

Barreto Cellars

VINTAGE VIEW

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OLD WORLD REVISITED

2002 HARVEST BEGINS COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION AS WELL AS A RETURN TO HERITAGE WINES

By-Michael Barreto: On September 6th Barreto Cellars began crushing grapes for its first year of commercial production. Last year, in the garage, about one hundred eighty gallons were produced of Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon. This year production was stepped up to almost one thousand gallons of Tempranillo, Touriga Nacional, Malbec and Sauvignon Blanc. Over the past year a path was set for production, developing premium wines, primarily using grape varieties native to Spain and Portugal. These varieties may be foreign to most of the wine drinking population, but the wines that can be produced from them are exquisite. Descriptions and history of these wines are discussed in the article "Iberian Wines", on page 2.



A truckload of Tempranillo

This year's harvest was comprised of five separate lots, made from the varieties; Tempranillo, Touriga Nacional, Malbec and Sauvignon Blanc. The last two are French in origin but were chosen because of their uniqueness and quality. Last year's Sauvignon Blanc from the same vineyard created a truly beautiful wine. If initial tastings are any indication the same will hold true this year.



Pressing is still done in an old style basket press.

Tempranillo, as it is referred to in Spain, or Tinta Roriz in Portugal, is the intended flagship wine being produced. Two lots of this variety were brought in from different growing regions to determine the different characteristics developed by different climates and growing practices.

One of the Tempranillo lots and the Sauvignon Blanc are

scheduled to be released for sale by Winter 2003.

Grapes were also crushed on the home front as a way of doing some research, Petite Sirah was made into a table wine, while Tinta Cão and Sousão, both Portuguese varieties were blended and vinted into a traditional port style wine.

As far as wines from prior vintages the Zinfandel from both 2000 and 2001 are now bottled. However, the Cabernet Sauvignon from these vintages are still being aged in barrels. The 2000 should be bottled late winter and 2001 has yet to be scheduled.

A lot has happened in a short amount of time to get Barreto Cellars up and going for its first harvest. A facility needed to be found, grapes had to be sourced, barrels ordered and transportation arranged, just to list a few. However upon tasting the wines one

can see that all of the hard work has yielded some promising results. Currently there are less than thirty California wineries distributing wine labeled Tempranillo similar to the way Syrah was in the late 1980's, this puts Barreto Cellars in a small group of producers that might be on the cusp of the next wave of California wine production.



The first bin of Barreto Cellars grapes to be crushed



Now that the wine is barreled, let the aging begin.

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IBERIAN WINES

The Iberian Peninsula is the name of the land mass at south west tip of Europe, which makes up the countries of Spain and Portugal. Spain has more acres of wine grapes in production than any other country, however due to cultural practices, such as dryland farming it is ranked number three for wine production. Many of the grape varieties there are indigenous to the area, though many French varieties were brought down by French viticulturalists fleeing phylloxera in the 1800's. Not only did they bring some of their grapes along but they also brought their winemaking techniques which they applied to the native grapes. Unfortunately these wines do not make their way to the United States in great numbers. So the burden then falls on immigrants of these regions to produce these wines and distribute them to the masses.

One of these varieties is called Tempranillo, the Cabernet Sauvignon of Spain. It is the main grape in the great wines of Rioja and Ribera del Duero, it is also one of the noble varieties of



Portuguese Port, when called Tina Roriz. What makes it special? It makes reliable wines that are unique and complex. It takes well to warmer climates, and can be made into many different styles of wine. The taste of Tempranillo has been described as lush texture with up front fruit, mainly blackberries, black cherries, mulberries and raspberries, age and maturity can bring in accents of black current moving toward tobacco, plums and cocoa.

Another variety, Touriga Nacional is a small berried low yielding grape from Portugal that produces intense flavors and powerful tannins. Most of this variety is made into Port wine, but when it is made into a table wine it has sweet fruit and leafy freshness with a hint of violets.

The affluent American wine drinking population is always looking for something new to try, as a way of escaping the usual four (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot). Italian varieties made an assault on California a few years ago, now the Rhone region of France is making a strong showing. Maybe this will be the next European region to be tackled by grape growers and winemakers in California.

Holiday Wishes

Although late, Joey and I wish everyone the happiest of Holiday seasons this year and a healthy and prosperous New Year.



JOEYS CORNER

Joey is still enjoying her job at Dana Elementary School in Nipomo. She is becoming quite the farmer, tending the orchard in our back yard that has avocados, citrus, apples and other tree fruit. Problems arise however as she patiently awaits these fruits to ripen, unfortunately the neighboring animals are not as patient. A fully loaded tree can be stripped clean overnight. She can be found most nights in camouflage with a night vision scope and a BB gun trying to thwart the little varmints. She has also continued developing her floral arranging skills as well as the major accomplishment of getting an orchid to bloom.

She also spends a lot of time as chief bottle labeler for Barreto Cellars giving the winery a good public image. She has also been working with the computer recently and can check her email and even respond, so if you tried in the past and were disappointed by no reply, please try again, she will get back to you now.