

L'AVENTURE NEWSLETTER

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2009 VINTAGE - AN IDEAL BLEND OF TERROIR, FRUIT AND WINEMAKING

Tasting the wines of the 2009 vintage in barrel, the consensus is that they are the most impressive blends we have tasted at this stage. The universal characteristic is a seamless opulence in the mouth. The wines are so well integrated, so fully developed, and so well made that they could be described as the best marriage of *terroir*, fruit, and winemaking that we have seen at L'Aventure to date (That's a marriage of three, but what the heck, who's counting!). In all of the wines, we see a broad attack, rich, deep palates, and a long finish. Through the rich fruit in the wines there emerges that "je ne sais quoi" element of taste that truly defines Stephan's wines and that sets them apart from others from the region.

Over the last 4 vintages, the growing seasons have exhibited an increasingly cooler trend. Stephan characterized 2007 and 2008 as "two vintages in one", starting off harvest with heat spikes, and then leveling off to cooler temperatures. In opposition, 2009 maintained relatively warm temperatures without seeing any sustained 100 degree plus heat spells. The characteristics of the 2009 vintage has given the wines a bit different shape, and we feel that it stands out for having profited from all of the positive benefits of this cooling trend.

The 2009 harvest began in early September and carried well into October. This classic vintage for Paso Robles produced low yields, excellent acidity, and, after 7 months on the vine, fully developed



aromas, flavors, and structure.

The 2009 growing season marks our second year of 100% estate fruit and was also the first during which Stephan and Dave would agree that the vineyard was in full production. While the majority of our 6,000 case production was from our mature blocks, we saw increased production from the young blocks which provided increased facets from which to create the complex and balanced blends L'Aventure is known for.

This vintage also saw our estate in its second year of a biodynamic regime, working without synthetic chemicals. Dave and Guillaume gave the Sunflower and Souslikoff

ploughs extensive work in the vineyard, turning and agitating soil for erosion control, creating heavily disked, tilthy soils for maximum cover crop effect. Compost was tilled into the vineyards and teas of nettle and silica were applied at key junctures in the vineyard cycle, such as pre-bloom and shoot elongation.

2009 also saw the production of two "members only" cuvées. The Sibling will be offered this spring, while Plus 16 will be offered this fall. As we evaluate these 2009 wines, we also offer a glimpse into the new whites and rosés from 2010. Turn the page for our Spring Release Tasting Notes.

SPRING 2011 RELEASE TASTING NOTES



L'Aventure Estate Viognier 2010

92% Viognier, 8% Grenache Blanc

The wine is perfect as an aperitif or with light shellfish dishes. A light gold-green in color, the aroma of green apples and a mineral note lead to a focused attack in the mouth of apple, pear, and citrus.

L'Aventure Estate Roussanne 2010

87% Roussanne and 13% Grenache Blanc

This wine has a deep green-gold cast. Aromas of fresh apricot and peach mix with soft floral notes in the nose. These aromas are repeated in the palate along with stone fruit flavors, crisp caramel apple and an earthy mineral note at the center.

L'Aventure Côte à Côte Rosé 2010

64% Mourvedre, 26% Grenache, 10% Syrah

The subtle pink satin color is beautiful! This gentle shadow of our Côte à Côte offers a bouquet of red spring flowers with a tight mineral note in the nose that lead to a soft entry in the mouth. Crushed rose petals, violet notes, and red berries carry long and finish cleanly.

L'Aventure Estate Rosé 2010

70% Syrah, 30% Cabernet

Sauvignon

Pristine pink-coral in color. Fresh rhubarb-strawberry preserves and melon notes predominate, with spring wildflower aromas as accents. The initial impact is soft in the mouth, as delicate raspberry and blueberry flavors lead to crispness suggestive of apricot, peach and grapefruit.

L'Aventure The Sibling 2009

35% Mourvedre, 35% Grenache, 30% Syrah

This "members only" cuvée is Stephan's version of a sister for Côte à Côte. High tone aromas of raspberry, violet, and pomegranate lead followed by soft fruit flavors of red cherry, blueberry, and violet candies which course long in the mouth. This is a unique wine that members will be very happy to have in their cellars. 200 cases produced.

L'Aventure Optimus 2009

50% Syrah, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Petit Verdot

Deep ruby-pomegranate in color, the wine exhibits aromas of blueberry, blackberry, and cassis, with underpinnings of graphite and tea leaf. Dense flavors of cola nut, blackberry, and currant are enveloped by tobacco and tea leaf. Cocoa and coffee are hiding above a long finish of vanilla and spice.

L'Aventure Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2009

91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9%

Petit Verdot

Dark and inky, with intense aromas of cola nut, black cherry, and cocoa. Cola, blackberry, and cherry dominate the attack, and are joined in mid palate by cassis and licorice notes. Long, resolved finish. Spectacular wine.

L'Aventure Côte à Côte 2009

42% Grenache, 33% Syrah, 25% Mourvedre

A dark ruby hue glistens in the glass. Rich notes of fresh plum, blueberry, and cherry are repeated and buoyed in the mouth by leather and rich, soft, elegant, polished tannins. Cocoa, acacia and the essence of *garrigue* (the scents of the herbaceous and woody plants particular to the French countryside in Provence) labor long through the spicy finish.

L'Aventure Estate Cuvée 2009

42% Syrah, 42% Cabernet, 16% Petit Verdot

Ebony at its center, with a dark purple robe, this wine is deep in every respect. Intense aromas of cola, licorice and wild blackberry set the stage. Cassis is there, as are black cherry and leather, as well as our omnipresent blueberry. The attack is magnificent, tremendously silky and opulent in texture. The palate revels in fruit as the finish is shaped by graphite, acacia and cardamom. This wine is perfectly balanced and promises wonderful aging potential in years to come.

THOMAS HILL ORGANICS

Many of you who have visited Paso have undoubtedly enjoyed the pleasure of an outdoor patio lunch or dinner at Thomas Hill Organics. Debbie & Joe Thomas have worked tirelessly over the last three years to establish what has become one of our prime dining destinations in town. The spirit of the restaurant is simply to bring the fresh and healthy organic produce from their Thomas Hill Farms to the table, where you can enjoy it along with local cheeses, and top quality local organic grass and well fed meats that capture the same localvore spirit. Their farm located on the east side of Paso Robles, specializes in heirloom tomatoes, fruits and nuts (over 800 fruit trees grow there!), as well as seasonal vegetables and greens, all of which find themselves in numerous expressions on the menu at Thomas Hill Organics.



invaluable air of authenticity and experience that one can only acquire by growing up in such a cultural tradition. Inspired by her experience around the family kitchen and table, she arrived in California and, here on the Central Coast, honed her craft with Pandee Pearson at Windows on the Water, and Megan Loring of the Park Restaurant. Julie brings an "out of the box" creative talent to the table, literally, as can be seen (and better, eaten!) in such starters as Open-Faced Duck Breast Grilled Cheese w/ Rinconada Dairy Poze Tomme, Duck Foie Gras and Tangerine-Grapefruit Marmalade, or Ground Pork Tacos with Avocado, Kimchi & Cilantro. Main courses include Singapore Butter Oat Style Prawns with Garlic-Chile Oil, Baby spinach, Egg, Kaffir Lime Leaf and Coconut Rice, as well as mouth watering wood oven baked, thin crust pizzas, such as the

L'Aventure staff favorite, featuring Caramelized Onions, Pink Lady Apples and Cambazola cheese drizzled with a Red Wine and Blackberry Reduction! There is truly something on the menu for everyone, and each selection is of the highest quality in both ingredients and inspiration.

Much of the art on the walls in the small indoor dining room is by Joe Thomas, who you will also see manning the pizza oven when he is not working out on the farm. Debbie runs the front of the house, and along with the well trained Thomas Hill staff, is there to steward your dining experience. A robust selection of Paso Robles wines (including L'Aventure Estate Cuvée) puts a warm accent on the dining experience here.

Thomas Hill Organics is open 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM 6 days a week, closed on Tuesdays. For reservations (you will need them) call 805- 226- 5888. Their address is 1305 Park Street, and the entrance is located in the alley off 13th Street between Park Street and Spring Street. You can also visit them online at www.thomashillorganics.com.

MEMBERS ONLY!

In order to offer club members something extraordinary, Stephan took a long and creative look into the various lots that he made in 2009. While blending Optimus, Côte à Côte, and Estate Cuvée, he decided to craft two members only cuvées for this vintage: The Sibling and Plus 16.

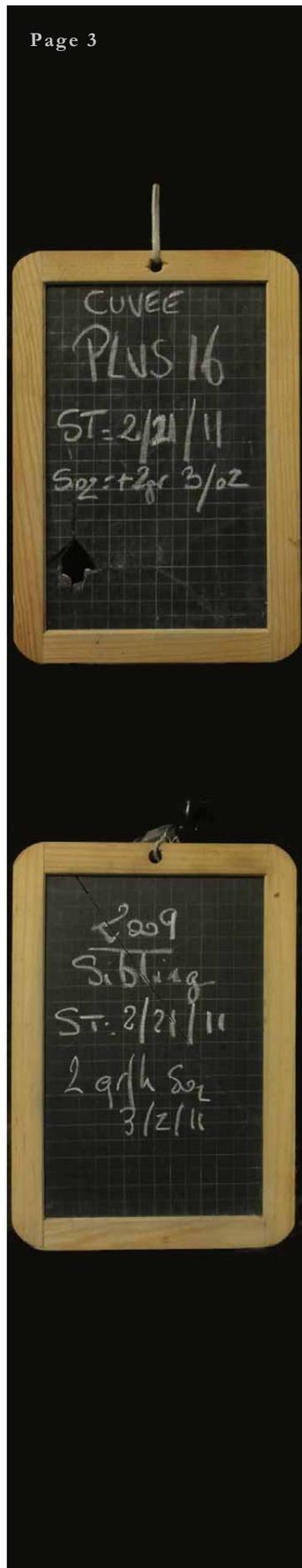
The Sibling is a sister to our Côte à Côte. While the blend remains Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, it is the spirit of the wine that truly distinguishes it from its exalted relative. A violet hue is perhaps the first suggestion of the bright floral characteristics that differentiate it from Côte à

Côte. High tone aromas of raspberry, crushed violet and fresh morning *garrigue* are so pleasant, and so excite the nose, that one will want to linger awhile before sipping the wine. In the mouth, these same flavors mix with pomegranate and blueberry and travel long, through a soft, spicy finish. One might say that The Sibling is simply a brighter, softer version of Côte à Côte, but that would be a mistake. It has a style all its own. 35% Grenache, 35% Mourvedre, 30% Syrah. 200 cases produced.

Plus 16 will be offered this fall and is a special blend of 42% Cabernet, 42% Mourvedre, 16% Syrah.

Originally a 50/50 field blend of Cabernet and Mourvedre, Stephan decided to add a little Syrah to lend some softness and femininity to the wine.

Plus 16 is dark ruby in color. The earthy nose is supported by black fruit and a touch of oak. The attack is smooth with a lot of crushed fruit balanced with good acidity. Ripe tannins provide nice structure and a long finish to this medium-full bodied wine. It will age well for 6 to 10 years. Wine Club Member Don Beane's inspired entry to our naming contest won him a double magnum of this luscious cuvee. Only 220 cases produced.





Stephan Vineyards & L'Aventure Winery

2815 Live Oak Road
Paso Robles, CA 93446

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

Email: stephanwines@tcsn.net

Visit us online at:
www.aventurewine.com

DANS LE VIGNOBLE; 2010 HARVEST

2010, while only slightly up from 2009 state wide, produced roughly 8,500 cases for us for the first time since 2005. After 5 years of semi drought, 25 to 30 inches of rain encouraged vine growth and leached soil salts which is good for both ground and vine. Letting nature take its course, Stephan, Dave, & Guillaume managed yields upwards ever so slightly. The result is a cadre of excellent wines, including those you know and love (Estate Cuvée, Côte à Côte, and Optimus) as well as a couple of "members only" cuvées, and two excellent rosés.

In the vineyard, 2010 allowed for the full implementation of Dave & Guillaume's new toys, I mean tools. The hedge trimmer, the Souselikoff and sunflower ploughs, along with two tractors all got a work out through this vigorous campaign. No frost, no shatter, and virtually no pest issues made 2010 a defensive rather than offensive farming year. It was our coolest growing season



ever and the early ripening white varieties, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon flourished, while the boys worked hard managing the Grenache and Mourvedre to maturity.

Inside the winery, the fruit went through a gentle destemming and crushing followed by a pass over two sorting tables to remove any stems and green parts leaving us with only berries for fermentation. The fruit then went from the sorting table into a custom spec stainless steel bin which was dumped directly into the tank.

In the biodynamic spirit, native yeasts were used in a greater percentage than cultured yeasts. The results are still

under review as we study the ability of the native yeasts to stand up to alcohol levels and effectively conduct the fermentation process. This process can be a challenge for yeast when presented with fruit as mature and rich as ours.

The outlook is very good for the 2010 vintage. We will most probably produce again a "straight" Cabernet Sauvignon, and maybe even return to a "straight" Syrah (the first since 2005). This will depend on the blending process, which will not take place until May 2011. We are looking forward to tasting the specific qualities that this very interesting vintage will produce.

NEW ON BOARD

Times change, life moves on, and here at L'Aventure we find ourselves with some fresh faces. After 6 years, Office Manager extraordinaire Dagny Peterson has moved on to spend more time with her young family. Tasting Room Manager Jacob Toft has decided to focus on his eponymous brand full time, and Tasting Room Attendant Maggie Tillman finds herself now full time at her family's property Alta Colina. Our jack of all trades, Riley Hubbard is off harvesting in Australia to expand the horizons of her career in the wine industry. With this exodus, we had some big shoes to fill and would like to introduce you to our new team members.

Marissa Winchester now plays the lead role of Office Manager. Marissa comes to us having worn many hats in the

wine industry and has jumped in with both feet, already proving herself an

indispensable member of the team. Plus, she has great leopard print shoes!

In the tasting room we present Dudley, Stein, & Wright (yeah, it

sorta sounds like a 70's prog rock band). This dynamic, young trio has brought a fresh perspective to the salon.

Robert Dudley manages the tasting room, and brings a history of wine industry insider experience with him. On the fast track toward becoming a lawyer, Robert detoured into the wine business as a compliance professional, and soon found that it was the



"wine" in "wine business" that he most appreciated. Also a home brewer, his career is fermenting along nicely.

Eric Wright comes to our tasting room having a background in the restaurant industry. He has completed his intro level sommelier classes, and is into wine & food, big time!

Last, but not least, Kendahl Stein is our newest Cal Poly recruit. With a degree in Marketing & International Business, Kendahl spent a sabbatical in Rome studying food & wine to further her education. Rough assignment!

We are happy to welcome these new additions and as you visit or correspond with us, I know that each of these new members of the L'Aventure family will take the best care of you.