

NOTES FROM THE WINERY



~ SUMMER 2009 ~

Featured Vintage

Celebrate summer with our luscious [2008 Alexander Valley Sauvignon Blanc](#).

Summer in the Cellar

Margaret Davenport talks bottling and begins preparations for harvest.

Wine Club Updates

Exclusive offerings for our Wine Club members.

Heirloom Zinfandel

Crafting a taste of Dry Creek Valley history from a unique vineyard block.

Spring Events at Passalacqua

Barrel samplings and a Sicilian marketplace mark the season at the winery.

Farmer's Corner

The latest from T.R. Passalacqua Vineyard.

News from the Winery Family

Passport weekend begins with a very special moment for one of our Passa il Vino members.

DON'T MISS THIS EVENT!

A Warm Summer Night at Passalacqua Winery
August 15 6-8:30 pm



Once a year Passalacqua Winery opens its private gardens after hours to the public, Wine Club members and guests in celebration of warm nights, outdoor dining and the release of the ever-popular Maple Vineyard Zinfandel. Get together with some great friends and join us!

Space is limited; visit our Events page online to purchase tickets or to read more about this event.

Into the Cellar With Jason: What to Enjoy Now

2007 Sauvignon Blanc: With the recent release of the 2008 vintage of our Alexander Valley Sauvignon Blanc, I would recommend that you don't cellar your 2007 vintage much longer. The Musqué floral component is still showing beautifully and the balance of fruit and acid are perfectly aligned. Like most Sauvignon Blancs, ours are made to be enjoyed sooner and not cellared for long periods of time. Enjoy the 2007 now and make sure to secure your share of the 2008 because the production was lower than normal and it is going fast.

2005 Russian River Zinfandel: One of our most popular wines is tasting fabulous in the bottle. This vintage, affectionately dubbed 'zino' because it has the mouthfeel of a Pinot but the fruit and spice of a Zinfandel, has aged to perfection. The classic lighter fruit profiles of a Russian River Zinfandel—mainly strawberry and raspberry—have blended together and are supported wonderfully by a mixture of toast from both American and French oak. I would enjoy this wine now or over the next few months. I would advise you to hold the 2006 vintage for a little longer (sorry, but we are sold out of the 2006) and call us if you are interested in the 2007 (not yet released).

Featured Vintage: 2008 Alexander Valley Sauvignon Blanc

Perfect for summer celebrations, this luscious Sauvignon Blanc offers notes of grapefruit and lychee with subtle floral aromas. Wonderful served cold, it's a fruit-forward wine with delicious flavor and a smooth palate.

After its debut at our Wine Club garden party, less than 200 cases of this fast-selling Passalacqua favorite remain, so now's the time to stock up on Sauvignon Blanc to bring along on picnics, pour at parties and sip as you enjoy a relaxing summer read.

To purchase your share, give us a call at 877-825-5547 or visit our online wineshop at passalacquawinery.com.

\$18



Winemaker's Notes: Summer in the Cellar with Margaret Davenport

Looking out the window at the thermometer with an afternoon temperature in the 80s means that summer is officially here—the season when we're busy refining and bottling one vintage and making preparations for the next.

In the cellar we're topping and getting some wines ready for bottling, and the barrel-fermented Chardonnay is first in line. Some spring frost led to low fruit yields for this varietal in 2008, so it's ready a little earlier than usual with that characteristic richness, fruity freshness and balanced oak. On the other hand, we'll delay bottling the classic blend of 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon from Tom Passalacqua's ranch. The reason for this is the very cool ending of the 2007 vintage. We waited for just the right time to pick and that turned out to be the end of October. Fermentations were slow with the cooler weather, which helped us to maintain fruit characters but meant that the wines went into barrels later than usual. We may bottle Cab in August or wait until after harvest; it's all about when the wine is ready.



Meanwhile, the Zins are coming along beautifully since well-received barrel samplings at our spring events. As the oak becomes more integrated with the fruit flavors, they're developing into big, jammy, rich wines. The Lavender Hill Vineyard Primitivo is going to be particularly good this year, and the Viti della Nebbia is wonderfully peppery with beautiful dark fruit. Both of these are bottled in early June, along with the Sangiovese and the Radici blend. Overall, 2008 is going to be an earlier drinking vintage for these varietals of high-quality, low-yield fruit.

This is also the time when we estimate our vineyard yields and order barrels from European cooperages before they close down for the month of August for their summer holiday. Sounds like a good idea to me! But that's just when we begin to visit vineyards on a weekly basis to monitor the 2009 crop. We'll order American barrels at the last minute, well after bloom is over and we know the total number of barrels we'll need to have on hand. Estimating actual vineyard yield is more of an art than a science: so far we're certain that this year's crop will be larger than last year's crop, but whether it will be "normal" or larger than normal is still anyone's guess.

Wine Club Updates

Due to demand, our wines are selling out more quickly than ever, so we're now limiting the release of many wines to Passa il Vino members. As a Wine Club member, you have received or will receive a sampling of these club-only wines in your shipments and enjoy the exclusive opportunity to purchase them in additional quantities while supplies last.

If you have not yet joined our Wine Club, access to the following club-only wines is a big reason to do so:

- **2006 Dry Creek Valley Estate Zinfandel** (\$36), with flavors of ripe raspberry, plums on the mid-palate and smoky nuances of toast and spice with a silky finish. *Under 65 cases available for purchase.*
- **2006 Dry Creek Valley Lavender Hill Primitivo** (\$36), featuring fruit reminiscent of wild blackberries with hints of raspberry, subtle oak tinged with smoke and vanilla, and a nuance of black pepper in the long, smooth finish. *Under 20 cases available for purchase.*
- **2006 Dry Creek Valley Maple Vineyard Zinfandel** (\$38), with signature aromas of cherries, plums, raspberry and black pepper and secondary aromas of smoke, coriander and vanilla contributing spice box complexities. *Under 95 cases available for purchase.*



Wine Club members enjoy many perks, including access to some exclusive barrel samples.

We'd also like to remind you that we have eliminated our summer shipment in response to concerns about the heat. If you need wine for summer entertaining, please visit our online wine shop or call us at 877-825-5547 to arrange a shipment.

Note: Our beautiful lower gardens are now reserved exclusively for Wine Club members (groups of four or fewer, please).

Heirloom Zinfandel: A Taste of Dry Creek Valley History

Our newest vineyard-designate Zinfandel gets its big, rich flavor from a very unique plot blending Dry Creek Valley history and the fruit character for which this appellation is renowned.

Located in the valley's eastern benchlands, the Bevill Heirloom Zinfandel Block is home to grape clones from five legendary area vineyards, most of which date to the late 1800s and continue to produce fruit for harvest. With the aim of preserving Dry Creek Valley's storied winegrowing tradition, Duff Bevill and his team grafted Zinfandel budwood from the Beeson, Cuneo, Guadagni, Hambrecht and Teldeschi vineyards onto existing rootstock to create the Heirloom Zinfandel Block in 1999. Today this lively family gathering produces delicious Zinfandel fruit, with the vineyard's varied terroir creating rich nuances within each row of vines.

Passalacqua's first Heirloom Zin received rave reviews in barrel tastings at our spring events, and as it continues to age in the cellar it exhibits great depth and richness with jammy raspberry, subtle pepper and bold tannins. It's a phenomenal representation of Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel, and has the flavors and spices wine lovers have come to expect from an historic appellation.

A limited-edition wine created especially for Passa il Vino, the 2008 Heirloom Zinfandel, is expected to debut early next year...Wine Club members, watch for release news in spring 2010!

Spring Events at Passalacqua

It was a busy spring for us here at the winery, with many of you making the trip to Dry Creek Valley for our annual barrel sampling and futures opportunities. We were thrilled to host two weekends of barrel sampling in March, when we poured tastes of our Old Vine Zin and Cab from the barrel. We created a special area for our Wine Club members which featured barrel tastes of our Estate Zinfandel, our Primitivo, the ever-popular Maple Zin and our newest Heirloom Zin. These wines are aging gracefully in their barrels and showed beautifully during the event, and we know you'll enjoy them with your family and friends after they're bottled later this year and released in 2010. To complement the wines, Chef Gerard Nebesky cooked up his signature paella on the deck, with a backdrop of beautiful springtime views of Dry Creek Valley.

In April we celebrated Passport to Dry Creek Valley with a Sicilian market theme, and released our new Sangiovese. With only 82 cases produced it's selling out quickly, so don't wait to claim your share of this wonderful Sangiovese! Once again we poured barrel samples of our Old Vine Zin and Cab, and our club-only Zinfandels for Passa il Vino members. Many of them found the futures opportunities to be *offers they couldn't refuse*. We rounded out the weekend of festivities with wood-fired pizza, fresh-fried calamari, an array of delectable cheeses, Dry Creek Olive Oil and dark chocolate gelato.

Futures for these special wines are no longer available, but you will find current releases featured in our online wine [shop](#). The annual opportunity to purchase Passalacqua wine futures goes by in a snap, so if you'd like to receive a reminder before our next round of futures is available in March 2010, let us know at info@passalacquawinery.com.



Farmer's Corner: Summer in the Vineyard

Tom & Sandi Passalacqua

The Cabernet vineyard is absolutely breathtaking, with the new growth creating a carpet akin to a dark green sea with an intense sweet floral aroma from the blooming flowers that precede grape development. Standing on the freshly plowed dirt in the middle of the vine row is truly a tranquil moment. However, this moment of ecstatic pleasure is never long enough, as preparation of the vineyard for the 2009 harvest is absolutely frantic. The men who tend the vineyard are working a minimum of ten hours per day, six days per week.

Pruning was completed on March 10. Immediately thereafter, three acres of vines that were affected by Eutypa were removed.

We replanted the acreage with 101-14 rootstock (the same as Blocks 18 and 19). The new vines arrive as growing potted plants similar to the potted tomatoes you plant in your vegetable garden. The planting was very timely as these five-month-old vines will have a long growing season (March through September) before they commence the dormancy process. After the replanting, we began the vineyard preparation a little later than usual, but still in plenty of time for the 2009 harvest. Right now, we are still suckering, putting up wires to keep the new cane growth from falling, removing all erosion-control drainage pipes, mowing grass in one row and discing the other row (for soil erosion protection), pulling petioles during bloom for tissue analysis (to ascertain what, if any, nutrients the vines need), removing the crop from one- and two-year-old vines to give the vines additional strength to grow, and dusting with sulfur to prevent mildew.



Tom Passalacqua shows Wine Club members new flowering clusters during a Passport tour of the T.R. Passalacqua Vineyard.

When we finish all of the aforementioned projects, we will pull grape leaves on the morning side of the vines to maximize air flow and sunlight, while removing canes with a cluster of grapes that measure 18 inches or less. Hopefully we will finish pulling leaves before veraison as we will commence dropping fruit at the time of veraison to maximize quality (clusters of grapes are dropped during veraison to assure an even berry development).

Mother Nature has been very kind in 2009—there has been no frost and absolutely perfect vine-growing weather, with no winds during bloom (wind causes shatter of the blossom resulting in lower crop yields). The five inches of rain in late April replenished the moisture in the ground, enabling the vines to flourish without irrigation.

Growing the perfect grape to deliver to the vintner is a challenging endeavor; however, to date, all of the growing components are in place to make the 2009 harvest equal to or better than the world-class wines of 1994. This could be one of those years!

News from the Winery Family

"I would like to send a special thanks to the Passalacqua family and employees.

"My first visit to Passalacqua was in November of 2005. This visit was not only my first to Passalacqua but my first trip anywhere with Jeff. From the moment we arrived we knew the winery would always hold a special place in our relationship. Not only were the grounds beautiful and the staff extremely welcoming, but the 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon was the best we'd ever tasted! Jeff and I fell in love with the amazing wines, and I quickly became a wine club member. Over the years, two visits in person and lots of phone time, I have gotten to know both Kathy and Tami as friends and great consultants!

"On Friday, April 24, Jeff and I returned to Passalacqua for this year's Passport event and, much to my surprise, he proposed to me at the only place in the world I would have wanted our engagement to start. Many thanks to Kathy for being our impromptu photographer! We also had the chance (as did others) to be swept away in a helicopter from the winery to the Passalacqua private vineyards. While there, we got to sip none other than the 2003 Cabernet with a 360-degree view of the vineyard's rolling hills. Amazing!

"Thanks again to Jason Passalacqua and his family for such a great experience. Who knows, maybe we'll be back to start yet another phase of our life!"

Traci DeHaas
Arlington, VA



Wine Club members Traci DeHaas and Jeff Smith enjoying a heli-tour of T.R. Passalacqua Vineyard during Passport to Dry Creek Valley.