

2013 VINTAGE TASTING NOTES

"About the characteristic of the vintage I will say that 2013 (like 2012) was a very early vintage, which means ripe style but perhaps with more firm tannins. I think, the trap in 2013 was to make big, heavy wine, so I tried during the vinification (while still keeping the style of the vintage) to work more on the elegance, the balance instead of the power. I wanted to make sure this wine was "still pleasurable and drinkable" more than bodybuilding even though you will see it is a big baby ☺!
Enjoy my friends!!"- Stephan Asseo

Tasting notes can be very singular which is why this year we did things a little different for our tasting notes...we asked the L'Aventure team to participate! Right before racking, on a Thursday morning, Stephan, Beatrice, Chloé, Dave, Marissa, Darren, Chandler, Jillian, and Leanne put on their "tasting hats" and tasted through all the 2013 vintage and this is what we came up with for each wine. Enjoy!

ESTATE CUVÉE BLANC 2014 **52% Roussanne, 28% Grenache Blanc, 20% Viognier**

Pale gold straw color with an exotic nose of white floral aromas. Dry and crisp with a richly textured mouthfeel, impressive for a white wine. Notes of lemon and honey with a solid core of minerality reflecting the L'Aventure estate. A finale of subtle spices provides a beautiful finish.

ESTATE ROSE 2014 **37% Syrah, 30% Mourvedre, 19% Grenache, 14% Petit Verdot**

A softly muted nose with a beautiful pale pink hue. Explosions of strawberry, lavender and raspberry entice the palate. This dry, crisp wine is just as at home on the patio as it is in the dining room.

OPTIMUS 2013 **48% Syrah, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Petit Verdot**

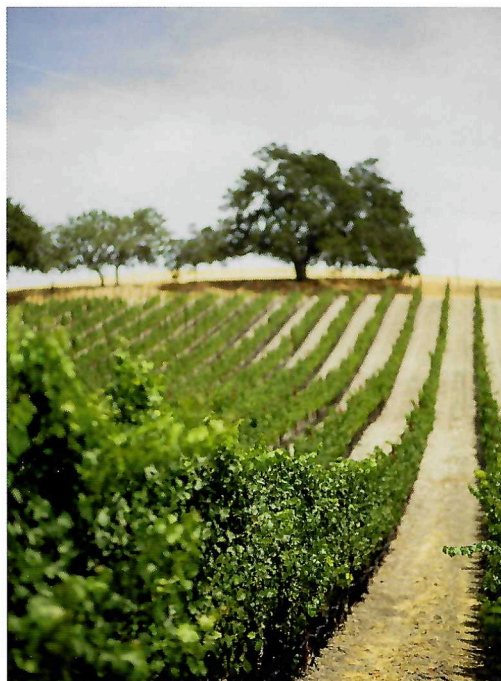
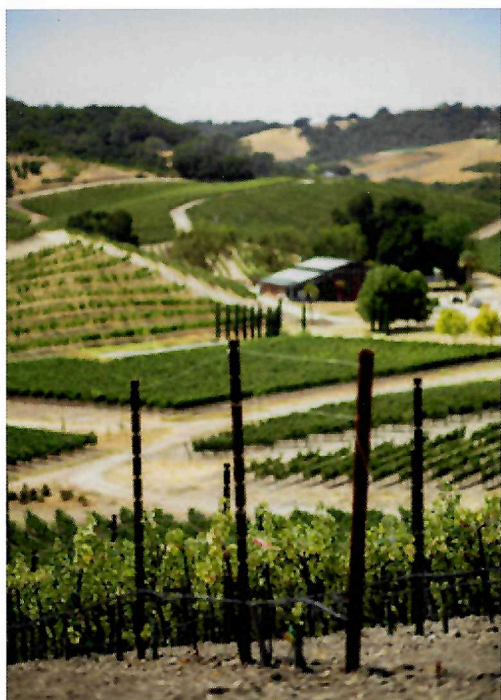
Optimus has gorgeous deep nose, full of reduction of blackberries and raspberries. A fresh, juicy attack leads to a medium/full body with a nice integration of solid tannins. The finish is long and well balanced, for sure a classic.

ESTATE CUVÉE 2013 **43% Syrah, 42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Petit Verdot**

The nose is seductive, full of dense dark fruit. A luxurious, silky texture leads to a huge attack. This is a full-bodied wine with big tannins, yet it retains balance and elegance, providing a perfect, long expressive finish.

COTE A COTE 2013 **40% Mourvedre, 30% Grenache, 30% Syrah**

Rich in color, dark opaque core. A beautiful, ripe nose integrating black and red fruit with a touch of earth. Attack brought on with red cherries, strawberries, thank you Grenache! A silky texture in the mouth, with nice volume, full body, refreshing acidity and big tannins that are well integrated. It is a touch more masculine than 2012, due to the Mourvedre! A very elegant, long finish, not too exuberant.



2013 VINTAGE TASTING NOTES CONTINUED...

SIBLING 2013

41% Grenache, 41% Syrah, 18% Mourvedre

Balanced nose with hints of dark red fruit and a touch of vanilla. Loganberries, Satsuma plums, and a hint of licorice envelope the palate with a very even mouthfeel from start to finish.

A delicate attack with soft tannins frames this elegant wine, which finishes strong with more fruit lingering on the tongue long after the last sip.

ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2013

96% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot

Deep, dark nose of black fruit with hints of oak. A mouth feel that is velvety and rich with leather and cigar box. Super attack, full body and explosion of fruit!

Nice smoky finish with big, bold integrated tannins. Very elegant.

CHLOE 2013

(Fall Release)

71% Syrah Black McVey, 29% Old Grenache Block (both cofermented)

What a nose! Very expressive with freshly crushed red fruit. Spectacular strawberry and raspberry fruit attack. Dense, elegant, and big yet balanced. Very tight, silky tannins create a long finish. Like climbing a mountain over the start and slowly rolling down the other side, enjoying the ride to the finish.

LASTLY... LET US INTRODUCE "FOR HER"



"I had already experimented with co-fermentation through the Chloé, which is a very pleasurable wine but I wanted to do a wine that was a little more focused, straight, and with a different dimension. In other words, I was waiting for the opportunity to think outside of the box. For the 2013 vintage, I created this cuvée using Syrah, all my Monastrell (Spanish clone of Mourvedre), and Viognier all co-fermented. When I tasted it, I thought this could finally be the cuvée that I would name for my wife, Beatrice. It corresponds to her personality: it is rigorous, has character, density, and ages with grace and beauty. It took me over thirty years to finally find the right cuvée for her!" For Her 2013 will be a fall release for our wine club members to be enjoyed with loved ones (in a few years, of course!).

FOR HER 2013

(Fall Release)

72% Syrah Hill Top Block, 23% Monastrell Block, 5% Viognier (all cofermented)

Very dense, rich opaque color. Deep, profound, ripe nose with hints of spice, nuts, and black fruit. Beautiful attack with a sharp structure from the start! Silky in the mouth with a full body yet super balanced and elegant! Perfectly round tannins that leave a long, weighted finish on the tongue.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE L'AVENTURE VINEYARD

As Stephan always says, "you can have the best winemaker in the world, if your fruit is not good, your wine will never be great". At L'Aventure, our philosophy starts and ends with the vineyard. Which is why, we thought it would be important to take advantage of the newsletter to share all the work that goes into the vineyard to make quality wine...

Our philosophy toward viticulture has always been more of a labor intensive, detail oriented, "haute couture" approach. We have 57 acres planted with a high density of 2100 vines per acre, equaling a total of 120,000 vines. With such a high density, the vines are pushed to be in constant competition with one another, coaxing each of them to produce only the best fruit possible. It also results in very low yields with our vines averaging only 2 tons per acre! With these high quality, low yields, we produce about 1 bottle of L'Aventure per vine. In comparison, the majority of other wineries regularly produce upwards of 4 to 6 bottles per vine! Of course, this philosophy generates quality but it does have a price. Let's start by saying; each individual vine gets the same dedication from our crew who spend the majority of their year tending to the vineyard. The main vineyard work cycle begins in January and does not finish until the end of harvest. That being said, the dormant season does still require some vineyard work from a smaller crew.



The long-term sustainability of our estate is important to us so we follow organic practices in our vineyard. Rather than spraying chemicals, we pass the tractor through each row two to three times per year, which takes two people and 15 days to finish each pass. If we were to spray herbicide for example, that would take us two days using only 1 person. Of course we would save time by spraying, but we feel that by using the organic method we are respecting our vineyard over the long term. We also believe that the quality will continue to grow with this method.

We start pruning in January. Each vine is pruned very tightly, creating a larger amount of grapes at a smaller size. With smaller berries, using the same weight of fruit, we have a higher skin to juice ratio, which contributes more polyphenols to the wine. We have had the same seven person pruning crew learning and working directly with Stephan for the past 6 years. The crew closely follows his instructions as he transfers some of our less vigorous blocks to a very specific pruning method called Double Guyot. This method involves keeping two canes every year, which will be the source of the next season's new growth. The blocks that contain more vigorous grapes such as Mourvedre and Grenache are maintained in the traditional Cordon Pruning method. Both methods are shown in the pictures below.

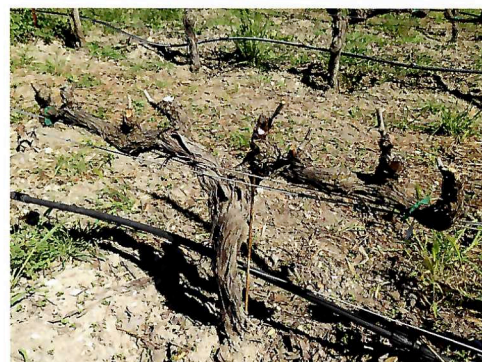
During the pruning period we also use tractors to control weeds and spray organic nutrients if necessary. On top of weed control, there is another extremely important tractor process we perform during that period. We use the disk and shank implements throughout the vineyard to oblige the roots to reach down as deep as possible in the earth. This goes back to Stephan's philosophy the "we work the earth". With this process, rainwater penetrates deeper into the hillsides and ultimately gets absorbed into the limestone, which is great during the growing season. It also obliges the roots to go further and exploit the real expression of the terroir! A fun fact: When digging the caves, some of the younger vines already had roots at 18 feet underground! Additionally, the disk and shank process helps the soil to breathe. In a way, we "de-compact" the soil, creating a type of mattress of air, which limits the evaporation. This is particularly important at this time, as water is an issue!

Suckering is the next step, by taking out all of the shoots on the vine that have no interest to us and that basically "suck" all the energy out of the vine. Most wineries will do this once a year but we do it three times a year! A very specific crew that knows what they are doing takes on the responsibility. It asks a lot of attention and effort from them but we want to make sure that we only keep the shoots that will create the best fruit.

By the time suckering is finished we have already made it to June. At this time, we do something that is still quite rare in California. We bought a machine called a "souffreuse" that disperse/sprays sulfur in powder form. By spraying sulfur during the flower bloom of the vines, we will actually warm the cluster while blooming. This warming will give better fecundation and balance the berries on the cluster. This also limits the chance of shatter. The procedure usually takes about 2-4 days to finish.

Parallel to that, we also do what we call "la lavage", which means "vertical canopy". When the canopy has reached 2 ½ to 3 feet in length we guide them in to trap wires. This directs the shoots to grow vertically. Of course this is done by hand because we have a huge foliage canopy (4 feet). After the initial training, the shoots continue to grow which means we have to follow back and retrain them up to 3-4 times per year!

As all of this is happening, we do somewhat of a "crazy job" to the Mourvedre and Grenache in our vineyard. After the flowering, when the berries are the size of little peas and before the grapes are completely closed (we still see the stem), we go in the vineyard and cut all of the wings and bottoms off of the clusters. We make, in a sense, smaller grapes. The reason behind this step is that instead of having 5 big clusters, we have 12 small clusters. We prefer to have a bigger ration of skin and seeds for the same weight! Now trust us when we say, this takes quite a long time to do...especially by hand!





In mid-July, with harvest only 1 ½ months away and veraison starting to color the grapes, we go back in the vineyard and do some “fine tuning”. We remove clusters that are too large or, more importantly, have delayed maturation of the berries. This allows us to be certain that there is balance between clusters in the vineyard as we prepare for harvest.

The timing of harvest is very important; when it is very hot we can have as little as one day to pick fruit before it transitions from good to overripe. This is why we have invested in a lot of tanks (more than average for our size); so that each block on our vineyard can be picked at the right time and complete fermentation on its own schedule without having to move for another block that is ready to pick. Our entire vineyard is harvested by hand in the morning so that the grapes arrive to the winery chilled or cold. Upon their arrival, all berries are hand sorted; we like to imagine them as “caviar”.

MEET OSCAR ALEXANDER CALVEZ



Stephan and Beatrice's son, Antoine and his wife Tess, welcomed a beautiful and healthy baby boy on December 15, 2014. Oscar is the first child for Antoine and Tess, making him the first and only grandchild (for now)!! We can't wait to see him grow up. And who knows he might follow in his grandfather's footsteps and become a winemaker! Cheers to the new generation!

STEPHAN ASSEO NAMED WINE INDUSTRY PERSON OF THE YEAR

At this year's Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance's annual winter gala, entitled “The Rubber Boot Ball”, the Paso Robles wine country community came together to recognize Stephan Asseo of L'Aventure winery for his contributions toward the success of the Paso Robles wine industry. As an experienced vigneron, his farming techniques and philosophies were quickly recognized by the local grape growing community, spurring a renaissance of creative ideas for many of the new vineyards at the time. “Stephan's influence on the appellation, beyond the national and international notoriety he has drawn with L'Aventure wines, has been exiting.” Said Marc Goldberg, Winemaker/Proprietor, Windward Vineyard. “Prior to his estate vineyard maturing, he sourced grapes locally and influenced how growers and winemakers could work together to produce high quality



wines. Stephan is the embodiment of the maverick spirit that is Paso Robles, which is evident in the unique and inspired wines he creates.” Some of the L'Aventure team was able to come and support Stephan at the event!

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