

# Member Newsletter

September 2013

Summer is almost over!

## **O'Brien Summer Update**

As the summer winds to a close, we are preparing to leave on an epic family vacation to China and Japan. Our son Mason, now 21 and going into his senior year at Cal Poly, has a summer intern job in Shanghai working for an Australian company. We are taking our 23 year old daughter Emily to join Mason and spend 4 days each in Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, and Kyoto. We will have lots of stories and photos to be shared with our members upon our return.

## **Date Night at the Drive-In**

We hosted our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Date Night at the Drive-In party on July 28<sup>th</sup>. About 80 wine club members and guests joined us for our evening of gourmet drive-in food (prepared by Lizzie Binder, Top Chef Seattle finalist) paired with lots of delicious wine. We had our traditional classic car show, but added a costume contest to put a reward system in place for those who came in 50's garb. A new addition this year was a dance floor outside on the concrete patio and some pumped up DJ speakers, prompting our first Twist dance contest (won by Charles and Nina Stratton – wow could they dance!). An unfortunate problem with the movie soundtrack not playing properly (you could hear Elvis singing just fine, but his spoken words were unintelligible) led to us abandoning the movie soundtrack in favor of more loud 50's music and dancing with just the movie seen on the winery wall but not heard. Like many unintended discoveries, this led us to the conclusion that dancing wildly was more fun than trying to follow the movie story line. So in the future, our movies will be just visual backdrops to wildly gyrating wine club members revisiting their youth. We hope you will come and gyrate with us next year!

## **Ireland Wine Club Member Trip**

We will be leading an expedition of wine club members to Ireland April 2014 to celebrate the 1,000 year anniversary of the death of Brian Boru, the first High King of Ireland, on the battlefield at Clontarf (outside Dublin) during the defeat of the Danish Vikings. O'Brien means "son of Brian" so all O'Brien's

are (in theory at least) direct descendants of Brian Boru, so this is a great excuse for a serious celebration in Ireland. We have arranged for a group tour, starting in western Ireland, to retrace the footsteps of Brian Boru across Ireland and to end up in Dublin to celebrate with other members of the O'Brien Clan (of which Bart is on the Board of Directors). We hope you can join us in this memorable experience!

## Napa Valley Film Festival

We decided to become official Napa Valley Film Festival Patrons this year to support this growing event. The founders, Marc and Brenda Lhormer, were also the producers of the movie "Bottle Shock", and were the founders of the Sonoma Film Festival. We urge you to make it to Napa Valley in November as this is a wonderful exploration of the world of film and filmmaking. The directors and actors of many of the films attend this event and engage with the audience after the movie screening. Fascinating insights into how these stories are brought to life and the amount of effort it takes to make any movie. We saw some wonderful films last year – ones we would never have the chance to see in the theater – movies that opened our eyes to fascinating facets of humanity.

## Upcoming Events

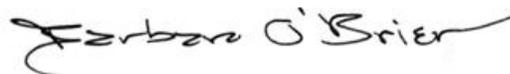
Our wine club member event calendar for 2013 is below. If you happen to be in the Napa Valley during one of our Wine Club Pickup Parties, (for our local will-call members), please come by and join the fun. During the summer, we will sit on the back lawn and watch the sunset over the Mayacamas Mountains. Wonderful!

September 7	Wine Club Pickup Party
September 28	Night of Unrestrained Reserve
November 16	Wine Club Pickup Party
February 14	Valentine's Evening Dinner
February 22	Wine Club Pickup Party
March 17	St. Patrick's Day Celebration
May 17	Wine Club Pickup Party
July 19	Date Night at the Drive-In

From our family to yours we wish you health and happiness! Thank you for being a member of the O'Brien Estate Wine Club.



Bart O'Brien



Barb O'Brien

## Tasting Notes for New Releases

### **2012 Estate Chardonnay**

Our 2012 Chardonnay is barrel fermented in 35% new French oak barrels. Malolactic fermentation is done to completion helping to ensure the microbial stability of the finished wine. The wine is aged sur-lie for 10 months, undergoing a monthly bâtonnage to enhance the rich and full mouthfeel. A brilliant, lightly golden hued wine opens with toasty oak aromatics backed by strong pear aromatics laced with vanilla, spice, and a hint of fresh flowers. The mouthfeel is rich and full, coating the entire palate and finishing with a flavor reminiscent of a spiced pear tart that lingers well after the wine has made its exit.

### **Wine Advocate Reviews**

Over the years, we have received many favorable reviews on our wine, particularly from the Wine Advocate and Wine Spectator. Many of our members are familiar with these reviews; they are printed here for the benefit of our newer members who may not have seen them.

Robert Parker Jr. has now retired from being the head taster at the Wine Advocate, a wine journal he founded in 1975. In his last year of tasting wines in Napa – 2010 – he gave our wines four 94 point scores (2007 Seduction, 2008 Seduction, 2008 Merlot Reserve, 2007 Unrestrained Reserve). Antonio Galloni succeeded Robert Parker for tasting Napa wines, but left the Wine Advocate earlier this year to pursue a separate endeavor. Robert Parker Jr. will again be reviewing Napa wines this year – we are looking forward to his opinions on our upcoming release.

#### **2007 Seduction Bordeaux Blend 94 points**

“The 2007 Seduction exhibits more graphite, licorice, black currant, and blackberry, with some floral underpinnings. I don’t like it better or worse than the 2008. Slightly more restrained, this gorgeous, medium to full-bodied wine is another impressive example of Napa viticulture at an attractive price point.”- Robert Parker

#### **2010 Seduction Bordeaux Blend 94 points**

“The 2010 Red Blend Seduction is one of the darker, richer wines in this range. Here, too, the tannins are quite silky and polished, making the wine quite enjoyable even at this early stage. Violets, mocha and cloves are layered into the rich, sumptuous finish. The appropriately named Seduction is indeed very hard to resist. I imagine it will be even better in another year or two, once some of the baby fat drops off. The blend is Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2025.” - Antonio Galloni

#### **2010 Chardonnay Reserve 93 points**

“The 2010 Chardonnay Reserve is another striking wine from O’Brien. The sur-lie aging in French oak gives the wine notable breadth and volume, but without masking varietal character. The 2010 Reserve is gorgeous in the way it captures the exuberance of California Chardonnay, but with much more nuance and transparency than is common within this style. Almonds, floral infused honey and nectarines all come alive on the creamy, textured finish. The 2010 is rich, bold and beautiful. I would prefer to enjoy this striking Chardonnay in its exuberant youth. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2016.” - Antonio Galloni

**2010 Devotion Cabernet Franc 92 points**

“The 2010 Cabernet Franc Devotion is another wine that stands out for its textural depth, finesse and sheer polish. There is plenty of varietal character in the glass, something I can’t always say about Napa Valley Cabernet Francs. Grilled herbs, mocha, plums, espresso and cloves are some of the many nuances that all meld together in this deep, fleshy wine. Layers of fruit continue to resonate on what seems like an eternal finish. The ripeness and softness of the tannin suggests the Devotion will drink well pretty much right out of the gate. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2025.” - Antonio Galloni

**2010 Romance of the Heart Bordeaux Blend 93 points**

The juiciest of dark raspberries, cloves, mint and freshly cut roses flow from the 2010 Red Blend Romance of the Heart. This supple, inviting wine possesses gorgeous depth and richness, all in a silky style that makes it approachable today. The 2010 firms up with time in the glass, but it remains quite polished and approachable for the year. Sweet herbal notes from the Cabernet Franc appear on the finish, adding further complexity and character. The Red Blend is Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Anticipated maturity: 2013-2020.

## Recipe

### Pulled Pork Tacos with Parmesan Quinoa & Grilled Peach Pico

Tobias Cappello, one of our Wine Club members, was having a glass of wine with Barb and discussing their favorite fall food to have with O'Brien wine while watching football. Tobias was talking about how wonderful his Tex-Mex pulled pork tacos were and Barb asked him to share his recipe with our Wine Club members.

These tacos are a full meal in a wrapper.

#### PULLED PORK

We smoke our pork shoulder "slow and low" in Texas and the flavors in the meat come from a combination of the wood smoke, the dry rub applied to the outside and the meat itself.

Dry Rub Recipe – this is a slightly spicy dry rub:

- 6 Tbs salt
- 3 Tbs course black pepper
- 1 tsp red pepper/cayenne
- 4 Tbs garlic powder
- 4 Tbs brown sugar
- 2 Tbs onion powder
- 2 Tbs paprika
- 2 Tbs ancho chili powder

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl and set aside

Prepping the Pork Shoulder - 1 pork shoulder, washed and trimmed. Pork shoulder comes in many sizes. The larger the piece, the more you have to eat and the longer it takes to cook. I suggest you smoke at least a 5 lb shoulder (also called Boston Butt). Once I have the shoulder, I trim the exterior fat down to approx. 1/8 inch. Although much of the exterior fat is removed, there is still plenty of fat on the interior of the shoulder to make it moist. Also, exposing more of the exterior meat allows more rub on the surface of the meat, which means more flavor.

Applying the dry rub - Before applying the rub, wash the shoulder in cool water and pat dry with a paper towel. Place on a sheet pan or in a shallow bowl (to catch the excess rub) and apply the rub liberally to the whole exterior. I apply the rub 2 hours before smoking; too much longer and the salt in the rub will extract too much liquid from the shoulder.

Smoking the Pork Shoulder – Smoke on any available smoker for 1.5 – 2 hours per pound at 200 – 225 degrees. I cook on a big green egg with lump wood charcoal and apple wood chips soaked in apple juice. Smoke the shoulder to 150 degrees. Remove shoulder, wrap in foil and return to the smoker. The meat will have taken in as much smoke as needed by this time and the wrapping will keep the moisture in and the shoulder tender. Once the shoulder reaches 190 degrees remove from the smoker and wrap in

beach towels and then a cooler for at least 2 hours. The wrapping will allow the shoulder to cook a little more (get to 200 degrees internal) and it will also moisten it.

### **PARMESAN QUINOA**

- 1 1/2 cups washed Quinoa
- 2 Tbs unsalted butter
- 1 large sweet (yellow is what I prefer) onion diced
- 1 finely chopped garlic clove
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 32 oz chicken stock/broth
- 3 tsp season salt
- 1 cup grated parmesan cheese

Melt the butter in a 3 quart saute pan on medium heat, add the onion and cook until soft. Add garlic and sauté for 2 more minutes. Add quinoa to the pan and sauté butter, onion and quinoa on medium heat until the quinoa is slightly toasted. You should begin to smell the toasted quinoa. Next, add the white wine and scrape the bottom to de-glaze the pan.

Once the steam has subsided, add season salt and 1/3 of the stock. Cook uncovered, stirring occasionally until liquid is absorbed. Repeat 2 more times until all stock is added and absorbed.

Finally, remove the pan from heat and add parmesan cheese and fold into quinoa. Let set for 5 minutes and serve.

### **GRILLED PEACH PICO**

- 1 peach
- 1/2 yellow onion diced
- 1 medium tomato quartered, seeded and diced
- 1 jalapeño diced (with membrane and seed removed)
- 1 minced clove of garlic
- 1 lime

Peel, halve and core out the peach. Grill at 350 degrees for 3 - 4 minutes, enough to get a few grill marks and soften the face. While grilling the peaches, combine the onion, tomato, jalapeño and garlic in a small bowl. Squeeze in the juice from the lime. Add salt and pepper. Once the peach is done, dice and add to the bowl. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour to allow the flavors to combine.

“Pulling” the Pork – after the shoulder has rested for a couple of hours, remove from the foil and take a chef’s knife and large cooking fork. Make a few cuts through the shoulder to loosen it up and then, with both utensils, “pull” it apart. You will be creating strands and chunks of the shoulder.

### **Assembling the Taco**

To make the taco’s place a serving of pulled pork on a warmed flour tortilla (approximately 1/4 cup). Then add 1/4 cup of parmesan quinoa, and a spoonful of the pico. Eat immediately and enjoy!