

THE STARGAZER

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE ADASTRA WINE CLUB

EARLY FALL 2022

In this issue we review your Wine Club selections, the 2019 Adastra Pinot Noir and the 2020 Boundless Optimism Rosé of Pinot Noir, both made from grapes grown at our certified organic Adastra vineyard. We have two tasting recipes for you in this *Stargazer*, both of which pair well with both wines. Page 3 details the Savory Mushroom Cheesecake, delightful hot or cold, while page 4 describes the satisfying Turkey Loaf; also on page 4, Chris continues the meleagraine theme with a report on turkey activity at the farm. **Thank you for your support. Cheers!** *Chris Fawcett*

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

2019 Adastra Pinot Noir *Carneros, Napa Valley*

An attractive garnet in color, the 2019 Adastra Pinot Noir has aromas of plum, cherries, tomato, cola and cloves. Plush in mouthfeel, the flavors of this medium-bodied wine include plum, cherry, cranberries, blackberries and a savory element. The refreshing finish has a beguiling briney component. Soft, velvety tannins make this wine pleasant to drink now, though it will benefit from aging, and should be enjoyable for at least the next fifteen years. Made from certified organic grapes from Adastra's vineyard.

2019 was a somewhat unusual year, because the vines started the vintage with good soil moisture. Over 27 inches fell in the rain year beginning October 1, 2018, and ending September 30, 2019, that's about 50 percent above the 21st century normal. Fortunately, most of the rain fell in winter, but, unusually, we also had over 2 inches of rain in May. That month, like April, was relatively cool. Budbreak had come in late March.

June saw a three-day heat spike, with the year's hottest temperature, 102.3° Fahrenheit,

falling on June 10. There were additional heat spikes in August and mid-September, with temperatures hitting the mid- and upper- 90s . The upshot of these heat spikes was that there was some sunburn damage to the fruit. We removed these damaged clusters prior to harvest. However, around September 13, grape sugars were "ahead of flavors" meaning the percent of sugar was quite high, but the desired flavors weren't yet present. A cooler period between September 13 and 24 allowed the flavors to catch up.

The grapes were harvested on September 19 and September 23. The Pinot Noir selections picked on the earlier date: DRC, Dijon 115 and Dijon 777, were fermented separately in S-bins, while the later-picked Swan, Pommard and additional 115, were fermented together in a tank. The grape stems tasted quite pleasant and woody, so we used 50% whole clusters in the S-bins, that's to say, we removed the berries from the stems of half of the grapes (mechanically), but left the remainder of the



2019 Adastra Pinot Noir— Just the Facts

Grapes: Pinot Noir selections Swan, DRC, Pommard, Dijon 115, Dijon 777

Yield (tons per acre): 0.92 to 2.66 tpa

Harvest Date: September 19 (DRC, Dijon 115, 777), September 23 (Swan, Pommard, more 115), 2019

Bottling Date: March 17, 2021

pH: 3.76 **TA:** 5.3g/L

Alcohol: 14.9% by volume

Barrel Aging: 19 months in oak

Barrels: 100% French oak (100% new oak)

Cooperage: Boutes, Dargaud-Jaegle Marcel Cadet, François Frères, Remond

Production: 140 cases

When Best to Drink: Now through 2037

NOTE: We chose not to put capsules on the 2019 Adastra Pinot Noir. We suspect capsules may be a waste of our own resources and the world's.

What's in the Box? *continued from page 1*

clusters intact. Whole clusters can help preserve color, and add non-fruit flavors to the wine, such as spice, tea and, an earthiness; in short, more complexity, interest, and individuality.

Fermentation began spontaneously from wild yeast on the grapes and in the winery air. Once fermentation had started, the grapes were punched down twice a day until they reached dryness, at which point the fermentation vessels were sealed with plastic for a period of extended maceration. Pressing took place on November 7, after 48 and 44 days of maceration, respectively. After the juice had been settled overnight, it was racked to all new French oak barrels, where it aged gently for 15 months prior to being bottled on March 17, 2021. After 18 months in bottle, the wine is beginning to hit its stride. We trust it will be to your liking.

2020 Boundless Optimism Rosé of Pinot Noir *Carneros, Napa Valley*

The 2020 Boundless Optimism Rosé of Pinot Noir is made from the Swan selection of grapes in the Adastra Vineyard. The wine has delightful aromas of strawberry, pink grapefruit, citrus, and pink lemonade; fullish in body for a rosé, there are mouthwatering flavors of pink grapefruit and citrus on the palate, along with hints of toast, spice, and marmite ("yeastiness"). Fascinating Fact: the 2019 Boundless Optimism Rosé was awarded "Best Every Day Wine" by the 2021 U.S.A. Slow Wine Guide.

In contrast to the previous year, discussed on the prior page, the 2019 to 2020 rain year yielded a paltry 9 inches of precipitation, less than half this century's rain year average. Although April and early May weren't especially warm, late May saw a run of high temperatures, and in August four days got hotter than 100 degrees. September saw more heat spikes, including a high of 109.9° Fahrenheit on September 6. The combination of low soil moisture and heat was certainly making the vines work. Smoke in the air from August 17 onwards added to their workload.

Our entire harvest for 2020 took place on a single day, October 2. The Swan Pinot Noir grapes were taken to the press, gently squeezed, and then sat for 40 minutes to allow color to be extracted from the skins. The wine was then pressed and sent to tank to settle for two days. The wine was then racked to barrels, and inoculated with two commercial yeasts, in an effort to ensure a smooth fermentation. After two months, the wine was basically dry. The barrels were mostly neutral, all but one older than three years, so imparted little oak flavor. That said, in the final wine, bottled on August 12, 2021, some oak flavors can be detected.

With the Rosé of Pinot Noir, we are aiming for a dry wine that has good, mouthwatering acidity, and a little yeasty tang on the finish. The 2020, we think, displays these characteristics. Perhaps because of the oak, it can taste a little bitter if chilled to the thirties Fahrenheit. Therefore, we recommend serving this wine about 45° F (or, put it in the fridge to get cold and then take it out and let it warm up for ten minutes or so, before enjoying). We have been gratified to taste this wine with a number of different foods and it nearly always works well, either in harmony, or as a pleasing counterpoint to the fare. We hope you enjoy it.



2020 Boundless Optimism Rosé of Pinot Noir Carneros, Napa Valley – Just the Facts

Grapes: Swan selection of Pinot Noir from
Adastra's CCOF-certified vineyard

Yield (tons per acre): c. 1.0

Harvest Date: October 2, 2020

Bottling Date: August 12, 2021

pH: 3.38 **TA:** 6.4 g/L

Alcohol: 14.9% by volume

Barrel Aging: c.10 months in neutral oak barrels

Barrels: 80% French oak, 20% American Oak

Cooperage: François Frères, Remond, Tonnellerie Ô

Production: 111 cases

When Best to Drink: Now through 2023

Additional Notes: 40 minutes skin contact prior to whole cluster press. Stirred on the lees twice only.

PAIRING RECIPE #1: SAVORY MUSHROOM CHEESECAKE

This is a delicious, easy-to-make recipe. It pairs well with both the 2019 Adastra Pinot Noir and the 2020 Boundless Optimism Rosé of Pinot Noir. Once you've baked it, you can either eat it hot, or chill it, in the more conventional cheesecake manner. Both options work well. We slightly prefer it warm. Preparation time is about 45 minutes, but you do have to allow time for things to bake and cool. It will take about 90 minutes from starting till you take the cheesecake out of the oven.

Recipe adapted from Akispetrezikis.com



Ingredients		Serves 8	
5 oz	Butter (4 oz and 1 oz)		
6 oz	Dry breadcrumbs	3/4 teaspoon	Salt
14 oz	Mixed mushrooms (we used a combo of brown, white, portobello, shiitake and oyster mushrooms)	1/4 teaspoon	Pepper
2 cloves	Garlic	16 oz	Cream cheese (room temperature)
2.5 oz	Walnuts	5 oz	Strained Yogurt (we used Fage 2% Greek Yogurt)
1 Tablespoon	Thyme leaves	4	Eggs, medium

Cooking Time: 15 + 30 = 45 minutes

Engaged Time: 90 minutes (Cooking plus prep)

Time to table: 90 minutes to up to 4 hours, depending on how/whether you cool the cheesecake

1. Preheat the oven to 320° F.
2. Line a 12" springform pan with parchment paper (this will give you a cheesecake about 1" in height).
3. Melt 4 oz of the butter (set the remaining 1 oz aside for later).
4. Place the breadcrumbs in a bowl. Add the melted butter and mix well with a spoon.
5. Spread the mixture over the bottom of the pan and press with your fingers to make a nice, firm crust.
6. Bake crust for 15 minutes in the oven, until golden brown.
7. Remove golden brown crust from oven. Place on a rack to cool.
8. Chop up the mushrooms fairly finely, (to 1/4" or smaller). Finely slice garlic. Place walnuts under a tea towel or bag and bash with a rolling pin to create small pieces (don't get carried away, you don't need a powder).
9. Melt the remaining 1 oz butter over a medium heat and add the mushrooms.
10. Sauté mushrooms till they lose most of their moisture (5-7 minutes).
11. Add the garlic, walnuts, thyme, and continue to sauté for another 3 to five minutes, till everything looks nicely done.
12. Add salt and pepper, mix, then remove mixture from heat.
13. Transfer to a bowl and set it aside to cool for 30 minutes. (If you turned the oven off, you'll need to turn it on again and preheat to 320° F.)
14. Meanwhile, add the room-temperature cream cheese into another bowl and whisk until softened.
15. Add the yogurt and eggs. Whisk until the mixture is homogenized.
16. Combine cream cheese mixture with mushroom mixture and mix well with a spoon.
17. Pour filling onto crust in pan and place in oven. Bake for 30 minutes, until filling is firm. Set aside to cool.
18. If going for the cold option, set to cool in fridge for about three hours, until chilled, or in freezer for 30 minutes.
19. Serve with 2019 Adastra Pinot Noir (which you could also cool for ten minutes in the fridge if going for the cold cheesecake option).

PAIRING RECIPE #2: TURKEY LOAF*Adapted from The Joy of Cooking (Rombauer et al)*

A pleasingly simple and tasty recipe which goes well with both the Rosé and the Pinot Noir. Serve with a salad or green vegetables and rice or mashed potatoes.

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cooking Time: 35 minutes**Ingredients****Serves 6**

1 Tablespoon	Olive oil	2 Tablespoons	Dry breadcrumbs
1/2 cup	Chopped onion	1 Tablespoon	Tomato paste
1 clove	Garlic, minced	1 Tablespoon	Fresh basil, chopped
1 pound	Ground turkey	1/2 Tablespoon	Oregano
1	Egg, large	1/2 Tablespoon	Thyme
1/4 cup	Parmesan cheese, grated	1 1/2 teaspoons	Salt
2 Tablespoons	Milk	1/2 teaspoon	Ground black pepper



1. Preheat the oven oven to 350° F.
2. Lightly grease a 4- to 5-cup loaf pan.
3. Using medium heat, heat olive oil in a frying pan.
4. Stir in the onions and garlic and fry until golden, about 7 minutes.
5. Remove from heat to a medium-sized bowl.
6. Add the remaining ingredients to the bowl: turkey, egg, Parmesan cheese, milk, breadcrumbs, tomato paste, herbs, and seasoning.
7. Mix thoroughly, then press into the greased loaf pan.
8. Place in oven and bake for 35 minutes, until the center feels firm when pressed.
9. Remove from tin.
10. Serve hot, with 2019 Adastra Pinot Noir and/or 2020 Boundless Optimism Rosé of Pinot Noir.

TURKEYS PLUNDER PUMPKIN PATCH

Connecticut Field, Cinderella, Big Max, Atlantic Giant, and Jack Be Little are favored varieties of pumpkin grown at Adastra for Halloween decorations. This year, the pumpkin patch was attacked by a peculiar plague: wandering flocks of wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*). The gobblers conducted their raids when no one was around and feasted on fresh-growing plant parts. This was our first such extreme experience with the birds, who have been seen out strutting on the property in posses of up to seven.



An initial response was to construct a “scareturkey” in the pumpkin area. The wily birds immediately scoped out the figure’s bogus nature and continued feasting.

In a last ditch effort to save our plants, which take 100 days of uninterrupted growth and pumpkin color maturation, giant rolls of netting were suspended over the entire area. It’s working so far, on turkeys, though recently a ground squirrel was seen to have penetrated the netted zone, possibly via a burrow.

Incidentally, while it is perhaps drought that drove the turkeys to the Adastra pumpkins, drought is believed to have factored in the demise of the original California turkey (*Meleagris californica*) around 10,000 years ago. It is speculated that the need to stay close to diminishing water sources restricted their habitat range, and perhaps made it easier for humans to hunt them to extinction. *M. gallopavo*, the descendant, also needs to drink water, but is currently thriving as a species in California, though those at Adastra will have to exclude pumpkin plants from their varied diet.