



# Merry Monks

## Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks



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## Winter Wonder Wine Pairings

It's that season again—although here in the Sierra Foothills, one might think spring has arrived early! Nonetheless, during this time of shortened daylight and colder temperatures, we human animals crave extra calories and warm comfort foods. At the Rorden residence, we love pulling out the slow cooker this time of year, as well as making big pots of flavorful soup and hearty pasta dishes. There are so many options for combining beautiful blends of seasonings with healthy ingredients *and* belly-filling comfort. We'll be sharing some fun menu ideas with you as we discuss the wines in your winter shipment.

And isn't it fortunate that so many hearty, comforting dishes are fabulous with wine? We are so excited about the wines in this shipment. Not only are we able to offer you our long awaited **2017 Barbera** (yes, it's finally ready), but we are also pulling out two very limited and super special wines from our Estate Vineyard. Our **2014 Estate Shiraz** (Australian clone) and **2014 Estate Syrah** (French clone) have finally spread their wings, and they are spectacular—perhaps our best vintage to date! We like to offer these two wines side-by-side, as they teach an interesting lesson on clonal variation. They are close cousins, but there are distinct differences in their flavor profiles and they pair somewhat differently with food.

So, pour a glass, pull out your cookbooks and enjoy the bounty of life's goodness!

### In this shipment:

#### 2017 Barbera, Sierra Foothills

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

We only release a Barbera every few years, so this one has been much anticipated. The grapes for this well-loved Italian variety come from Wilderotter Vineyard in the Shenandoah Valley, Amador County. It is a bright, medium bodied red with pomegranate fruit characteristics and a rose floral component.

#### Pairing with food:

This wine is fantastic with Italian cuisine—its bright acidity balances well with tomato-based sauces. Salty olives, cured meats and aged Italian cheeses provide wonderful complements. Enjoy this wine with a meaty lasagna or gourmet pizza—Kalamata olives, roasted fennel and prosciutto work particularly well. A hearty minestrone soup is another great pairing, as is our favorite—cioppino!

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

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### 2014 Shiraz, Estate (Australian clone)

Harvest Brix: 26.1      pH: 3.79      TA: 5.11      Alc: 14.8%      RS: 0.0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 101      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

Our planting of Australian Shiraz produces exceptionally high-quality, rich, concentrated fruit. This wine has blueberry notes which are enhanced by spice characteristics such as pepper and tobacco. It has a slightly exotic character, and one can imagine it being drunk by Persian poet Hafez when he wrote, “Bring me a cup of wine that is dark red and smells like musk. Don’t bring me that expensive brand that tastes like money and smells like lust.”

#### **Pairing with food:**

On your winter table, try pairing this wine with slow-cooked Moroccan lamb or a spicy Indian curry (avoiding yoghurt or cream in favor of tomatoes). We’ve been experimenting with Mulligatawny, a Sri Lankan soup recipe that is thought to have evolved from an Indian dish that was changed into soup to satisfy fussy British soldiers during the British Raj. We are enjoying it so much that we thought we would include a recipe for you!

### 2014 Syrah, Estate (French clone, exclusive club release)\*

Harvest Brix: 25.5      pH: 3.74      TA: 5.88      Alc: 14.8%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 56      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

The Sierra Foothills, particularly in higher elevations such as Fair Play, have proven to be exceptional for growing bold, fruit-forward yet balanced Syrah. Until our recent replant, our own vineyard yielded a tiny Syrah harvest with very low pounds per acre—and some of the best quality we have found. The rich, concentrated blackberry fruit and bold tannins are balanced with cleansing acidity, resulting in a classically structured food wine.

#### **Pairing with food:**

Like our Shiraz, this Syrah is excellent with lamb. With this wine, we would recommend a lamb stew containing mushrooms and potatoes. Also consider trying it with a Beef Bourguignon. For a veggie option, the earthy flavors of Ratatouille are perfect with a hearty Syrah.

*\*LIBRARY WINE FOR AMBASSADORS: Our upper tier club members will receive two each of the 2014 and 2011 vintages of Estate Syrah!*