



WINTER 2011 NEWSLETTER

One of the joys of operating a small business is linking interdependent vendors, employees and customers. Together, they comprise a business and, *as the entrepreneur hopes*, add to more than the sum of its parts. From all of us at Bohème, we thank you, our friends and family, for your patronage—the irreplaceable leg of our trio.

In this release there are many blessings to share. First, we offer the inaugural bottling from English Hill Vineyard, our first ground-up vineyard installation! The Chardonnay from English Hill is our first made entirely in a concrete tank (without oak), and we're thrilled with the results. We also give thanks to fruitfulness: 3 of the 4 wines in this release are from the 2008 vintage, which was generous in both quality and quantity. We have a greater supply for our customers, and a resource that will continue to support our ventures.

FARMING ON THE SONOMA COAST



The Bohème vineyards are located 4.3 to 9.2 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Over the course of a year and as the seasons change, water temperatures at Bodega Bay swing from 50°F in May to 55°F in September. Ocean water is the greatest determinant of weather, and because of our vineyards' close proximity, maritime influence is especially pronounced. The great mass of water keeps local temperatures within a narrow range; days are neither extremely cold nor hot. Only once in 4 or 5 years are we treated to a skiff of snow on the highest ridges, and seldom do summer highs exceed 85°F. During winter, high continental pressures keep the ocean influence at bay, and we're treated to the finest blue water views of the year. Conversely, continental heat during summer (with low pressure) draws damp air from the ocean inland, filling coastal valleys with expansive pools of fog.

While summers on the Sonoma coast may be foggy, they're void of the precipitation necessary to sustain most plants, and flora have adapted. Coastal redwoods have evolved to absorb fog moisture through their needles, called *foliar uptake*. In fact, 80% of the dominant species in Redwood forests exhibit this water acquisition strategy. Moreover, Redwoods so depend on fog that grove boundaries are telltales of fog intrusion limits. They're so successful in this environment that Redwood forests have the highest biomass of any terrestrial ecosystem! For coastal grape growers, extreme moisture brings both unique gifts and challenges.

Taylor Ridge Vineyard, for example, grows atop a 928 ft. ridge, just 4.8 miles from the ocean. The aroma of forest and fog is mesmerizing. On foggy mornings the mist condenses on the grape canopy and precipitates to the soil beneath. This regular dampening of the ground maintains root moisture and eliminates the need for irrigation! Reduced sunlight and cooler temperatures, however, slow photosynthetic development, and cause the grape harvest to be delayed. Pinot noir and Chardonnay vineyards of the inland Russian River and Dry Creek Valleys often pick grapes by mid September at 24° - 26° Brix. By this time on the coast, grapes are normally 19° - 21° Brix—well short of desired ripeness. The extra weeks needed for ripening on the coast are key to distinguishing the character of coastal wine. We believe the added time for ripening enhances aromatics, flavor complexity and dimension in the finished wine.

Perennial late harvests do not come without pain, however. They expose the risks of fall storms: fungal

growth and sugar dilution. Powdery mildew and botrytis thrive in moist environments. To reduce the chance of infection, we prune unneeded leaves and lateral shoots to increase sun exposure and facilitate air movement for evaporation. To ensure uniformity of the crop, careful farmers also remove a portion of unripe fruit in the late summer, called *green thinning*. This step focuses vines' energy on a smaller mass of fruit and increases ripening rate of the remaining crop. Without these measures the grape crop and ultimate wine quality can be compromised.

Coastal winemaking requires extra investment and attentiveness. By accepting its challenges, we enjoy rare opportunities. We build a close relationship with the vines and earth, and earn the chance to create wines of great intrigue and mystery. We hope the fruit of our endeavors adds to the sum of your life, now, and for many years ahead.





2008 STULLER VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

Stuller Vineyard grows amid Redwoods on a ridge top with views to the Pacific, 6.4 miles west. The vines are pruned according to varying soil vigor and exposure in the two vineyard blocks: one south-facing hillside (Clone 115) and a rocky hilltop (Clone 667). Vertical trellises oriented in a north-south direction apportion sunlight evenly between morning and afternoon sides of the canopy.

In 2008 we harvested the vineyard in stages between September 22nd and October 18th, with a yield of 1.77 tons per acre. Each lot received tailored cold-soak and hand punch-down treatment, with 30 mos. cellaring in 20% new French oak barrels. This mineral-rich, dark ruby Pinot noir abounds with sanguine earth and dark fruit flavors. Forest floor, figs, cherries, Oolong tea and dense tannins adorn the finish in this food-friendly Pinot noir.

Alcohol 14.3% 455 Cases Produced

\$45/ 750 mL

2009 ENGLISH HILL CHARDONNAY

English Hill Vineyard grows on a hilltop in Southern Sonoma Coast AVA. Overlooking Tomales and the Marin Coast Range, the weather is wild and turbulent at this exposed site. Pacific fog engulfs the foliage, fruit and cover. Gale winds deposit soil flecks in folds of leaves. August heat draws moisture from the ground and forms cracks in the clay-sand loam.

This 2009 Chardonnay is our inaugural bottling from English Hill. Fruit from the 0.4 acre Wente clone block was pressed and fermented in one egg-shaped *Nomblot Oeuf*. The porous concrete vessel preserves mineral and fruit flavors, while arrested Malolactic fermentation maintains fresh, fine texture. The color is a pale golden glow; the nose has discreet floral aromas and the palate is rich with mineral and stone fruit flavors. English Hill Chardonnay complements fine cheeses and seafood, especially shellfish pastas and fresh oysters.

Alcohol 13.8% 45 Cases Produced

\$36/ 750 mL

2008 TAYLOR RIDGE VINEYARD

Taylor Ridge Vineyard grows atop a bluff 5.3 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Its fine, sandy soils derive from prehistoric beaches that rose to an elevation of 928 feet. In late summer, cool air and fog from Tomales and Bodega Bays drift over the vineyard, creating a climate that slows nutrient uptake by the vines, and gently ripens the fruit. We're continually impressed by the complexity and density of wines from this vineyard. Both the Pinot noir and Chardonnay pair well with a variety of foods, but their exotic richness makes them shine alone, too.

Pinot Noir: The 2008 crop of Swan selection Pinot noir gave 1.88 tons per acre, the most fruitful to date. Harvested October 2nd, the clusters were de-stemmed and sorted into individual ¾ ton fermentation lots. Each lot received a tailored cold-soak and hand punch-down treatment, and aged 30 mos. in 20% new French oak barrels. The perfume is vibrant with bright berries, sage, dill, clove, Christmas spice and caramel. The finish is long with smooth, supple tannins.

Alcohol 14.7% 235 Cases Produced

\$49/ 750 mL

Chardonnay: The petite, golden Wente clone clusters were harvested under a full moon on the dawn of October 14th. The 1.6 ton-per-acre yield was the most bountiful to date. After pressing and settling, the juice was fermented in two-thirds neutral French oak barrels and one-third stainless steel drums. This combination yields a balanced Chardonnay with lavender and citrus aromas, fresh stone fruit flavors and a fine, viscous texture.

Alcohol 14.5% 225 Cases Produced

\$36/ 750 ML



Kurt C. Beitler, Vintner