

The Helm



WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2024





Dear Wine Club Members,

Happy Autumn from Dry Creek Valley! Harvest is the most magical time at the winery, as all the hard work throughout the growing year rewards us with beautifully ripened fruit ready to become our newest vintage. Fittingly, as we reflect on the incredible journey from vine to bottle, we're proud to shine a spotlight on our grower partners. Over the past 13 years, Director of Winemaking Tim Bell's hands-on approach and close relationships with our longtime growers have earned him an intimate understanding of each of our partner sites, making them seamless extensions of our estate program. The hardworking families and the exceptional fruit they've grown for us over the decades play an invaluable part in the character and quality of the wines you love. Learn more about Vogensen Ranch, Buchignani Ranch and Somers Ranch in the pages ahead.

Inside, you'll also find insights from another set of dedicated employees, our hospitality staff, who go above and beyond during the holidays and year-round to create magic for our members. Find their recommendations on wines to drink now.

We are profoundly grateful for the loyalty and hard work of our growers and winery team and we're thankful for you and your ongoing support that inspires us. As we celebrate in the coming months, we hope you feel the warmth and community that defines Dry Creek Vineyard.

Cheers to a beautiful fall season!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Stare Wallace".

Kim Stare Wallace
President



On the cover: "Vanitie" by Sonoma County artist Michael Surles

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HIGHER ON THE VINE

These family farms share our “no compromises” philosophy.

WHEN YOU CHOOSE A BOTTLE OF DRY CREEK VINEYARD WINE, YOU CAN BE SURE EACH and every grape was grown on one of our own estate vineyards or that of a small local family farm. Our dedicated grower partners embrace our reverence for the land, our “no compromises” commitment to quality and our belief in community. Like family-owned wineries, multi-generational farms are an increasingly rare breed, so as we celebrate the spirit of Dry Creek Valley this fall, we are proud to feature three of our longstanding partners: Vogensen Ranch, Buchignani Ranch and Somers Ranch. Each vineyard, with its unique site expression, contributes significantly to the character and caliber of our wines.

VOGENSEN RANCH: THE HEART OF ZINFANDEL

Nestled in the northwest part of Dry Creek Valley, Vogensen Ranch stands out for its rugged, picturesque terrain. Rising more than 800 feet off the valley floor, this vineyard is known for its rocky, iron-rich soils and steep slopes, which create challenging farming conditions but contribute significantly to the character of the fruit. The vines, with the oldest blocks planted in the late 1970s, are a mix of old-school, head-trained vines and newer trellised ones planted in small blocks.

“Sometimes I visit Vogensen just to take in the view and clear my head.”

The fruit from Vogensen Ranch plays an important role in our Heritage Vines Zinfandel and is also showcased as a single-vineyard bottling. The vineyard’s high elevation imparts bright red fruit characters, with notes of cranberry and cherry, and a unique spice profile that includes cinnamon, nutmeg and white pepper. These quintessential Dry Creek Valley qualities bring balance and brightness to our blends.

Matt Vogensen, who took over managing the vineyard from his father, Joe, is a no-nonsense guy who takes tremendous pride and care in his farming. “We’ve worked together for almost 13 years, and he also oversees the farming of all of our estate vineyards. Whether it’s adjusting leaf canopy to improve sunlight exposure or ensuring precise picking schedules, he knows exactly what I’m looking for,” Tim Bell, our Director of Winemaking, explains.

Tim’s connection with Vogensen Ranch goes beyond the viticulture. “Sometimes I visit Vogensen just to take in the view and clear my head,” he shares. “There’s a winding road up to the top level of the vineyard where you can look out west into the mountains and see a canyon that goes off into the distance, with not a soul around. It’s one of my favorite places.”

Vineyard Manager Matt Vogensen at his family’s farm.



BUCHIGNANI RANCH: A LEGACY OF OLD VINES

Buchignani Ranch, at the northern end of Dry Creek Valley, boasts a rich history and a remarkable collection of old-vine Zinfandel. Managed by JoJo and Susie (Buchignani) Garcia (he farms, she runs the business), this vineyard is a testament to the enduring legacy of small family farms. The vines here, some dating back over 100 years, produce fruit integral to our Old Vine, Heritage Vines and Historic Blocks Zinfandels. We’ve worked with Buchignani Ranch for over 11 years, cultivating a deep understanding of this extraordinary site.

The vineyard is divided into three distinct blocks: the Pumice Block, Big Block and Hill Block, each contributing a unique dimension to our wines. The Pumice Block, with its intense fruit and peppery notes; the Big Block, with its rich concentration; and the Hill Block, with its lighter body and spice qualities, all add to the complexity and completeness of our Zinfandels.

“The vines produce high-quality fruit with intense flavors.”



Susie (Buchignani) and JoJo Garcia with their granddaughter.

JoJo employs traditional farming methods, including dry farming and root pruning, to enhance the quality of his naturally low-yielding fruit by encouraging deep root growth and resilience. “JoJo has a natural intuition for vine management,” Tim says. “His practices ensure that the vines produce high-quality fruit with intense flavors and balanced tannins. He understands the importance of maintaining the health and productivity of these old vines.”

A memorable presence on the ranch is JoJo’s giant Brahma bull, who once threw JoJo in the air by his horns. Tim explains, “The pen is tucked away in the backside of the vineyard. From a distance, you can hear this huge bull stomping towards you, and you’re just so thankful for the fence.”



SOMERS RANCH: UNIQUE TERROIR & HERITAGE SELECTION

Somers Ranch is home to hillside blocks that were among the first to be planted using the Heritage Clone. The development of the Heritage Clone was initiated to preserve the tradition and heritage of old Zinfandel vineyards. Today,

The vineyard’s Petite Sirah also plays a crucial role, adding body and structure to our wines. “We’ve been working with this site for decades. George Somers, who managed the vineyard for many years, exemplified dedication and passion,” Tim says. “Although he has stepped back due to health

“The fruit from Somers Ranch ... adds wonderful depth and texture to our wines.”

Somers Ranch is an important contributor to our single-vineyard Zinfandel and Heritage Vines Zinfandel. Sitting at the south end of our appellation, the vineyard enjoys cool air that funnels up from the Russian River Valley, resulting in late-ripening fruit with singular expression.

The fruit from Somers Ranch brings roundness and richness to our blends, with flavors ranging from cherry to boysenberry and subtle spice notes.

reasons, his wife, Judy, and their foreman, Jorge, continue to uphold the incredibly high standards George established. Their responsiveness to our needs ensures that we always receive exceptional fruit.”

Tim appreciates the unique qualities that Somers Ranch brings to the table. “The fruit from Somers Ranch is not as spicy as other Zinfandels, but it has a pure, rich character that adds wonderful depth and texture to our wines.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

The success of Dry Creek Vineyard’s wines is deeply rooted in the long-term relationships we have cultivated with our grower partners. As we celebrate the contributions of Vogensen Ranch, Buchignani Ranch and Somers Ranch, we also honor the people behind these vineyards. Their hard work, dedication and passion are integral to the quality of our wines. We are thankful for their efforts, and we are grateful to share the fruits of our collective labor with you.



Cork & Fork

POTLUCK WINS

SWEDISH MEATBALLS

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 20 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 4–6

FOR THE MEATBALLS:

- 500 g ground beef**
- 250 g ground pork**
- 1 small onion, finely chopped**
- 1 garlic clove, minced**
- ½ cup breadcrumbs**
- 1 egg**
- ½ cup milk**
- ½ tsp allspice**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 2 tbsp butter**

FOR THE GRAVY:

- 2 tbsp butter**
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups beef or vegetable broth**
- 1/2 cup heavy cream**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

In a large bowl, mix together beef, pork, onion, garlic, breadcrumbs, egg, milk, allspice, salt and pepper. Shape the mixture into meatballs, each about the size of a rounded tablespoon.

Heat the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the meatballs and cook until browned and cooked through, about 10–12 minutes. Remove and set aside.

In the same skillet, begin making the gravy. Melt the butter over medium heat and add the flour. Stir continuously and cook for 1–2 minutes. Add the heavy cream and cook while stirring until the gravy thickens. Season with salt and pepper.

Before serving, return the meatballs to the skillet and simmer with the gravy until warm. Enjoy alongside lingonberry jam and mashed potatoes.

"ELOTES" STREET CORN CASSEROLE

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 30 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 8–10

- 6 cups frozen corn kernels**
- ½ cup mayonnaise**
- ½ cup sour cream**
- ½ cup red onion, finely chopped**
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped**
- Juice of 1 lime**
- 1 tsp chili powder**
- ½ tsp smoked paprika**
- ½ tsp ground cumin**
- 1 ½ cups shredded Cotija cheese, divided**

Salt and pepper, to taste

Fresh cilantro and lime wedges, for garnish

Preheat the oven to 375°F and grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. In a large bowl, combine the corn, mayonnaise, sour cream, red onion, jalapeño, garlic, cilantro, lime juice, chili powder, paprika, cumin, 1 ¼ cups cheese, salt and pepper. Mix until well combined.

Transfer the corn mixture into the baking dish and spread it out evenly. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top. Bake in oven for 25–30 minutes, or until the casserole is slightly golden on top. Let cool for a few minutes, then garnish with cilantro and lime wedges before serving.

SAVORY BREAD PUDDING

PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 50 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 8–10

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter**
- 1 onion, finely chopped**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 6 large eggs**
- 2 cups whole milk**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 loaf French bread, cubed**
- 2 cups Gruyère cheese, shredded**
- 1 cup diced ham or cooked bacon**
- 1 cup baby spinach, chopped**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley**

Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. In a large skillet over medium heat, melt the butter, then add onion and garlic. Sauté for 3–4 minutes and remove from heat.

Whisk together eggs, milk and heavy cream in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the cubed bread to the bowl and gently toss. Let the bread sit for 10–15 minutes, making sure it absorbs the liquid.

Fold in the onion, garlic, cheese, diced ham or bacon, spinach and parsley until well combined. Transfer the mixture to the baking dish and spread it out evenly. Bake for 45–50 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and the center is set. Let cool for a few minutes before serving.



What We're Sipping

WALLACE RANCH ZINFANDEL | Paige Pedroza, Wine Educator

"I adore this Zinfandel's cranberry and boysenberry notes, and subtle spice character. It's a great go-to with a charcuterie board when entertaining guests."

MERITAGE "ALLUVIAL GAP" | Josh Giron, Wine Educator

"Pair this plush wine with a savory lamb chop or a cheese platter to highlight its enticing notes of black currant, blackberry and fine leather."

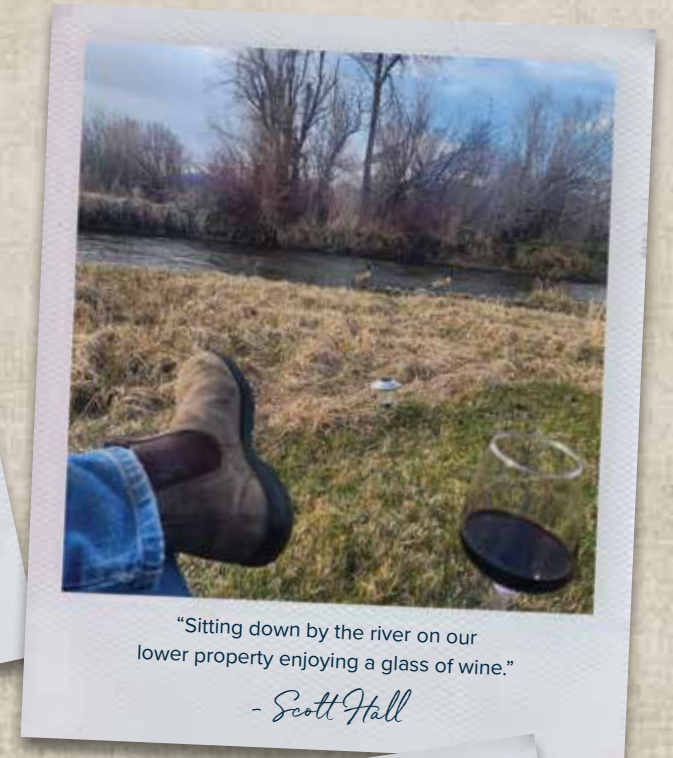
FOUR CLONES ZINFANDEL | Ridge Holguin, Assistant Tasting Room Manager

"I love this wine's rich, spicy character. The layers of blackberry, white pepper and mocha make it a perfect match for a hearty beef stew or braised short rib."

THE MARINESS | Mari Pagán, Hospitality Manager

"This elegant, Bordeaux-style white blend is a favorite for sharing with family and friends. Enjoy it with Chicken Piccata to complement its vibrant citrus and melon notes, and crisp acidity."

Heard Through the Grapevine



SHARE YOUR DRY CREEK VINEYARD MOMENTS
IN OUR WINE CLUB FACEBOOK GROUP. >



2024 Member Milestones

25 YEARS

Andrea Brunetti
Anne Mackie
Arlene Scully
Bill Vespa
Bob Rolf
Bram Sheafor
Carlos & Teena Amador
Catherine Stewart
Chris & Jeanne Root
Chris Brain
Con Lynch
Dale C Jensen
Dave & Leesa Tobiasz
Douglas Charles
Enrique Alvarez
Gayle Streng
George Flentke
Greg Smith
James & Lydia Adams
Jean Martin
Jeffrey Berman
Jon Lycett
Karen Ploetz
Kerry L Graf
Kevin Garrett
Lee & Eugenia Steffens
Marene Parsons
Margaret Mager
Mark Haslam
Matthew Messner
Paul Tourville
Ray and Jane Davilla
Raymond Russell
Robert Brown
Robert Fluegel
Robert O'Connell
Robert Thomson
Susan Hoffman
Tatiana Piech
William Gisvold
William Stuart

20 YEARS

Anne Campbell
Anthony Plese
Bjorn Flesaker
Bruce Campbell
Carlos Gamez
Caroline Reitenbach
Colleen & Jonathan Greko
Deanna McKenzie
Dennis Denton
Diane Boyer
Dick Plesha
Frank & Renee Jordan
George Knafl
George Rick Hutchinson
Gerald Burke
James Austin
James Lutz
Jane Coryn
Jenny & Scott Ellenbecker
John Casey
John Nabozny
John Woodmansee
Kathleen Taltavall
Kathy & Roger Yule
Kent Kitchel
Kurt Krummrich
Margaret Hundley
Mark Bertolini
Michael Fincher
Michael Rouse
Michael Scanlon
Mike Sokolsky
Nancy Lucas
Reta Bodwell
Roger Cominsky
Salina Littleton
Shary & Don Mason
Sue & Mike Courts
Tammy & Andrew Cooke
Thomas Bolger
Valerie Holden

15 YEARS

Adam Berry
Anna M. Benincasa
Bridget Dunham
Carol Shaw Austad
Chris Searles
Cindy Weber
Dr. Michael Block
Ed Peterson
Edwin J. Osborne
Eugene Elliott
Harvey Smith
Holly Watts
Jay Bryan
John Murray
Kimberly Hamm
Mark Banta
Megan Ricke
Michael Knutson
Mike White
Nick Reagles
Nora Canty
Pamela Cooney
Paul Frassetto
Richard Otley
Ruth Lapin
Sandra Thoman
Scott Meyers
Stephen Brown
Steve Rich
Steven Hanson
Susan Thomsen
Tamara Wilson
Wayne Jackson