

L'AVENTURE NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Earthquake!</i>	1
<i>Salon Opening</i>	2
<i>Côte à Côte</i>	2
<i>High Street Adventure</i>	2
<i>Dinner Chez Vous</i>	3
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	3
<i>Stephan's 2002 Notes</i>	4

Special Points of Interest:

- ZinFest Dinner, March 19 at the Winery
- 2002 Vintage Release, June 1, 2004
- 2003 Estate Cuvée Futures Window, May-June, 2004
- Salon Opening April 1, 2004?

EARTHQUAKE CLAIMS ANGEL'S SHARE OF 2003 OPTIMUS

When the San Simeon quake hit us mid-morning, December 22, Dave DeBusk, our Vineyard and Operations Manager, was two tiers up, topping casks on tier three. A decent equestrian, Dave quickly executed the second-story, auto-dismount, and ran for open ground in front of the winery. From the rattling of the French doors in my office, I thought the Amtrak commuter was detouring through the winery and joined Dave as quickly as I could. Dagny Petersen, our Administrative Director, went out the side door — she thought a tractor was coming in the front door. Stephan, Beatrice, and family were in France, so missed out on their first-ever California earthquake. I called to inform them of the calamity, and Stephan's uttered "wow" many times. I gave Dave the phone to deal with this nightmare, such as their house having jumped four feet north off its foundation, and that we had lost approximately 1,000 cases of our 7,200 cases of



December 22, 2004 — Quakin' All Over



2003 vintage wine. Unfortunately, two tanks that were just finishing a difficult malolactic fermentation came off their moorings and collided, their variable tops popped open, the result being a serious loss of wine. More bad news.....these were among our best lots destined for the 2003 Estate Cuvée. It

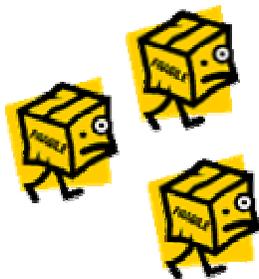
will be rarer still, when it debut's. The good news? There remain 6,000 cases of excellent 2003 vintage L'Aventure to enjoy...shaken, not stirred!

CLUB L'AVENTURE X 3

Due to popular demand — and increasing logistical challenges presented by our growing wine club — we have decided that in 2004, we will ship to our members three times a year and do away with the twice a year option. So few members had elected the

latter, that it created computer-related issues that are best resolved by standardizing the shipping schedule. February 15, June 1, and November 15 will be targeted shipping dates for this year. We continue, of course, to offer a winemaker's selection

or a custom case option, which is the feature appreciated most by our members. And, as is always the case, members are welcome to purchase quantities in excess of the six bottle minimum, in order to keep their cellars in showcase condition!



TASTING SALON OPENING

At long last, permits in hand, L'Aventure Winery will open its doors (French doors!) to visitors this spring. With construction moving ahead on schedule, we anticipate opening the doors by April 1.



L'Aventure Winery
Salon opens April 1, 2004

The Salon will be open from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Thursday through Sunday. We will continue to ask visitors to call ahead and to visit by appointment. This way we can continue to afford Club L'Aventure members and serious wine aficionados a quality tasting experience, and the necessary time to discuss the philosophical foundation and technical details that make L'Aventure unique. We will aim at hosting guests in small groups on the hour. A tasting of current vintages, barrel tasting, and a walk

through our vineyards to discover our special west-side *terroir* will be the docent program. We will just be getting our legs under us when May rolls around, and the 2002 release will be upon us. Collecting a few bottles of our estate wines from this outstanding vintage is reason enough to visit the Salon as these limited wines will be available first, and in some cases exclusively, to wine club members and at the winery. Give us a call, or e-mail us as we get into March, to confirm the opening day date. Then, gather up your friends and come enjoy Stephan's wines in their natural setting.

*Côte a Côte...hillsides,
side by side*

CÔTE A CÔTE

It wasn't easy. We started slowly, receiving just a few names a week. Then, a dozen would come through in a day. We loved Cal Poly professor William Ausmus' suggestion of Orpheus, for its reference to the Greek God whose harmonies captivate man. Alas, it is already registered elsewhere. Same for Elysium and

Crescendo. Maximus certainly is sympathetic to Optimus, and other "big timers" Magnus and Reine du Rhône caught our attention as well. Nocturnus was a bit dark, but so are Stephan's wines! Labyrinth, suggestive of complex blending, was a favorite among us all. All of these entries were refreshing in the

face of our standby "Rhône Cuvée." Then, at the eleventh hour, like a soft breeze blowing in through the window, young Molly McPhee came up with the winner. Côte a Côte! Miss Molly McPhee receives a double magnum of the 2002 Côte a Côte, along with our thanks. Thanks, Molly!

L'AVENTURE HITS THE HIGH STREET

Ms. Patrice Rietmann writes: "I am in London several times a year, and always frequent the Borough Market. While there in June, I tasted the Optimus from a lovely English purveyor who has some connection with Stephan's family. I was reluctant to even taste a California wine while in Europe...my focus has always been on French and Italian wines for my cellar, even though I grew up in LA, and

attended Cal Poly in SLO. However....one taste, and I was convinced enough to buy several bottles to drink while in London and even carried a couple home to drink in Washington state, where I now reside. Absurd to import California wine to Washington via London, don't you think? I leave for London again tomorrow, and I look forward to re-visiting the purveyor and telling him how happy I am he

arranged the acquaintance with your lovely wines." Thank you, Patrice!

If you too find yourself in England any time soon, you can contact our agents there to discover just where our wines can be found. Call Cartwright Brothers Vintners, Ltd., at 208 297 5004. Or, there's always the Borough Market.



ZINFEST DINNER

It's time again (already?) for Paso's annual PRVGA ZinFest Weekend. This year's celebration of the zinfactly delicious grape takes place March 19-21, with a variety of events being held at wineries throughout the area. (See www.pasowine.com for more information.) At L'Aventure, we're excited to welcome back Chef Antonio Varia of Buona Tavola Restaurant in Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo, to orchestrate a menu to complement Stephan's 1998 through 2001 Zinfandels. As has been the case with past dinners, this fête to Zinfandel will be held in the main winery,

where we can comfortably seat 50 guests.

Zinfandel is a grape related to the Primitivo of Apulia, both hailing from Croatia, so it's a sure bet that Chef Antonio's hearty, Mediterranean cuisine will truly enhance the elegant, powerful Zinfandels crafted by Stephan. And, while not commonplace in Italy, Zinfandel is not to be found at all in the lexicon of the French winemaker. Not surprising, then, that Stephan was tempted to try his hand at this distinctive variety that has come to be closely associated with our Paso winefield. Come and enjoy the charm of



Antonio Varia from Buona Tavola Stars again at L'Aventure

this grape as captured in Stephan's classic winemaking style. The evening's menu is enclosed. Please reserve a space by calling the winery. Buen Provecho!

DINNER CHEZ VOUS

Preston Black of Chicago guarantees that his fried chicken will "make you wanna slap your Mama" and that it will be a sublime foil to our Roussanne. Rich Tuohey of Sausalito, California, is thinking that a L'Aventure dinner "chez lui" for his closest 20 wine-collector friends would be a perfect way to celebrate

moving into his and wife Meghan's new Bay-view home — and christen their new wine cellar. Like Stewart McLeod of Seattle and Attorney Michael Saxe of Miami before them, these wine lovers are planning on hosting dinners in their homes for their serious collector- friends in order to introduce them to L'Aventure.

These dinners are infinitely more intimate than those held in restaurants, and truly enable guests to unwind and develop relationships with Stephan and his wines. If wine and food is a passion for you, and, like us, you love to mix serious wine enjoyment with fun, then, let's have dinner...chez vous!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Please join us for the following upcoming dinners and tastings.

February 26 - Dinner at 750ml in Portland Oregon. Call Rena at 503-224-1432 for reservations.

February 28 - Dinner with Stephan and co-host Laurent Grangien of Paso's own Bistro Laurent at The Scottsdale Culinary Institute, Scottsdale, Arizona. Call 480-425-3141 .

March 11- Dinner at Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel. This will be an exciting pairing of Stephan's wines with The Ritz' heralded cuisine. Call 949-240-2000.

March 2- Dinner at Ritz - Carlton Pasadena. 626-568-3900.

March 19-21 - ZinFest Weekend in Paso Robles. Dinner at the winery with Chef Antonio Varia on the 19th, open

houses at the winery Saturday and Sunday. Zin tasting and auction in town Saturday night. Call PRVGA at 805-239-8463..

March 23 - Dinner with Stephan at Alain Ducasse, New York City. Nothing to add here but "see you there!"

March 29 - Etruscan Dinner at Alloro Restaurant in Paso Robles, featuring L'Aventure and other Paso vintners. Call Fabrizio at 805-237-0600

*March 23, 2004...
Dinner with Stephan
at Alain Ducasse,
New York*



Chef Alain Ducasse

Stephan Vineyards

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

STEPHAN'S 2002 ESTATE WINES

For the first time in the history of L'Aventure, and maybe the last, I decided — because of the quality of the vintage — to make something that I'm generally against. Alongside the 2002 Estate Cuvée, I've kept some straight, estate-grown Syrah and estate-grown Cabernet Sauvignon. I have only 10 barrels of each, and am reserving them for Club L'Aventure members and Salon visitors. Why? Because I could not help myself! The naturally low yields from this vintage resulted in wines of great character that are complex of themselves, even before being blended to make Optimus or Estate Cuvée. If ever straight varieties will come from L'Aventure that are somehow close to my philosophy, it will be from this vintage. So, that is why I make the ex-

ception. These are exceptional wines. In 2002, I also made for the first time a Rhône blend, something I have been waiting for two years to do. The vintage gave me excellent Grenache, which I wanted to be the dominant force in the blend, so we are pleased to present "Côte A Côte" 2002, 60% Grenache, 40% Syrah. Again, for members only, as 7 barrels were all that I could produce, based on the ideal blend I found in my trials. Grenache brings aromatic power and freshness to the blend, as well as a rich, soft tannin finish, and excellent aging potential. Estate Cuvée 2002 is very powerful, like 2001, and has a "classic" personality, being long on the palate and a bit closed when young, a characteristic of the vintage.

These wines are very limited, so I encourage club members to invest in this spring release, so they can enjoy unique, collector wines in the future.

Stephan Asseo

February 2, 2004



Stephan in his vineyard