

Brittan Vineyards

intention, execution, vigilance

FALL 2016 RELEASE NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

“Each vintage we get one shot. One shot to get it right. One chance to learn, and so we push ourselves slightly farther. Because the aim is to make better wine than last year. And if you don’t learn, you can’t make better wine.”

- *Robert Brittan* on 43 harvests

REFLECTIONS ON HARVEST

It has now been 11 years since we began the adventure of learning and working the Brittan site. It was, and continues to be, a challenging site, but in this challenge lies engagement; the obsessive drive to push not just the vineyard, but ourselves in uncovering its unique components and profiles.

As many of you know, the vineyard is a rocky site with shallow soils. It takes longer for vines to establish. The low yields do not mean less work. In fact, these vines require more work and as a result of vigilance and constant monitoring, they have started producing more fruit. (Just under 2 tons per acre this year!) The mercurial temperature shifts from the end of August and the beginning of September kept us on our toes deciding when to harvest.

In the cellar this year, we had ten lots from the vineyard fermenting in puncheons. Double the size of a normal barrel, a puncheon holds about a quarter of a ton. These small lots, just like the vineyard, require the same amount of work as our five-ton fermenter, but yield less wine. But with these small ferments we are able to push ourselves and learn a bit more. This harvest these lots saw more whole cluster usage than in past vintages, up to 30% for some, and the resulting textures have been encouraging and exciting to see.

With the last pressload of Pinot noir and the 2016’s finally being barreled down, we will take a brief pause to raise a glass, but then it’s onwards to blending and the continual march forward.



Harvest at Brittan Vineyards 2016. Photo by John McJunkin

FALL RELEASE WINES

2014 BRITTAN VINEYARDS GESTALT BLOCK PINOT NOIR

TASTING NOTES

The rich, opulent color reveals Italian plum and lavender with hits of black licorice, charcuterie and sage. The palate is supple with black raspberry and cedar,

AVA: McMinnville
VINEYARDS: Brittan Vineyard
SELECTIONS: 115, 667, 777
ELEVAGE: 12 months, 20% new French oak
ALCOHOL: 13.5%
DATE BOTTLED: December 2015
CASES PRODUCED: 372 cases

2012 BRITTAN VINEYARDS SYRAH

TASTING NOTES

Royal garnet in color with a nose of dried lilac, cedar, black peppercorn, black cherry, candied plum. Ribbon of red fruit on palate, seamless rich texture, light leather and fresh tobacco on lengthy

AVA: McMinnville
VINEYARDS: Brittan Vineyard
ELEVAGE: 12 months, 20% new French oak
ALCOHOL: 13%
DATE BOTTLED: April 2014
CASES PRODUCED: 52 cases



Final Pinot pressload. Photo by Hadley Ortloff.

FROM THE BARREL ROOM

Our Pinot noirs are over vintaged, meaning after all of the blood, sweat (and sometimes tears) of harvest, we turn around and start to compose the final blends from the previous vintage, preparing to bottle them in December. It's a great time to reflect, having tasted the fresh ferments of the 2016 harvest, and then those from 2015 that have had time to ease into themselves.

We are excited about the 2015's, as they possess supple fruit characteristics, but finesse. Due to the temperatures dropping at the beginning of September, the fruit ripened gradually and built complexity, resulting in wines with power and poise.

The 2015 vintage marked the initial harvest of some new blocks on the estate., the first being our four acres of Chardonnay. The final blend of the 2015 will have fruit from our estate as well as a few select sites from the valley as we wait for our blocks to mature and yield a bit more fruit.

The other new block we brought in is something a little different. Called the "Rhône Zone" (for now), this small block is trained en goblet (shaped like a goblet) and contains two to three vines each of Syrah, Petite Syrah, Grenache, Viognier, Mouvedre, and Zinfandel. These were brought into the winery, tote by tote, and cascaded into a puncheon, whole cluster and then topped off with destemmed Syrah.

With the continual heat in 2015, this field blend of Rhône varieties has the winery giddy. So giddy in fact, that it can be hard to refrain from giving folks that come into the tasting room a little sneak peak. We may just taste through the entire puncheon! Should any of you out there have a good name for it, we are all ears. This special limited blend will most likely be bottled in April, and you our Assemblage members, will have first crack at this spectacular wine.

The 2015 vintage will be making its way to your doors starting in spring 2017. Stay tuned!

CURRENT RELEASE WINES

2011 PUNCHEON	\$75	CLUB PRICE	\$63.75
 2014 CHARDONNAY	\$42	CLUB PRICE	\$35.70
 2013 BASALT BLOCK	\$48	CLUB PRICE	\$40.80
 2013 GESTALT BLOCK	SOLD OUT		
 2013 CYGNUS BLOCK (10 cases left)	\$65	CLUB PRICE	\$55.25

2016 BY THE NUMBERS

FIRST BRITTAN FRUIT: September 5, 2016
 LAST BRITTAN FRUIT: October 11, 2016

TOTAL TONNAGE: 45.97
 TOTAL (PROJECTED) CASES: 2,400

TOTAL PINOT NOIR: 38.10 tons
 TOTAL CHARDONNAY: 4.29 tons
 TOTAL SYRAH: 3.58 tons

TOTAL COFFEE CONSUMPTION: 45 pounds
 NUMBER OF CAKES: 10
 NUMBER OF PINTS: Don't ask!



Chardonnay at Brittan. Photo by John McJunkin

