at the winery creating the new look as onlookers witnessed this “Live Performance” art. Dazelles’

first American Exhibition Tour was “an American Dream come true,” says the artist, who grew –up in south west France playing GI Joe and hoping one day to come to America.

Erwin Dazelle’s work is multi-faceted. As a third generation stained glass artist, his graphics are bold and naïve, exhibiting a pop-chic tendency. While his American tour “A La Tienne” work is acrylic on canvass and linen, he is also expert in the mediums of plaster and clay modeling, and has recently designed a collection of *prêt-à-porter* wear for the French label *Paseo*.

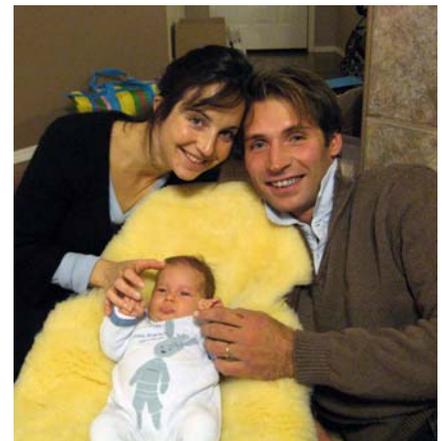
Inspired at an early age by his famous mother Blandine Strauss-Dazelle in stained glass art, he has carried over these techniques to canvas, and applied them in rich color to the themes central to his Basque ancestry, such as [The Basque Country](#), [Jambon Bayonne](#), and [The Bull Ring](#).

It is fitting that Mr. Dazelle’s art graces L’Aventure, as he and Stephan share the common dream of making America the place in which to fulfill their ultimate artistic expression. For more on Mr. Dazelle visit his website at [www.dazelleusa.com](http://www.dazelleusa.com).

### CLEMENTINE

Guillaume Fabre, one of Stephan’s two “right hands” in the winery, and his wife Solène, have welcomed baby Clémentine Marie into the world. Born October 20, 2009, Clémentine is a bright, smiley baby; a “moving (aka active!) baby” papa Guillaume relates. Although it sounds like they have the best of both worlds as he follows with “She sleeps 10 hours a night...she is a dream for her parents”! Clémentine is the fourth baby,

and fourth baby girl to be born into the L’Aventure “family “ in four years. First there were Kalista and Amelia, “The Peterson girls”. Then, baby Zoe danced into Chandler and Emily Smiley’s lives. Brushing aside the ubiquitous cliché, under the circumstances, this begs the question “Is there something in the wine?”



## RISTORANTE IL CORTILE

The newest addition to Paso Robles' "A list" dining scene is Il Cortile Ristorante. Located at 608 12th Street, the restaurant is housed in a new building that has been elegantly and simply appointed by owners Santos Macdonal and Carole Terranova-Macdonal. At Il Cortile, food and wine share the spotlight!

Carole, who works as Executive in Charge of Production for the hit show "The Biggest Loser" when she is not in the restaurant, grew up in a restaurant family in New York, where her Father taught her the importance that the personal touch makes in the customer's dining experience. Santos has worked at honing his culinary skills in many different kitchens for as long as he can remember. He has worked from the ground up, and his eclectic experience leads him to model traditional dishes a little differently, keeping his cuisine fresh for both diners and himself. Given his time in Italian kitchens, as well as his love of Italian food (who doesn't?), and having been mentored in LA by Giorgio Baldi, he moved naturally to



open Il Cortile.

Why Paso Robles, I asked? It turns out that with Carole's busy schedule the two ended up in Paso Robles for a delayed honeymoon a couple of years back. Having researched opening a place in Los Angeles, they asked themselves "why not the Central Coast?" After scouting all of the charming towns in the area, they settled on Paso Robles because of the growing food & wine culture that exists here.

The wine list at Il Cortile offers many delightful selections from Italy, but the focus is on Paso Robles wines. The rich, terroir driven, balanced palate that Paso wines tend to offer goes beautifully with the rich flavors

that Santos conjures from his fresh, as organic as possible ingredients.

Starters include a sensational Grilled Calamari, as well as Grilled Octopus, Asparagus Milanese, and a traditional selection of meats in the form of the Afetatta Mista. A variety of Burrata plates are available, pairing the rich, fresh, creamy mozzarella with prosciutto, melanzane, or crostini. The dozen pasta selections are creative and delicious, favorites being the Asparagus Ravioli, Spaghetti with Ragu, and Risotto di Pesce. Main courses are generous, and run from Veal Chop Porcini, to Branzino in Saffron Sauce, to Langostinos in lemon and oil, a signature plate. Finish with a glass of excellent Vin Santo and homemade biscotti, and you will experience one of Paso Robles' very best dining experiences.

Il Cortile is a very busy spot, so be sure to call for reservations. The restaurant is open seven days a week for dinner, and lunch everyday but Sunday. Call 805-226-0300 to reserve a place.

## NOS CAVES

As you stand outside the tasting room at L'Aventure, enjoying a taste of Optimus 2007, fresh air and sunlight drawing you outside, look to the right, at the beautiful, terraced Petit Verdote hillside, and you will see Stephan's next "dream come true". Beneath this hillside lies the future home of nos caves, that is, our cave.

Ever since he first "fell in love" with this place that we call L'Aventure, Stephan has envisioned a cave as part of the overall production scheme. "The cave is magic", he beams, "not just for visitors, but as regards production, as well". The plans for the 5,000 square feet have been drawn up and construction is projected for



spring 2011. This will be timed perfectly as our estate production will reach our planned capacity of 8,000 cases by 2012, and the caves will be necessary to house a good part of the vintage. Stephan is already thinking of a special alcove in which he can age his library wines, as well as those destined for club members!

The Calcareous shale soils are

ideal for such subterranean excavation, as witnessed by the incredible network of caves that links the Champagne houses of Epernay and Reims, in France. "The temperature variation is 0% underground, and coupled with the retention of moisture, is a perfect environment for aging in barrel as well as in bottle.

Eventually, the caves will also serve as a special entertainment destination for club members, VIP visitors, and all of us that work at L'Aventure seeking a cool place to beat the heat on those 100 degree days!

*Calcareous shale soils  
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subterranean excavation*



# DANS LE VIGNOBLE; 2009 HARVEST

Stephan Vineyards &  
L'Aventure Winery

2815 Live Oak Road  
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Phone: 805-227-1588  
Fax: 805-227-6988

Email: [stephamwines@tcsn.net](mailto:stephamwines@tcsn.net)

Visit us online at:  
[www.aventurewine.com](http://www.aventurewine.com)



"It was a typical growing season, up until harvest" is Stephan's introduction to the 2009 vintage notes. A very torrid last two weeks of August and early September accelerated maturity, and like 2004, set the stage for very ripe, juicy, forward wines of the vintage. At L'Aventure, we picked straight through, from the beginning of September up to the highly unusual rains of October 13. Picking feverishly, and nearly non stop, we brought in all of our fruit by October 12, the day before the deluge started! This, in contrast to many growers who waited through the rain and picked at the end of October, some well into November. This vintage will definitely present a mixed array of styles for red wines in Paso Robles.

White wine grapes bore the full brunt of the heat spell. Many vineyards reported desiccation, and nearly everyone suffered dehydration, resulting in yields of anywhere from 30% to 50% of normal, at best. Our L'Aventure Roussanne Estate yielded only 3 barrels from our block that usually produces 8 to 9. The result is a well balanced, dry table wine (Stephan adds "best ever").

The red Rhone fruit from this vintage also draws great praise from Stephan. He is not sure if the high quality is due to timely picking, the fact that the vines continue to mature, or to the seasonal characteristics and imprint of the vintage. "The Rhone varietals from 2009 are all beautiful, the best ever" he maintains. They are fantastic in terms of

structure, balance, acidity, and alcohol, and are also full of fruit and pleasure. This could be our best vintage yet!"

The excellent quality of the 2009 wines in barrel is also a product of five to six years of experimenting in the winery with such operations as extended pre fermentation cold soak of the must, whole berry fermentation, lower fermentation temperatures, and the reliance on native yeasts during the primary fermentation. This latter development is sympathetic to Stephan's rigorous development of a biodynamic approach in the vineyards, which now sees L'Aventure at roughly 90% biodynamic farming methods.

Stephan says that the integration of the use of wild yeast into his winemaking program is simply another stitch in the overall tapestry of grape growing and winemaking at L'Aventure. "Whether it will be the case in 2010 or 2011, I don't yet know" he says. "In the end, my commitment is more to making a biodynamic vineyard than a biodynamic wine" he

adds. "My real purpose behind becoming a biodynamic farmer is to give back to the land, and to keep the land clean". "On biodynamic wine, maybe I will change my mind, little by little". 2009 will see the advent of a couple of very limited blends that will definitely be "for members only". A Cabernet Sauvignon/Mourvedre blend is already field blended in barrel, and a Côte à Côte "cousin" (a second GSM with the emphasis on Grenache), will both be reserved exclusively for members. Roughly 10 barrels of each will be produced. This second vintage of 100% estate fruit will see Estate Cuvée and Côte à Côte as beneficiaries of a rigorous selection process. They have always been carefully selected, but now Stephan will redouble the selection system, culling only the *crème de la crème* from our best blocks to go into these, our flagship blends. Members should look forward to the 2009 vintage wines with anticipation. They promise to be extraordinary.



This picture taken by Larry Letters—[www.larryletters.com](http://www.larryletters.com)