



## **BOOMERANG CLUB NEWSLETTER**

### **FALL 2015**

#### **FALL WINE CLUB RELEASE**

##### **WINEMAKER'S SELECTION**

**2013 CHARDONNAY, HAWK HILL VINEYARD (RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY)**

**2013 PINOT NOIR, GRIFFIN'S LAIR (SONOMA COAST)**

**2012 ZINFANDEL, STONETREE VINEYARD (SONOMA COUNTY)**

**2012 SYRAH, GRIFFIN'S LAIR (SONOMA COAST)**

**2012 SYRAH, ESTATE (SONOMA VALLEY)**

**2012 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, MCGRAW VINEYARD (SONOMA VALLEY)**

##### **OPTIONS FOR CUSTOM ORDERS**

**SONOMA REDS - LOT 9 (SONOMA COUNTY)**

**2011 SYRAH, KICK RANCH (SONOMA COUNTY)**

**2013 LATE HARVEST ZINFANDEL (SONOMA COUNTY)**

**2013 PORT (SONOMA VALLEY)**



Fall 2015

Dear Club Member,

Harvest began in the first week of September; one of the earliest on record. Continued drought, one of the worst in centuries, and hot weather has really taken its toll. As the harvest progressed we found that the bunches and berries were smaller and the yields were off by 25-50% of normal. It is became obvious that old vines with their deep root systems that can seek water, and older vintners with their years of experience, were both important. I often say that every year I learn new things so that I'll know what to do next time I see it. The problem is that I rarely see the same thing again! It is my 20th harvest under the Loxton label though, and in that time its almost certain that you learn a thing or two. This year's harvest started a little like 2008 with hot weather drying the fruit to higher sugars before we get the flavors and fruit maturity that we wanted. What I learned then was to be patient, to not jump into picking too early and then end up with tart and astringent wines that lack flavor. It was re-assuring to bounce ideas off my father; he saw these conditions early this year in Australia and with 60+ harvests, he's probably seen more than most.

Each harvest I think about the challenges and then have my plan to make the perfect wine. Then, of course, nature takes a different path and I'm left to change the game plan. What doesn't change is the commitment to make the best wine possible; to make no compromise, and to hold the goal that the wine should reflect the vineyard and the vintage. It makes it much easier now that 40% of my production comes from the Estate. In the last few years there have been several instances where I've picked half of each row and then stopped where the soils change and then come back to pick the remainder a week later. It is all part of the challenge (and the fun!) of trying to make the perfect wine.

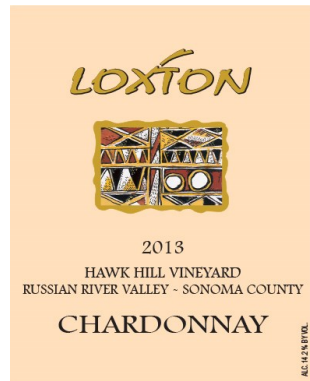
The wines in this fall release are from the excellent 2012 and 2013 vintages. Time will undoubtedly show that these are great vintages; wines to drink now or to keep for the longer term. The Sonoma County Harvest Fair judges seem to agree; while I did not enter the Chardonnay or Zinfandel (the judges often like sweet and oaky wines in these categories), all 9 wines won a medal and for the Pinot and Cabernet in this release it was a gold medal! What made these vintages so special was that there was an abundant harvest, so pickers and grape growers were all happy, and there were no extremes of weather to force winemakers to pick based on fruit and vine condition. Perhaps it is when we don't have these ideal conditions that we can find out who is the wine grower and not just the winemaker. The wine grower makes sure to have the very best grapes so that the winemaking becomes the easiest part of the process.

I hope you enjoy these Fall releases, they are all hand made wines made without compromise and I trust they will be able to grace your table.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris".

## 2013 CHARDONNAY - HAWK HILL VINEYARD



Appellation: Sonoma Coast

Blend: 100% Chardonnay

pH: 3.32

Alcohol: 14.2%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 204 cases

Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered July 3, 2014

Release Price: \$28.00

I've tasted a number of older vintages of Hawk Hill Chardonnay in the last year and I now regret not having a retrospective tasting of a decade of these wines in last year's summer tastings. I really like what a little bit of bottle age does to build up a richness to complement the acidity that this vineyard gives. The vineyard is in Freestone, one of the epicenters of Chardonnay and Pinot noir at the Sonoma Coast. When the vineyard was planted 20 years ago, it was uncertain that the area was warm enough for grapes to ripen. My first Hawk Hill Chardonnay was in 2001, and the wines have been remarkably consistent.

2013 was the second year of the drought, an almost perfect vintage with little disease pressure and no weather extremes and the wine shows it. One of my favorite Chardonnays. Only the first pressed juice makes it to the vineyard designate wines. This first pressed juice is what the Champagne producers use as

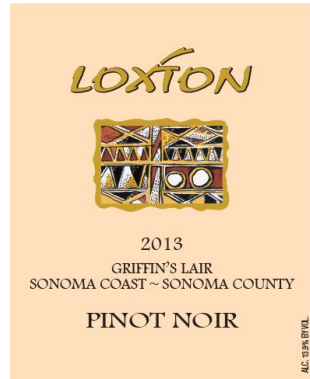
it has delicacy and flavor without the harshness of juice obtained when pressing at high pressures. By avoiding this harshness I don't have to add "fining agents" (these are proteins; historically gelatin or egg whites) to remove the tannins extracted from the skins of the grapes. Avoiding a problem is so much better than fixing a problem!

Bright acidity, real depth of flavor and character, oak a mere passing note to accompany the citrus and peach flavors. A great wine for seafood or rich dishes. Drink now and for another 5 years.



## 2013 PINOT NOIR - GRIFFIN'S LAIR

### GOLD MEDAL - SONOMA COUNTY HARVEST FAIR



Appellation: Sonoma Coast

Blend: 100% Pinot, clones "Pommard" and 115

pH: 3.80

Alcohol: 13.9%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 229 cases

Bottled unfined and lightly filtered Sept. 1, 2014

Release Price: \$35.00

Griffin's Lair is a vineyard in what will soon be known as the Petaluma Gap – an area of emerging brilliance with Pinot noir and Syrah. It also happens to be a part of an important bird corridor and they just love those wonderful (and expensive) grapes. While some use less expensive options to combat the problem, the only real solution in this area is netting to go over the top of the vine rows and it is labor intensive and expensive. A plastic cup on top of each post is used to stop the netting being damaged. It looks odd seeing a field of red cups over the posts across the vineyards! The nets drive me crazy when I'm sampling the vineyard to determine ripeness and make my picking decision. I collect 200 berries or so at random in order to taste and to measure pH and sugar levels. It takes me 3-5 times longer to sample when I have to coax a berry out from inside the canopy and then through the netting without dropping them.

To make matters more complicated I get 2 clones from the vineyard; clone 115 for aromatics and delicacy and "Pommard" for color and power. The effort is worthwhile, the 2013 is one of my best Pinots. Still young, perhaps even better with decanting, but able to show what makes Pinot so special; intensity without heaviness. Drink now or keep for up to another 5 years





## 2012 ZINFANDEL - STONETREE VINEYARD



Appellation: Sonoma County

Blend: 100% Zinfandel

pH: 3.68

Alcohol: 14.1%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 245 cases

Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered Sept. 8, 2013

Release Price: \$28.00

Stonetree vineyard is located high in the Mayacamas mountains between Napa and Sonoma Valleys. It is very close to the petrified forest and has petrified wood throughout the vineyard. I could have used the words "Old Vines" but what does that really mean? Some say that if the vines are older than the vineyard owner then they are old vines. In this case I don't like the proposed definition as 50+ year old vines should qualify, but would not as owner George Hellyer is 93!

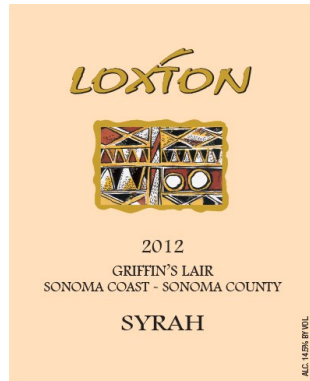
We often start each harvest in September in the upper part of the Stonetree vineyard. It's a great place to start as I help with the picking and it gets us into the groove. It is quiet and peaceful and has stunning views and it is the calm before the chaos of the rest of harvest. Little has changed since I first got these grapes in 1999 with George still driving the tractor and I've lifted every bucket of fruit into the back of a truck since that first pick. George is an inspiration, so I've decided to re-release the remaining quantities of the 2012 wine that was first released last year.



In last year's 10 year tastings we found these Zinfandels age wonderfully, the 2002 was a crowd favorite. These old vines give a wine with real character, showing the backbone and structure of mountain grown fruit, but with some extra age in the bottle it's now showing a juicy red fruit sweetness. Excellent with ribs or rich dishes now, it should continue to improve with age over the next 2-4 years.

## 2012 SYRAH - GRIFFIN'S LAIR

### SILVER MEDAL - SONOMA COUNTY HARVEST FAIR



Appellation: Sonoma Coast

Blend: 100% Syrah, clones 887 and "Alban PB"

pH: 3.80

Alcohol: 14.5%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 98 cases

Bottled unfined and lightly filtered, March 7, 2014

Release Price: \$30.00

In addition to Pinot noir, Griffin's Lair is also proving to be a great spot for Syrah. My first, made in 2009, continues to be one of my favorite Syrahs that I have made. The moderate climate resulting from being so close to the San Pablo Bay allows a long growing season with no extremes. This results in great color development as well as flavor and tannin maturity that just can't happen in some sites. Complexity comes from several different Syrah clones (877 and Alban Power Block), no added yeast, and several different French barrel makers.

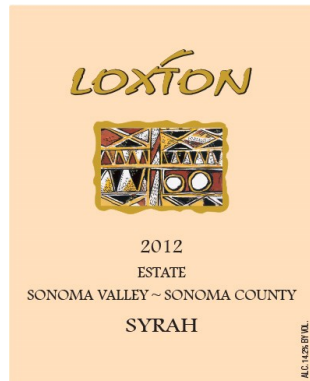
My red wines are all made in open top fermenting tanks where I plunge the floating skins down into the fermenting liquid in order to extract color and flavor. I like to do this job. It might be laborious, but it gives me time to get to know the newly forming wine. To smell the fabulous aromas of fermentation, to see the color being extracted from the skins into the juice, and to check the temperature of the fermentation. On really cold mornings its fantastic to see the steam coming up off the cap during these "punchdowns"!

Intense but drinkable now, it should age gracefully for another 5-8 years. There is a freshness and intensity of flavor that I think might eclipse the 2009 with cellaring. This is a great example of cool climate Syrah with its spicy notes. Try this with lamb or hearty foods.



## 2012 SYRAH - ESTATE

### SILVER MEDAL - SONOMA COUNTY HARVEST FAIR



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 100% Syrah

pH: 3.65

Alcohol: 14.2%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 210 cases

Bottled unfined and lightly filtered, July 3, 2014

Release Price: \$35.00

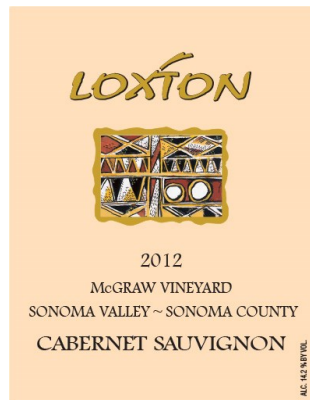
This is the first of the Estate Syrah wines, following my lease of the property in 2012. Estate grapes allow extra degrees of freedom that are sometimes vitally important for great wines. The added value of selling wine rather than grapes means that the really hard decisions that impact quality can be done without negatively affecting the bottom line. These practices include reducing crop to maximize wine intensity, reducing irrigation to get smaller berries (less weight but more intensity), and removing any green bunches when most are purple as they fail to catch up in maturity. I've picked each area of the vineyard and kept it separate until blending in the following spring to make the best Estate Syrah. The style is richness without heaviness, oak a minor note; a wine made without compromise and a true expression of Syrah in the Sonoma Valley. I just love making wine in this area of the valley. We use no pesticides, have afternoon winds that mean little disease pressure and it is a fantastic place for Syrah (and Zinfandel). Plus it is beautiful!



Because each area of the vineyard is picked on different days, I've sometimes done the job with staff or family rather than ask pros to drive in to pick for just a few hours which can irritate them. It all adds to how much care and attention goes into the wine! This is a wine to age for 10 years, or to enjoy now with a wide array of foods.

## 2012 CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MCGRAW VINEYARD

### GOLD MEDAL—SONOMA COUNTY HARVEST FAIR



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

pH: 3.82

Alcohol: 14.2%

Closure: Cork

Production: 141 cases

Bottled unfined and lightly filtered, July 3, 2014

Release Price: \$32.00

I am a big fan of the locavore movement and I love the fact that you can see the McGraw vineyard from the parking lot at the winery. The vineyard runs down a south facing hillside just on the other side of our neighbors the Paganis (with their 130 year old Zinfandel!). Cabernet needs more heat to ripen than we have at the winery location, but the southern aspect means more afternoon sun, and elevation above the valley floor means less fog; both crucial to ripening Cabernet. These are perhaps the smallest berries that come into the winery; and Cabernet is all skins and seeds at the best of times. The pickers just hate picking these bunches, it takes forever to fill a picking bin and they much prefer to pick "by the hour"!

It all results in a big wine, and 2012 gave us big wines that really demand a good steak or rich meal. 23 months aging in the best French oak has mellowed the wine somewhat and then we have aged it another 15 months in bottle prior to release. Making Cabernet is not for those without the long-term vision! In fact, this is no way to make a fast buck. The best way to make it work is to run the winery as a passion for good wines and that way we are delighted to see the small berries of Cabernet.

I would expect this wine to cellar very well and the vineyard has a track record of my wines back to '03 to prove it.





### **SONOMA REDS - LOT 9**

**Sonoma County • 67% Zinfandel, 19% Syrah, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Sirah,  
3% Pinot Noir, 2% Grenache • pH: 3.71 • Alc: 14.2% • 269 cases • Screwcap  
Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered, September 2, 2014 • Release Price:\$17**

The concept for the Sonoma Red was a multi-vintage and multi-varietal blend that would be lovely to drink in the middle of the week, would work with most foods and would not break the bank. The different components have all been grown and processed to make my top wines, but for various reasons are left unbottled. In the case of the Lot 9, I decided that 2013 was to be the last Zinfandel from Buck Hill vineyard. Although I'm able to cherry pick the best hillside fruit, I just don't get enough to justify bottling it separately so I used it as the base for the red blend. I added 2 barrels of Zinfandel from the lower swale of the Stonetree vineyard while the remainder were smaller lots left over after bottling from my vineyard designated programs.

### **2011 SYRAH - KICK RANCH**

**Sonoma County • 100% Syrah • pH: 3.82 • Alc: 14.1% • 199 cases • Screwcap  
Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered, March 16, 2013 • Release Price:\$30**

This Syrah, a re-release from last fall, is 100% from the Kick Ranch, uses three different clones and is aged for 20 months in French oak. Compared to the more brash Shiraz style, this wine has more elegance, with violets and cherry liquor notes, a seamless palate feel and showing nice acidity. Additional time in barrel has mellowed the wine and continues the Kick Ranch style that I have seen right from the 2007 wine as my most easy to like vineyard designated Syrah. Now I'm thinking of a nice weekend dinner.

### **2013 LATE HARVEST ZINFANDEL**

**Sonoma County • 100% Zinfandel; Estate 50%, Stonetree Vineyard 30%, Rossi Ranch 20%  
pH: 3.35 • Alc: 16.2% Sugar 7.3% • 88 cases • Cork Finish - 500mL  
Bottled unfinned and unfiltered, September 2, 2014 • Release Price:\$28**

Zinfandel is a grape that very quickly turns to raisins and it is quite normal to have some percentage of raisins on otherwise perfect bunches. This makes it an excellent variety for a dessert style wine. To reduce the raisin flavors and higher alcohols that result from including these grapes in my regular Zinfandel wine, I reject this fruit and it goes into the late harvest Zinfandel program. In addition, I kept out sections of the Estate vineyard and rockiest soils of the hillside Stonetree vineyard to get to very high sugars for this late harvest wine. Grapes from these areas have high natural acids and tannins that help balance the sweetness. I need the high sugars as eventually enough alcohol is made in fermentation that the yeast die, leaving the wine sweet. This isn't a very controlled process, so making late harvest Zinfandel can be risky.

This is a wine to have with bittersweet chocolate after dinner. It should be at its best for the next few years and should be consumed within a week of opening.

### **2013 PORT**

**Sonoma Valley • 100% Estate Syrah • pH: 3.72 • Alc: 18.3% • Sugar 8.7% • 338 cases • Cork Finish  
500mL • Bottled unfinned and unfiltered, September 2, 2014 • Release Price:\$28**

My 12th version of Port follows the path of the vintages before it. 100% Syrah grown here on the property from the driest soils and thus with the smallest berries. I use pure grape alcohol to arrest the fermentation and leave the wine sweet and this version has one of the lowest residual sugars, more typical of the Portuguese versions. It is still a wine to savor after dinner, perhaps with a chocolate dessert, and can be enjoyed over several weeks without the wine going bad as the alcohol and sugar are excellent preservatives. Tannins extracted from the grape skins and seeds during and after fermentation help balance the sweetness to stop the Port from being cloying.

Every version of the Port since the 2002 has been a medal winner at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair and the wines age very slowly in a good cellar as was shown in the retrospective tasting of Ports last summer.

**November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2-5 pm**

Celebrate the bounty of harvest at the fall release party! Sample all of the new wine releases while sitting back and taking in the beautiful view of the Mayacamas. We will have catered food to enjoy along with your wine and artist, George Hellyer (owner of Stonetree Vineyard), will be displaying some of his work in the reserve tasting room.



George Hellyer, Stonetree Vineyard

Please RSVP to [winery@loxtonwines.com](mailto:winery@loxtonwines.com) or 707-935-7221 by October 18<sup>th</sup>  
Members: No Charge, Guests: \$10

SHIPPING RATES										
Ground (5-7 Business Days)									2 DAY AIR	
# of Bottles	CA Zips 93601-95993*	CA Zips 96001-96162*	CA Zips 90001-93599, NV*	AZ* NM**	CO, ID MT, OR WA, WY	KS, ND NE, OK, SD	AR, IA, IL LA, MN MO, TX	AL, CT, DC, DE FL, GA, IN, KY, MA MD, ME, MI, MS NC, NJ, NH, NY OH, RI, SC, TN VA, VT, WI, WV	PA	AK, HI
6	17	18	17	19	30	33	36	39	42	77
7	18	19	21	22	33	38	42	46	48	80
8	19	21	22	23	35	39	44	48	50	86
9	19	21	23	25	36	41	46	50	54	94
12	21	23	25	28	41	46	52	57	66	122
18	28	35	35	40	71	79	88	96	108	199
24	37	45	45	47	80	90	102	112	130	242
3+ cases	20 each	22 each	24 each	28 each	37 each	44 each	50 each	54 each	63 each	120 each

\*CA, AZ, and NV shipping prices are calculated at real time rates and may vary slightly from the chart above

\*\*NM, GSO rates applicable to serviceable zip codes, prices are calculated at real time rates and may vary slightly

Additional charge will apply if address is incorrect or package is undeliverable resulting in redirection or return