



Merry Monks

Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks



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25 Years of Winemaking Bliss: The Estate

If someone had warned us how much time and effort it would take to get our winery plans drawn up, engineered and approved, we never would have believed them. Climbing Mount Everest might have been easier! But finally, by the end of 2006, we broke ground and our inertia gave way to progress.

That year had been a fog of parental bliss and sleep deprivation, with the arrival of our second child, Benjamin. We continued to run our two tasting rooms—at the Vino Piazza and the Somerset corner—hiring part-time staff as needed. We also brought in contracted grapes from various vineyards as we had been doing, crushing them in Lockeford, then aging the resulting vintage in our leased barrel room.

With the construction project officially launched, the ensuing months were a flurry of excavation, concrete pours, and subcontractors. Our walls rose into the sky, tier upon tier, like giant Lego blocks which were then tied with rebar, studded with custom Gothic-arched windows, and pumped full of concrete. The roof trusses were placed with an enormous crane. EIFS coating was expertly troweled onto the exterior, while the underside of the roof was blasted with spray foam insulation. Then there was 3-phase power for our production equipment, and 180-degree F water for sanitation. Rich worked tirelessly with the construction crew, while Christine handled the scheduling and ordering of materials. But we couldn't have done any of it without Tim Keller, our contractor friend who helped us through all our various projects over the years.

By that time, our vineyard was starting to produce. We had already made an estate Petite Sirah in 2005, as well as a small test batch of Semillon. In 2006 we turned our Semillon into a dessert wine, named “Madrigal,” as well as blending our first estate Shiraz into a Cab-Shiraz, named “Troubadour.” We were gratified to see that our careful planning in the vineyard was paying off in exceptional fruit quality.

Then, in the fall of 2007, we did our first crush on our property. We transferred our licensing to the new building, moved our inventory up from Lockeford, and closed down that location. Not having deep pockets, we managed to procure a used press and forklift, temporarily renting a destemmer-crusher and splurging for a new impeller pump and hoses. We added a mix of new and used jacketed tanks as funds allowed. With our vineyard hitting its stride and our building well underway, we felt like things were finally coming together.

Our tasting room on the Somerset corner continued to be the face of Cantiga for a couple more years. It was a fun spot that enabled us to offer patio seating, live music, weekend food service and special events. But when the Great Recession hit in 2008, wine tourism evaporated. Financially, we needed to complete our estate tasting room so we could give up the rental, but we realized that our current design was inadequate for the sort of hospitality we wanted to offer. We needed a commercial kitchen. So, it was back to the drawing board,

redesigning the intended tasting room space into a compact but functional kitchen, then pushing out a new section for our tasting room. And back to the Building Department we went.

Rich, along with Tim Keller, built the estate tasting room and kitchen with minimal help. Christine worked on the kitchen with the county health department, obtaining permits and getting certified as our food safety manager. She and her mother, Annette, landscaped and planted the gardens. Decorative concrete was laid around the focal point of the new patio—a beautiful, three-tiered fountain, installed in the pouring rain three days before our big event.

The grand opening of our new tasting room was scheduled for May 2010, which also marked our 10th anniversary. As luck would have it, a major storm came through and turned the grounds into mud. Thankfully, our vineyard manager, Rick, saved the day by showing up with his tractor and a couple hundred zinnias. He transformed the worst muddy patch into a lovely garden that will forever be known as the “Rick Garden.” The sun shone on our opening weekend, and our family, friends and wine club showed up in force for the celebration. Our journey was complete, and our entire operation was now comfortably housed on our estate.

A momentous harvest followed, in which Seth came into our lives—and he never left! What started as a crush internship turned into a beautiful friendship and working relationship. And the rest is history. Well, not quite; there are countless more stories to share, and new ones being written...but they'll wait for another time.

Included in your shipment:

2017 Syrah, Herbert Vineyard

Harvest Brix: 25.7	pH: 3.89	TA: 6.19	Alc: 15.0%	RS: 0%	ML: 0%
Cases: 176	Aging: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak				

This is our second time offering this gorgeous vintage of Herbert Syrah to our club. We've been amazed at how it has developed in recent months. It has become so smooth and decadent, it is now Christine's “go to” wine. This will pair beautifully with your hearty holiday stews and mushroom dishes.

2016 Library Zinfandel, Herbert Vineyard

Harvest Brix: 25.9	pH: 3.52	TA: 6.50	Alc: 15.5%	RS: 0%	ML: 0%
Cases: 194	Aging: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak				

We realized that many of our members rely on a supply of our Herbert Zinfandel this time of year. Sadly, our current vintage is sold out, and the new one isn't quite ready. Never fear, we've got you! This “Library” vintage was waiting in the wings for just the occasion. The 2016 has all the lush raspberry fruit and anise spice we love in a Herbert Zin. Enjoy this with your holiday ham, pork roast, or a steaming bowl of chili!

2017 Troubadour (Note: Upper tier clubs also receive 2013 Library Troubadour)

Harvest Brix: 24.8	pH: 3.61	TA: 5.48	Alc: 14.5%	RS: 0%	ML: 0%
Cases: 245	Aging: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak				

The holidays just wouldn't be complete without a “Troubadour,” our signature Cab-Shiraz blend. This new vintage has loads of fresh cherry fruit, subtle spice, and acidity enough to balance rich beef dishes like prime rib. It is also a great choice to pair with Tourtière (French-Canadian holiday meat pie—the recipe is on our website). Additionally, our Professional Winos and Ambassadors will be treated to the 2013 Library vintage!