



Merry Monks

Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks



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Farm to Fork, Vineyard to Glass

Locavore (lo·ca·vore): one who eats foods grown locally whenever possible

— Merriam-Webster Dictionary

With the unfolding of spring, we eagerly anticipate the start of our bi-weekly box of locally grown veggies from the small, family farm up the road. Every box is like opening a gift, bursting with colorful, leafy, nutrient-rich surprises, grown with love and care. Our family's meal-planning centers around these offerings, and so our diet is very much tied to the local soils and the changing of the seasons.

We delight in being able to do the same for our wine club. Our wines are products of the granitic soil, abundant sunlight and cooling night breezes of our spectacular foothills. They are grown and fermented with love and care. We select each quarterly club offering to complement the way our eating changes with the seasons—medium-bodied reds and lively whites for fresh summer menus, and deeper, heavier wines for calorie-rich, cold-weather fare.

It is truly fortunate that local, seasonal food and wine thrive in our area, and throughout the Sacramento region. Soon, weekly farmer's markets will be popping up all over, and our vibrant winegrowing and agricultural communities will be in full swing. Many of the region's restaurants place priority on purchasing local produce and wines. It is no surprise that Sacramento is known as the "farm to fork capital!"

Sacramento is not alone, as a broader interest is growing in supporting small, local producers. This reflects a pushback against mass-farming and distribution practices. More and more, it is becoming apparent that the global industrial food complex, with its mega farms and mono-cropping, has some deep flaws. Sure, we can buy the same produce year-round, shipped in from distant places, but this convenience takes its toll on the environment, biodiversity, and our health. It particularly takes a toll on the food security and welfare of farming communities in the less-affluent nations that grow much of our food. These issues have spurred initiatives such as the Slow Food Movement and Local Food Movement, not only throughout the United States, but worldwide.

If you share our passion for supporting community-based food producers, consider joining a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) or shopping at Farmer's Markets, artisan wineries and craft breweries. Dust off your cookbooks or jump online, and choose your recipes based on what grows well in your area. Enjoy the bounty of the season, paired with a fine bottle of Cantiga!

Included in your spring shipment:

2020 Verdelho, Sierra Foothills (New Release)

Harvest Brix: 23.2 pH: 3.65 TA: 6.00 Alc: 13.6% RS: 0% ML: 0%
Cases: 206 Aging: 1 year in stainless steel

This Portuguese white grape, grown in neighboring Shenandoah Valley, is medium-bodied and dry, with lush lychee, citrus and apricot fruit. While the warm Foothill summers lend themselves more to growing red varieties, Verdelho is a heat-loving white that thrives here.

Farm-to-Fork Tip: Organic heirloom tomatoes can be expensive unless you grow them yourself, but you can often load up on them at your local farmer's market for a fraction of the supermarket price—and the flavor is beyond compare. Use them to make Salmorejo—our favorite Spanish cold soup (recipe on our website). Another delicious tapa is fresh tomatoes sliced onto fresh or toasted bread that has been rubbed with garlic and drizzled with olive oil.

2019 Grenache, Estate Vineyard (New Release)

Harvest Brix: 25.4 pH: 3.93 TA: 5.07 Alc: 14.9% RS: 0% ML: 0%
Cases: 294 Aging: 2 years in mostly neutral European oak

This medium-bodied Spanish and Rhone varietal is pure, balanced, lively and floral with lush strawberry notes. The Foothills are known for growing ultra-premium Rhone-style wines, where late-ripening Grenache gets ample “hang time” to develop its distinctive flavors and aromas.

Farm-to-Fork Tip: Bell peppers can be procured at a good price at summer farmer's markets, so that is a good time to roast them in quantity to make Romesco sauce (recipe on our website)—an addictively mouthwatering topping for roast potatoes, steamed mussels, and many other foods. If you make a large batch, you can freeze it in smaller portions to enjoy year-round.

2015 Zinfandel, Herbert Vineyard (Library) – All club levels

Harvest Brix: 25.7 pH: 3.34 TA: 7.30 Alc: 16.1% RS: 0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 224 Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

Made in our signature classical style, our 2015 Library Zinfandel is loaded with raspberry and pomegranate fruit notes, and hints of anise and clove. It is balanced, elegant and exceedingly versatile with food. After nine years of aging, this wine has deepened into a delicate complexity while maintaining its vibrancy.

Farm-to-Fork Tip: A great way to take advantage of your over-producing garden or low prices on seasonal veggies is a pasta primavera. Gather whatever happens to be in season at the time (zucchini, asparagus, tomatoes, basil, onions, broccoli—the sky is the limit), lightly sauté them in olive oil, and pile them onto a bed of pasta tossed in olive oil, herbs and parmesan cheese. Delicious!

*** 2013 Zinfandel, Herbert Vineyard (Library) – Professional Winos and Ambassadors only**

Harvest Brix: 25.2 pH: 3.54 TA: 6.83 Alc: 15.3% RS: 0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 342 Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

As a special treat for our Professional and Ambassador members, one of your Zinfandels will be a rarer and older offering—our 2013 vintage. Somewhat deeper and more introverted than the 2015 vintage, this one will be a fantastic complement to your summer BBQs.