

Member Newsletter

February 2014

Rain has come! We are saved!

O'Brien Estate Spring Update

As we write you this newsletter, we are in Houston in the midst of a marathon road trip over 2.5 weeks and most of the country it seems.

We decided, rather than having our traditional Valentine's Evening dinner at the winery, that we would take this opportunity to visit as many wine club members as possible in the Southwest (a fortunate decision, as the Northeast became impassable with major storms – even as I write this, we are heading to North Carolina where our hosts are without power).

Our trip started with a Museum of Fine Arts Charity Fundraising dinner in St. Petersburg, FL, where Bart's parents still live, who are now 89 (Dad) and 92 (Mom the cougar). After visiting with Mom and Dad, then having a great dinner in a lovely home, we next drove to Orlando to spend the night with an old college friend of Bart's. The next evening found us in Ft. Lauderdale at another friend and wine club member's home. Then we drove to Miami, met our sister-in-law at Joe's Stone Crabs, then continued on to the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo for another major charity fundraising dinner and more wine club members.

After Key Largo, we flew to Austin for 2 wine dinners hosted by local restaurants, then to Houston for dinner with friends and then a major wine dinner at Luca and Leonardo's in The Woodlands. We had about 80 people attend, of which about 60 were wine club members. This was a great opportunity to connect with old friends. We are now on our way to Little Rock for a wine dinner with more wine club members, and then onto Wilmington, NC for our last wine dinner of this trip. Whew! We ended up having about 250 people at all these dinners, and connecting with wine club members in their own towns was great fun. We will be having our Valentine's Evening dinner next year at the winery on February 13, 2015.

Wine Club Member Trip

As you hopefully know, we will be having 50 of our wine club members join us for a “Footsteps of Brian Boru” tour across Ireland to celebrate the life and death of the greatest High King of Ireland. O’Brien means “Son of Brian” in Gaelic, so of course we had to go celebrate with other O’Briens. This will be taking place from April 12 to the 20th.

We are now thinking about what wine club trips our members would be interested in for 2015. One of our ideas is a river cruise down the Danube for 8 days in May 2015. We will be sending out an electronic survey to ask how many people would be interested in this or other possible trips. We had a wonderful time with 100 members on our January 2013 Celebrity cruise to the Eastern Caribbean and would like to continue having an annual trip with our members.

Napa Valley Film Festival

In our November newsletter, we spoke of becoming Patrons of the Napa Valley Film Festival as we thought it was pertinent to support this important, but fledgling addition to Napa Valley. Wow! The NVFF in its third year became a major event. Colin Farrell and other stars came to visit and rub shoulders with the Movie Moguls (but not us - a much higher level of financial commitment than the Patron level), and the entire valley was abuzz with great movies and even better parties. It truly felt like being in Hollywood. We loved the independently produced movies and the unique stories they told, and meeting the producers, directors, and actors in the Q&A sessions following the movies. We hosted a dinner at the winery for 18 actors, directors, and other Patrons and had an up and coming young chef, Tyler Stone, put on a great show and meal for us. If you are making travel plans to Napa in the late fall this year, we suggest you look into attending this event and purchasing the Festival passes in advance. We expect this event to continue to grow dramatically and become one of “the” festivals to attend. The dates are November 12-16, 2014.

Wine Club Recipe

Included in this shipment is a recipe graciously provided by Tyler Stone printed on a card. We hope you enjoy this lamb dish as much as we did during the Film Festival dinner party we hosted.

Upcoming Events

Our wine club member event calendar for 2014 is below. If you happen to be in Napa Valley during one of our Wine Club Pickup Parties, please come by and join the fun. We are having Tyler Stone cook for our members at the February 22nd Pickup Party.

March 17	St. Patrick's Day Celebration
May 17	Wine Club Pickup Party
July 19	Date Night at the Drive-In
September 6	Wine Club Pickup Party
September 27	Night of Unrestrained Reserve
November 15	Wine Club Pickup Party

Tasting Notes for New Releases – David Yorgensen, Winemaker

2011 Romance of the Heart - Instantly approachable, the bright, vivid and lively 2011 Romance of the Heart possess aromas and flavors of red cherries, currents, raspberries and spice that gain weight and texture throughout the lingering finish.

2011 Merlot – With a dense purple hue the 2011 Merlot indulges the senses with aromas of rich, dark fruits, black cherry, plum, cassis, and forest floor that blend harmoniously with mocha laced toasted oak and lush, all-encompassing, smooth tannins to define the depth and breadth of this well balanced and easily drinkable offering.

2011 Seduction – Complex and complete, the densely purple colored 2011 Seduction reveals a multifarious bouquet of dark fruits, mixed berry pie, bakers chocolate, spices and well integrated, mocha laden toasty oak. On the pallet it is equally intricate exposing a wealth of balanced tannin and acidity that last.

2011 Passion of the Soul – Bold, dense and powerful, the 2011 Passion of the Soul is a big, ripe cabernet lovers cabernet sauvignon with a deep purple hue, rich, complex and intense aromatics of dark fruit, graphite and fine oak, and a densely structured mouth feel that is long and lingering.

2011 Devotion – Dark, dense and expressively perfumed, the 2011 Devotion is a deep and brooding wine that interweaves floral elegance with rich dark fruits and a big, round, fine-grained, mouth coating, palate presence and finish.

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 surlie for 10 months, undergoing a monthly bâtonnage to enhance the rich and full mouth feel. 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 mouth feel 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

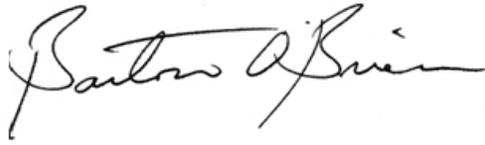
2010 Devotion Cabernet Franc 92 points

“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.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bart O'Brien". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Bart O'Brien

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barb O'Brien". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being the most prominent.

Barb O'Brien