

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.

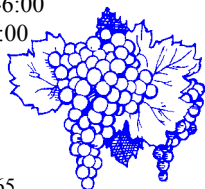
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FENN Valley

VINEYARDS AND WINE CELLAR

January/February 2010

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>

20TH ANNUAL PRE-RELEASE BARREL TASTING

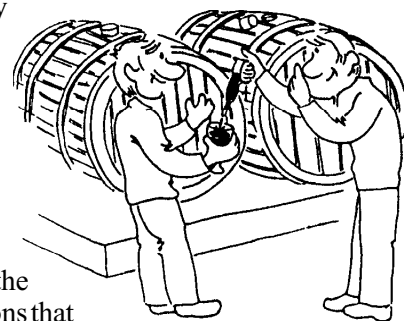
Twenty years ago we designated a special weekend in March when visitors could taste some of our newest wines directly from barrels and tanks before they were bottled; and participants could pre-order any that they liked at a substantial discount. Arriving guests would stand at the tasting room counter while the winemaker was summoned into the tasting room to explain the wines. It seemed that those guests of long ago enjoyed the feeling of being connected with the winery, the wines, and the extra discount. This March we will carry on this tradition as we bring you our 20th annual Pre-Release Barrel Tasting.

March 13 & 14, and March 20 & 21 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 6 and March 27 (*See page 3 for menus and details*).

Once you are seated, you will be given the six wines, one at a time, along with a food selection that pairs with the wine being served. Our winemaking staff will roam the floor to answer any questions that you might have about the wines or the past vintage. 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.

Just like in the past, you will receive **up to 30% OFF** on the Pre-Release selections that you wish to purchase. A 50% deposit holds your selection at the (*Continued on page 2*)



A NEW CHARDONNAY FOR 2010

We are making a new style of Chardonnay this year. Our winemaker is not particularly fond of Chardonnay as it is traditionally made in the US with extensive oak and sur lie aging. So, we decided to venture in a new direction - a cool fermented Chardonnay made entirely in Stainless Steel. The result is a crisp white wine with distinct apple and grapefruit character that has a strong resemblance to Sauvignon blanc.

Historically, we have made two Chardonnays: our "Chardonnay Reserve", fermented in new oak barrels and aged sur lies, and our "Chardonnay" which is fermented in Stainless Steel and then aged sur lies in well-used old oak barrels. Both wines have a toasty character

resulting from the sur lie aging and the former also has some vanilla character from the new oak. Both styles tend to cover the *true* Chardonnay fruit character that begs to be discovered with this, our third Chardonnay.

We have decided to name this Chardonnay "**True Chardonnay**", as it emphasizes the *true* taste of Chardonnay without all of the extra flavors that are derived from the fermentation and aging processes associated with oak barrels. The fresh fruit character and bracing crispness of **True Chardonnay** allow it to compliment today's lighter and healthier eating habits. Pair this flavorful wine with fish, chicken, pork or vegetables served "naked" or dressed in simple, light sauces.

(Pre-Release continued) special sale price. We will notify you in future editions of the newsletter as to when the wines are released and available for pickup. Join us on one of the weekends to taste the wines and talk with the winemaker to see why 2009 was so good.

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. We try to make this event both fun and educational.

The colder than normal growing season of 2009 was a challenge all across Michigan. Fortunately, late August and most of September were sunny and warm, which allowed our early and mid-season grape varieties to ripen in near perfect conditions. In southwest Michigan, that meant that the Pinots, Chardonnay, and Riesling experienced the near ideal ripening conditions during much or all of the critical period prior to harvest. The warm but not hot ripening conditions allowed the fruit characters to develop to their full potential, resulting in wines with robust varietal fruit character.

The overall cool growing season resulted in wines with a slightly higher acidity than "normal". The white wines of 2009 will have a bracing crispness that will make them especially food friendly, and a lower pH, which should give them the ability to withstand a little more bottle age than "normal".

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 2009 ripening season was not particularly warm, it was long; we didn't finish the harvesting of our red vineyards until the second week of November. Evidently, that was sufficient to offset the cooler weather pattern, as our red wines are outstanding this year. 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.

Bring a friend and make an afternoon of it. We'll be running the "Friends of Fenn Valley" program again (*see page 3*), so if you bring a friend who is not already in our mailing list, *your friend gets a pair of Fenn Valley logo glasses and you get a \$10 gift certificate upon signing them up!*

Blues Fans - Pay Attention!

We had to change the date of "Reds, Whites, and the Blues". The new date is **Saturday, July 17** from 3-8 PM. The change was necessitated because the Elwood Splinters Blues Band could not make the original date and the "FBI" band disbanded. The band lineup is as follows:

3-4.....Keith Scott

4-6.....BMF Band (from Southwest Michigan)

6-8.....Elwood Splinters Blues Band

More Tanks

During the last few harvests, we have been cramped for space as our new vineyards have come into production and we are forced to make more wine. So, this past year we bit the bullet and purchased a number of new tanks for wine blending and storage. In December we received several 260 and 500 gallon variable volume tanks, and in January we installed two 5000 gallon fixed volume tanks.

The variable volume tank design is a relatively new concept. Essentially, it is a giant open-topped cup, being a straight wall vertical tank with a disk shaped lid that slips snugly inside of the tank. After the wine is pumped into the tank, the lid is lowered



260 gallon variable volume tanks

ered into the tank and placed in contact with the surface of the wine. Going around the edge of the disk is a plastic "inner tube" that is pumped full of air, sealing the wine from the air above. Thus

the "variable volume" concept as opposed to a tank with a fixed lid and a fixed volume.

It is important to keep air away from wine when storing wine for a long period of time, so all tanks and containers need to be filled to the top. We use the variable volume tanks to hold the "excess" wine after one or more fixed volume tanks are filled to capacity.

Prior to that, we used plastic drums and glass jugs of various volumes to contain the "excess" wine, resulting in a mountain of small containers scattered throughout the winery. Obviously, this change will be a huge improvement in terms of labor and wine quality!



Two new 5000 gallon fixed volume tanks



Part of the "mountain" of small containers

TWO Pre-Release Winemaker's Dinners

March 6th 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 6th festivities, we have scheduled the second winemaker's Pre-Release Dinner for March 27.

Due to the popularity of these events, *reservations are required*. The cost is only \$70 per person (\$5 less than our "regular" winemaker's dinners), 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%. 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. (*Note that there will be no cellar tour either evening*)

Both dinners are overseen by Chef Christine Ferris of Christine Ferris Catering in Holland, MI. Chef Christine and Chef Luke work together and have been behind the scenes at many of the Fenn Valley winemaker's dinners in the past. We have asked each chef to put together a menu that they think will show the wines in the best light. We think that both menus look impressive!

Chef Luke Webster March 6

Clams Genovese - broiled stuffed clams
Pinot Grigio 2009

Shaved fennel and blood orange salad
Riesling 2009

Grilled shrimp with white beans and arugula
Dry Riesling 2009

Duck Scalopini with dried red cherries and grappa
Cabernet Franc 2009

Osso Buco with risotto
Meritage 2008

Clementines with balsamic vinegar over walnut cake
Select Harvest Vignoles 2009

Chef Christine Ferris March 27

Seared caraway seed encrusted Monkfish
Dry Riesling 2009

Seafood chowder
Pinot Grigio 2009

Chicken Marbella - chicken thighs roasted with prunes
Riesling 2009

Bresato - braised beef on garlic mashed potatoes
Meritage 2008

Spanish meatballs simmered in roasted red pepper sauce
Cab Franc 2009

Pineapple upside down cake with Dulce de Leche Gelato
Select Harvest Vignoles 2009

Friends of Fenn Valley

We frequently hear long time friends and visitors say, "I brought someone who has never been to Fenn Valley before". We are especially pleased that you think so highly of Fenn Valley that you want to show us off to your friends. We'd like to express our thanks to you by giving you a \$10.00 gift certificate when your guest signs up for our newsletter.

We call it "Friends of Fenn Valley", and it works like this: When you visit us and bring a first time visitor, ask for a "Friends" form from any staff member. Fill out the form, putting your name and address at the top and your guest's information at the bottom. Hand it to the cashier when you leave. We will give your guest(s) a pair of logo glasses and we will send you a post card/gift certificate worth \$10 for each new household that signs up for the newsletter. This offer is valid at either the winery or our Saugatuck tasting room.

Now, for the fine print... The new guests must be first-time visitors and may not be already enrolled in our mailing list as ei-

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 and summer we are offering the following wines at this special discount. All sale wines are subject to availability. Sorry, no rain checks for out of stock items.

February.....Lakeshore Red

March.....Lakeshore Ruby Red

April.....Lakeshore Demi-Sec

May.....Traminette

June.....Sparkling Demi-Sec

JulyLakeshore Demi-Sec

AugustLakeshore Sunset and Cabaret Rosé

ther an active or a non-active customer. New guests must have a valid mailing address in MI, IL, IN, or northwestern OH. One \$10 gift certificate per new household that is signed up. Gift certificates will be mailed within seven days. Gift certificates must be redeemed in person, at the winery or the Saugatuck tasting room, on wine purchases only. Sorry, no phone orders.

FENN Valley

VINEYARDS AND WINECELLAR

6130 122nd Ave.
Fennville, MI 49408

Return Service Requested

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

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UP & COMING AT FENN VALLEY

March 6 and 27: PRE-RELEASE WINEMAKER'S DINNER 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 13-14, and 20-21: 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 24: ETHNIC WINEMAKER'S DINNER. Our annual culinary excursion to a foreign land. This year Christine Ferris will help us explore the dark continent of Africa. 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 1: GIRLS AFTERNOON OUT. Join us as Chef Christine Ferris demonstrates "Cooking with Spring Produce". 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 & 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, a barrel aging demonstration, and wonderful live music. A fun time for all, young and old! \$8.00 adults. 1-5pm. *No reservations.*

July 17: BLUES IN THE VINEYARD. *Note the change of date!!!* We're going to bring you three bands for an evening of entertainment. Bring a picnic lunch or sample some of Jim Hoyt's BBQ specialties. 3-8pm. *No reservations.*

July 9, 24, Aug 6: 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 - July: Saturdays at 3:00 pm. *Reservations strongly recommended* and can be made the week of the tour. No tours on weekends with scheduled cellar events or during the middle two weekends of March. The cost is \$8, which includes a wine glass and a coupon worth \$5 on the purchase of 3 or more bottles of wine.

VINEYARD TOURS: Our much sought-after fall vineyard tours begin the last weekend of August. Reservations are *required* and are accepted beginning July 1. Prime time tours fill by July 10, *so call early.*

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