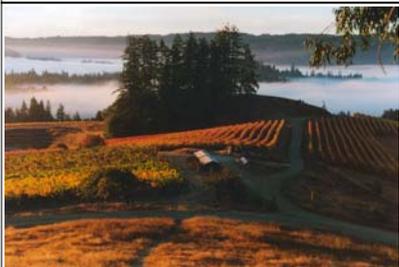


PEAY VINEYARDS

SPRING 2008

ISSUE 11



I am aging. This is evident both in my thinning hair and sagging body. Thankfully, my eyesight has worsened as the years have accumulated. And for all this humiliation, am I at least improving with age? Am I like a fine wine that needs a few years to mellow some particularly strong characteristics after which I will emerge balanced, complex, ineffable? I'll ask my mother that question, she may give me the gentlest answer.

Now that I mention it, why do many wines need time aging in the bottle before they are ready to drink? How do you know if a wine will improve with time in the bottle or

fall apart only to resemble an aged rock star: flabby, tired and a shadow of his former self? How can you be sure you end up with a Johnny Lee Hooker and not a David Lee Roth?

When young, many wines are dominated by a few very pronounced characteristics. Ideally, these notes (call them musicians in a talented youth orchestra, if you would like) are in some kind of balance of magnitude but every player is fresh and exuberant and playing at full throttle to impress his mother. The experience as a whole can be disjointed and aggressive. It can also be a challenge to enjoy other aesthetic pleasures in the surrounding environment—like the food on your plate—when the wine crashes through whatever dare lay in its path. But some people enjoy wine and music that way. “Turn it up, show me what you got, the bigger the better. I paid a lot for this wine so it had better feel like a lot in my mouth.” It is the consumer’s prerogative.

But something happens if you allow a wine to mature a little. The overt and singular primary grape flavors of the wine begin to coalesce and aromas of earth, tea, leather, mushroom, flowers, honey, caramel, metal, etc. come to the fore. The blaring oak flavors, whether they are vanilla, brown spice, raw wood, or charcoal, become less distinct and evolve to a less visible supporting role. Tannin chains lengthen and some precipitate and fall to the bottom of the bottle. The remaining long chain tannins provide shape without drying the tongue and stopping the flavors short on the palate. If the acidity level is ideal, the wine remains vibrant and fresh and cleanses the palate at the finish. Power and amplitude diminish to be replaced by nuance and subtlety. The wine is experienced as a mature whole greater than the sum of its youthful parts. How does this happen?

Wine is made up of dozens of chemical compounds in large quantity and thousands of compounds in minute quantities. While in barrel or in bottle, these compounds interact with each other to form new compounds. These reactions can be understood to cascade: products of one reaction become reactants for the next reaction and so on. The rate at which the first reactant, oxygen, is introduced affects the quantities of the various compounds in the cascading chain of reactions at any one time. This is why a glass of wine left out overnight doesn't at all resemble an old wine. The initial state of the wine at the end of fermentation (while still in the fermenter) is highly anaerobic; the yeast has consumed all available oxygen. Oxygen is slowly picked up from moving the wine from fermenter to barrel and from transpiration through the barrel staves. After dissolving into the aqueous solution, the oxygen reacts preferentially with some molecules, e.g. phenolics associated with tannins, bitterness, and color. The higher oxygen containing molecules react with lower oxygen containing molecules, either passing off an oxygen or polymerizing with each other. The longer chained tannins are an example of more highly polymerized compounds and their perception in the mouth is soft and silky. Short tannins from young red wines or un-polymerized ellagitannins from new oak are quite grippy and drying. Color also changes since it is a flavanoid and a phenolic monomer, and polymerization of it turns wine from deep red/purple (depending on which flavanoid it is) to brick, then rusty red, and finally brown.

There is, however, a peak expression after which a wine no longer improves with age. Once it passes this apex, the flavor of the wine begins to slowly fade away until all compounds eventually polymerize and you are left with a flavorless, dark liquid. The peak is the moment when the fruit expression has matured and volume, acidity and tannins are in perfect harmony. The best aged wines I have tasted left me speechless (a feat.) The components of the wine melded into one singular, balanced personality that was best described as “yummy”, rather than a lengthy string of adjectives. Not all wines improve with time, however. If there is not enough acidity and tannins

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ANTICIPATE-A-A-TION, IT'S MAKING ME WAIT

- WINEMAKER VANESSA WONG



My female compatriots think I married a renaissance man. My husband Nick picked out my engagement ring all by himself. Despite having absolutely no guidance from me, I not only approved of his selection but also loved it. When I share this with inquiring friends, Nick groans, "Why do you have to tell people?" I declare with a wink, "Not every man can change a transmission and pick out a diamond ring!" The women are usually at this moment eyeing their husbands who are no doubt glowering at Nick. "He is a sensitive new-age guy and a DIY he-man!" I exclaim. "And, if you can believe it," I add, "he also makes his own duck confit."

The making of duck confit is inexplicably appealing to me (see Nick's recipe on page 7). I think it has something to do with the fact that as an ancient method of preserving food it strikes some primordial chord. The intricate food science explanation of why it works also appeals to the geeky part of my personality. The French word "confit" means preserved, and the process was devised as a means of preserving a variety of meats and poultry — most traditionally goose, duck, or pork. The technique evolved over centuries but with the advent of modern methods of preserving food it has become somewhat of a dying art. The process involves fully curing the meat in salt, poaching it slowly in its own fat, and storing it covered with the fat until you are ready to eat it or cook with it. Curing the meat in salt makes the water in the piece of meat unavailable to microorganisms thereby rendering them incapable of causing spoilage. Covering the meat completely with fat keeps air from reaching it, further retarding the tendency to spoil. If the meat has been properly cured, a confit will keep in a cool, dark place (a cellar or refrigerator) for up to six months.

To me making duck confit is also an exercise in patience and the deferral of instant gratification for the reward of a product improved by time aging. Although making duck confit is not very complicated, it does take time: it is a two day affair. Nick likes to salt and pack the duck legs in herbs at least the night before he will cook them. Then he poaches them slowly in low heat so that the fat barely simmers for about 3 to 4 hours. During this time, the aroma of the garlicky, succulent duck legs bubbling in the fragrant herbs is exquisite torture. One must resist the temptation to pull the legs from the oven and call them ready just to seek relief from the sheer agony of waiting. Nick says that you have to wait until you see the skin pull back from the joints: a cooking tip he learned from our chef buddy, Rob Hunter of Pangaea Restaurant in Gualala, California. But the most difficult part is resisting the temptation to eat the duck legs straight away. The smell of the meltingly tender meat is almost too much to bear. Duck confit, however, is one of those dishes that get better with a little time. The flavors and texture come together and confit is better at one month than it is straight out of the oven. So if you wait, you will be rewarded with the enhanced complexity of flavor and texture.

The same holds true for our wines, or more specifically, our red wines. I know a lot of folks are curious and succumb to temptation, popping a few corks as soon as the Peay bottles arrive on their doorstep. As a winemaker, however, I have a quiet hope that our customers will cellar a few bottles for a little while, perhaps even for a few years. When making our Pinot noir, I intend for the wine to be aged in bottle since it is necessary for the wine to evolve slowly to reach its full potential (for further discussion see Andy's article on page 1). After the jarring process of bottling, wine shuts down and becomes a little inert or goes into a "dumb" phase. When we pour our new, young wines at events or for customers we almost always decant them to allow them to open up and wake from their slumber. With more time in bottle, the wine undergoes a secondary transformation: tannins soften, fruity aromas evolve to include a more subtle and complex bouquet of florals, spices and perfume. The true character and terroir expression begin to unfold after the more brash primary aromas subside. So a wine could be quite good when it is young, yet would yield great rewards to the drinker who waited for this evolution to take place. It is like a stew that tastes better the next day or a cheese that ripens and goes from being mild in flavor and chalky in texture to delectably pungent and gooey. Instead of occurring in a matter of days or weeks, however, this transformation process could take years in a wine.

The six million dollar question is when best to drink a wine. To answer it, I like to refine the analogy of the bell curve and liken the trajectory to that of a mesa or a plateau. There is no precise moment at which it is best to open a specific bottle. It is more a span of time that is the ideal. I always find it most fun to have multiple bottles of the same wine so I can open them

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FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ODDITIES AND CURIOSITIES...VIOGNIER

- WINEGROWER NICK PEAY



Who are we? When asked to supply a vinous identity, I reply “We are primarily a Sonoma Coast Pinot noir house with a small Chardonnay program and a sizable Syrah experiment.” You may have noted that we also produce Roussanne/Marsanne and Viognier. But as you may have discovered when attempting to order it in the past, we only make a tiny amount of Viognier, less than a hundred cases, and it sells out within days. So you may ask, “What’s the story with Peay Vineyards’ dabbling with this variety?”

First impressions are lasting and my first wine job back in 1988 with Bill Smith still influences my winegrape passions to this day. On a vacation through the Northern Rhône valley, Bill was struck by the unique beauty of the wines from the tiny Condrieu appellation made exclusively from the Viognier grape. Bill was so impressed he brought some cuttings home from the tireless Condrieu promoter and producer, Georges Vernay. In 1981, Bill grafted a few Cabernet rows at La Jota on Howell Mountain over to Viognier, as did Pete Minor at Ritchie Creek across the Napa Valley. In doing so, they became the first ambassadors of this Northern Rhône grape variety in the United States. In 1990, Bill and his wife Joan went a step further and imported Condrieu from seven vigneron. Other than the importer of Guigal, they were one of the few introducing Condrieu to the States at the time.

One day during vintage, Bill opened a 1987 La Jota Viognier that intrigued me. It was pretty and floral with mineral undertones yet delivered weight and broadness in the mid-palate. That vintage was nicely brisk with its finishing acidity. I observed over the years, however, that Bill struggled to retain, or create, acidity in his Viognier. Eventually he gave up trying to duplicate on Howell Mountain what he had tasted from Condrieu, but not before inspiring and encouraging me to give the grape a try.

By the time Andy and I found our viticultural piece of paradise out on the Northern Sonoma Coast, Bill was tiring of-- but not yet finished with-- Viognier. He gave me cuttings of two different selections that we grafted during the winter of 1996-97. I took Bill’s advice that in order to retain its acidity, Viognier should be planted in a cooler climate than the Cabernet-friendly Howell Mountain. Although I wasn’t exactly certain of the climate at our new property, I knew it was a lot cooler than Howell Mountain. Thus was born our little 0.8 acre Viognier block, a size that reflects the calculated risk of the previously unknown viticultural climate in the northern Sonoma Coast. Add to that the known difficulty in attaining a perfectly balanced wine from the grape, and the relative obscurity and uneven quality of these wines, and you can see why we proceeded with caution. Happily, the results of our small dalliance have been warmly embraced.

In the nine years between first tasting Viognier and our planting, I tasted Bill’s Condrieu imports, followed the evolution of his La Jota wines, and tasted anything anyone in California had attempted. I concluded that over-cropped Viognier was a watery, anonymous white wine. On the other hand, Viognier that was correctly cropped but grown in too warm a site produced “fruit cocktail” flavors: syrupy, thick wines whose florality was transformed into apricot liqueur that finished heavily without any refreshing acidity. One year, Bill had a young consulting winemaker barrel ferment his Viognier in 100% new French oak. In comparing the Condrieu of that time made with no new oak to Bill’s 100% new oak Viognier, I came to the conclusion that new oak was the enemy of good Viognier expression. I assumed that these things were written on granite somewhere in the town square of Condrieu. “Pas de bois!”

Not at all, it turns out. In 1972 there were only 12 hectares of Viognier planted in Condrieu. In 1994, the Guigals launched the La Doriane cuvée using 50% new oak, and by 1998 it was 100% new and highly prized by critics. Today, Condrieu is experiencing a renaissance with over 130 hectares planted and young entrepreneurial winemakers copying their successful grower-négociant to the north by including varying amounts of new oak. It turned out the Condrieu imported by Bill and Joan were just snapshots, the style of the day. Since those early years, I’ve tasted bigger Viogniers that can tolerate 10-20% lightly toasted new French oak and benefit. Most often, though, I’ve found that the new oak takes the flavors in a different direction, adding a graham cracker note at the expense of floral freshness. And the other positive attribute of new oak, the mid-palate broadening and body-enhancement that comes from the barrel sugars of the new barrel, are completely

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VANESSA'S NOTES ON THE SPRING 2008 RELEASE

2006 was an exceptional vintage. You will note that our Pinot noir production has increased a little as we had "normal" yields (2-2^{1/2} tons/acre) and much anticipated new blocks came into their 5th and 6th leaf. You will also note that we are making a non-estate wine for the first time. The 2006 Peay Vineyards Hirsch Vineyard Chardonnay from the Sonoma Coast was a one shot deal we struck with David Hirsch. He needed a small press and Vanessa's winemaking guidance and we have always respected his vineyard and were interested in making wine from his fruit. It is quite interesting to compare the two Chardonnays as the winemaking regime was almost exactly the same. Other than the differences between our specific terroir (we are a touch cooler and in the fog), the main differences are clone type and age as well as the fruit's ripeness when picked. Not surprisingly, the wines share the same focus and elegance that you have come to expect from Peay Chardonnay but our wine has a little more minerality and verve while the Hirsch Chardonnay has more flesh and glycerin.

2006 PEAY VINEYARDS *SCALLOP SHELF* ESTATE PINOT NOIR

When prepping the soil for planting, we discovered ancient scallop and nautilus fossils revealing our hill top's residence on the deep ocean floor prior to the formation of the coastal range. The 2006 Scallop Shelf Estate Pinot noir is a blend of 6 clones: Pommard, 777, 115, Swan, Mt. Eden and 828. It was fermented in small, open-top fermenters, moved by gravity, aged for 11 months in 39% new French oak and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

The nose is bright with medium concentration. Beguiling aromas of Serrano ham (cured meat) and lavender wrap around a cherry core with a hint of orange peel coming mainly from the 44% contribution of Pommard. The palate opens with a high tone pomegranate note harnessed by dried cherry, forest floor and black walnut flavors. The Scallop Shelf has medium weight and structure from soft silky tannins, excellent acidity and fruit concentration but is not fat or fleshy. The finish is very long. The Scallop Shelf is built to last and will fill in and gain cohesion as mature aromas develop with bottle age. If you must drink one now, decant for 45 minutes and cellar the remainder for at least 3-5 years. 950 cases produced.

2006 PEAY VINEYARDS *POMARIUM* ESTATE PINOT NOIR

Pomarium (po-mare-ee-um, apple orchard in Latin) harkens to the days when our hill was planted to pears and apples for dried fruit production to feed San Francisco. The 2006 Pomarium Estate is a blend of 5 clones: 667, 777, 115, Calera and 828. It was fermented in small, open-top fermenters, moved by gravity, aged for 11 months in 32% new French oak and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

The nose is immediately appealing with wild strawberry, cherry and sandalwood aromas coming mainly from the 667, 777 and 115 clones anchored by black licorice and tarragon notes from the Calera selection. With more time in the glass the tension between bright fruit aromas and earthy notes promise much for those with the patience to age the wine a few more years. The mouth is true to the nose adding hints of blood orange and black tea. The Pomarium has great persistence and length with a clean finish. If you open one on release, decant for at least 45 minutes and cellar the remaining bottles for 3+ years. 1100 cases produced.

2006 PEAY VINEYARDS ESTATE CHARDONNAY

The 2006 Peay Vineyard Estate Chardonnay strikes a balance between the crisp 2004 and the fleshier 2005 Estate Chardonnays leaning more towards the style of the 2004. As our Chardonnay vines age a unique character and breed is evolving in the wines. The 2006 continues this progression.

The 2006 is a blend of clones 76, 95, 96 and the Robert Young and Hyde selections. It was picked from September 27th through October 10th, hand-sorted, aged in 42% new French oak and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. The nose is focused with aromas of lemon and quince supported by limestone and flint contributed by the very low yielding Hyde and 76 clones. The wine opens on the front of the palate with lime, almond and golden delicious apples and as it carries across the palate broadens to become silky with hints of lemon curd and gun flint. The oak is very well-integrated at even this young age. The acid is clean and crisp and the finish long and lingering. I recommend aging the Estate Chardonnay for 2-3 years for the various features to gain cohesion. If you prefer more mature flavors the healthy acidity in the wine will allow further aging in bottle without losing vivacity. Decant for 15 minutes to allow the wine to fill out. 885 cases produced.



VANESSA'S NOTES ON THE SPRING 2008 RELEASE

2006 PEAY VINEYARDS *HIRSCH VINEYARD* CHARDONNAY

The Hirsch Chardonnay is made from an old Wente selection picked from September 26th to September 30th. The fruit was hand sorted, aged for eleven months in 50% new French oak, and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. The nose is full with hay, clove, apple and peach aromas and a lingering whiff of gunpowder. The mouth is medium-to-full-bodied with a broad, fleshy mid-palate kept in line by good minerality and refreshing acidity. Aromas of maple, green papaya and pear develop as the wine opens. This Chardonnay is best drunk 6 months to 2 years from release to best appreciate the freshness of the fruit expression. 335 cases produced.

2006 PEAY VINEYARDS ESTATE VIOGNIER

The 2006 Estate Viognier is reminiscent of the 2003 in both structure and fruit profile. It was picked on September 26th and 27th and fermented in 100% old oak barrels. The nose is focused with aromas of kumquat, ginger, baked pears and lemon-grass enveloped in a lemon meringue and green tea embrace. On the palate, the Viognier expresses the crisp acidity and limestone/crushed oyster shell minerality that reveals its cool climate origin. Aromas of lilies and baking spices are supported by medium weight and a hint of glycerin in the mid-palate. The Viognier ends with a very crisp, bright finish. 100 cases produced.

2006 PEAY VINEYARDS ESTATE ROUSSANNE/MARSANNE

Each year our Roussanne/Marsanne takes on greater elegance and focus as the vines age and we learn how to best farm the fruit. The 2006 Estate Roussanne/Marsanne has an intensity and verve that builds on the strength of the 2005 taking the blend to a new level. The Marsanne and Roussanne were picked on October 26th and 31st and fermented in 100% old oak barrels. The nose opens with honeydew melon and almond supported by a metallic note that again speaks of its cool climate origin. The mouth feel is silky with medium weight and pitch perfect balance. The front of the palate warms with honeyed, orange sherbet notes followed by the peppery spice of matsutake mushrooms. There is an elegant richness that strikes the perfect balance between weight, acidity and fruit intensity. The Roussanne/Marsanne will evolve beautifully in the bottle as you age it. If you decide to drink when young, please decant for a few minutes and serve at cellar temperature to capture its full charm and complexity. 85 cases produced

ANTICIPATE-A-TION, IT'S MAKING ME WAIT

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at 2 to 4 year intervals. What does a winemaker drink, you ask? Right now Nick and I are mostly pulling corks on 1999 to 2003 Pinot noirs, a little older for the Syrahs and circa 1996 for any California Cabernet Sauvignon we have. Occasionally, we will pull out a treasure from our cellar for a special dinner like the 1989 La Tâche and the 1982 Château Margaux this past Christmas meal. They were both hitting their stride, gliding along the mesa, diminishing in volume but gaining ethereal qualities.

When I sit down for a meal and tuck into the duck confit that I waited for a month to enjoy, I think about how my patience has paid off. I also revel in what a "catch" Nick is. Yet, I have that quiet hope that with time he will also evolve and attain new attributes that I can brag about: such as the ability to pick up his dirty socks from the floor, fix the water heater, and remember Valentine's Day. Ah well, at least when I am working on my patience I can enjoy some tasty duck confit and some aged Pinot noir.



2008 PEAY WINE DINNERS

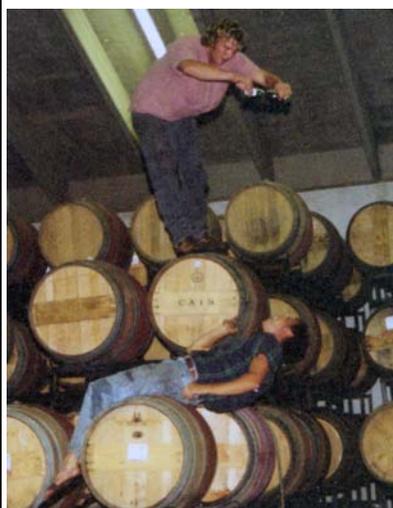
The following wine dinners have been confirmed for 2008. One, two or all three of us will attend each dinner. Please contact the restaurant to make your reservations. We will pour library wines along with a few of the new releases. Hope to see you there.

Bourbon Steak—Michael Mina	February 21st	Aventura, FL	786-279-6600
Cyrus Restaurant	March 3rd	Healdsburg, CA	707-433-3311
TBD-The Modern at the MOMA	March 18th or 20th	New York, NY	212-333-1220
TBD-Tru	March 25th or 26th	Chicago, IL	312-202-0001
Le Pigeon	April 1st	Portland, OR	503-546-8796
Mosaic	April 16th	Phoenix, AZ	408-563-9600
L'Auberge Carmel	April 18th	Carmel by the Sea, CA	831-624-8578
Campton Place	May 6th	San Francisco, CA	415-955-5555
Excelsior	May 14th	Boston, MA	617-426-7878
TBD— maybe Straight Wharf	May 18th	Nantucket, MA	508-228-4499
Melisse	May 28th	Los Angeles, CA	310-395-0881
Martini House-Attack of the Killer Tomatoes Dinner	August 13th	St. Helena, CA	707-963-2233
Cavallo Point Lodge with Michael Tusk from Quince Restaurant	October 14th-16th	Sausalito, CA	415-339-4700



2008 TASTINGS AND EVENTS

Below is a list of events where we will pour our wines. Please contact the organizations for more details on how to purchase tickets.



The Little Nell— Pig & Peay Après Ski Tasting with Andy Peay & Richard Betts	February 25th	Aspen, CO	970-920-6313
World of Pinot Noir	March 8th	Shell Beach, CA	805-489-1758
Rhône Rangers Grand Tasting	March 16th	San Francisco, CA	www.rhonerangers.org
Pebble Beach Food & Wine — Women in Wine Seminar & Grand Tastings	March 27th-30th	Pebble Beach, CA	www.pebblebeachfoodandwine.com
Nantucket Wine Festival	May 14th-18th	Nantucket, MA	www.nantucketwinefestival.com
Pinot Days	June 27th-29th	San Francisco	www.pinotdays.com
Ferry Plaza Wine Merchant	July 9th	San Francisco	415-391-4500
PinotFest at Farallon Restaurant	November 15th	San Francisco	415-956-6969



IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW

- We make wine from our 48-acre hilltop vineyard located above a river gorge in the far northwestern corner of the Sonoma Coast, 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean at Sea Ranch. Yes, it is remote.
- We grow 33 acres of Pinot noir, 8 acres of Syrah, 5 acres of Chardonnay, 0.8 acres of Viognier, 0.4 acres of Roussanne and 0.2 acres of Marsanne. We sell fruit to 2 wineries: Williams Selyem Winery and Failla Winery.
- Winemaker Vanessa Wong left her position as winemaker at Peter Michael Winery in 2001 to launch Peay Vineyards.
- Nick, a UC Davis-trained and veteran Santa Cruz mountains winemaker, is the vineyard manager and works side-by-side with our full-time crew of 8 vineyard workers.
- Though we are not certified organic, we grow our fruit using sustainable and organic vineyard practices. The long term health of the vineyard and our ecosystem drive our practices. We continue to experiment with less invasive, organic and environmentally-friendly alternatives and convert our cultural practices when substitutes are deemed successful. We went solar at the vineyard and winery in December 2007.
- The vineyard and winery are not a family heritage, they are the result of our combined 42 years working in the wine industry. We started it from scratch and have dedicated our lives to it. Wine is our work and our passion.



NICK'S DUCK CONFIT

I love duck. As Vanessa mentioned in her article, something about the cooking and aging process, the chemistry of the flavor development appeals to me. I like to make twelve legs at a time because that number fits into a pot nicely and you'll be unlikely to eat them all at once.

Ingredients

12 Duck legs—(any good grocer that sells duck breast is likely to have legs as well. They are usually in the back, frozen).

2 ½ qts/5 lbs Duck fat—(hard to find but must be purchased. Try Golden Gate Meats in the SF Ferry Building or mail order from Fabrique Délices 510/441-9500. You will be able to reuse this, expecting ~20% loss from batch to batch.)

6 to 8 sprigs of fresh thyme

4 cloves of garlic, peeled

1 Tbs black peppercorns

1 Tbs whole coriander seed

3 whole star anise

½ cup coarse salt, medium grained

How To Confit

1. Fully thaw out the frozen legs. Let them sit out 12-24 hours before you salt them.

2. Using a lidded pot that can accommodate 4 legs per layer, individually salt each leg and layer them into the pot interspersed with some of the thyme. Refrigerate overnight or longer.

3. Preheat oven to 250°F. Duck fat at room temperature at this stage is convenient, though not entirely necessary.

4. Brush the salt off of each leg, patting dry with a towel if necessary (esp. the bottom layer of legs). Do not worry about removing all of the salt, since it will season the legs during the next step. You may save the thyme, treating it the same way as the duck legs.

5. Discard the rendered duck liquid from your pot. Return the legs with all herbs, spices and garlic layered in. If the duck fat is a soft solid, put it on top of the legs and put the pot in the oven without the lid. Check on the fat in 20-30 min and put the lid on when the fat is liquified. Make sure that there is enough fat to completely cover the legs.

6. Cook for 3 or more hours, checking the temperature of the fat and the meat with a quick reading thermometer. The meat is essentially cooked at 160-170 °F, but you'll want to look for the skin pulling away from the joint, revealing the leg bone, to determine that it is really done.

7. Remove legs from fat (tongs are nice) and set to drain on a rack above a pan. Select a lidded storage container that can be microwaved. Place cooled legs in container and pour liquid fat over them until it completely covers the legs. Important: The bottom of the pot will contain non-fat liquid rendered during cooking. You must separate out and discard this portion, it will spoil if stored with the legs. Store in refrigerator for 1-6 months.

To Use

Microwave the container until a leg can be extracted: you do not want to further cook the duck. Melt off the solidified fat by placing the leg(s) on a rack in an oven or toaster oven with a pan underneath to catch the fat. You may now:

1) Pick off the meat and mix it with blood orange slices, pickled shallots, frisée lettuce, and a nice vinaigrette.

2) Shred the picked meat, mix with duck fat – voilà, duck rillettes, to be spread on toasted rounds.

3) Heat a skillet on high (turn on hood!). Place legs together and put a lid smaller than the skillet directly onto the legs. Stack heavy, non-meltable things onto the lid to weigh it down (like a tea kettle full of water), cook until crisp, turn legs over and repeat. The object is to press down on the duck legs so that the heat travels efficiently through them in the time it takes to crisp up the outside. Serve with lentilles de Puy (cooked in stock w/ lardons) and braised escarole (in stock, finished with a touch of blue cheese). Or pommes frites with celery root salad. Or...find your favorite combination and tell us about it!



2006 VINTAGE NOTES



About halfway through February I began to worry (a farmer's waking state). Where were the winter torrents? The reservoir was low. Then came the March rains. Relief. Needless to say, that wet earth stayed cold, delaying budbreak by two weeks, getting our season off to a late start around the first of April. Not that April was exactly blue skies and sunny days. By the latter half of April the pond was full and May weather was pleasant. We collected all of our petiole samples in June, none in May, which was a harbinger of how delayed the season was. June weather was perfect for pollination resulting in a higher percentage of flowers per cluster fertilized (turned into berries) than is normal - or even room for on each rachis. This didn't mean the final berry size was big: Flavor intensity *was* preserved. And because of the dodgy weather in the previous spring (2005), the number of clusters hanging out there was modest to low. So we had big, tight clusters but not a very large crop hanging, something on the order of 2 to 2 ¼ tons per acre (for Pinot noir). While the summer was nice with no excess of fog nor cool temps, neither were there any heat spikes, so we remained two weeks late right through veraison. Weather from veraison to harvest for the Pinot, Chardonnay and Viognier stayed moderate to cool, resulting in an ideal ripening environment but slow sugar accumulation. Needless to say, I began to worry (see first sentence) whether the Syrah and Roussanne and Marsanne would run out of season before getting ripe. We picked the Pinot in a rather spread out, unhurried fashion, from September 23rd through the 16th of October. Not that Mother Nature intended to deprive us completely of harvest excitement: The Chardonnay came ripe just at the beginning of October. Most of it was picked when Mom threw us an inch and a quarter of the wet stuff on the 5th and 6th. We picked the penultimate ton of Chardonnay on the 8th with no worries, but that final ton, picked on the 10th was falling apart on the vine, rotting from a botrytis explosion taking place before our very eyes. Yes, we trimmed berries with our needle-nosed pruners and discarded entire clusters. It took 12 people two hours just to pick that one ton! Then we gently tumbled the survivors onto our sorting table where we sorted through them again. For some reason, the laggards of the Pinot held up fine and made great wine. Maybe their clusters weren't as tight.

The Syrah was rescued by a late heat wave that began on the 19th allowing us to bring it and the Marsanne and, finally, the Roussanne in before Halloween. That was a good thing because November 1st brought rain. Even the mylar sheeting that lies under our Roussanne can't convert rain into a beneficial ripening environment.

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF...VIOGNIER

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unnecessary to Viognier since it comes with its own weighty, almost oily mid-palate. New oak use in Condrieu and elsewhere varies widely today, with some returning to all or partial stainless steel or old oak fermentation. But winemaking styles often swing on a pendulum. I've recently read that the style of the 1940's, around the time of the creation of the appellation, was to make a fizzy sweet wine to be sold (in bulk - bring your jug - or directly to restaurants) at Christmas-time following the vintage. Today, sweet Condrieu has made a comeback as many are making late-harvest dessert wines with fruit from the new vineyard parcels.

The techniques used to make Viognier today mostly depend on a winemaker's preferred stylistic expression (40s, 80s, 90s) as well as on where she gets her grapes. In a climate as cool as ours, un-inoculated, barrel-fermented, sur lies-aged in neutral oak Viognier delivers the suppleness and richness necessary to counterbalance our crisp acidity while the lack of new oak retains our pretty high-tone floral notes. But there are significant challenges. Managing the acidity in the grapes from our cool climate has been a trial. In some vintages there has been so much acid that it has been difficult for the malo-lactic bacteria to finish the secondary fermentation. Ironically, it is the very growth and metabolic process of the malo-lactic bacteria that reduces acidity. In years with unfinished malos, our Viognier is extra-crisp, as it is with this spring's offering.

But I feel we are learning, viticulturally as well as enologically: when to pick, how to meet the vines' nutritional needs, what rootstock to use, and how to space the vines. I'm negotiating with the other two newsletter scribes to allow me to plant another half acre next spring. Can we make seven barrels instead of four? Can we move from the whimsical to the experimental stage?



INTRODUCTION: I AM AGING

Continued from Page 1

to preserve the wine while it ages, the resulting wine will become flabby, prematurely oxidized, and out-of balance. This happens often in a high alcohol wine as it is likely the acidity is low since there is an inverse correlation between acidity and alcohol levels. Even if acid is added to the wine, as the wine ages other components lessen in magnitude to come into balance with one another while the alcohol stays at the same level. That is why the alcohol level in a young high alcohol wine can seem "in balance" but when the same wine is tried a few years down the road the alcohol sticks out like a sore thumb.

So, all that remains is determining whether a wine is "built to age" – before trying it! There are a few indications found on the label. Hillside fruit potentially provides smaller berries with a higher ratio of skin to juice resulting in more tannins and higher acidity. A low-to-medium level of stated alcohol may indicate sufficient acidity and is – roughly – an indicator of the actual alcohol level¹. The appellation or vineyard site will give you some idea of how appropriate a site's climate is for the grape grown. Cooler sites will more likely produce fruit with less juicy fruitiness, greater acidity, mature phenolics and lower alcohol levels due to longer hang time. And then there are tasting notes - whether they come from the winery or from critics. The descriptors may reveal the winemaking style and consequently whether the wine may improve with age.

Last November, we sat down to taste through all of the past vintages of our Syrah from 2001-2005. I condensed my tasting notes to focus on whether I think a wine will improve with further time in the bottle or whether it should be drunk now. If you do not have any of these wines in your cellar, we will have minute library releases in the next few years of a few of them. In the meantime, we are hosting wine dinners this spring in major cities all over the U.S. (see page 6) where we plan to pour a few library wines. We hope to enjoy them with you. And then you can judge whether we - and our wines - are improving with age or whether, perhaps, we should have been enjoyed at a more youthful stage.

PEAY SYRAH VERTICAL TASTING: AGING RECOMMENDATIONS

2001 Peay Vineyards Estate Syrah

Drink Now/Hold to 2010

A beautiful wine from 4th leaf (young vine) plants. The fruit aromas persist though leather, game and spice have emerged to round out the personality. It is drinking well now and should either be drunk now or held for up to 2 more years.

2002 Peay Vineyards Estate Syrah

Hold to 2010-2012

The fruit aromas have mellowed though the spice level remains high. There is sufficient acidity and tannins to hold the wine for 2-4 years to wait for the spice to come into ideal balance.

2003 Peay Vineyards Estate Syrah

Drink Now/Hold to 2013

The wine is in balance as a whole yet still youthful. Mature elements are just starting to emerge making it tempting to drink now while the wine still has power. If you want power, drink now. If you would prefer for the wine to become more subtle with aged aromas, it will age well for at least 5 years.

2004 Peay Vineyards La Bruma Estate Syrah

Hold to 2013

On release this wine was full of vibrant, high-tone lavender and red fruit notes. These characteristics are still paramount. Ideally the wine should be held for the primary fruit character to mature and for reductive notes to emerge. I believe the ideal window will be reached in 5+ years.

2004 Peay Vineyards Les Titans Estate Syrah

Drink Now/Hold to 2018

This is already drinking well. If you want vibrancy and power, drink now, though the tannins could stand to subside a bit. It needs significant decant time for other characteristics to coalesce. If you prefer for the wine to become more subtle with more aged aromas, I would hold it for up to 10+ years.

2005 Peay Vineyards La Bruma Estate Syrah

Drink Now/Hold to 2013

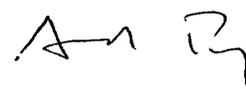
This wine has been drinking very well since release. It needs 45 minutes in a decanter for the flavors to emerge and coalesce. If you wait, I believe the wine will improve for about 5 years as aged qualities emerge and come into cohesion.

2005 Peay Vineyards Les Titans Estate Syrah

Hold to 2015 and longer

This wine is still massive and youthful. It needs at least 5 years to reach potential, perhaps 10. If you drink now, decant for an hour for the wine to unwind.

¹ Above 14% alcohol, the alcohol level stated on the label must be within 1% of the actual alcohol level, below 14% the range is 1.5%.



GROUP 3 ORDER FORM

WINE	MAXIMUM	BOTTLES ORDERED	PRICE	TOTAL	ADDITIONAL BOTTLES?
2006 <i>SCALLOP SHELF</i> PINOT NOIR	6		\$52		
2006 <i>POMARIUM</i> PINOT NOIR	6		\$52		
2006 <i>ESTATE</i> CHARDONNAY	6		\$50		
2006 <i>HIRSCH</i> CHARDONNAY	3		\$48		

ORDERING: Your allocation is the **maximum** amount you may purchase in this release. If you are interested in more than your allocation please signify this on the online order form or on this order form. If any wine remains we will **automatically** charge you for the additional wine after the release period ends in April. Wines are not guaranteed and are sold on a **first come, first serve basis**. You can order your allocation **online** at our Wine Shop (www.peayvineyards.com), by **fax** (707-894-8723), or by **mail** (207A N. Cloverdale Blvd #201, Cloverdale, CA 95425). **No phone or email orders, please.** They are easily misplaced causing you and us much consternation. If you want to order online and **do not have a password**, please email Andy at andy@peayvineyards.com.

Sub-total		
Sales Tax		
Shipping		
Total		

SHIPPING: UPS prices went up a touch this past year due to fuel price increases. If your **state is not listed below**, please email us. Most likely there is some alternative available. We **only ship 2 day air to warm states like FL, GA, TX, AZ** due to past issues with unpredictable warm temperatures year around. We will **ship from March through May and then again in November**. **Pick up at the winery will be on April 19th**. If you do not see the option to pick up online, email Andy at andy@peayvineyards.com and I will set you up for pick up. Please select pick up only if you can come on the appointed day. We will have library wines and food to nosh on.

# of Bottles	GROUND PRICE PER ORDER			2 DAY PRICE PER ORDER				SALES TAX	
	CA, OR	CO, ID, NV, NM, WA, WY	CT, DC, IA, IL, KY, MI, MN, MO, NH, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OH, VT, VA, WI	CA, OR	AZ, CO, ID, NM, NV, NM, WA, WY	CT, DC, FL, GA, IA, IL, KY, LA, MI, MN, MO, NH, NJ, NY, NC, ND, OH, TX, VT, VA, WI	AK, HI	CA	7.75%
1	\$16	\$17	\$18	\$20	\$23	\$25	\$43	NH	8%
2	\$17	\$18	\$19	\$25	\$27	\$32	\$47	NY*	8.75%
3	\$18	\$18	\$22	\$29	\$34	\$40	\$57	TX	6.25%
4	\$19	\$22	\$27	\$36	\$40	\$47	\$70	VA	5%
5	\$21	\$24	\$32	\$38	\$43	\$52	\$74	WA*	8.9%
6	\$23	\$26	\$33	\$39	\$48	\$55	\$79	*WA and NY charge Sales Tax on the wine and the shipping cost. Sorry.	
7	\$24	\$28	\$36	\$45	\$50	\$66	\$88		
8	\$27	\$31	\$43	\$46	\$54	\$68	\$96		
9	\$28	\$32	\$44	\$48	\$56	\$72	\$101		
10	\$30	\$34	\$47	\$53	\$58	\$75	\$107		
11	\$33	\$36	\$51	\$54	\$61	\$79	\$114		
12	\$35	\$38	\$54	\$58	\$64	\$86	\$118		

SHIPPING ADDRESS (NO P.O.S.. PREFER BUSINESS):

NAME _____ STREET _____ CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

BILLING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT)

NAME _____ STREET _____ CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Name on CC: _____ CC#: _____ CVVS: _____ Exp. _____

Card Type (circle): MC, Visa, Discover (no AMEX, please) Signature: _____

Our wine can be sold and delivered only to people who are at least 21 years of age. In placing your order and **signing below**, you represent to us that you are at least 21 years old and that the person to whom delivery will be made is at least 21 years old. When the wine is delivered, the person receiving the wine will be required to prove that he/she is 21 years old. **Signature:** _____ **Thank you!**

