

TANTARA Winery

Harvest 2009

September 23, 2009

Greetings from the Santa Maria Valley.

The beginning of Fall, the equinox- the earth and sun in perfect balance and the grape harvest in full swing. Also, as has been the case more often than not lately, we have the September heat. It is also happening this year. Climate change? – perhaps.

Another weather item is my iPhone weather icon which I use a lot. I have all the northern hemisphere Pinot Noir growing regions logged in to compare temperatures during the growing season and harvest. Not surprisingly, at least to us, our local zone – California's Central Coast, and specifically the Santa Maria Valley, is cooler than Burgundy, Oregon, Northern California, even the Rheingau in Germany on a daily basis. Certainly other factors play into the suitability of all these sites to ripen Pinot Noir to perfection, but climate is the most important. This goes a long way in explaining the vibrancy of the fruit from our area.

We harvested our first Pinot Noir on a hot September 7 and we were slammed until September 11 with fruit coming in daily. The weather fortunately moderated after the 12th. Early sugar spikes dropped down as we tried to wait for flavor development in the skins. We had another big day on the 19th, processing 14 tons from five different vineyards. The remaining Pinot Noir to be harvested is ripening very slowly – a good thing because it gives us time and tank space as we press off and barrel down the first new wine. The fermentations have been rather quick but moderate in temperature – the average time from receiving the fruit, cold soak and completion of fermentation is 12-14 days. Can we assess the new vintage? All signs point to lovely, fruit forward, aromatic wines. The level of tannin and acidity is hard to gauge at this point but the colors are an iridescent magenta which is a good indicator of healthy, structured young wines.

We think this will also be a very good vintage for Chardonnay. The yields are up a bit from 2008, but there appears to be good flavor development in the skins with substantial acidity and phenolics. The ripening curve in the Chardonnay is very slow and even.

That is my snapshot of the Harvest 2009 action. It's always good to revisit these notes later. Thanks for your continuing support of Tantara. Very glad you all are out there.

All the best,

Jeff Fink
Tantara Winery

TANTARA Winery

Fall Release Vintage 2007

Highly touted as the 2007 vintage is, as wine producers we try to maintain some sense of decorum and a dose of healthy skepticism. It can be a bit unseemly to proclaim “vintage of the century” or trot out other glowing come-hither phrases too often, but in this case maybe all the hubbub is warranted. The 07 rocks! The wines are as complete and balanced as any we have produced. There is fruit - lots of it- but the fruit while full is not over the top. The aromas are deep, very pure and vineyard identity has never been clearer. The spectacular sites and passionate growers that we are privileged to work with allowed us to produce consistently delicious wines across the entire range of our portfolio. A point of departure. We get asked from time to time why our wines taste a certain way– what do we do or not do. The simple answer is that there is no recipe. Each vintage is different. We try to be in close contact with the wine throughout. From the yearly cycle of the vineyard to the harvest to the down time in barrel through to bottling we try to stay curious and continue to learn. But in the end it is about how good does it taste. So to borrow two words from Japanese – a particularly precise language, there is *oishi* –good and *umai* – delicious. We aim for *umai*.

We hope you enjoyed our Spring Release of the 2007 vintage. In this Fall offering we feature wines from all five of our appellations ~ six Pinots and two Chardonnays. Following are tasting notes describing what these wines say to us. Please feel free to write your own notes. It can be quite fun, keeps your palate sharp and you connected with your Muse. These wines were all bottled in February 2009 and are adjusting to their life in the bottle. Most will benefit from decanting including the Chardonnay. We see a long life ahead for the 2007 vintage but they are showing very well right now.

Cheers!

2009 Fall Release Tasting Notes

2007 Dierberg Vineyard ~ Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay

Typically steely and linear, this wine is a minerally yet mouthfilling concoction of lemon zest, lychees, hazelnuts and wet stones. Silky but at the same time precisely defined in its many layers, one our most compelling examples of what this vineyard is capable of. Drinks wonderfully now and should age for 7-10 years.

140cases \$38

2007 Brosseau Vineyard ~ Chalone AVA Chardonnay

Harvested from 20 year old own rooted Wente clone Chardonnay vines, this site is unique in California. First planted in the 1920's by a Frenchman looking for limestone, this uplifted plateau of both volcanic and marine sediments produces wines of distinct character. Tropical fruit – mango for example is paired with hints of fig and honey. Very low yielding vines.

16 cases \$38

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2007 Silacci Vineyard – *Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir*

Just past the northern edge of the Santa Lucia Highlands, this windy outpost of Pinot Noir was planted in 1999 to the Pisoni Clone. In 2007 we took the plunge and harvested the fruit at 23 brix – way less sugar than in past vintages but it was ripe at that level and produced a lovely wine – delicately perfumed yet with sinewy proportions. Reminiscent of a bottling from the Côte de Beaune, it would pair well with seafood.

119 cases \$52

2007 Bien Nacido Vineyard – *Old Vine Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir*

This vineyard is one of the oldest Pinot Noir vineyards in California and hence the New World. Planted in 1973 to own rooted Pommard clone, this site, along with Sanford and Benedict, legitimized Pinot Noir in Santa Barbara County. Now recognized as producing an iconic example of Pinot, the 2007 Old Vine from G Block falls squarely in this camp. Succulent red fruits, baking spice and a hint of pepper identify this as Bien Nacido. Seamless, early drinking but with the ability to age are also hallmarks. The real deal. Old gnarled vines that comfort the soul to walk through yield wines that soothe the palate.

83 cases \$48

2007 La Colline Vineyard – *Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir*

If we were to assign Grand Cru status to wines from our portfolio, this one would meet the criteria – flavor, distinction, consistency, ageability. Another example of old vines, this vineyard was planted in 1980 to an own rooted Martini clone of Pinot. In 2007 extremely low yields produced unbelievably concentrated yet balanced fruit. A dark ruby color with deep pure aromas of cassis and black cherry, this wine is seamlessly palate coating and has a long effortless finish.

146 cases \$48

2007 Lindsay's Vineyard – *Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir*

Since 2004 this vineyard has been playing the musical chairs of names, having had three. Politely referred to as the “vineyard formerly known as Ashley’s” in 2005 it was purchased and renamed Gaia. In 2006 it sold again to Bill Foley and was renamed Lindsay’s. It appears this name will remain for now. The good news is the fruit was and is extraordinary no matter what the name. We select from four blocks and three clones scattered around the ranch which we think gives us a comprehensive vineyard profile.

Ripe and appealing in the Santa Rita way, this very cool site also gives spice and structure of which the last element is particularly important to us. Lovely fruit with a spicy twist.

120 cases \$55

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2007 Brosseau Vineyard ~ *Chalone AVA Pinot Noir*

Planted to the Mount Eden clone of Pinot on this marginal site, when young these wines can be a bit backward and unyielding. This example however, even though equipped with significant tannin, is very lush and open on the palate. A larger scaled Pinot, it is full but not heavy. Aromas of wild berry pie – blackberry and blueberry come to mind. There are also hints of *sous bois* – forest floor. An autumnal wine, it would be a great pairing with the wild boar that roam this vineyard.

71 cases \$52

2007 Garys' Vineyard ~ Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

This special place is the brainchild of two established Monterey County farming families. Planted by Gary Francioni and Gary Pisoni in 1996 to the fabled Pisoni clone, it is impeccably farmed and a consistent producer of truly distinctive ultra high quality Pinot. It is the flag ship of the Santa Lucia Highlands bench – a very cool windy river valley location with gravelly well-drained soils. While Garys' is compared to the Pisoni Vineyard for obvious reasons, it is much cooler than Pisoni which is out of the wind belt and typically has higher acidity and brighter fruit. It almost always harvests one to two weeks after Pisoni. So while the clone is certainly important, in the end we think site takes precedence. This iteration of Garys' is very fragrant and youthful. While fruit forward, its teen angst has been channeled. This is an exciting wine.

119 cases \$60

In Memoriam

While we discuss the merits of the new vintage and the bounty of life, many of us in the Santa Barbara area are dealing with the loss of a dear friend. On September 3rd, after a valiant year long battle with cancer, Peter Dempster passed away at his home in Montecito. Pete was a vital life force who engaged everybody that he touched. You always had his full attention. He was a tireless champion of New World wines and became an integral part of the Tantara family. Always a presence during harvest and bottling and our winery events, it is hard to believe that he left us this soon.

He will always be in our hearts and minds as well as in Peter Bruce, a Santa Barbara County Sauvignon Blanc that he produced with us at Tantara. Even though he is gone, this project will be continued by his three sons.

Pete, you left a large void in all our lives and we will never forget your friendship, camaraderie and heroic demeanor. You will be greatly missed.



Tantara Fall Open House

The Tantara Fall Open House is October 11th from 12-4pm. It will feature unlimited tastings of all our Fall Release wines plus many others, a Santa Maria Style BBQ, and the musical stylings of the Damon Castillo Band. Hailing from San Luis Obispo, each member of the band is a master musician with a diverse past of jazz, funk, rock, and soul performance. This is sure to be a special afternoon, so we hope to see many of you there! \$25 at the door.

Upcoming Wine Events

Santa Barbara County Celebration of Harvest
October 10, 2009
www.sbcountywines.com

Carmel Harvest Festival
September 26 – 27, 2009
www.harvestcarmel.com

Tantara Fall Open House, October 11 from 12-4 pm
Featuring live music with the Damon Castillo Band,
Santa Maria style BBQ, and current vintage wine
sampling. Call 805.938.5051 for more details

Big Sur Food & Wine Festival
November 6 – 7, 2009
Big Sur, CA
www.bigsurfoodandwine.org

27th American Wine & Food Festival
October 2 – October 4, 2009
Los Angeles, CA
www.awff.org

Pinot Days Chicago, Navy Pier
November 13 – 14, 2009
Chicago, IL
www.pinotdays.com

Directions to the Winery

- Take Betteravia exit from Highway 101 and go East
- Drive approximately 7 miles from Hwy 101 overpass – take a left at the "Y" onto Santa Maria Mesa Rd
- Drive approximately 0.6 miles to Ontiveros Lane and turn Left. You will see a white sign with green lettering that says TNT 1.3 miles
- Drive 1.3 miles through the vineyard on Ontiveros Lane until you arrive at Tantara Winery

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WWW.TANTARAWINERY.COM / Fax: 805.938.0036 / Address: 2900 Rancho Tepusquet Road, Santa Maria, CA 93454

Fall 2009 Order Form

WINE		BTL	CASE	TOTAL
1. 2007 Pinot Noir, Old Vine Bien Nacido	\$48 / \$576			
2. 2007 Pinot Noir, Brosseau	\$52 / \$624			
3. 2007 Pinot Noir, Garys'	\$60 / \$720			
4. 2007 Pinot Noir, La Colline	\$48 / \$576			
5. 2007 Pinot Noir, Lindsay's	\$55 / \$660			
6. 2006 Pinot Noir, Silacci	\$52 / \$624			
7. 2007 Chardonnay, Dierberg	\$38 / \$456			
8. 2007 Chardonnay, Brosseau	\$38 / \$456			
				Subtotal
				Tax (8.75%)
				Shipping
				Total

SHIPPING COST 1-6 bottles = \$3.50/btl. 7-11 bottles = \$3.00/btl. 12+ bottles = \$2.75/btl

PAYMENT Please check one option:

Check (payable to "Tantara Winery")

VISA

Credit card number _____

MasterCard

Expiration date _____

Signature _____

BILLING NAME & ADDRESS

(Shipping address on right, if different)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

SHIPPING NAME & ADDRESS

(No PO Boxes)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Contact phone for above _____

Circle one:

Business

Residence

ALWAYS feel free to call us at 805.938.5051 if you have any questions about ordering, shipping, or purchasing wine.