

The 2013 Harvest is Here!



Fall 2013 Newsletter

Bacigalupi

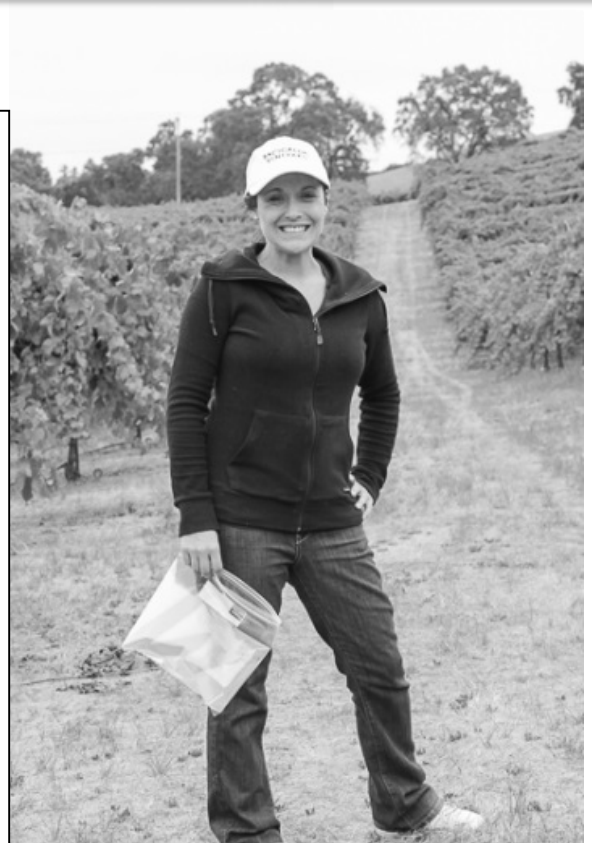
Volume 6 Issue 2



Lucky Thirteen

On the heels of a near perfect season, 2013 had some big shoes to fill. The most challenging aspect of harvest and farming in general is the unpredictability of Mother Nature. Weather can be friend or foe, and growers are constantly trying to find that perfect balance that brings all aspects of farming together. So far, the 2013 vintage has been able to do just that. From bud break in the spring to harvest in the fall, this year is shaping up to produce some exceptional wines. Perhaps this will ease the stigma, at least in wine country, of the number thirteen being unlucky?

Harvest at the Bacigalupi Vineyards started in the early morning hours on Thursday, August 22nd 2013. We picked our chardonnay from the Goddard Ranch with the pinot following close behind just one week later. The 2012 Rosé of Pinot was such a hit that we picked more Pinot Noir this year and will make about double our production in the same saignée style. We anticipate starting to pick our Zinfandel and Petite Sirah pick by late September, which typically don't come in until October.



There is no one better to get the details about what's happening in the vineyard than my dad; our vintner John Bacigalupi. He walks the vines all year long and has a front row seat to all the action.

“Bloom this year was particularly long and as a result we see a slight unevenness in the bunches. This makes for a challenge in determining when the fruit is ripe. In addition there are higher acids this year due to the cooling trends so we needed to wait until some of that dropped off to pick. We thought we were going to start even earlier until things cooled off mid-August.



Suddenly we saw cooler temperatures, slowing the pace of grape ripening, allowing more time for fruit to mature on the vines and us more time to prepare. This additional hang time, leads to more balanced maturity on the vine, creates more complexity of flavors and aromas and gets the acidity, sugar levels and the tannins at the right balance.”

We refer to harvest as our super bowl. It's all hands on deck, 24 hours a day for several weeks if not months. Power naps are essential, tractors become our main mode of transportation, and by 10:00 am dad is eating a turkey sandwich because he has been up picking since 2:00 am so by his stomach's standard, it's lunch time. And after the last grape has been harvested, and all the juice is resting safely in the barrel, it's time to get a manicure, a foot rub, and take a well-deserved vacation. But such is life when you live and work in paradise.

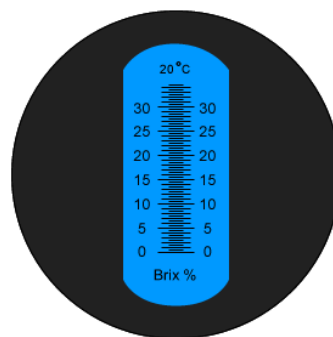
Written by : *Katey Bacigalupi*

Harvest Q and A

During this time of year we get visitors from all over the world coming to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of harvest. We get many questions about what goes on around crush time so we have compiled the most commonly asked questions with answers that are exclusive to our vineyards.



Refractometer



Q: How do you know when the grapes are ready to pick?

A: We will go out to a specific block and grape varietal and sample the individual grapes from several hundred clusters throughout that block. Those grapes are carefully smashed to release the juice but not hard enough to crunch the seed. We then use a tool called a refractometer to measure the sugar level or Brix in the grapes. The refractometer uses a prism that reacts differently to light by giving a reading on a scale depending upon the amount of sugar that is available in the sample. When the sample reads between 24-26 Brix is when we pick that block.

Q: Do you pick by hand or machine?

A: All of our vineyards are picked by hand. We have a crew of about 12 workers who pick mostly at night moving quickly through the vineyard row by row, vine by vine, using shears or a curved harvest knife to carefully cut off the ripe clusters. Each worker has his/her own small picking bin. When full, the smaller bins are dumped into larger macro bins that are on a tractor which follows the crew down the rows. When the macro bins are full they are then transported by the tractor to the loading dock where they are placed on the hauling truck and tied down securely for their journey to the winery.

Hand harvesting may seem traditional or behind the times. With technology being where it is these days, everything seems to be moving at high speed. But when it comes to quality, nothing beats doing things by hand. It's like the saying goes, "many hands make light work."

Q: Why do you pick at night?

A: Harvesting at night benefits both the grapes and employees. It's beneficial to bring in the fruit to the winery as cold as possible. It stabilizes the sugar and makes the berries more resilient to early breakage which means you get more free run juice, the highest quality juice when you crush at the winery. The fruit is fresher and the stems are stiffer and easier to cut. In addition it is better for the workers as conditions are cooler and much more manageable.

Charles & Helen Bacigalupi first harvest



Q: How long is harvest?

A: Harvest time is different for every grape grower and region. Since the Russian River Valley is most known for its cool nights and warm days we experience a longer growing season than our neighboring appellations. The Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grape varietals usually reach ideal sugar levels first and are typically picked around the first week of September. Zinfandel and Petite Sirah are harvested later in the season due to their thicker skins. We usually begin harvesting these varietals late to early October and finish by late October.

Tasting Notes

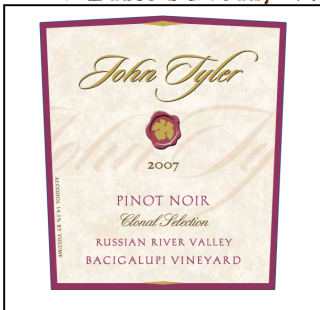
Please note the following tasting notes are for the default shipment only. Customized notes are available upon request.

2009 Zinfandel



2009 was a great year for Zinfandel in the Russian River Valley. This beautifully balanced wine has a classic raspberry jam aroma. Hints of cinnamon, cocoa and baking spices compliment the ripe, sweet red and dark fruits. Nice tannins finish broad and lush across the palate. The cool weather patterns of morning fog and warm afternoons helped keep a vibrant acidity which will contribute to its age-ability. 220 cases produced

2007 Pinot Noir, Clonal Selection (100% Pommard Clone)



The highly desirable Pommard Clone (named for the village in Burgundy) is widely considered to produce some of the finest wines in the world. It is a difficult clone to cultivate due to its sensitivity to light, cropping levels, soil types and pruning techniques. It takes an almost perfect growing season to bottle a Pommard clone on its own. 2007 saw ideal growing conditions in the vineyard resulting in a long hang time.