



# Tasting Notes

Wine Garage Newsletter

October 2011

## Fall Wine Club Opener - Oct 3

The first signs of weather change can be heard crashing on my rooftop as a torrential downpour rains down on under ripe wine grapes hang idly by awaiting the upcoming harvest. The crackling of a blazing fire is also heard by your correspondent, trying to warm himself with the first fire lit in his fireplace since June of this past spring, the wettest and coolest spring in over a hundred years in these parts. Both of these wet events has led the experts to declare the grape harvest of 2011 as being under siege. It has been a cool summer – two in a row now – that is preventing the grapes from ripening at their normal rates, coupled with extreme shatter (when the grape flowers fall off due to cool and wet conditions in the spring), vigorous vine growth, evidence of powdery mildew, and now, RAIN right before harvest – oh lord, I would hate to be a grower right now. I am crushing not a single grape this year – I pass....

There have been changes at the Wine Garage this Autumn as well and I wish to share them with you folks, my Club Members, best customers, and dear friends. The Garage is no longer a “mom and pop” shop, we are now just a “pop” shop. Joy and I separated two years ago and have now divorced. These last two years we have run the shop together as partners but even that proved difficult and we have now also parted ways professionally. All this has been done amicably – we will always be friends and we have a beautiful daughter to raise – we will be involved in each others lives forever.... I tell you all this because you have been a part of our lives for 8 years now and when I write these notes I am writing to YOU, my friends, and I feel you have a right to know. I have written about our family and our experiences here in Napa – and this is one of those things that people go through in our journey through life. Today is Joy’s birthday (39th) and I want to say thanks for all her contributions to the Garage - I couldn’t have done it all without her. She was an integral part of the Wine Garage and her mark will be forever felt. We are all happier, including Emma. As she tells it, “I have a house in town with a cat (Joy’s) and a house in the country (mine) with a dog”.

Joy said this so succinctly to Emma when we were explaining these new life changing events to her: “Your father and I always loved one another, we just were never true ‘soul mates’”.

This past summer was another slow one in the shop, the recession evident in all aspects of the Valley for the fourth season in a row. I got to go fly fishing like 5 times, a record for me, including a week long trip to Oregon at the headwaters of the Deschutes River just south west of Bend in the Cascade Lakes Region. So unbelievably beautiful, it defies description. I was camping at Little Lava Lake in a 1961 Airstream “Bambi”, with a view of the alpine lake, the snow covered Mt. Bachelor, Broken Top, and the Little Sister all in one eyeball view from the picnic table at the campsite. The Airstream is owned by Amelia, my new partner in crime. We met 6 months after Joy and I separated – with uncanny coincidences crisscrossing our previous lives: we both have daughters named Emma, we both lived in Miami at different times – yet there is a picture of me playing football on the beach when I was 12 years old with a condo in the background that she later owned, and one of her friends she met while living there was the daughter of my late father’s business partner – a girl I played with as a child at backyard BBQ’s. Weird, no? Proof to me that everything DOES happen for a reason.

I tell you this because for the last 2 years Amelia has been on many trips with me, written about in these notes, hidden from your view. Paso Robles, Santa Barbara, Hospice du Rhone, San Diego.... She was with me this summer on the buying trip to Mendocino that you will read about later in these notes, and in Amador that will be described more in detail in the November Club. I hope that you don’t feel I’m “airing out my dirty laundry”, things change, this is life – my life, living in Napa Valley. I hope you enjoy the ride with me....