



# Merry Monks

## Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks



PO Box 66, Somerset, CA 95684

(530) 621-1696

[merrymonks@cantigawine.com](mailto:merrymonks@cantigawine.com)

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## 25 Years of Winemaking Bliss: Prologue

It's hard to believe that Cantiga is a quarter century old this year; but looking back at all the milestones, the many challenges and joys, and the friends we've met along the way, it feels like we've accumulated a lifetime of memories. As we celebrate our silver "wine-iversary" over the coming months, we thought we would share our story with you. We will begin here by going waaay back to the very foundations upon which Cantiga was built.

(Cross-fade to black and white film footage, accompanied by Arlo Guthrie guitar-picking.)

The figure who dominates the earliest chapters in Cantiga's pre-history is the "patriarch" of the Rorden family wine operation: Bud Rorden (1931-2018). A Stanford graduate and early pioneer in the satellite-building industry, Bud caught the winemaking bug while working at the Stanford Research Institute. His early experiments in winemaking began in 1959, resulting from his friendship with the founders of Ridge Vineyards—also SRI employees. Bud would help them pick grapes and receive, in payment, five gallons of crushed grapes to ferment in his garage. Despite his enthusiastic involvement, he turned down the opportunity to go into business with Dave Bennion and company, instead continuing to a long and successful engineering career.

Nonetheless, winemaking soon became a serious hobby, and it wasn't long before the whole Rorden family was involved. Rich's childhood memories are full of long, arduous grape picks, late night crushes with the hand-cranked crusher and basket press, and going to school with purple arms up to the elbows because the family did all their fermentation punch-downs by hand. At one point, Bud decided to plant a vineyard on a plot of land the family owned in La Honda. This was a challenging undertaking in which all the kids and a donkey were enlisted. Unfortunately, the vineyard didn't survive long, as severe drought struck later that year.

Memorable vintages from the family's early winemaking years include a 1968 Lodi Late Harvest Zinfandel and a 1976 Monterey Cabernet Sauvignon, of which a few exquisite bottles still remain! In 1981, Bud produced what we believe to be the first Cab-Shiraz blend in California. His association with Doug Meador, a talented winegrower who went on to become the founder of Ventana Vineyard in Monterey, added a new dimension to the project—and some new and exciting grape sources. The Shiraz vines that Doug planted at Ventana were propagated from the original cuttings brought over from Australia. (Cuttings from that same vineyard were eventually grafted onto Cantiga's estate vineyard, and the fruits of that labor are included in this club shipment.)

The methods Bud developed over the years—of producing long-ageing wines of exceptional quality and character, without malolactic or unnecessary processing—became the basis for the methods we use at Cantiga. And although Rich may not have appreciated the involuntary labor of his childhood in the home winery, those experiences were instrumental in shaping his life path. More about this in the next episode.

(Fade to black.)

ESTATE WINERY & TASTING ROOM: 5980 Meyers Lane, Somerset, CA 95684

[www.cantigawine.com](http://www.cantigawine.com)

### *Included in your shipment:*

#### **2017 Shiraz, Estate**

Harvest Brix: 25.5      pH: 3.72      TA: 5.50      Alc: 14.9%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases: 95      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

In 2002-2003, we planted two blocks of Australian Shiraz on our estate—one from a UC Davis heat treatment and the other in the form of cuttings taken from Ventana Vineyard, one of the original plantings of Shiraz in California. Some of you may remember that we made several early vintages of Monterey Shiraz from Ventana grapes, following the Rorden family tradition.

The new vintage of our Estate Shiraz is a clear demonstration of how the vines are maturing. The characteristics we love about Shiraz are now flourishing. With velvety tannins, perfumy notes of blueberries, pronounced pepper spice and hints of tobacco and leather, this vintage reminds us of those early Monterey Shirazes.

#### **2017 Petite Sirah, Estate**

Harvest Brix: 25.3      pH: 3.76      TA: 5.36      Alc: 14.5%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 246      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

We just tasted this new vintage, and we're so excited to share it with you. Even a few months ago, it was still a little rough around the edges; but then suddenly it turned a corner and blossomed into a smooth, balanced wine with loads of lush blackberry and plum notes. It has the makings of an excellent food wine. This will be our 13<sup>th</sup> vintage of this varietal from our estate vineyard!

#### **2019 Barbera, Sierra Foothills**

Harvest Brix: 25.5      pH: 3.42      TA: 6.67      Alc: 14.8%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 88      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

Cantiga's Barbera is a popular favorite for many, but it is often in short supply, as we don't make every year. Thank you for your patience, and we believe you will find our fourth vintage from Wilderotter Vineyard fruit in Shenandoah Valley well worth the wait. It is a beautiful, nuanced vintage with layers of pomegranate and red plum fruit notes, and a whiff of rose petals and violets. As always, this wine is amazing with Italian food.

### **Special Library Barbera releases:**

We love to treat our members to rare golden oldies! The following vintages of Wilderotter Vineyard Barbera are included for upper-tier members, and are available to add on for all club members, if you would like to try a mini vertical. Each of the offered Barberas is unique and fun to compare with the others, and we are proud of them all!

#### **2017 Barbera, Sierra Foothills – Professional Winos and Ambassadors**

Harvest Brix: 25.4      pH: 3.32      TA: 6.93      Alc: 14.7%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 158      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

#### **2016 Barbera, Sierra Foothills – Ambassadors**

Harvest Brix: 25.6      pH: 3.25      TA: 6.78      Alc: 15.2%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 152      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak