



Release Notes, November 2014

Red Wines

Nebbioso, Italy 2012

Not all the wine regions of Italy are the arid climate of Tuscany. Travel north and west of Tuscany, toward the mighty Alps, and you will find the cooler summers and foggy mornings of the Piedmont region. The locals name for the fog is Nebbia or Nebbioso.

It is from the land of the fog that the grand Barolos and Barbarescos hail. It is said that Barolo is “the King of Wines and the Wine of Kings.” In the adjacent hamlet is made Barbaresco, “the wine of Queens.” Both of these grand wines are made from 100% Nebbiolo grapes. And you guessed it, the grape is named after the local Nebbioso, or fog.

The Nebbiolo grape requires a long, cool growing season to mature. The foggy conditions help to shield the vineyards from the morning sun, keeping the temperature down. The Alps also influence the climate by protecting the vineyards from winter storms blowing out of the Northwest, thereby extending the growing season.

The Grand Barolos are among the best aging wines in the world. A Grand Cru Burgundy ages gracefully due to the high acidity of its Pinot Noir grapes. A great Bordeaux relies on its strong tannins derived from the Cabernet or Merlot grapes. Nebbiolo wines, on the other hand, benefit from both its naturally high acidity and its strong tannins.



Our Nebbioso is made from 100% Piedmont Nebbiolo. It has a deep garnet color that clings to the glass after swirling. Its aroma offers hints of things to come with dark fruit and lavender.

Take a sip and immediately notice the full body and dark fruit character up front. Concentrated plums and dark cherry slowly give way to more floral, almost earthy tones. Its lingering finish shows evidence of its barrel aging with a touch of vanilla, hazelnut and spice.

This dry wine has such bold character that it can easily overpower lighter foods. Consider serving with prime rib or a rack of lamb.

We have chosen to release this wine at a relatively young age. It shows a lively side of Nebbiolo when young. That being said, I believe this wine has the foundation to age very gracefully. In another three to five years, this wine will trade its bold personality for a kinder and gentler style. Its deep garnet color will have become lighter and perhaps more brick colored. And its fruity nose will share the stage with complex smokey tones.

(Total Production: 27 cases)

Regular Price: \$20.99

Club Price: \$17.99



Waiting for Verdot, Australia 2012

This wine is an encore performance of a Petit Verdot that we made a few years ago. Its name derives from the notion that this wine has been preceded by high anticipation. It seems deliberately slow to age in the bottle, which only adds to the anticipation. I would argue that the parallels to Samuel Becket's play, *Waiting for Godot*, ends here. The play's minimalist style provides only bare bones elements, allowing the audience's imagination to fill in the details. This wine is far from simplistic in style. In fact, its complexity provides all the details necessary. The audience knows when it arrives, and it has been worth the wait!

This batch is made from Petit Verdot grapes grown in Australia. This grape is one of the native varietals used in Bordeaux blends, albeit in small percentages. Geneticists believe the grape is older than Cabernet Sauvignon and many other French varietals.

When mature, this grape has a very small berry size and very thick skin. This means its ratio of juice to skin and seeds is low, producing deep colored and highly tannic wines. Another characteristic of Petit Verdot is that it has difficulty reaching full ripeness. If the weather is too wet or too cool, the grape will mature and the resulting wine can have harsh, green flavors. For these two characteristics, the grape's name literally translates to "Little Green."

Over the years, plantings of Petit Verdot in France have been reduced due to the difficulty (and frequent hardship) it brings to the growers. Thankfully, the varietal has found increasing success in



warmer climates such as The Riverland in Southern Australia and to some extent Northern California (Napa).

But enough about the grape, what about the wine? (See what I mean about *waiting*?) I highly recommend that you either decant this wine an hour before serving or, if you are tired of waiting, use an aerator when pouring and serve at or just below room temperature. More on this in a moment.

Pour this wine into your glass and you immediately notice the dark rich color. It clings to the glass with an obvious viscosity, teasing at the full bodied mouthfeel to come. The aroma is bursting with bold fruit and sweet cherries with just a whisper of lavender.

Your first sip is loaded with dark fruit including blackberry, plum, and black currant. As the fruit begins to subside, the true complexity of the wine is revealed. Soft tannins maintain a solid footing for layers of dark fruit, dried raisins, cedar, spice and finally anise. Elegant and complex, yet this wine finishes with just a dash of sweetness.

Petit Verdot has been called the “Super Cab,” due to its ability to provide all the desirable characteristics of Cabernet Sauvignon in a concentrated form. It has also been known to mimic a bold Shiraz at times. In *Waiting for Verdot*, the grape is displaying a little bit of both worlds. The big fruit forward start is contrasted with a smooth tannic structure. These tannins are still young and benefit from the taming effect of oxygenation from decanting. The oxygen allows the volatility of the nose to be maximized while beginning to break down larger and more rigid tannin molecules.



This wine is best enjoyed with full flavored foods. Roasted lamb or game will be enhanced by the darker nature of the wine. Any pork or beef dish with star anise would be a great match. My favorite pairing for this wine, however, is Steak au Poivre (pepper steak), which will underscore the peppery character of the wine while complimenting the creamy texture.

I hope that you will agree that our Petit Verdot was indeed worth the wait. It is our goal with the Wine Explorer's Club to introduce you to wines that you may not otherwise try. Finding new wines that we love can be invigorating. And besides, as Samuel Becket said in Waiting for Godot, "Habit is a great deadener."

(Total Production: 10 cases)

Regular Price: \$17.99

Club Price: \$14.99



White Wines

Pacific Gold

When vacationers think of the Pacific, they may think of deep blue waters. After tasting this wine, you may think of golden wines!

Traditional wineries will often blend grapes to make wines, but the grapes are almost always all from the same region. We made this wine from grapes grown around the entire Pacific Rim. Viognier from Chile, Chenin Blanc from California, Gewurztraminer from Washington State, and Muscat from Australia are all combined into a single cuvée!

Sometimes when that many grape varietals are blended, the distinguishing characteristics of each can be lost or diluted. This is not the case with Pacific Gold. Each grape takes its turn in the spotlight like a well choreographed performance.

The first impressions of this wine are formed from the Viognier. Ripe stone fruit, peaches and apricots, dominate the aroma and the initial taste. This grape traces its origins to France, but has found great success in the New World, particularly California and Chile. Those from Chile make particularly lively and fruity wines, with fresh-from-the-peach-grove taste.

In Act 2, the stone fruit give way to apples and melons, in particular, Honeydew. The California Chenin Blanc blankets the bright fruit with a soft creamy texture and a drop of honey. It also adds a touch of



acid for structure. This grape will often make a lighter bodied wine and helps to keep this blend buoyant.

Next comes the complexity of Gewurztraminer, often known for its citrusy, spicy or floral notes. As this wine lingers, its fruity character becomes more tropical with notes of mango and pineapple. Perhaps a flash of rose petal or orange blossom appears and quickly fades from perception. Being from Washington State, this Gewurztraminer also contributes to the acidic backbone that allows the performance to continue without becoming flabby or boring.

And finally, the Encore, right on cue. The Muscat steals the show with its grapey (like Thompson seedless grapey) finish. The ultra ripe Muscat from Australia also gives this wine its deep golden color and flavors of sweet white raisins and orange peel. Perhaps the most intriguing part of the wine is the sweet finish to an otherwise off-dry wine.

This wine is constructed with so many layers, it can pair very nicely with almost any seafood from grilled shrimp to baked salmon. It also can be served with herb roasted chicken or Hawaiian pork tenderloin. For a special treat, try it with pan seared Sea Bass and a mango chutney. It is also a perfect sipping wine, so make sure you have plenty on hand for before or after dinner too!

(Total Production: 28 cases)

Regular Price: \$18.99

Club Price: \$16.99



Moscato, California

The Moscato grape is enjoying somewhat of a resurgence in the US of late. It has been reinvented as vibrant and sweet wine which is lighter in body. It is even being produced with a secondary maceration with red skinned grapes to produce a pink version.

In fact, Moscato has been used by Italian and other European winemakers for many millennia. It has historically been used to make sweet sparkling wines (Moscato d' Asti), dessert wines, dry table wines, fortified wines, and is even distilled into Grappa. It is also very tasty when fresh and is served as a table grape by many.

Our Moscato is made in a more modern, New World style. It is bright and fruity from start to finish. It is medium sweet with a tremendous nose of freshly harvested grapes. It reminds me of my childhood when my family would go grape picking in Fredonia. The barns would be filled with apples, pears, and grapes that you could smell as soon as you stepped out of the car.

The fresh grape character this wine is achieved by finding a delicate balance between low acidity and low alcohol levels while maintaining a higher sugar level. This balance makes for a bright and inviting wine that is best enjoyed young and improves little with further aging.

In the case of Moscato, the Italians may have pioneered many different ways to enjoy Moscato, but I think the Americans have perfected it! Enjoy this wine all by its self or with desserts. Try it



paired with crepes stuffed with bananas and fresh cinnamon whipped cream. Yum!

(Total Production: 10 cases)

Regular Price: \$11.99

Club Price: \$9.99