

July 1, 2009

The Sommelier Says....

Hello and welcome to the newsletter for <http://www.wine-sommelier.com/>

Sorry for the delay in getting this newsletter out- my PC died (*I am buying a Mac*) and I lost a bunch of data and have spent the past month trying to rebuild all of it.

Just what does “Old Vines” really mean?

You hear the term ‘old vines’ so much you figure it must have some official viticulture definition right? Nope. And the term must also mean that this must be good wine too. Not necessarily.

It might surprise you to learn, though, that there's no legal definition of the term. Producers are free to publish "old vines" on the label of any wine, with no penalty other than perhaps the scorn of consumers who catch on to cases of abuse.

In general, many producers voluntarily limit the term to vines with at least 35 years of age, although this is by no means hard and fast. In California, where "old vines" most often attached to truly ancient Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and other old classic varieties, it's not uncommon to see vine ages of 80 to 100 years or even older.

After 40 or 50 years, though, grape vines - like some people, perhaps - start to slow down physically even as their "wisdom" grows. Very old vines produce relatively little fruit, to the point where growers - particularly corporate owners focused on the balance sheet - consider ripping out the under-performing old vines and replacing them with younger, more vigorous plants that will make more wine.

What's more, the experts don't even fully agree on what mechanism enhances old-vines fruit. One widely accepted hypothesis holds that the roots of ancient vines have reached so deep (sometimes 30 feet or more) that they are unusually effective at contributing trace elements of terroir - the minerality of the soil - to the wine.

Others suggest that the declining vitality of older vines simply reduces the yield of grapes, concentrating the vine's efforts into relatively few grapes of commensurately great flavor and intensity.

What are some of your favorite 'old vine' wines? Drop me a note with your favorites and why and be entered in winning a bottle of wine from my personal wine cellar!

Rancho Ventavo Opens their Tasting Room!

Address: 741 South "A" Street, Oxnard CA 93030 / Telephone (805) 483-8084.

Days of Operation: Friday - Sunday 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM and Monday holidays.

We will gladly open by special appointment for groups of 10 or more.

Tasting Fee: \$10.00 p/p, includes a 16-oz Italian crystal logo glass.

BUT wait there's more ... if you bring you RVC logo glass back with you on subsequent visits, the tasting fee will be reduced to \$5.00!

Come on out and support our local wine makers!

Looking ahead

*- *July 17-18 California Wine Festival-Santa Barbara*

<http://www.californiawinefestival.com/>

*- *July 26 A Taste of Camarillo*

<http://www.meadowlarkserviceleague.com/>

*- *August 8-9 Paso Robles Wine Tour- Details in the next issue!*

*- *September 11-13 Wine tour to Willamette Valley Oregon, are you interested in going too? Let me know today!*

Cheers-

Tim

If you would like to be removed from this list, please reply to me at tim@wine-sommelier.com and request removal from this list.

If you know someone that wants this list, please have him or her send me an email requesting to be included too!