

ADASTRA

THE STARGAZER

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE ADASTRA WINE CLUB

LATE FALL 2022

In this bumper six-page issue of the Stargazer, we review your Wine Club selections, the 2020 Adastra Syrah, the 2018 Boundless Optimism Cabernet Sauvignon, and the Boundless Optimism California Dessert Wine. We also present two tasting recipes : Lamb Shawarma, to go with the Cabernet Sauvignon, and Butternut Squash Latkes, a terrific vegetarian companion to the Syrah. On page 6, Chris has a lot of trees on his mind. **Thank you for your support. Cheers!**

Chris Edwin

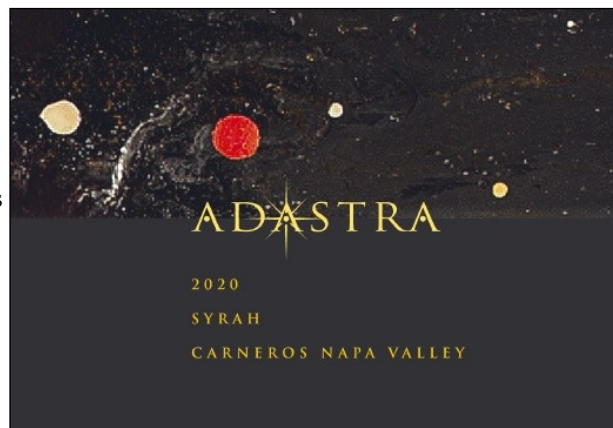
WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

2020 Adastra Syrah *Carneros, Napa Valley*

The 2020 Adastra Syrah is a dark, maroon-colored wine. It has aromas of raspberries, red currants, spiced plum, black pepper, coffee, graphite, and dark chocolate, along with a hint of vanilla. This Adastra Syrah is medium in body with supple tannins, and a smooth finish. Made from certified organic grapes from Adastra's vineyard.

The 2020 growing year began with very little moisture in the soil due to a fairly dry winter. Budbreak in the Syrah occurred in late March and the vines began to grow in relatively mild weather. There were some warm days in late May and early June, but July was mild again, the high temperature only once passing 90° Fahrenheit. In August, however, there was a run of three days above 100° Fahrenheit, August 14 to 16. The temperature dropped 10 degrees on August 17 and there were widespread dry lightning strikes, igniting over 700 wildfires statewide. Although the nearest fires were more than 10 miles away, there were fires at all points of the compass and the air was smokey.

September saw more 100-degree days, with September 6 and 7 both exceeding 109, setting records. Fortunately, Syrah is a grape that does well with heat.



2020 Adastra Syrah—Just the Facts

Grapes: Syrah clone 470

Yield (tons per acre): 2.45 tpa

Harvest Date: October 2, 2020

Bottling Date: August 9, 2022

pH: 3.47 **TA:** 5.8g/L

Alcohol: 15.4% by volume

Barrel Aging: 20 months in oak

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

Cooperage: Dargaud-Jaegle Marcel Cadet,
Ermitage, François Frères

Production: 60 cases

When Best to Drink: Now through 2029

NOTE: We chose not to put capsules on the 2020 Adastra Syrah. We suspect capsules may be a waste of our own resources and the world's.

Concerned by the smoke, we did micro-fermentations of Syrah, Pinot Noir and Merlot in an effort to evaluate the quality of potential wine. As a result of our trials, we decided not to make any Pinot Noir, but were encouraged to try Syrah and Merlot, since their flavor matrix did not seem to be affected adversely.

Towards the end of September, there was another heat spike, with temperatures again passing 100° Fahrenheit on September 28. The previous day, on September 27, the Glass Fire began north of St. Helena. This hugely destructive fire mercifully stayed at least 20 miles north of the farm, though it spread into Sonoma County and was active for 23 days.

We harvested on October 2.

The normal way we make Syrah is to destem the grapes, give them a few days of cold soak, allow them to spontaneously ferment, and then, once fermentation is almost complete, to cover the storage vessels with plastic for a period of extended maceration in an anaerobic

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

environment..

Destemming is simply the process whereby the grapes are separated from the rachis (the non-grape part of bunch of grapes). The stemless grapes are collected in a bin. Depending on the volume, they may just stay in the bin, or they may be transferred to a tank. Now it's time for a cold soak for the berries, skins and juice that remain.

With a **cold soak**, the must is kept at a low enough temperature to inhibit any yeast present from starting fermentation and creating alcohol. The alcohol-free juice environment allows color, flavor and aroma compounds to more easily transfer from the skins to the liquid. Most research suggests that after three days, most of the extraction has occurred; nevertheless, many winemakers prefer longer duration cold soaks just to make sure.

Once the cold soak is done, the juice is heated up adequately for **fermentation**, when the yeast converts the sugar in the juice to carbon dioxide and alcohol. Once fermentation is almost complete, we cover the must (as the fermented juice is called) with a plastic and sand barrier to create an anaerobic environment for **extended maceration** where color, flavor and aroma compounds can continue to leech into the liquid without coming into contact with oxygen (which would encourage any acetobacter present to make acetic acid — aka vinegar — which we don't want).

Once the wine tastes like it's extracted all the good stuff there is to extract (typically two to four weeks), the plastic is removed, the liquid pumped off, and the berries pressed to extract more juice. After this has settled, it gets sent to barrel.

That's the typical procedure. In 2020, however, we adjusted our process. Although our micro ferments had not indicated that smoke was going to affect the wine, the belief was (and is) that smoke-derived compounds are mainly found in the skins of grapes — so it seemed prudent to minimize the amount of time that liquid and skins were in contact.

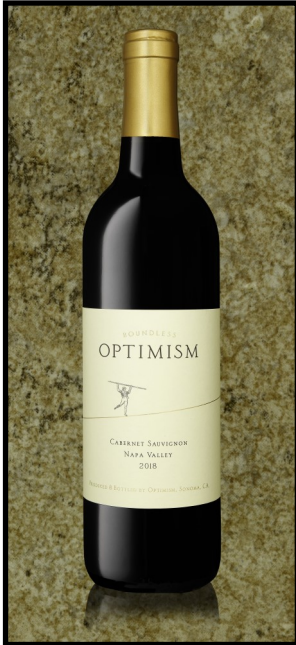
Therefore, we did a basic minimum three-day cold soak, and used commercial yeast in an effort to keep things moving along. Two weeks after harvest, the yeast had fermented to juice to dryness. Since color and flavors were good, we decided to forgo extended maceration and immediately press. The wine was then settled in a tank before being racked to French oak barrels that we had previously used.

During the wine's 20 months of aging, we racked twice and carefully monitored the wine's progress, tasting both internally and with fellow experts not employed by Adastra. Since the wine was progressing deliciously, we proceeded with the aging process, and eventually bottled it on August 9. It will benefit from a little age, but is very drinkable now, especially with a little aeration. Cheers!



Pictures: Top: Chris carries empty picking bins on the RTV for the Syrah harvest 2022. Middle: Bins of Syrah 2022. We harvested Syrah on two days this year on September 29 and on October 12. Bottom: Edwin with some of the micro fermentations in 2020. We did small scale fermentations in advance of harvest to evaluate the crop.

2018 Boundless Optimism Cabernet Sauvignon *Napa Valley*



The 2018 Boundless Optimism Cabernet Sauvignon combines Cabernet Sauvignon from the Baumgartner Vineyard in Oak Knoll, just north of the City of Napa, with 12% Petit Verdot, sourced from a Hoffman Lane, Yountville, vineyard. The wine is full-bodied and creamily textured, with flavors and aromas that include berries, plums, licorice root, sage, and spice, with berries very much to the fore at present.

2018 might have been the last fairly “normal” year of recent vintages. Although there was little winter rain, during the actual growing seasons there was neither an excess of heat or cold, or unexpected precipitation. The

grapes were able to gently ripen and be harvested when ready, which is our preference.

At the winery, the grapes were destemmed, fermented in bins using wild yeasts, and then given a period of extended maceration. Forty-nine days after harvest, they were pressed, then racked to barrels. Racked three times in the course of aging, the Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot were blended together one month before bottling. Coming up on two years in bottle, the wine is maturing nicely, and pairs well with a range of foods. We trust it will be to your liking.

Boundless Optimism “Sweet” — A California Dessert Wine

The Boundless Optimism “Sweet” is a reprise of a wine that we made in 2018 and sold in the tasting room. The idea was to create a substantial wine that was sweet. We considered adding “Optimism” after the sweet, to make “Sweet Optimism,” but (optimistically) figured people would guess. It is clear from Wine Club members’ correspondence that not everybody likes dessert wines, but for those of you who do, here it is.

Boundless Optimism “Sweet” A California Dessert Wine— Just the Facts

Grapes: Syrah, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, and Merlot

Bottling Date: August 9, 2022

pH: 3.49 **TA:** 6.6 g/L **Residual Sugar:** 5.5%

Alcohol: 14.1% by volume

Barrel Aging: various regimes

Barrels: 100% French oak, 50% new oak.

Cooperage: Dargaud-Jaegle Marcel Cadet, Ermitage, François Frères, Taransaud,

Production: 82 cases

When to drink: now until 2037

Blended from wines sourced in Napa, Sonoma and beyond, (including our vineyard), the wine has aromas of cherries, plums, and cinnamon, with an intriguing earthiness. On the smooth and supple palate, you may detect dark cherries, spiced plums, nutmeg and other spices.

Pairing experiments are in their infancy, but we have found the wine goes well with milk chocolate and all kinds of cheeses.

Please let us know what you think!

2018 Boundless Optimism Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley— Just the Facts

Grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon from Oak Knoll; Petit Verdot from Yountville; (88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot).

Yield (tons per acre): c. 3 tons per acre

Harvest Dates: October 22, 2018 (both varieties)

Bottling Date: December 11, 2020

pH: 3.88 **TA:** 5.3 g/L

Alcohol: 14.9% by volume

Barrel Aging: 23 months in barrel

Barrels: 100% French oak, 50% new oak.

Cooperage: Demptos, Taransaud, Tonnellerie Ô

Production: 175 cases (seven barrels)

Additional Wine Notes: Racked three times in the course of aging.

When Best to Drink: Now through 2037.



PAIRING RECIPE #1: LAMB SHAWARMA

Adapted from Allrecipes.com

This is a tasty recipe which does require some forethought, because the meat needs to marinate for at least 12 hours, preferably 24. Ask your butcher to take the meat off the shoulder and slice it into quarter inch strips. That will save you some time. Other than that, most of the ingredients are spices, so preparation is straightforward. Although this recipe works with the 2020 Adastra Syrah, the 2018 Boundless Optimism Cabernet Sauvignon was a better fit. Serve with tahini yoghurt dressing (see below), a side salad with hummus, and rice.

Prep Time: 40 minutes Cooking Time: 30 minutes
Marinating Time: 24 hours (recommended), 12 hours minimum.

About Shawarma
 “Proper” shawarma is traditionally cooked on a vertical, rotating spit, a technique pioneered in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Sharwama is the anglicized version of an Arabic word, itself an approximation of the Turkish çevirme (“turning”). Many geographic variants and other names have evolved. This recipe takes the essence of the concept, thinly-sliced, spiced, marinated meat.

Ingredients: Lamb Shawarma

Serves 8

5 lbs	Boneless shoulder of lamb, cut into 1/4 inch thick strips	1/2 teaspoon	Ground black pepper
1/2 cup	Plain yogurt	1/2 teaspoon	Ground cumin
1/4 cup	Water	1/4 teaspoon	Ground nutmeg
2 Tablespoons	Fresh lemon juice	1/4 teaspoon	Ground cloves
1 Tablespoon	Distilled white vinegar	3/4 teaspoon	Ground mace
1 Tablespoon	Olive oil	1 teaspoon	Cayenne pepper
3 cloves	Garlic, minced		
1 Tablespoon	Salt		

1. Into a large mixing bowl, put the yogurt, water, lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil, onion, and garlic.
2. Whisk in the salt, black pepper, cumin, nutmeg, clove, mace, and cayenne pepper until evenly blended.
3. Mix in the lamb strips to coat.
4. Cover the bowl with brown paper, or plastic wrap.
5. Set in refrigerator to marinate for 12 to 24 hours.
6. Heat a large skillet over high heat.
7. Cook the lamb strips in single layer batches until the fat melts and the meat has browned and is no longer pink in the middle, turn occasionally (takes 4 to 6 minutes).
8. Serve with the tahini yogurt dressing, a mixed salad, and rice (or stuff everything into pita bread for a more informal kebab sandwich) .
9. Enjoy with the 2018 Boundless Optimism Cabernet Sauvignon.



Ingredients: Tahini Yoghurt Dressing

Serves 8

2 Cups	Plain yogurt	<i>This is a simple,, quick, and delicious dressing. You should juice the lemon, then add some juice to the mixture and taste it. You want the final result to be just a little tangy. In our trials, the acidity of lemons varied quite a bit.</i>
8 Tablespoons	Tahini	
1 lemon	Juice of	
Salt	To taste	

1. Combine yoghurt, tahini, and some of the lemon juice in a bowl.
2. Whisk into a paste.
3. Taste and add lemon juice if needed.
4. Add salt to taste.
5. Use as a dip.

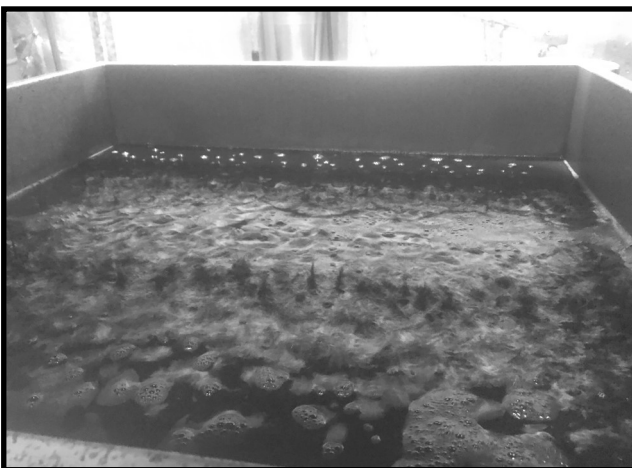
PAIRING RECIPE #2: BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND SAGE LATKES*From NYT Cooking***Ingredients****Serves 6****Prep Time: 30 minutes; Cooking Time: 45 minutes**

1/2	Medium onion, grated
6 cups	Grated butternut squash (1 x 3lb squash)
1/4 cup	Chopped fresh sage
1 teaspoon	Baking powder
Salt	
Black pepper	Freshly ground
3 Tablespoons	Oat bran
1/4 cup	Canola oil (or grape seed oil or rice bran oil)
1/4 cup	All-purpose flour
2 eggs	Beaten



1. Place the grated onion in a strainer set over a bowl while you grate the squash. Then squeeze out excess water from the onion, either by wrapping in a dishtowel and squeezing, or squeezing by the handful.
2. Place onions in a large bowl and add the squash, sage, baking powder, salt, pepper, oat bran and flour. Taste and adjust salt.
3. Add eggs and stir together.
4. Heat the oven to 300 degrees. Place a rack over a sheet pan and set aside for the finished latkes.
5. Prepare the patties: Take a 1/4 cup measuring cup and fill with 3 tablespoons of the mixture. Reverse onto a second parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining latke mix; you should have about 30 latkes..
6. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the oil to the pan and when it is hot (hold your hand a few inches above, you should feel the heat) use a spatula to transfer a ball of latke mix to the pan. Flatten by pressing down with the spatula. Add more patties to the pan, allowing space around each.
7. Cook on one side until golden brown, about 4 to 5 minutes. Slide spatula underneath latkes to flip over. Cook on the other side until golden brown, another 3 to 4 minutes.
8. Transfer finished latkes to the rack set over a baking sheet and place in the oven to keep warm while frying the remainder of the batch.
9. Serve hot with 2020 Aadastra Syrah.

Pictures below left and right: Syrah from the 2020 vintage cascades from the press into the catchment pan — one of the beautiful sights in winemaking that not many people see. For brief moments, it's like watching purple rain. Smells good, too.



MILLION TREES NAPA

Napa County recently announced a project called “Million Trees Napa.” The objective is to plant a great number of trees in Napa County to improve the environment in many ways. Scrubbing atmospheric CO2 to mitigate global warming is a major effect as carbon is deposited into growing tree wood. Oxygen is released as a positive by-product of the process. Fire resiliency, catching and cleaning water, wildlife protection, and historic preservation are all benefits of the project.

At Adastra, we already have a past, present and future role in tree nurturing. A line of towering Monterey Cypress planted as a wind break by the original settlers, the Ravens from Denmark, still stands after at least 75 years of growth. A giant eucalyptus is in the same row and probably of similar age. Many past guests remember the magnificent willow tree that dominates “the island.” A coastal live (?)oak, part of the natural native American ecology, is a volunteer in a corner of the vineyard and we’ve planted multiple California buckeye trees; the nuts are poisonous unless boiled first, but the tree shape is quite pleasing.

Most recently we planted two rows of ornamental pear trees (“Philadelphia”) on the driveway and get a springtime show of abundant white blossoms.

We currently have over 15 acres of vineyard land to replant and certainly will incorporate trees as windbreaks, block dividing lines, and even perhaps forego grapes and devote more of the land to long-term investment in the Million Tree Napa project.

We have several young redwood trees on the property and their vigorous growth encourages us to consult an arborist about including them in our own Adastra Tree Project.



Pictures: Top: the willow tree on March 28, 2012 (with eucalyptus tree lurking back right). The pond was full after over 11 inches of rain in the first three months of that year.

Middle: the ornamental pears in November, 2022, above, and blossoming in March, 2016, below.

Left: the volunteer oak tree next to the vineyard, November, 2022.