

For Immediate Release
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HARVEST 2010: “The Long Cold Summer” ... Almost Like the Movie!

Sebastopol, CA – The 2010 growing season was cold and challenging, one of the most difficult on record and disastrous for many northern California’s vineyards. For us, the silver lining was that the long hang time allowed mature flavor development and, being a small estate focused on quality, we were able to turn our 20th year into a vintage of sterling quality from both of our organic vineyards.

A Late Bud Break, even Later Véraison, and Latest Harvest in History!

Everything was delayed this year. Bud break came a week late, but fortunately we had a frost-free spring. Above-average rainfall in May and an unusually cool, foggy summer brought véraison about two weeks late. With these conditions, mildew (mold) and botrytis (rot) soon became a big challenge. We pulled leaves to allow light and air into the canopy – yet we were careful not to pull too many, to avoid possible future sunburn. This proved a good decision, as on August 24 an intense “heat storm” hit the region; the grapes, not used to warm weather, suffered from sunburn despite the protective canopy.

We made many passes through the vineyards to drop fruit affected by mildew and sunburn. But while most vineyards had huge losses, we were hardly unhappy with a 20% Chardonnay and 15% Pinot loss.

The Harvest that Would Never Come...

Every day since early September we thought we’d start harvesting “next week”! But when the second heat spike came around September 20, suddenly all the Pinot Noir became ripe. We finally started harvest on September 26 in the Don Miguel Vineyard, and on September 30 in the Doña Margarita Vineyard. Our crew made fast work of it and finished in record time – in just one week we picked 45 tons from the Don Miguel Vineyard and 20 tons from the Doña Margarita Vineyard.

For the past two years, Cristina and I went off in late August on vacation and harvest started just before our return; so learning from that experience, I decided to not plan any trips until October 6, when we went to Spain for our fall Board Meeting. Well – we didn’t start picking Chardonnay until October 4! I still was able to take coffee and donuts to the workers the first three days, but came back on the last day of the Chardonnay harvest, October 20... First time in my life that I was away during harvest!

Perfectionism Paid Off

We sorted out not only the fruit on the vines before and during harvest, but also – and very intensely – on its arrival at the winery, discarding a lot of damaged berries. Sorting is common for Pinot Noir, but we had never had to do it for Chardonnay! We sorted out 10% of the berries that entered the winery and ended up with 119 tons of beautiful fruit, with mature flavors and brown seeds. We picked the Chardonnay at an average of 22.5 - 23° Brix, which should give us an ideal alcohol level of 13.5%.

The Native Spanish Varieties: Albariño and Tempranillo

Albariño, an aromatic variety native to Galicia in my native Spain, appears to be thriving in our Green Valley terroir. We expect to bottle 200 cases of our first 100% Albariño (since in 2009 we blended it with Chardonnay). Our Tempranillo/Syrah blend will yield some 150 cases; the grapes were last off the vines on October 27, and looking magnificent!

So far we’ve had excellent, clean fermentations and all wines are showing wonderful concentrated flavors. Malolactics are just starting and we are looking forward to a great vintage – even if we can probably label it the most difficult in memory.

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Please contact us for the files of the photos on back of this press release, or for other pictures

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2010 HARVEST



**THE FIRST PINOT GRAPES CAME IN ON SEPTEMBER 26
-- JUST ABOUT A MONTH LATER THAN NORMAL!**



**A WORST-CASE-SCENARIO IN PINOT NOIR: GREEN
AND SUNBURNED BERRIES IN THE SAME CLUSTER!**



**CHICO AND BONITA LOVE RUNNING AND PLAYING
AROUND IN THE DOÑA MARGARITA VINEYARD!**



**THE GRAPES ARE UNLOADED ONTO THE SORTING
TABLE FOR A FASTIDIOUS SELECTION**



**CHICO AND BONITA WERE VERY PLEASED
WITH THE SYRAH GRAPES.**



**THE ALBARIÑO VINES SHOWED
BEAUTIFUL BUNCHES, TOO.**



**THE TEMPRANILLO BERRIES LOOKED
MAGNIFICENT, AS YOU CAN SEE!**