

All year: Mon-Sat 11-5, Sun 1-5 *plus...*

Jul/Aug: Mon-Sat 11-6:00

Sep/Oct: Fri-Sat 11-6:00

6130-122nd Ave.

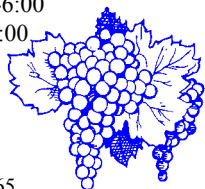
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FENN Valley

VINEYARDS AND WINE CELLAR

January/February 2009

For those who may have forgotten...

I-196 to exit 34 (between Holland & South Haven). East on M-89 at Exit 34 for 3½ mi to 62nd St. South (right) on 62nd 1 mi to 122nd Ave. Left on 122nd ¼ mi. Winery on right. *Follow the signs.*

<http://www.fennvalley.com>

19TH ANNUAL PRE-RELEASE BARREL TASTING

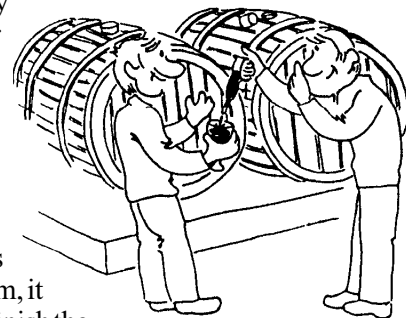
Get ready to taste some exceptional wines as we give you a behind the scenes preview of some of our best wines for 2009. **March 14 & 15, and March 21 & 22** are the dates of this *educational and fun-filled event*. Come out and see what new wines are on tap at Fenn Valley. We are looking forward to showing off some of our new releases and specialty wines as we give you a chance to taste our newest and best wines *before* they are released to the public.

As in the past, *seating will be by reservation only*. Our seatings are 1½ hour overlapping periods beginning at 12:00, 12:45, 1:30, 2:15, 3:00, and 3:45 on Saturdays, and at 12:30, 1:15, 2:00, and 2:45 on Sundays. Walk-ins will be accepted as room permits with reservations taking priority. Each time slot will accommodate 9 parties of up to six people. Please call or fax us to make your reservation for this exciting event. For those of you who cannot join us on any of these weekends, the wines will be available for tasting during the intervening weekdays, 11 to 5 PM. Should you want to experience these wines in the setting of fine food, join us for one of the special winemaker's dinners scheduled for March 7 and March 28 (*See page 3*).

The vintage year 2008 was as difficult as it was full of surprises. Right from the start, we anticipated that the cool dry ripening season (mid-August through October) would yield outstanding white wines. And, on that note we were right. The Pinot Grigio is one of our best and our winemaker thinks that this year's Dry Riesling is our best ever. When we were writing the Pre-Release wine tasting notes for the semi-dry Riesling, we compared this year's notes to last years, and the descriptions were almost verbatim - word for word. And, last year's Riesling was judged #1 at the Finger Lakes International Wine Competition, rising above 82 Rieslings from around the world. The 2008 Riesling appears to be every bit as good.

But the biggest surprise came with the red wines. Normally, we rely on warm weather during September and October to produce grapes ripe enough to make our best red wines. While the 2008 ripening season was not particularly warm, it was long; we didn't finish the harvesting of our red vineyards until the first week of November. Evidently, that was sufficient to offset the

(Continued on page 2)



NEW WINE RELEASES FOR 2009

We are coming out with two new wines this year and a variation of an old favorite, Edelzwicker. We are very excited about our **Dry Traminette** which will make its debut later this spring. We have offered a semi-dry Traminette since 2001, and this will be our first venture with a totally dry version. Traminette is a new grape variety developed at Cornell University that is a hybrid of Gewürztraminer. A recent study showed that there are more of the compounds responsible for the Gewürztraminer taste than in a true Gewürztraminer. Since we experienced a Gewürztraminer crop failure in 2008 (see Nov. newsletter), we hope to replace our missing Gewürztraminer with this dry version of Traminette.

Along the same lines, we will be introducing an **Edelzwicker** made with Traminette, rather than Gewürztraminer. Once again, the strong Gewürztraminer character of the Traminette actually makes for a more flavorful Edelzwicker.

And finally, we will be introducing a dry rosé bearing the moniker **Cabernet Rosé**. Rosé and blush wines are possible because the juice of a red grape has no color. This wine is made from the free-run juice from Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes with less than 10% Pinot Noir free run for complexity. We think that an icy cold glass of this dry rosé will be a perfect summer refresher.

(Pre-Release - continued from page 1) cooler weather pattern, as our red wines are outstanding this year, particularly the Cabernets. There is more color than the last two years, more complexity to the fruit, and little or no bell pepper character that so often accompanies cool climate reds. If vintage 2005 was a "10", 2008 looks to be an "8.5".

This year we will again be featuring six wines, and just like last year, you will receive **up to 30% OFF** on your Pre-Release purchases. Join us on one of the weekends to taste the wines, talk with the winemaker to see why 2008 was so good, and make your selection.

A 50% deposit holds your selection at the special sale price. We will notify you in future editions of the newsletter as to when the wines are released and available for pickup. Or, you may opt for our *free* wine aging and storage service where we store your wines at optimum cellar temperature for maturation and flavor development.

Because the Pre-Release tastings have become our most popular event, *reservations are required*. The atmosphere is *very relaxed* and you are invited to sit back and enjoy yourself during your hour and a half tasting experience. As you taste the wines Eric, Vern, and Doug (the production people) will roam the room to answer questions and offer comments. Sometimes they can be persuaded to pour a sample of an older vintage so that you can see how a particular wine will age. Please keep in mind that the Pre-Release wines are pulled from barrels and tanks, and that they have not seen aging of any significance, so they will tend to be a little rough around the edges.

Bring a friend and make an afternoon of it. We'll be running the "Friends of Fenn Valley" program again, so if you bring a friend who is not already receiving the newsletter, *you get a coupon that may be applied toward a bottle of wine upon signing them up!*

Sulfites and The Red Wine Headache

We are frequently questioned about the use of sulfites in wine and their relationship to a Red Wine Headache (RWH). Coupled to this myth is another myth that European wines do not contain sulfites. Lets see what the facts really are...

To answer the first question, no one is certain what causes a RWH, but researchers are confident that sulfites are not the cause. First, sulfites are used to prevent oxidation and browning, and there are usually more sulfites in white wine than red wine. So, if white wine is not a problem, it isn't the sulfites that are causing the RWH. It should be noted that sulfites can cause an allergic reaction, but they result in asthmatic type breathing disorders or a skin rash with itching, tingling, and redness. For a simple test for sulfite allergies, eat some orange dried apricots, as brightly colored dried fruit contain the same amount of sulfites as wine. What reactions, if any, are noted? If there are none, you are not allergic to sulfites.

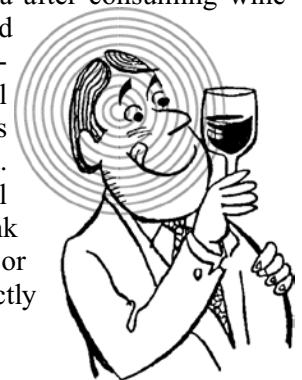
We also know that tannins are not the cause of the RWH, as no one has ever complained of a headache after consuming tea or foods containing soy sauce or chocolate. Some have hypothesized that the skin of the grape, which is used in red wine production but not white, may contain histamines or histamine precursors that cause the RWH. However, a study of 16 people who were intolerant of red wines showed no difference in their response between wines with high and low histamine contents.¹

A more likely cause behind the RWH are prostaglandins, which are substances produced by cells that can cause pain and swelling. Analgesics, such as aspirin, Acetaminophen,

and Ibuprofen block prostaglandin synthesis, which is why they are ineffective in treating a RWH unless taken *before* the consumption of a red wine.² Of the three analgesics, a controlled study has shown that aspirin was the most effective in preventing the RWH.³ If you are susceptible to a RWH, it may help to take an aspirin (or other analgesic) prior to consuming a red wine. Once the prostaglandins have formed and you are experiencing a RWH, these analgesics are ineffective.

As to the use of sulfites in European wines, the European wine producers have been using sulfites for thousands of years. It was just that because "Contains sulfites" only appeared on US wines, consumers erroneously thought that European wines did not contain sulfites. In fact, they contain just as much as domestic wines and have the same limits regarding their use. A new EU laws require that any wine bottled after 11/25/2005 will have the same warning as required in the U.S. Australia has a similar requirement, they just call it "preservative 220." (Pretty clever!) Maybe now we can finally put this myth to rest!

So, why is there so much anecdotal evidence that points to the absence of a headache or nausea after consuming wine "all night" in Europe? American red wines, particularly those from California, contain up to 20% more alcohol than European reds, and Europeans consume wine slowly and with food. Americans tend to drink high alcohol wines without food as one would drink beer. Maybe in this case our RWH or morning after nausea is more correctly attributed to a hangover.



1. Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, Feb 2001

2. Herbert Kaufman, M.D. in Lancet 1981; 1: 1263 and Immunology and Allergy Practice; 7: 279-84

3. Kaufman & Dwight Starr, M.D., Prevention of the Red Wine Headache; A Blind Controlled Study. "New Advances in Headache Research", 2nd edition, ed. Clifford Rose. Smith-Gordon, 1991.

TWO Pre-Release Winemaker's Dinners

March 7th at 6:00 is when we will kick off the Pre-Release weekends with another of our Pre-Release winemaker's dinners. We will feature all six of our Pre-Release wines in the setting of a gourmet meal that will give you the opportunity to experience these wines in the best setting – with food. If you can't make the March 7th festivities, we have scheduled the second winemaker's Pre-Release Dinner for March 28.

Due to the popularity of these events, *reservations are required*. The cost is only \$70 per person, which includes *everything*. Just as with a "regular" Pre-Release tasting, all of the Pre-Release wines may be reserved at a discount of 25-30%. (Note that there will be no cellar tour either evening as all of the wines that would be tasted on the tour are featured at the dinner.)

On March 7th, we will kick off Pre-Release 2009 as we welcome Chef Carl Baker. Chef Baker has been the executive chef at the South Haven Yacht Club and currently is the president of the local chapter of the American Culinary Federation. With more than 30 years in the food service industry, Chef Baker has won numerous awards and currently mentors students at the Van Buren Technology Center.

On March 28th, long time favorite Chef Christine Ferris will impress you with her interpretation of the best setting for our wine selection. Both dinners will begin at 6:00 with a tasting of our sparkling wines along with assorted cheeses. Following the welcoming reception, we'll be seated at 6:30 when our newest releases are unveiled.

Chef Carl Baker March 7

Crab cakes with lemon beurre blanc & red pepper puree
Pinot Grigio 2008

Roasted tomato bisque with fresh basil
Dry Riesling 2008

Skewered Thai chicken with plum dipping sauce
Riesling 2008

Mixed greens, pears, goat cheese, & glazed pecans in a cucumber ring with arugula pesto vinaigrette
Select Harvest Vignoles 2008

Smoked duck breast with wine reduction with dauphiné potatoes and spring vegetables
Meritage 2007

Flourless chocolate torte with raspberry coulis
Cabernet Franc 2008

Chef Christine Ferris March 28

Buckwheat blini with crème fraiche & truffled caviar
Pinot Grigio 2008

Chicken & green peppercorn sausage on lentils & thyme
Dry Riesling 2008

Pan seared Sea Bass with a dried fruit pan jus
Riesling 2008

White cheddar apple soup with bacon
Select Harvest Vignoles 2008

Roasted rack of veal with lemon zest, garlic, & rosemary crust served with espagnole sauce.
Garlic mashed Yukon Gold potatoes & roasted kale
Meritage 2007

Dark chocolate cake with brandied cherries & whipped cream
Cabernet Franc 2008

Winemaker's Dinner at Tello's Trattoria

We are extremely pleased to have been invited to Tello's Trattoria to participate in a winemaker's dinner which will take place on Thursday, April 16 at 7:00 pm. Tello's is located in downtown South Haven at 524 Phoenix Rd. Owner David Militello has been a strong supporter of Michigan wines and his restaurant is known for exquisite casual fine dining - Italian style. Our winemaker loves their calamari, cooked to melt-in-your-mouth perfection without being the least bit "rubbery".

Join our winemaker for this classic Italian dinner, complete with wines selected to pair with each tasty course. Make your own reservations by calling 269-639-9898. Space is limited to 25 participants, and the cost is \$65pp plus tax and tip.

Winemaker's Dinner at Tello's Trattoria Thursday, April 16, 2009

Seared Halloume cheese w/sundried tomato tapanade
Pinot Grigio 2008

Lightly sautéed calamari w/arrabiata sauce on linguine
Riesling 2008

Herb crusted prosciutto stuffed pork tenderloin with a porcini and roasted garlic pan sauce
Meritage 2006

Baby greens and herb salad with extra virgin olive oil and red wine vinegar
Traminette 2007

Grilled peaches with ricotta & lavender-honey sauce
Late Harvest Vignoles 2005

UP & COMING AT FENN VALLEY

March 7: PRE-RELEASE WINEMAKER'S DINNER #1 with Chef Carl Baker...

March 28: PRE-RELEASE WINEMAKER'S DINNER #2 with Chef Christine Ferris...

...taste the Pre-Release wines the way they should be tasted - with food. A gourmet meal matched to the newest Pre-Release wines. Details and menus on page 3. *Reservations required.*

March 14-15, and 21-22: PRE-RELEASE TASTING weekends. Get a behind the scenes look at the new wines and taste them before they are bottled. Order any that you like and save 25-30%. *Reservations required, no charge.*

April 16: WINEMAKER'S DINNER at TELLO'S TRATTORIA. A special winemaker's dinner at Tello's Trattoria in South Haven (see page 3). \$65pp, plus tax and tip. 7pm *Reservations required. Call 269-639-9898*

April 26: ETHNIC WINEMAKER'S DINNER. Our annual culinary excursion to a foreign land. This year Christine Ferris will help us explore the classic cuisine of France. Visit our website at www.fennvalley.com or call the winery for a menu and further details. \$75pp, includes food, wine, tax, and tip. *Reservations required. Accepted March 1.*

May 2: GIRL'S AFTERNOON OUT. Join us as Chef Christine Ferris treats us to another of her fun and informative "cooking seminars". Following the demonstration, participants will enjoy a brunch complete with assorted wines. \$30/pp includes lunch, wine, tax and tip. 11-2pm. *Reservations required. Accepted March 1.*

June 27: Fenn Valley Wine Fest (a.k.a. Open House). Once again we will kick off the beginning of summer as we invite you into the vineyards for great wines, tasty ethnic foods, and wonderful live music. A fun time for all, young and old! \$7.50 adults. 1-5pm. *No reservations.*

August 1: BLUES IN THE VINEYARD. A great success last year! We're going to bring you two bands for an evening of entertainment. Bring a picnic lunch or sample some of Jim Hoyt's BBQ specialties. 4-8pm. *No reservations.*



July 10, 25, Aug 7: SUMMER EVENING COOKOUT. You bring the grillmaster and an appetite for fun and good food. We supply all of the wine, champagne, food, and live music. Enjoy a relaxing evening in our quiet country setting. *Reservations required. Accepted June 1.*

Sundays in August: PERFORMING ARTS IN THE VINEYARD. Each Sunday from 2:30-4:30 we feature various performing artists, ranging from poets, to classical guitarists and harpists. Grab a glass of wine and enjoy the mini concerts in our restored vintage barn. *No reservations, no charge.*

TOURS Nov - May: Saturdays at 3:00 pm. Call to confirm the time and availability of the tour. Not available on weekends with scheduled cellar events or during the month of March.

Wine of the Month

Every month we select a wine that we offer at the special price of 3 bottles for the price of 2 - a 33% savings. This spring we are offering the following wines at this special discount. Subject to availability. Sorry, no rain checks. for out of stock items.

February Lakeshore Red
March L/S Ruby Red
April L/S Demi-Sec
May Traminette
June Vignoles