

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

MAY 2015

## O'Brien Estate Summer Update

Oh, the joys of living in the Napa Valley! While the rest of the country was buried under snowdrifts, deluged with floods, or simply frozen, we had a mild and dry winter. While we wished for more rain, we can't complain about the way Mother Nature treats us (except for the occasional earthquake to keep us from becoming too complacent). Now we are having glorious spring days, with the budding vines reaching for the sky, and starting the seasonal process with the tiny growths that will become wonderfully ripening grapes shortly. With the warm weather, our thoughts turn to (drum roll) – Summer Parties!

We hope you can join us for our first Summer of Love party on July 18 at 7 pm. After ten years of our 50's themed Date Night at the Drive-in, we decided move up a decade to celebrate the 60's: Woodstock and the San Francisco Summer of Love. Wear your best tie-dyed t-shirt and hippie beads, and enjoy wine and a casual dinner on the lawn under the stars. We will screen the movie *Woodstock* on the winery wall and have a groovy dance party after dinner in the tasting room with our disco lights.

## 2015 Event Calendar

We have planned some exciting events for our Members. If you happen to be in Napa Valley during one of our events, please plan to join the fun. We will email invitations through Paperless Post with all of the details.

Saturday, July 18	Summer of Love Party
Saturday, September 12	Harvest Party
Saturday, September 26	A Night of Unrestrained Reserve
October 5-13	Mediterranean Cruise **Only a few spaces left – please reserve by May 1**

*Dates are subject to change so please check with us first before making travel plans.*

## Wine Pick Up Days

If you live nearby or happen to be in town, please join us on a Sunday afternoon to pick up your quarterly wine allocation. Come enjoy a glass of wine and some small bites and visit with fellow wine club members. Please RSVP to let us know you will come by, so we can have your wines packed for pick up, especially if you do not usually pick up your wines. *Please check the online calendar, as dates are subject to change.*

Sunday, May 17th	12 noon – 5 pm
Sunday, September 20th	12 noon – 5 pm
Sunday, November 8th	12 noon – 5 pm

## Join us for the 5th Annual Napa Valley Film Festival – November 11-15, 2015

O'Brien Estate is once again a proud Vintner Patron of the festival, and will be hosting one of twenty-four luxurious Vintner Circle dinners at the winery on Saturday November 14th. This is a perfect time to plan your visit to the Napa Valley! This five day event features 12 Screening Venues, 125 Films, 300 Filmmakers, 50 Chefs, and 150 Wineries, bringing together film, food, and wine aficionados from around the world. Buy your pass online today at <http://napavalleyfilmfest.org> and enter **OBRIEN for a 10% discount**. Patron pass holders receive priority access to filmmakers, celebrities, celebrated Napa Valley Chefs and Vintners, never wait in line, and are invited to spectacular VIP parties and events.

## Member Mediterranean Unrestrained Wine Cruise

Please join us for another unforgettable member cruise. This year, we will be sailing aboard *Oceania's* newest mid-sized ship, the *Riviera*. The cruise starts in Athens, Greece. Barb and I are planning to arrive a few days early to visit the Greek islands, then the pre-cruise guided tours of Athens. Our children Emily (25) and Mason (23) will be joining us on the cruise also for a family adventure.

Once we board the ship, we will continue on to Sicily, Rome, Florence, Monte Carlo, Provence, and end up in Barcelona. You can view the entire itinerary online at [www.foodandwinetrails.com/OBrien2015](http://www.foodandwinetrails.com/OBrien2015). We will have 4 wine events featuring O'Brien wine aboard, including a Welcome Reception, Tasting Seminar, and 2 wine dinners. *Food and Wine Trails* specializes in creating travel adventures for high end wineries with large memberships. This is all they do and they have been doing it for 20 years, so they understand how to create great food and wine experiences.

We are looking forward to joining our adventurous members on this cruise, as these member events are the most fun vacations we have had. The excitement of being in a foreign country, while becoming friends with our members, is truly a wonderful experience! Check the brochure, as great early booking discounts are being offered including **FREE AIRFARE** from 27 major U.S. airports!

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being a member of O'Brien Estate. We hope you enjoy our wines in good company.

Cheers!



Bart O'Brien



Barb O'Brien



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## TASTING NOTES

### DAVID YORGENSEN – WINEMAKER

#### CURRENT RELEASES

**2013 Fascination Sauvignon Blanc** – Bright and brilliant, displaying a crisp, light golden color. Initial aromas of wet stone, grapefruit, and lemon peel soon transform, as the wine travels across the palate, to reveal subtle, tropical, pineapple notes that effortlessly intermingle with the original mineral and citrus character in a curiously rich and round, yet endlessly refreshing wine.

**2013 Chardonnay** – This vintage exemplifies aromatics and flavors of rich pear that blend effortlessly with bright stone fruits. In a wine that is exquisitely balanced, yet still very playful and lively on the palate. Vanilla laced pear notes linger on the lengthy balanced finish.

**2012 Estate Merlot** – A truly focused wine, with aromas of black cherry, boysenberry and espresso. The structured mouthfeel is velvety on the palate with lasting flavors of spicy dark fruits. *“A really delicious, full-throttle Merlot...about as sexy and seductive a Merlot as one is going to find. It also has more complexity than Merlot often has credit for possessing....This is a beauty.” 90 Points ~ Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate*

**2012 Romance of the Heart** – Exploding with aromas of red raspberry, cherry pie and red plum; the mouthfeel is supple with balanced tannins and the evolving presence of red fruits and cedar spice. *“This is a full-bodied beauty.” 92 Points ~ Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate*

**2012 Seduction** – Overwhelmingly diverse and complex with a dynamic bouquet that keeps delivering mixed berries and dark fruit; exotic, supple, polished and balanced with integrated silky tannins and a long flavorful finish. *“A very juicy, ultimately complex wine that tastes like a Right Bank Pomerol from Bordeaux.” 90 Points ~ Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate*

**2012 Passion of the Soul, Cabernet Sauvignon** – Dark, deep and muscular with brooding aromatics of black currant, dark chocolate and ripe plum. Rich and dense with dark fruits wrapped in a veil of smooth tannins; an iron fist in a velvet glove. *“A rich, broad, open-ended, opulent style that can be drunk now, or cellared for 10-15 years.” 91 Points ~ Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate*

## OUR RESERVE WINES

**2012 Reserve Chardonnay** – The nose is deep, complex and rich with ripe pear, butterscotch and hints of toasted marshmallow. The mouthfeel is full and balanced, showcasing spice that marries with pear to last endlessly on the palate. *“Nicely proportioned, this beauty comes across like a top-flight Burgundy Bâtard-Montrachet.”*  
**94 Points** ~ Robert Parker, *The Wine Advocate*

**2012 Reserve Merlot** – This vintage bombards the senses with dark fruit and a softness you swear you can smell. Upon tasting, the mouth is overwhelmed with dark fruit, rich earth, subtle oak and polished tannins; A fabulously balanced expression of pure Merlot. *“A Merlot that consumers will love. This is a beauty to drink.”* **91 Points** ~ Robert Parker, *The Wine Advocate*

**2012 Devotion, Cabernet Franc** – A pure and focused expression of Cabernet Franc with huge vibrant floral aromas of wild flowers and violets. Flavors of wild blueberries envelop the palate along with supple and balanced tannins. The delicate fruit and floral aromas linger and intensify as time goes on. *“This is a gorgeous Cabernet Franc... impressive purity and length.”* **92 Points** ~ Robert Parker, *The Wine Advocate*

**2012 Unrestrained Reserve** – A bold display of what a wine can achieve; rich in flavors, color and complexity. The nose is ever-changing and enticing with rich dark fruits, dense structure, and a balanced mouthfeel. Perfection in a glass! *“A killer wine aged 18 months in 100% new French oak...full-bodied, pure and beautifully textured.”* **96 Points** ~ Robert Parker, *The Wine Advocate*



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## SUMMER RECIPES

Chef Elizabeth Binder, originally from South Africa, is our longtime friend and was recently a *Top Chef* finalist. Lizzie offers the following original recipe for our Wine Club Members, to pair with our newly released 2014 Flirtation Rosé.

*"This stunning salad is perfect for those coming warm evenings - as strawberry season gets underway - especially divine served with O'Brien Estate Flirtation Rosé."*

### **Balsamic Roasted Strawberry Salad**

*Serves 2*

- 1 pint of freshly picked strawberries
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- Juice from 1/2 a lemon
- Several handfuls of peppery greens such as watercress, arugula, mustard or nasturtium
- 3-4 oz goat cheese, crumbled
- 1/2 cup of hazelnuts, toasted and chopped
- Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 350° F. Wash, hull and cut the strawberries in half. Lay them on a baking tray in a single layer. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar and lemon juice and season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Bake in the oven for 40 minutes until the juice is bubbly and the strawberries are soft.

While the strawberries are baking, toast and chop the hazelnuts and set them aside.

Wash and dry your greens and arrange them on a plate or in a bowl. Divide the goat cheese and toasted hazelnuts and add them to each serving.

When the strawberries are done baking spoon several strawberry halves onto each salad and drizzle the juices they were baking in over the top. Drizzle on some extra virgin olive oil.

Serve warm or cold. Enjoy!

## MORE SUMMER RECIPES

As some of you may know, Bart's brother Dr. Christopher O'Brien is a world-class liver researcher and Professor of Medicine at the University of Miami Medical Center. (It's ironic that both Chris and Bart ended up in the liver business - but on different sides of the liver!) Chris married Michele Porcaro, who is half Greek and half Italian. In anticipation of our upcoming cruise embarking from Athens, we thought we would share one of her Greek family recipes.

Barb chose a recipe for the delicious Greek appetizer, dolmades made from grape leaves. This of course seemed appropriate as this is something we have in abundance this time of year. The name comes from the Turkish word "dolma" meaning "stuffed". Dolmades are a favorite dish in Greece, and we plan on sampling many of them during our 2015 Mediterranean Cruise, along with all the Greek food we can find in Santorini, Naxos, and Athens.

### PREPARING FRESH GRAPE LEAVES



When making stuffed grape leaves, it is always best to use fresh young grape leaves. The jarred grape leaves are sometimes tough, and the fresh leaves are tender. Pick tender leaves in springtime. Usually, the smaller leaves are most tender, but they should be large enough to be able to wrap. Once you've picked the fresh grape leaves, you should parboil to preserve freshness. In order to parboil, bring water to a boil in a large pot. Scald the leaves for 1 minute. Drain and make stacks of leaves.

If you don't plan on using the grape leaves immediately, they can be frozen. To freeze, place stacks of grape leaves in freezer bag, and place in freezer. When you're ready to use, unfreeze by putting in water, or just let them thaw out.

### DOLMADES

#### Stuffed Grape Leaves with Meat

2 lbs. ground beef (90% lean)	mint -chopped
fresh grape leaves OR 1 jar grape leaves	1 bunch scallions
1 - 32 oz. can chicken broth	1 onion
1 1/2 cups Carolina rice (or other fluffy white rice)	pepper
6 lemons	olive oil

Rinse rice to remove starch. Juice lemons, and reserve peels. Chop mint, scallions, onion and mix together. Put meat in large bowl. Add rice, scallions, onion, mint and a little olive oil. Add chicken broth and lemon mixture to bowl (1/4 cup broth, 1/4 cup water and juice of 1 lemon). Mix raw meat with all ingredients (mixture should be moist). If necessary, if mixture starts to look dry while wrapping leaves, add additional juice mixture.

Remove leaves from jar, rinse with water and then separate. Place about 1 tsp. of the rice mixture in the center of each leaf (shiny surface down). Fold sides in and roll up. Repeat process.

In large pot, put leaves on bottom of pot. Add dolmas to pot, stacking neatly. Add chicken broth, water and lemon juice mixture. Pour pure lemon juice over the top layer. Put lemon peels on top. Also, put plate upside down on top of lemon peels for weight. Bring to a boil and then simmer gently for approximately 1 hour until rice and meat is cooked thoroughly. ~ *Victoria Porcaro*