

WINE CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Graziano Family of Wines

SPRING (PRIMAVERA) 2024

Arneis and the white wines of Enotria and Piemonte



As much as everyone wants to talk about the diversity and the quality of the red wines of Piemonte, Italy, the whites are just as diverse and spectacular. The reason we are always educating our friends about these wonderful wines is the more you know about them in their homeland, the more they can be appreciated here in America. As far as production of native varieties is concerned, Barbera is the number one planted variety in Piemonte followed by Moscato Bianco, Nebbiolo, Dolcetto, Cortese, Brachetto, then finally Arneis. However, there are copious numbers of secondary white varieties grown here,

but in small amounts, such as, Erbaluce, Nascetta, Timorasso, Baratuciat, Malvasia Bianca, Blanchet and Favorita (the local name for Vermentino). These are mostly aromatic varieties possessing fruity aromas and flavors and each one finds a home in the many diverse regions of Piemonte. When speaking of white varieties, Moscato Bianco in Piemonte, specifically the province of Asti, is the world's leading producer of this most ancient and aromatic of grape varieties. Here you will find several styles (mostly all sweet) from the slightly effervescent Moscato d'Asti to full-blown sparkling wine, Asti Spumante. These wines have few equals in the world (one of which I would brag is our Enotria Moscato, our largest selling white wine) with their floral aromas and flavors of peaches and Freesia flowers. These wines are wonderful ice cold on a hot day or paired with Prosciutto and melon, a Piemontese specialty. We like to pair our Moscato with a lovely Key Lime pie that my wife Trudi makes (I swear it is as good or better than anything we had in Key West). The next largest planted white grape variety is Cortese, the specialty of the Gavi DOC. Extensively cultivated in the province of Alessandria since the 1600's, Cortese produces dry white wines with aromas and flavors of citrus and white flowers with a very lively acidity. It's success as a wine is evident in its acreage planted, now totaling over 4,000 acres. The wines come in several styles from fruity, tank fermented versions, frizzante-sparkling, to barrel fermented sur lie aged Riserva wines.

Now for the star of our show, Arneis. Often called "the rascal" or "difficult one" because of its temperamental nature. Late to ripen, low in acidity, and its preponderance to rot if rained on at the wrong time makes this variety difficult. Arneis is native to the part of the Piemonte called Roero, a region near the town of Alba named after the Roero family which ruled the area long ago. Historians disagree on how long Arneis has been grown there and by what specific name; in the 15th century it may have been called Renesi or Ranaysi, in 1478 a grape called Reneysium was documented

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GRAZIANO



FAMILY OF WINES

Mendocino Wine Growers
Since 1918

WINE CLUB EDITION



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"Work is the curse of the drinking classes."

— Oscar Wilde

grazianofamilyofwines.com

A Prohibition Pantry Staple: 'Bacchus Blocks'



Bacchus Block grape shipping box end

Oh, how quickly we forget the past...

The days of Prohibition are long over and every year we creep closer to 100 years of being able to buy alcohol "legally" again. We know that alcohol sales being illegal during that time didn't exactly deter people from drinking; in the beginning about 30% of people still drank, with the number increasing to about 60% as time went on. (Though we must remember that the Volstead Act just made the industrial manufacturing, importation, sale, and transport of consumable alcohol illegal.) I probably don't need to bore you with the same narrative about prohibition and how

it propped up illegal manufacturing of alcohol, created bootlegging, caused copious amounts of methanol poisonings, etc. etc. The truth is, there were plenty of loopholes for those wanting to drink, you just had to be in the right place or have the right goods to do it.

Technically speaking, Prohibition did not prohibit the consumption of alcohol. Section 29 of the Volstead Act allowed every home to make up to 200 gallons of wine or cider per year, meaning most families could have a home stash. If you were lucky enough to live in farm country or wealthy enough to purchase fresh fruit, you could be set for the year if you knew how to ferment your fruit. (A lot of rural homes had small vineyards for this reason.) In fact, a lot of small farmers survived because of this law; too much fruit for personal use? Pack it in crates and sell it across the states. (Our family did this!) Or, if you were a winery looking to survive, making sacramental wines for churches was an option as well. This saved several wineries from going under.

But what if you missed out on the growing season? Can't afford fresh fruit? Don't have the space? Well... there is another option for you. We introduce: Bacchus Blocks. A BRICK of dried, compressed grapes you can rehydrate into grape juice. (Just be careful, leave it too long and it will turn into wine! *Wink, wink*) You have the option of Tokay, Sauterne, Burgundy, Port, Muscatel, or Riesling, all available through the Vin Sano Company. Retailing at \$1.25 a block, they're a steal!

Now, I must admit, I was surprised to learn about these. I had no idea they existed and I feel like I should have all along. After all, it does make sense that a product like this would exist. We buy preserved foods all the time, how would a dried block of grapes be any different? This was before sliced bread (1928), so it was probably a pretty slick move for most folks that also didn't have modern refrigeration (1911-1928 refrigerators were introduced but not common household items). Feeling thankful for refrigerators and bottled wine yet?

So, to wrap up this block of grapes, let's just say I'm grateful for the end of Prohibition and all the modern luxuries of today.

Thanks to MendoFever, a local news source of ours, who wrote the original article I read about Bacchus Blocks and led me to finding out more.

Cheers! — **Alexandra Graziano**



Vincenzo Graziano grape shipping box end

MARCH 2024 Wine Selections



Blend: 100% Pinot Noir
Cases Produced: 360
Alcohol: 14.5%
Total Acidity:
 0.65 g/100 mL
PH: 3.54
Residual Sugar: 0.2% (Dry)

2021 Saint Gregory Pinot Noir Mendocino

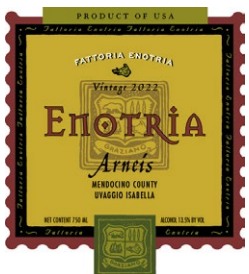
This is the 29th release of our Mendocino Pinot Noir and as always, we feel it is a very fine vintage, very much in the style of all the Saint Gregory wines. Mendocino County's cool climate produces a very elegant and rich style of Pinot Noir with balanced acidity, dark color, full tannins and very fruity flavors.

The grapes for this wine come from three truly unique vineyards located within 2 distinct appellations within Mendocino County. 15% percent of the blend is from Valley Foothills Vineyards managed by the veteran grape grower Casey Hartlip and is located in the heart of the Anderson Valley. 25% is from the Costa Vineyard which is located in the Comptche Appellation which the native Americans called "in the valley among the hills". Comptche is located just northwest of the Anderson Valley and has a similar cool climate. 60% percent is from our Nube Bianco Vineyard located at the headwaters of the Russian River in the high elevation Potter Valley.

All of the fruit was hand-harvested between 24-and 25-degrees brix. After crushing, approximately 20 percent of the grapes were added whole-cluster to cold soak for four days before fermentation. The must was punched down twice daily for an average of two weeks to gently extract color, flavor and tannins. After a gentle pressing, the wines were racked into small 25% new French oak barrels where they finished malolactic fermentation with their indigenous malolactic bacteria. The wines were aged on their secondary lees for 28 months then egg white fined and bottled on Feb 10, 2024.

This wine is medium dark red garnet in color and Burgundian in style; with rich, full and attractive aromas/flavors of ripe black cherries, plum, toasty oak and hints of earth. Soft tannins, balanced acidity and a rich, velvety mouth-feel produce a luscious wine that is enjoyable now and will develop more complexity with additional aging in the bottle.

Delicious companions with this wine are roasted duck, sage-roasted double pork chops and roasted lamb with fresh herbs and Mediterranean vegetables.



Blend: 100% Arneis
Cases Produced: 140
Alcohol: 13.5%
Total Acidity:
 0.75 g/100 mL
PH: 3.05
Residual Sugar: 0.2% (Dry)

2022 Enotria Arneis

Arneis (which in the Piemontese dialect means a difficult one or little rascal) is a rare, ancient white grape variety that was all but abandoned because of its low yields and difficulty to cultivate. Primarily grown in Piemonte, this varietal is now being grown in several regions of California. When everything falls into place, Arneis has the flavor and fine, dry palate to succeed where an overblown Chardonnay fails, especially with flavorful seafood such as halibut or prawns. It is probably one of the most distinctive and unusual white grape varieties in the world and we are one of the oldest producers of this variety in America.

The 2022 vintage marks our 25th vintage of Arneis. 88% percent of the wine is Arneis and comes from our Nube Bianco Vineyard grown at the headwaters of the Russian River in the high elevation Potter Valley. This is the perfect terroir for this variety, as it lets the grapes mature very slowly, which leads to the development of their very unique flavors and aromas. The final 12% of this wine is comprised of Vermentino that is grown in the gravelly clay soils of the Talmage district in the eastern benchlands in the Ukiah Valley by the Ruddick family.

The grapes were hand-harvested at an average 22.0 degrees brix between October 7th and 18th of 2022. The grapes were crushed, pressed, and cold settled before being racked into neutral French Burgundy oak barrels. The wine was then barrel-fermented, "sur-lie" aged for eight months, not allowed to undergo malolactic fermentation, and bottled on September 1st, 2023.

This wine has a rich body with balanced acidity and a medley of distinctive aromas and flavors of spiced Pippin apples, Bosc pears, anise, and hints of almonds. A long, complex finish follows the rich, supple texture and intensity on the palate. With some extra time in the bottle it shows a beautiful, somewhat petrol aroma, similar to well-aged Riesling.

The 2022 Arneis pairs well with many seafood dishes such as seared scallops wrapped in pancetta. It is a charming aperitivo and sipping wine. Also, give it a try with clam and bacon pizza or chicken Piccata with lemon and capers.



Blend: 88% Zinfandel,
 12% Petite Sirah
Cases Produced: 220
Alcohol: 14.5%
Total Acidity:
 0.72 g/100 mL
PH: 3.30
Residual Sugar: 0.75% (Dry)

2018 Graziano Zinfandel Reserve

Throughout the years at the Graziano Family of Wines, we have featured many Zinfandels in our quarterly wine club newsletter. Zinfandel has been, and will always be, one of the most important varietals we produce and is also one of the most important wines of Mendocino County and California. As we all know, Zinfandel has always had an up-and-down importance in the history of California. This I blame on the many different styles Zinfandel can produce, which is dependent on where and how it is made. Many elements of our Zinfandels have always rung true. Our Zinfandel is always full of flavor, very aromatic, well-structured in both tannin and acidity, full in body, well balanced, and is a wine that is very age worthy. This Zinfandel exhibits all of these traits.

The grapes for this blend are 89% from Redwood Valley, which is a great appellation for Zinfandel. 56% of this Zinfandel is grown by my cousin Gil Tournour and his late brother Alex in gravelly clay soils in the eastern benchlands of Redwood Valley. 12% is Petite Sirah from the Arreguin Vineyard, grown in gravelly clay soils next to the Russian River, also in Redwood Valley. The final 12% is Zinfandel from the Casa Pacini Vineyard, grown in rocky-clay soils on the eastern benchlands in the Talmage region, also a great place for Zinfandel. All the grapes were hand harvested between October 21th and November 3rd at an average of 25 brix. After 2 weeks of being pumped-over or punched-down twice daily while fermenting, the wines were pressed and then racked to barrels for aging. The wines were aged for a full 3 years in French Burgundy barrels, of which 20% were new. During this time the wines were never racked off of their secondary sediments which contributed complexity and terroir to the wine. Aromas and flavors of ripe berries, smoky, toasty oak, and earth are framed by a very full body and rich, round tannins. This is a great wine with any meat dish, especially wild game. This Zinfandel will also age very gracefully for many years to come.

Wine Article

Shipping Grapes Before, During, and After Prohibition

Shipping grapes across the country was a small enterprise for grape growers in California prior to prohibition, not because getting bottled wine from California was hard to get, but because it was more affordable to the poor European immigrants who were not only used to drinking wine, but making it. The method of shipping grapes in non-refrigerated railroad cars was a learning curve, much like shipping lettuce across country (after several attempts of shipping more delicate varieties like butter lettuce, which wilted on the way to their destination, varieties like Iceberg and Romaine lettuces were used because their trip was made easier due to their higher water content.) Grapes had a similar problem, which was even more evident during prohibition when the demand went ballistic. But, like lettuce, the variety shipped was important for its success. In 1920 at the start of prohibition, 26,000 railcars of grapes made the trip from California to cities like Chicago, Newark, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. By 1927, 72,000 railroad cars were making the journey. Grapes that were less juicy did better during shipment and made better wine; it was the toughness of the skins and how loose the bunches were that mattered. This really explains why the grape varieties Alicante Bouchet, Carignane, and Zinfandel were planted during prohibition because of their loose clusters and tough skins did not rot during transportation, not to mention home winemakers liked them for their tannins, good color, and bright acidity.

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From 1920 to 1933, over \$100 million of new vineyards were planted in California. Acreage grew during this time from 300,000 acres to 577,000 acres (today there are about 600,000 acres of wine grapes grown in California). Growers who were shipping grapes were responsible to buy their own one-way grape shipping boxes. Of course, because of cost, most boxes were built by the growers, like my grandfathers. This cost and inconvenience was one of the reasons the grape brick was invented. Today, we still ship grapes in refrigerated trucks and railcars around the country to home winemakers, but also to many new wineries that are springing up in states like Arizona, New York, Georgia, and Missouri. These small and sometime large wineries like the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, depend on California grapes to supplement their inconsistent production. Many of these wineries have restaurants and wedding venues to supplement selling the wines. We and others, who now depend on this out-of-state business, use plastic lined, thick cardboard bins (like what you see watermelons and corn in) to ship the grapes. This has become another income stream for us in this challenging wine and grape economy... but it is also another way to spread the great reputation of our Mendocino grapes and wine.

All the best — **Gregory Graziano**

GFW Order Form

Wine	Reg. Bottle Price	Club Bottle Price	# of Bottles	Total \$
SAINT GREGORY				
Pinot Noir 2021	25.00	18.75		
Pinot Meunier 2021	28.00	21.00		
Reserve Pinot Noir, Anderson Vly 2019	40.00	30.00		
Brut 2014, Sparkling Wine — 8 years on tirage (Release 11-1-23)	60.00	45.00		
MONTE VOLPE				
Primo Rosso Lot-17	14.00	10.50		
Extra Virgin Olive Oil 2022, 375ml	16.00	12.00		
Pinot Grigio 2022	18.00	13.50		
Vermentino 2022	18.00	13.50		
Sagrantino 2020	18.00	13.50		
Fiano 2023	23.00	17.25		
Greco d' Tufo 2023	23.00	17.25		
Ribolla Gialla 2023	23.00	17.25		
Negroamaro 2019	23.00	17.25		
Primitivo 2020	23.00	17.25		
Sangiovese 2019	28.00	21.00		
Montepulciano 2020	35.00	26.25		
Nero d' Avola 2020	35.00	26.25		
Aglianico 2020	40.00	30.00		
ENOTRIA				
Moscato 2022	14.00	10.50		
Arneis 2022	20.00	15.00		
Barbera 2019	23.00	17.25		
Barbera Riserva 2018	35.00	26.25		
NV Moscato Elevato Fortified dessert wine, 375ml	35.00	26.25		
GRAZIANO				
Colombard 2022, Old Vine	18.00	13.50		
Chenin Blanc 2023	18.00	13.50		
Carignane Rosé 2018	18.00	13.50		
Zinfandel 2019	23.00	17.25		
Carignane 2018	23.00	17.25		
Petite Sirah 2020	23.00	17.25		
100th Anniversary Cookbook	25.00	18.75		
Zinfandel Reserve 2018, Old Vine	30.00	22.50		
Syrah Tawny Dessert Wine 2002 Fortified dessert wine, 375ml	40.00	30.00		
Coro Mendocino 2020	50.00	37.50		
Syrah Tawny Dessert Wine 2002 Fortified dessert wine, 750ml Wooden Box	100.00	75.00		

Subtotal		\$
CA Residents - Add Sales Tax (7.875%)		\$
WI Residents - Add Sales Tax (5.0%)		\$
Add UPS or GLS Ground Shipping, packaging, and handling: — \$30/cs Western States, — \$50/cs Middle America, — \$60/cs Eastern States		\$
Total Amount Due		\$

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____



Come by and see us in Hopland for free tasting!

Graziano Family of Wines Tasting Room

John Reagh, Manager
johnr@grazianofamilyofwines.com

13275 S. Hwy 101, Ste 1
Hopland, CA 95449

Office
707-744- 8466 (VINO)

E-mail
info@grazianofamilyofwines.com

NEW Releases!

MonteVolpe



Aglanico
Mendocino County

Another top-flight winner, this Aglianico is one of the best wines of this vintage and comes from our special Bella Vista Vineyard overlooking the Ukiah Valley and our Vincenzo Vineyard's experimental plot on a benchland in Calpella above the Russian River. This wine was aged in French Burgundy barrels, of which 30 % were new, for over 36 months. Like all of our red wines, it sits on its secondary sediments its whole life in the barrel, which enriches and protects the wine, giving it the tell-tale earthy and complex structure. The beautiful dark purple garnet color and intense ripe fruit notes of black berries and jam are balanced by full, rich tannins and great acidity, which is typical of this fabulous Italian grape variety. Less than 120 cases produced, so it will sell-out fast.

2020 MONTE VOLPE
Aglanico

MonteVolpe



Montepulciano
Mendocino County

We are the oldest producer of this Italian red variety going all the way back to 1992 when it was produced from the Fox Hill Vineyard. In 2015 we planted this prolific Abruzzian variety in our Vincenzo Vineyard's experimental plot on a benchland in Calpella above the Russian River. Montepulciano is very late ripener, so you must not overcrop this variety in our climate. This wine was aged in French Burgundy barrels for over 36 months, which has created a wine with complex aromas and flavors of ripe berries and earthy spiciness with a balanced acidity, making this a great food wine to pair with wild boar ragu, roasted meats, or dried aged cheeses. A minuscule 30 cases were produced.

2020 MONTE VOLPE
Montepulciano

MonteVolpe



Negroamaro
Mendocino County

This Apulian (heel of the boot) red variety has found a happy home in the western benchlands of the Calpella district here in Mendocino County. Organically grown by our cousin Gil Tournour in our local white clay-loam soils, this variety produces an elegant red wine with medium-dark red color and pretty aromas and flavors of red berry fruits such as red raspberries and cranberries. Aged in mostly neutral French Burgundy barrels for over 36 months, which has softened the tannins and acidity creating a pleasing red wine perfect for summer fare such as grilled pork chops or seafood cioppino.

2019 MONTE VOLPE
Negroamaro

MonteVolpe



Nero d'Avola
Mendocino County

This important Sicilian red grape variety is planted in our Vincenzo Vineyard's experimental plot on a benchland in Calpella above the Russian River. Small, loose berries and clusters produce a fruity wine with cherry-berry aromas and flavors. This wine was aged in French Burgundy barrels for over 36 months, which has softened the tannins and acidity creating a wine that is immediately enjoyable with lighter Italian fare such as pizza Siciliana or veal scaloppini with Marsala wine sauce, a Sicilian original. A minuscule 30 cases were produced.

2020 MONTE VOLPE
Nero d'Avola

MonteVolpe



Primitivo
Mendocino County

As one of the oldest producers of this Italian clone of Zinfandel, our Primitivo comes from the Calpella District and the eastern benchlands of Redwood Valley, and walks the line of rich, almost sweet fruit aromas and a well-structured serious food wine. Aromas and flavors of ripe berries, Bing Cherries, earth, and toasty oak, gives this wine a world class presence. Aged in a combination of American and French Burgundy oak barrels for over 36 months, which has produced a stunning wine to drink now or one to place in your cellar for coming years of enjoyment.

2020 MONTE VOLPE
Primitivo

continued on page 8

News from the Tasting Room



MARCH MADNESS! Members Save 40% Off ALL Wines!

The Benefits of Being a Graziano Wine Club Member and Customer:

Graziano Family of Wines Wine Club is the best wine club you can be in! Where else can you get barrel fermented white wines and mature red wines that have been barrel aged for three to five years, all at ridiculously low prices? Don't forget this month is March Madness where members save 40% on ALL wines when you buy 12 bottles! No other winery offers that. Most wineries offer member discounts of 10%, maybe 15%.

Graziano Family of Wines members save 25% on all standard wine purchases. On top of that there are the monthly mixed case specials where members save 35%, 40%, even 50% on different wines every month. And then there is Penny shipping every December and June. For the folks in places too hot to ship in June and too cold to ship in December we added penny shipping in April and October. And just to spice it up we have popup sales and popup penny shipping!

We take great care in our wine selections, making sure you never get the same wine twice and that you get to experience the full variety that we have to offer. Speaking of spicing it up, how about Greg's love of introducing us to Italian varietals. Remember Falanghina, Fiano, Ribolla Gialla, Coda Di Volpe, Greco Di Tufo. Now, from his experimental block, we have small lots of Montepulciano, Nero d'Avola, and Sagrantino. Not many wineries can offer you so many different varieties! As Mick Jagger sings "Wild horses couldn't drag me away" from the quality, variety and value of being a member of the Graziano Family of Wines wine club.

So, here's a simple breakdown of some great reasons to be a Wine Club Member at Graziano Family of Wines:

- Members enjoy 25% savings on all standard wine purchases.
- March Madness where all wines are mixed case special at 40% savings for members.
- Every month featured wines on mixed case specials at greatly reduced prices mean great savings.
- Penny shipping months
- Pop up sales
- Pop up penny shipping.
- Small lots of Italian varietals like Montepulciano, Nero d'Avola, Sagrantino
- Red wines that are barrel aged for 3,4, and 5 years making them balanced, mature and complex.
- Barrel fermented white wines with great rounded mouth feel from leaving them on the fat lees.

Every time we celebrate "March Madness" we think about our late friend and tasting room manager Bob Meadows, who started the concept. He was a basketball fan and sometime before 2007 he had the idea of giving our members the same excitement he felt during one of his favorite seasons in sports.

— **John Reagh**

MORE NEW Releases!

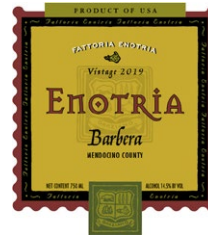
MonteVolpe



Sagrantino
Mendocino County

Sagrantino, the most important variety of the Umbrian region of central Italy, is legendary for its rich, full flavors and its robust tannins and acidity. Similar to Nebbiolo, but with more pronounced fruit flavors and aromas with a darker jammy texture, these wines take years to age. However, when the wine is balanced it can also age for decades to reward its cellar master. This variety we will plant more of, but currently comes from our Vincenzo Vineyard's experimental plot on a benchland in Calpella above the Russian River. This wine was aged in French Burgundy barrels for over 36 months, which has helped tame this Sagrantino, the wildest of Italian red grape varieties. A minuscule 30 cases were produced.

2020 MONTE VOLPE
Sagrantino



The most important red variety of our Enotria brand, Barbera is the most widely planted grape in its Italian homeland of Piemonte. These grapes are grown in our Vincenzo Vineyard and in the Epperson's Burke Hill vineyard, which we manage, located in the western foothills of the Ukiah Valley. A vibrant blend of red fruits such as raspberries and cranberries, soft tannins, and great acidity produces a red wine of immediate enjoyability. The aging in French Burgundy barrels for over 36 months created a great stand alone and food wine with red sauced pizzas or pastas such as Spaghetti Puttanesca.

2019 ENOTRIA
Barbera



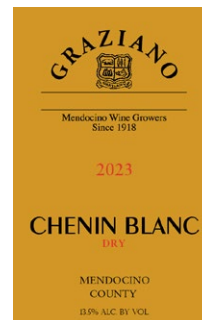
2023
CARIGNANE
ROSÉ

MENDOCINO
COUNTY

18% ALC BY VOL

Grown in our Vincenzo Vineyard, this wine is produced from our 85+ year-old Carignane vines. 100% barrel fermented and sur-lie aged for four months in neutral French Burgundian barrels has created a beautiful light pink colored wine with fruity strawberry and watermelon flavors and aromas that lead to a crisp, clean, refreshing finish. This is the perfect wine for light soups, fresh shellfish, or anything al fresco. Only 300 cases produced.

2023 GRAZIANO
Carignane Rosé



2023
CHENIN BLANC
DRY

MENDOCINO
COUNTY

13% ALC BY VOL

Our 18th vintage of Chenin Blanc from the 50+ year-old Heil Vineyard coupled with the new Koball Vineyard. Both lots are barrel fermented and sur-lie aged for 6 months without malolactic fermentation, which would lower the fruit and acidity. This wine combines the mineral-laced, steely acidity and structure of a classic Loire style wine, with the rich, creamy texture, roundness and fullness of fruit of a Californian wine. Aromas of wet stone, peaches, pear, and citrus all commingle in this racy, complex wine. Enjoy this Chenin Blanc with shellfish pastas in a white wine cream sauce, roasted free range chicken, or grilled halibut. 760 cases produced.

2023 GRAZIANO
Chenin Blanc



2019
ZINFANDEL

MENDOCINO
COUNTY

15% ALC BY VOL

Our most important grape variety in the Graziano Family line-up, Zinfandel, is also one of Mendocino Counties best. We are lucky Mendocino County has a large supply of old vine vineyards, grown by experienced and long-time grape growers, many of them of Italian heritage. The Tournour and Foster vineyards are both grown in Redwood Valley, which is one of the best Mendocino appellations for Zinfandel, adorn this full-bodied wine. Aged in French Burgundy and American oak barrels for over 36 months, which is our norm for Zinfandel, gives our wine a richness and complexity many aspire to. Now with a new white label, it is set apart from the rest of our line-up. Drinks perfectly with Spaghetti or lasagna Bolognese (in our cookbook).

2019 GRAZIANO
Zinfandel



UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAR

- **March 7th - 9th - Jackson Hole Food and Wine Fest**, Jackson Hole, WY
- **March 8th - 10th - Charleston Wine and Food**, Charleston, SC
- **March 8th - 9th - Cincinnati Wine Fest**, Cincinnati, OH
- **March 9th - Wine Club Pick Up Party**, Hopland, CA
- **March 9th - Second Saturday**, Hopland CA
- **March 16th - Mendocino Whale Festival Wine Walk**, Fort Bragg, CA
- **March (Various Dates) - Disney Wine and Food Fest**, Anaheim, CA

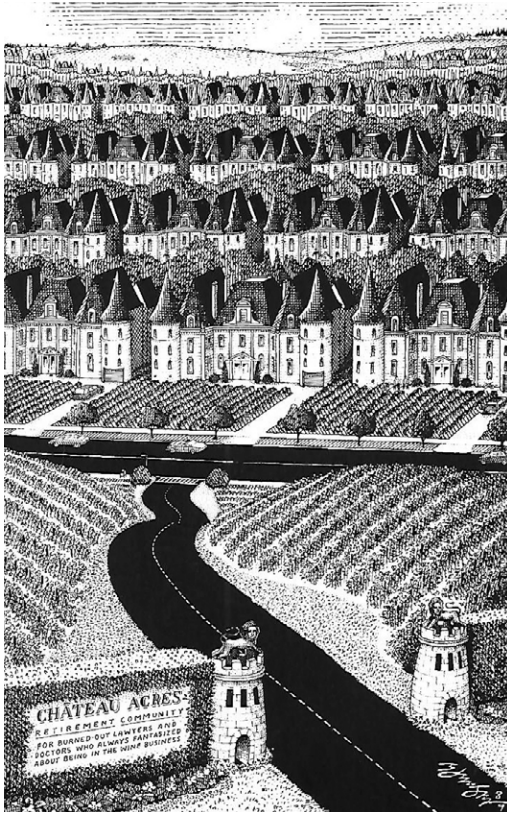
APR

- **April 3rd - 6th - Taste of Vail**, Vail, CO
- **April 13th - Second Saturday**, Hopland CA

MAY

- **May 11th - Second Saturday**, Hopland CA
- **May 17th - 19th - Anderson Valley Pinot Fest**, Philo, CA
- **May 24th - 26th - BottleRock, Napa**, Napa, CA

Feature Article

Arneis and the white wines of Enotria and Piemonte (continued from page 1)

growing in Torino and could also be it. The first actual appearance of the word Arneis is from an ampelography (the identification and classification of grapevines) text by Count Giuseppe di Rovasenda in 1877, where it was noted that “the Arneis grape was well established in Piemonte”. For most of the next century, Arneis was grown primarily for two purposes: one, to use it as the French use Viognier with Syrah in the northern Rhone, as a blending wine to soften the intense tannins of the Nebbiolo-based wines of Barolo and Barbaresco (it has therefore often been called Barolo Bianco), and two, as an aromatic sacrificial border crop to lure hungry birds and insects away from the more highly prized Nebbiolo fruit. As a white wine, it wasn't held in very high esteem due to the fact that it was usually planted in the least desirable locations (Nebbiolo and Barbera got those), leading to a rather undistinguished profile on the palate. As a crop, its susceptibility to powdery and downy mildew and low levels of acidity caused too many problems for growers to think of it as a money crop – hence its moniker. Then, when Italian wine laws changed in the 1960's so that Barolos had to be 100% Nebbiolo, Arneis growers were forced out of the picture, leading many growers and producers to remove the varietal in favor of easier and more lucrative vines and wines. By the 1970's, production was so low that the varietal was in serious danger of going extinct; only two producers were still making it, Bruno Giacosa and Alfredo Currado of the Vietti estate, who helped save it from obscurity. Then, in the 1980's, Arneis was 'discovered' by Italian wine connoisseurs and it became a cult wine in the fashionable cafes and restaurants along the Ligurian coast where it fetched ever-increasing prices. That, of course, led to expanded acreage. Then, in 1989, Arneis was awarded DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) status, meaning it meets or exceeds certain quality parameters, which in turn led to an ever-expanding increase in Arneis plantings and bottlings. By 2005, it was awarded the top qualitative designation, DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata Garantita), and Arneis was decidedly off the

endangered list, with increased plantings in the Piemonte as well as Sardinia, California, and Australia. Like practically every other wine grape on the planet, Arneis will be different when grown in disparate locations. In the Roero, it is usually a rather light-bodied, fragrant, crisp wine with pearl-like notes; however, when barrel-fermented it tends toward a more full-bodied, mineral tinged wine with balanced flavors and aromas of apricots, pears, and almonds. Globally, when planted in chalky soils like those in its native home, the wines have more structure and acidity; when planted in sandy clay, the wines tend toward elegance and balance. Our Mendocino soils are mostly of the latter type, and our Arneis is most definitely a subtle wine. Golden in color with aromas reminiscent of slate and baked pear, the wine is definitely full-bodied and crisp, with flavors of lemon, apricot, and creamy hazelnut, and the finish is long, lingering and taut. Our winemaking with neutral barrel fermentation and sur lie aging helps this style along, making it a food forward wine to be sure. So even though Arneis' 'cult' status of the 1980's and 1990's has dissipated, as so often happens, the qualities which made it fashionable and successful have not – its dry, crisp minerality and lively aromas and flavors. As the oldest producer of Arneis in America (1992) it is, above all else, a unique wine, and a perfect varietal for innovators like the Graziano Family of Wines to produce, and the perfect wine for innovative wine drinkers like yourselves to enjoy.

All the very best, **Gregory Graziano** (with some help from our old friend Bob Meadows).

The **Next Wine Club Shipment** will be in **June 2024** and will feature:

2018 Enotria Barbera Riserva
2023 Saint Gregory Pinot Blanc
2020 Monte Volpe Primitivo
2019 Graziano Zinfandel *(red only)*

Please contact us with any address, email or credit card changes.

Recipes



Potato and Goat Cheese Croquettes

MAKES APPROX. 30

BACKGROUND:

Croquettes are found all around the world in various forms, but they are small fried rounds or cylinders of meat, fish, and/or vegetables. They take a little time to make, but they are perfect to serve at a party (you can do a bit of the prep beforehand) and we promise they will disappear fast. Serve with Lavender Honey, your favorite marinara sauce, chives and crème fraiche, or anything you would want to pair with goat cheese.



METHOD:

For the Béchamel: In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add flour and whisk to form a paste. Cook, whisking constantly, for about 1 minute. While whisking constantly, slowly pour milk until all of it has been added, and continue to cook, stirring often, until béchamel is thick, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg to taste.

For the Potato Croquettes: In a medium saucepan, combine potatoes, water, and salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer. Cook until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Drain potatoes, then transfer back to now-empty saucepan. Set saucepan over low heat, shaking saucepan constantly, until moisture has evaporated from potatoes, about 1 minute.

Pass potatoes through a ricer into a medium bowl (or mash until smooth as possible), then allow them to cool slightly, about 2 minutes. Using a flexible spatula, stir in butter, crumbled goat cheese, and season with salt, pepper, to taste. Stir in béchamel until thoroughly combined.

Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Using a 1-tablespoon cookie scoop or measuring spoon, scoop potato mixture onto prepared baking sheet, into about 30 portions. Using your hands, roll each portion into a ball between your palms (dough should be soft but not sticky) and place on baking sheet. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, at least 1 hour.

In separate bowls place flour, eggs, and breadcrumbs next to the baking sheet. One at a time, roll ball completely in flour, then beaten egg, and then place in breadcrumbs, turning to coat completely. Return to baking sheet and finish the rest. Put the baking sheet back to refrigerator to keep chill.

In a saucepan add enough oil to fill 2 inches. Heat oil over medium-high heat, until the oil reaches 340 degrees F. Working in batches, carefully add the cool croquettes to hot oil using a slotted spoon. Fry until golden brown, about 1 ½ minutes. Once finished cooking, transfer to wire rack. Return oil to 340 degrees and continue with remaining croquettes. Serve immediately.

(If you want to keep them warm until service, you can heat oven to a low temperature around 200 degrees or so, and keep the croquettes in there once finished frying.)

—Trudi & Alexandra Graziano

INGREDIENTS:

For the Béchamel:

- 1 tbsp. plus 2 tsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp. plus 2 tsp. all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- Salt and white pepper
- Freshly grated nutmeg, a few pinches

For the Potato Croquettes:

- 1 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes (2 to 3 medium potatoes), peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 8 oz. goat cheese, chevre, crumbled
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- Salt and white pepper
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs, beaten in a shallow bowl
- 2 cups panko breadcrumbs, finely ground in a food processor
- Vegetable oil, for frying



Greg Graziano in Tasting Room, Hopland, CA

Greg's Two Cents

Blending, the wine makers art



Of all the things that that I am responsible for or involved in, blending wines is one of my favorites. I really look forward to sitting down in our conference room with my assistant Cheson and my daughter Alexandra tasting wines and putting together wines (blending) for future ageing and bottling. This is truly a skill that I have developed over the 47 years I have been a winemaker. Blending is a combination of using your olfactory senses of taste and smell and your brain to figure out the best blend of lots and varieties to make the best, most hedonistic wine you can. Oftentimes I consider it an effort in intuition, but in reality, it is much deeper than that.

With all the rules and laws that we must follow as far as year, varietal, and regional composition, blending can be difficult in the numbers game. Here are a few laws and guidelines that are set by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), the government agency that regulates winemaking. We will start with the broadest category and work our way from there. If you want to label a wine with a "California" designation, it must be 100% from California. If you are making a wine with a vintage date, a varietal, and a county designation, such as Sonoma County or Santa Barbara County, the wine must contain at least 75% of that named variety, 75% from the named county, and 85% of that designated year. If you want to claim a legalized appellation such as Napa Valley, Central Coast, or Carneros, the wine must contain a minimum of 85% from that appellation, 85% of that variety, and 95% from that vintage. If you want to give the wine a vineyard designation like Vincenzo Vineyard or To Kalon Vineyard, the minimum for vintage, variety, appellation and vineyard must be 95% of all.

When you are blending wine, you have many things to think about such as color, acidity, sweetness, alcohol, fruit, flavor intensity, body, and most importantly balance of all these. When doing the actual blending, not only do you have to think about quality (whether it is yours or someone else's idea of what quality is) you must also think about the economics of blending. So, what does that mean exactly? When blending wines, it is important to try and use all the wine from the individual lots you choose so you leave no wine behind. (When you juggle as many vineyards, varieties, and separate "lots" as we do, it can be an inventory nightmare if not managed.) However, this also depends on how much of this wine you can reasonably sell in a specific amount of time. Sometimes we purposely leave wines behind because we want to use them for other blends and to be blended in future vintages. Sometimes winemakers will blend in less expensive wines to lower the cost of that particular wine so he can make more profit (which is why about 75% of all the grapes from Mendocino County leave to Napa, Sonoma, and elsewhere). In blending wines, very often the more variety you add to a blend the better, such as one of the most expensive wines in the world; Krug Champagne. Sometimes hundreds of individual lots go into some of their wines. The combination of wines can make the blend more complex and interesting, and fill in holes the original wine may have.

But there is the flip side. Other times a single lot from a single row of vines from a single vineyard is the best, like many Red Burgundy wines made from Pinot Noir. In reality the beauty is often in the eye of the beholder, which is really the most difficult part of blending. When blending varieties together in a varietal designated wine, I believe you must be careful not to take away the character of that varietal. Too much of any varietal blended into Pinot Noir for example can strip the wine of its identity unless it is a related variety, in this case maybe Pinot Meunier, Pinotage, Blanc, or Gris. This is true with many varieties such as Sangiovese and Grenache. Again, too much Cabernet Sauvignon in Sangiovese overpowers it, making it not identifiable as Sangiovese. Oftentimes blending wines that are "traditional" blenders (varieties grown together in the same region) like blending Syrah into Grenache and vice versa make sense because it is done in the old world and complement each other. The same goes for blending the Bordeaux varieties, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, it works because they possess similar aromas and flavors! Sometimes you blend these varieties because they have different structure. Like blending Merlot into Cabernet to soften both the tannins and acidity. (Don't tell that to the Australian wine makers who often blend Cabernet Sauvignon with Shiraz. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't.) There are also certain varieties like Carignane, Grenache, and sometimes Syrah that are great blending varieties because they do not have overpowering aromas and flavors that can dominate others. Carignane is perhaps one of the best blending wines because it can give wines like Zinfandel better color, acidity, and tannin, without changing the character of said wine too much. Petite Sirah for instance is another good blending grape but for different reasons. You can greatly increase the color, tannin, and acidity in a wine with very little volume but you must be careful with this grape as too much of a good thing can be bad. In white wines it is similar. Sauvignon Blanc mixed with Semillon, a traditional Bordeaux blend, works very well for many reasons. Semillon can give body, richness, and can lower the intensity of Sauvignon Blancs aroma which can be a good thing, and visa a versa. It is amazing to me after working with Italian varieties for over 30 years how well they blend together, although it can be regional. For instance, few things work with blending Nebbiolo. With my experience only the Piemontese varieties like Barbera and Dolcetto will blend well, but in very small increments. Don't try to blend in Nebbiolo into Sangiovese or the other way, it just doesn't work.

So, in closing, I am preparing to get into our first blending session of the year. Whether I planned it this way, or whether it just happened, I am most fortunate that we produce so many different wines and that we age our wines for such a long time. This gives us numerous possibilities in blending, which is one of the many reasons we make such good wines!

All the very best, — **Gregory Graziano**



Greg Graziano in 1955 - Happy 70th Birthday



Grape shipping bins

