

L'AVENTURE NEWSLETTER

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Special points of interest:

- Order form for next shipment enclosed
- Reserve space for May 16 Winery Dinner Now!
- The weather's great...come visit by appointment. Call (805) 227- 1588
- Check out our website for sales, upcoming events, the latest press; www.aventurewine.com

2001 RED WINE RELEASE

May 2003 sees the release of the 2001 vintage, our best to date. Nature was generous both in terms of quality, and quantity, as Stephan crushed 7,000 cases of his best wines yet. A long, classic growing season resulted in perfectly mature fruit, providing Stephan with the pallet from which to create stunning wines, in every case. Color is deep and dark, aromas are complex and focused, and flavors are rich, concentrated, and long in the mouth. These are wines to lay down and enjoy for years to come.

Estate Cuvee 2001

Truly the apex of Stephan's wine making here in California, this wine will be the reference point for future Estate Cuvee releases, as well as for the AVA, as concerns power and style. It is the first glimmer of things to come from L'Aventure's own vineyards. The blend is 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Petit Verdot, and 20% Syrah. The wine is non- filtered or fined, and spent 14 months in new French oak barrels. Only 500 cases produced.

Optimus 2001

Optimus was a true beneficiary of this excellent vintage, as our west side growers / partners were able to bring in top -quality fruit of nearly estate caliber, to compliment our own, at the base of the cuvee. By dropping fruits and managing irrigation in this abundant year, they provided us with superb resources with



Stephan
In the vineyard.

which to assemble our flagship *cépage*. A blend of 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Syrah, 3% Petit Verdot, and 5% Zinfandel, the 2001 Optimus displays a deep ruby color, with garnet backlighting, an explosive bouquet of floral, berry and non-fruit notes, and an elegant and lengthy palate. Please buy plenty for your cellar...this is a keeper! Three thousand cases were produced.

Syrah 2001

This is another, and possibly the best, in the line of classic, immense, Asseo Syrahs. (The '99, in magnum, isn't tasting too shabby!) Take a toe- hold, get a grip, and go for it! A black abyss in your glass, the wine releases it's aromas slowly. What begins as a bold, peppery , lyrical note, develops into complex roasted coffee and leather nuances, and

finishes in a crescendo of licorice, violets and...oh yeah, Syrah! Club members get first crack at the 350 case production.

Stephan Ridge Red 2001

Last, don't forget Stephan Ridge Red, our "baby Optimus". For reasons of style or logistics, Stephan will direct around 10% to 15% of our fruit in a given vintage to this wine, enabling him to concentrate the very, very best into Optimus. Needless to say, the 2001 Stephan Ridge Red is one excellent value at \$25.00 a bottle. Save the Optimus for the weekend...this is a wine to keep on hand for week-night enjoyment!

DECANT!!

On a serious note, decant! Verb transitive.

At the winery, or when we are on the road selling to customers, or when tasting wines with our club members, it is always remarkable to watch Stephan's wines change in glass. Sometimes, particularly with well made wines, it can take a while for wines to open-up, and show their very best, balanced character. It is precisely for this reason that I recently got down the Waterford decanter that my mother brought back from a visit to the "old sod," and that I've been packing around for some time. I called it into service to decant a particularly big California wine, and I haven't put it back up since! It seems that just about every wine that I put into it benefits from it's time spent there.

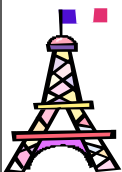


Decanters

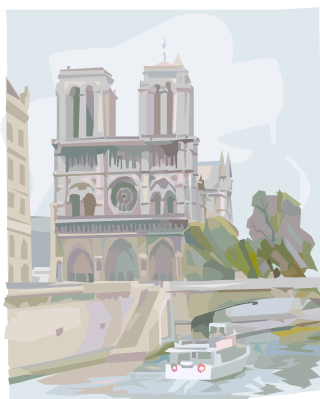
I was discussing this subject recently with an old friend, Master Sommelier Andrea Fulton-Higgins, who had the following sage points to offer. Andrea counsels us first that there are two basic reasons to decant. First, to remove sediment from a wine in bottle, and second, to aerate it in order to advance it's development and enhance it's enjoyment, in glass. Speaking specifically to this latter operation, she counsels us to choose a decanter that's big enough for the job. If the objective is to aerate the wine in order to "wake it up" - she hates the term "breathe" in this context - then, best to have a vessel with ample ullage after the wine is poured in. Don't fill past the shoulder of the decanter. Leave plenty of head-space for the wine. She suggests the Reidel "Dominus" decanter (unleaded), which will serve bottles ranging from 750 ml to six liters, or the

reliable "Cabernet" decanter, which can house magnums as well as 750 ml bottles. She also suggests decanting at table, instead of in advance of service. The idea is that, as the wine splashes into the decanter at table, with your main course neatly in front of you (we are talking about red wines, in the main), you will be able to chart it's evolution, and enjoy the changing nuances in your glass. Makes sense.

Ms. Fulton-Higgins is the regional representative for Reidel Cristal, as well as a wine educator and hospitality professional at Justin Winery. To reach her as concerns the proper decanting of wines, protocol concerning the decanting of wines (call her if you have some big Oporto wines on your hands...for that matter, call me!), or to order an excellent Reidel Decanter, call her at (805) 226-0830. You won't be disappointed.



"I love Paris in the springtime"...



PARIS, PASEAUX ROBLES

Claude Chazalon, his wife Chrystel, and their daughters Daphné and Diane, moved to Paso from Paris, France, just a year ago. In May, 2002, Claude followed a friend, Yves Julien, who owns an antique shop in town, to the central coast. Diminishing opportunities in France, and a life-long curiosity about the US compelled him, and by July, Paris was up and running. A matter-of-fact man, Claude speaks to me in short sentences, as he works around his kitchen. The stock pot simmering on the stove top answers the important questions. Fresh ingredients, simple, but artisan, bistro fare. Having operated *Le Clos de L'Alma*, and *Le Petit Boileau*, both in Paris, Claude has brought his outstanding country French cuisine, home-made pate' and *chariot de fromage* to "Paseaux". Call (805) 227-4834 for reservations.



Chef Kim and Claude Chazalon

CULLINARY ADVENTURES

The intense operations of bottling the 2001 vintage, and racking the 2002 behind him, Stephan is ready to set out on a culinary adventure, with the end in mind of sharing his wines with wine lovers everywhere, in the company of good cuisine. Here's a look at our winemakers dinner calendar as it currently stands.

May 2 Dinner at LA Farm, Los Angeles, California; Chef Jean – Pierre Peiny's menu includes Tartelette of Leek w/ Scallop and Lobster Sauce, Braised Lamb Shank, and Venison Loin w/ Celery as foils to our L'Aventure wines. Call (310) 449– 4000 for reservations.

May 5 Dinner at Mistral, Sherman Oaks, California: Henri Abergel's exquisite Brasserie will pair Grilled Quail w/ Mushroom Risotto, Alaskan Halibut w/ Fondue of Leeks and Cabbage, and Grilled Lamb Chops w/ Roasted Garlic and Green beans with Stephan's wines. Not to be missed for \$85.00 per person. Call (818) 981-6650 for reservations.

May 14 Dinner at La Folie, San Francisco, California: Chef Roland Passot has created an inspired menu to go with Stephan's new release 2001 red wines, and will dazzle you with two courses to begin, with a

L'Aventure Chardonnay vertical. Join us in La Folie's private dining room for a menu that bridges the classical with the innovative. Call (415) 776– 5777 for reservations.

May 16 Dinner at the Winery: Join Stephan and Chef Antonio Varia of Buona Tavola Restaurant for a Paso Robles Wine festival fête! The hearty wine country menu features Triologia di Risotti, Costolette di Vitello in "agridolce", and a Rack of Lamb in an Optimus Reduction Sauce. The evening will finish with Stephan and Antonio's collaboration from the 2002 harvest, "Asiago in Vinacce", a rare, wine cured cheese, which is a wine country tradition in Italy. Call the winery at (805) 227 –1588 for reservations.

May 30, 31 Hospice du Rhône; Come and taste Rhône and Rhône style wines from around the world at the Fairgrounds in Paso Robles. We'll be there, as will top producers from France, Australia, South Africa, and elsewhere. For information, call (805) 784– 9543.

July 24-26 Society of Wine Educators 27th Annual Conference, Bellevue, Washington. Stephan will join panelists to discuss The Syrahs of Paso Robles, California. Wine enthusiasts and professionals welcome to this three day conference featuring over 40 seminars. Call (202) 347– 5677 for more details.

August 18 Cookin' with Caprial, Caprial's Kitchen, Portland Oregon. Stephan joins renown chef, author and Food Channel personality Caprial Pence for an Outdoor Grilling class, pairing L'Aventure wines with Caprial's favorite grilled meats and vegetable dishes. This will be both a fun and informative evening, so, if you're from



The cellar as a

Dining Room

Don't forget the Paso Robles Wine Festival, May 17, in the Park, and Hospice du Rhône, at the Fairgrounds, May 30 and 31.

ESTATE CUVÉE 2002 FUTURES OFFER

Traditionally, "futures" offerings of Bordeaux were sold during the first spring following the vintage, in order to generate cash to cover the balance due from the previous harvest, for such items as new barrels, grape contracts and other capital expenses. As wines had finished their malolactic fermentation in barrel, and were "finished", savvy buyers would seek market advantage by buying the

wines while still in *barrique*, before going into bottle, at a price generally around 30% below market price. Certainly, the reputation of a given property had everything to do with the trust *négociants* would place in their wines, and the degree to which they would invest in the chateau's futures.

At L'Aventure, we are offering futures for the first time this spring, in the form of our

2002 Estate Cuvée. While the 2002 will differ from the 2001 as regards blend, it will continue to represent Stephan's very best effort in every vintage. We hasten to add that, at 30% off of the market price of \$75.00 per bottle, the Estate Cuvée represents one of the best values among California's top, collectable wines. Order 1-6 bottles for \$52.50 through June, 2003, for delivery in may, 2004. See your order form.



L'Aventure Winery

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L'Aventure...where Bordeaux meets the Rhone !

DANS LE VIGNOBLE: VINTAGE 2002

Club L'Aventure members have another excellent vintage to look forward to from our 2002 harvest. Inconsistent weather during the spring resulted in uneven flowering of some varieties, including Petit Verdot, Viognier and Cabernet Sauvignon. In the case of the first two grapes, we had little or no fruit in 2002, and you won't be seeing these wines in our cuvées. Cabernet Sauvignon, however, benefitted greatly from the uneven flowering, producing just 2 tons per acre of our best Cabernet ever, without our dropping a cluster of fruit! Syrah was less effected, but also gave us shorter than typical yields, coming in at 2 tons per acre as well, after having dropped some clusters at veraison. A slightly shorter, and warmer growing season than the '99 or 2000, and an early harvest (though still a few days after Bordeaux brought in their



resulted in our most developed, complex Cabernet yet. Not only did our Cab come in with high brix, but with excellent acidity. "This is a gift from nature", remarked Stephan. "It's a very unique product of our warm days and very cool nights here in west Paso Robles". This harvest also gave us our best Grenache to date, good enough for Stephan to blend with our estate Syrah to

Grapes at harvest

create our first –ever "Rhone blend". At 60% Grenache and 40% Syrah, it's a luscious, aromatic wine, with a "bright" character not present in our other wines. All in all, 2002 represents one of our two best vintages from a quality standpoint, unique in character, capturing the power of an excellent California harvest.

Cabernet!), resulted in a vintage characterized by complexity and power. The comparatively longer maturation cycle that Cabernet enjoyed in 2002- 10 days longer than Syrah- Stephan comments that "in 2002, we got tremendously high brix, but retained

