

LOXTON



BOOMERANG CLUB NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

SPRING WINE CLUB RELEASE

WINEMAKER'S SELECTION

2020 SENCILLO, VIOGNIER-RIESLING (SONOMA COUNTY)

2018 GSP, ESTATE (SONOMA VALLEY)

2018 PIONEER CUVÉE, ESTATE (SONOMA VALLEY)

2017 SYRAH, GRIFFIN'S LAIR (PETALUMA GAP)

2016 SYRAH, RESERVE CUVÉE ELLEN (SONOMA VALLEY)

2017 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, MCGRAW VINEYARD (SONOMA VALLEY)

OPTIONS FOR CUSTOM ORDERS

ALL WINES FROM OUR WEBSITE ARE AVAILABLE, BUT THE FOLLOWING ARE PARTICULARLY HIGHLIGHTED

2020 ROSÉ, VIN GRIS OF SYRAH (SONOMA VALLEY)

SONOMA REDS - LOT 15 (SONOMA VALLEY)

PETITE SIRAH, ESTATE (SONOMA VALLEY)

2015 PORT (SONOMA VALLEY)



A stunning sunrise over the frost covered valley turns winter to spring

Spring 2021

Dear Friend of Loxton,

Spring means that our attention shifts to the vineyard. There are vines to replace, frost protection to set up, pruning and planning for the coming harvest. Normally I would be off to Australia to see the harvest on my father's old vineyard, but quarantine issues make this impossible. The pace of our vineyard though keeps us focused as we know that to have a successful harvest we must deal with virus, business shutdowns and possible drought while still concentrating on what is at hand. It is also time to evaluate the wines from last harvest and unfortunately we have made the hard decision that there will be no Chardonnay or Pinot noir from 2020 due to smoke related issues with the grapes. It seems that the later picked vineyards were more affected but there is no clear pattern as some vineyards were affected while others were not.

This year will be my 20th harvest of the Syrah grapes grown here around the winery. I've been opening some of these older wines to assess the arc of this journey as I kept some bottles back for potential "research". Unless there have been issues relating to the corks, it's been a fascinating experience. The first 3, being the '02 Reserve, then '03 and '04 EnglandCrest Vineyard (as it was known then) are still excellent wines. I had just moved to the property and the winery was struggling to get open. There was little money for new oak barrels and the most immediate concern was for finding the best winemaking methods to deal with the fruit. That the wines turned out so well is testament to both Bruce England's decision to plant Syrah and to this area just being the right combination of soil and climate to suit the variety. After the tasting room opened in 2004 there was better cash flow and the wines show the influence of new oak barrels – not overpowering the wines, but adding a framework as seen in the '06 and '07 Reserve wines. After leasing the vineyard in 2012 there were changes in vineyard management practices (organic fertilizer and reduced irrigation) and I started spending more time in the vineyard. The result has been more fruit intensity and this is shown in the wines from '14 through the current release of the '16 Estate wine. Going forward I project that we will be spending more effort "down in the dirt" to make happier vines, combatting high soil acidity using amendments of powdered oyster shells and to targeting soil deficiencies with foliar sprays. The journey that started with winemaking has gone back to farming! With just 1 harvest per year, it's a journey that takes a long time.

While we wait for the results of this work there are new releases to tide us over. The new Sencillo and Rosé are from the 2020 harvest and were picked before smoke taint became an issue and remind me of the very strong 2019 offerings from last year. The two new estate wines are from the 2018 harvest and the GSP and Pioneer Cuvée wines fully show how this will be remembered as a great harvest in Northern California. The Griffin's Lair Syrah and McGraw Cabernet are from 2017 and I think are some of the best wines from their vineyards. Finally the Reserve Syrah is our last offering from 2016 and is an elegant tribute to my grandmother Ellen. As always, you can change your order as you see fit and can also select from currently available wines instead of, or in addition to the new club offerings.

Cheers,



Chris Loxton

2020 SENCILLO



Appellation: Sonoma County

Blend: 85% Viognier, 15% Riesling

pH: 3.40

Alcohol: 12.9%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 130 cases

Bottled unfined & lightly filtered March 1st 2021

Release Price: \$22.00

Viognier was only grown in a few villages in the Rhone Valley in France until about 50 years ago. My guess is that if it was easy to grow and make wine from, it would have spread all over France and beyond. The fact that it did not probably means something. This is a pity as the grape can be used to make lovely white wines and excellent dessert wines and is particularly useful when added in small amounts to red wines like Syrah to improve aromatic and floral qualities.

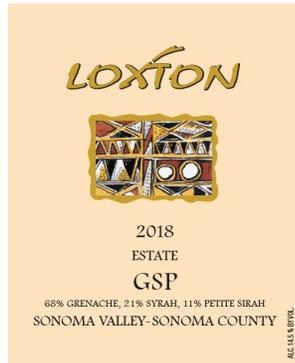
In 2013 when I proposed planting some Viognier, my vineyard manager Rafael was skeptical. He had experience at another vineyard where the vines just didn't bear much fruit. This hasn't been a problem here where we have found the opposite and our challenge is to stop the vines from overcropping. Almost half of the fruit that sets has to be removed by hand and we come back to just 1 bunch on every shoot. In addition to this extra work, I've never seen a grape variety that wants to send out so many shoots! These extra branches must all be removed by hand to get air flow through the fruit zone and reduce mildew pressure. It's the same reason gardeners do this with roses and some fruit trees and it requires considerable expertise. When the grapes finally get ripe, it seems that every bird and wasp in Glen Ellen comes past to sample the product and we need nets and bird scarers to ward them off.



With the leaves gone in Winter we can see the well spaced branches selected last Summer

Since our first crop in 2017 we have chosen to augment our Viognier with a small amount of other grapes, sometimes Chardonnay and more lately Riesling, to make a wine ideally suited to summertime. The style has been the same, crisp and clean and with lower alcohol that can be enjoyed with simple Summer foods or sitting out on the deck with the wine well chilled. This wine will be at its best over the next 12 months.

2018 GSP - ESTATE



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 68% Grenache, 21% Syrah, 11% Petite Sirah

pH: 3.56

Alcohol: 14.5%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 215 cases

Bottled unfinned & lightly filtered March 14th, 2020

Release Price: \$32.00

Grenache has been grown here in Sonoma Valley for more than 100 years. It was part of the mix of varieties that make up the old plantings and Grenache contributed nice cherry fruit flavors and acidity to the assemblage. I love the old “field blends” but I’ve been particularly impressed by how well Grenache has shown when playing a leading role. This wasn’t always the case in older times, but our planting material isn’t the same as it was then. More recent selections from old vineyards in France and Spain, chosen for the color and intensity of the wines they produce, have been brought to California since the ‘90’s and the result has been some outstanding wines.

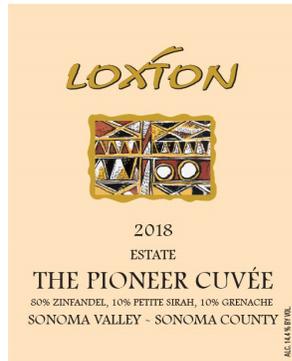
Our experience with the Estate Grenache is so convincing that I have decided to take out another block of Syrah and replace it with Grenache. The plan was to graft them over last year as I had done in 2014 but the Syrah block was showing signs of disease and we have decided to start from scratch and replant this Spring which is a much slower process. It will allow us to amend the soil, choose the rootstock and Grenache clone as well as redo the irrigation. It will be 4 years before I can make wine from those vines, and even longer before the wine club can taste the result, but I’ll have enough Grenache to look at making a varietal wine.



Pulling Syrah vines in preparation for the new Grenache plantings

Or I could make more of the GSP! This blend has consistently been my fastest selling wine since the first in 2013. This new release is the 2018 and I think it has the best fruit definition of them all. There is all of the bright cherry fruit of Grenache, the roundness that comes from the Syrah and the tannin structure from the Petite sirah that seems mostly hidden by all the fruit. While it seems more accessible than the previous wines, a wine for sipping as well as with food, I’m sure it will reward with another 3-5 years in the cellar.

2018 PIONEER CUVÉE - ESTATE



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 80% Zinfandel, 10% Grenache, 10% Petite Sirah

pH: 3.73

Alcohol: 14.4%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 121 cases

Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered August 26, 2019

Release Price: \$30.00

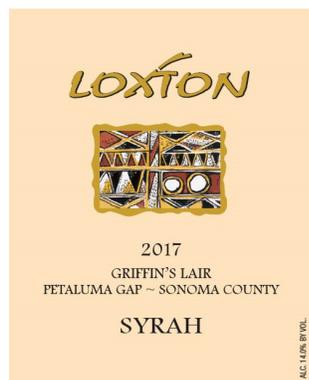
Over the years we have had a number of interns work the harvest and it has been a great pleasure to be a part of the learning process for them as they start their careers. I've made it a priority to ensure that they see all parts of the process from harvest to helping out at our club release parties. The most recent was Christiaan, on a work visa program, from South Africa. He had not worked with the Zinfandel grape before, but found parallels in his own work experience from a harvest spent in the Douro Valley of Portugal. Many of the old vineyards there were field blends of mixed grape varieties, sometimes both red and white, that were all picked together as a "field blend". Our old vineyards of Zinfandel here in Sonoma are often the same.

Perhaps it's the physicist still buried deep inside me, but it just doesn't seem rational to just hope that this random field blending will result in the best wine (although many are excellent). A more controlled method would be to pick each grape variety when at its best and then make the blend in Spring, based on tasting trials to see which is preferred. I have done this in what I think are some of the best harvests to make what I call the "Pioneer Cuvée" as a tribute to those old pioneers who planted the Sonoma vineyards more than a century ago. I'm pleased to offer this '18 version to represent such an excellent harvest. The wine is all from Estate grown grapes and based on the Zinfandel grown on the hillside at the back of the property with Petite Sirah added for color and structure and Grenache for acidity and red fruit. This will continue to improve for the next 3-4 years in the cellar and it is an outstanding match for anything grilled, or to just have a glass of wine. It is an interesting counterpoint to the GSP as this wine is clearly Zinfandel based with its berry flavors, while the GSP is more cherry dominant.



Our intern, Christiaan, saw all from driving the tractor at harvest to filling barrels

2017 SYRAH - GRIFFIN'S LAIR



Appellation: Petaluma Gap

Blend: 100% Syrah

pH: 3.73

Alcohol: 14.0%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 147 cases

Bottled unfiltered and lightly filtered March 18, 2019

Release Price: \$35.00

When Joan and Jim Griffin established their vineyard just north of the San Francisco bay there was no Petaluma Gap appellation and very little experience of Syrah grown in the region. Pinot noir was the more obvious choice and their vineyard quickly gained a reputation for its excellent Pinot noir grapes. I made Pinot from the vineyard for 7 years and can attest to how well it performed there. I would argue, however, that it's the less obvious choice of Syrah that is the best match to this fabulous site. The relatively warm winters and the mild summer from being close to the water gives a long growing season where the vines don't get over-stressed. The result is a depth of flavor in the wines that can be exceptional.

Even with these advantages, it still requires dedication from the owners and this is where the Griffin's excelled. Joan did most of the management, along with a vineyard management company, and I loved visiting the vineyard as I came away knowing more than when I arrived. She was often asking for opinions on what to do and apparently did this with everyone but then had the ability to distill these down into a

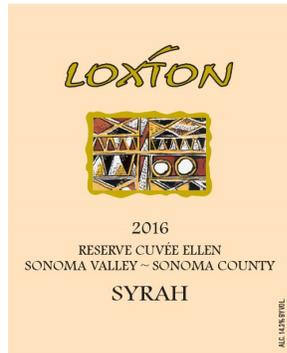


The grapes reflect a lot of love and dedication

plan to grow better grapes. Her dedication to looking at the bigger picture for sustainable agriculture, improvement of the soil, better vine canopy management and beneficial insects has pushed me to be a better steward of my own Estate vineyard.

Following the 2017 harvest Joan and Jim Griffin decided to sell their vineyard and retire from this "retirement" project. I have tremendous admiration for what they accomplished, taking a risk to establish a new vineyard in a fairly new area and believe this new release is a fitting tribute to their work. It has the depth of flavor and a "thick" texture that I also noted in the 2016 version. It reflects concentrated grapes without being heavy or alcoholic. I believe it to be one of my best Griffin's Syrah wines and expect that it will be great in the cellar for up to 10 years.

2016 SYRAH - RESERVE CUVÉE ELLEN



Appellation: Sonoma Valley

Blend: 100% Syrah; 64% Estate, 28% Rossi Ranch, 8% Griffin's Lair

pH: 3.70

Alcohol: 14.3%

Closure: Screwcap

Production: 162 cases

Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered July 23rd, 2017

Release Price: \$40.00

The reserve Syrah is only released occasionally, with the previous releases from the '12 and '14 harvests. I want it to be the best expression of Syrah I can make based upon grapes grown here in Glen Ellen. Sometimes I'm a little leery when I see the word "Reserve" on a label. I've found that in some cases the wine-maker seems to be trying too hard, the wines are just too big, or too over-ripe, or too influenced by new oak barrels. It shouldn't be more of everything, it should be a wine you want more of! In fact, it seems counterintuitive; why have the best fruit and then cover this up with too much oak flavor?

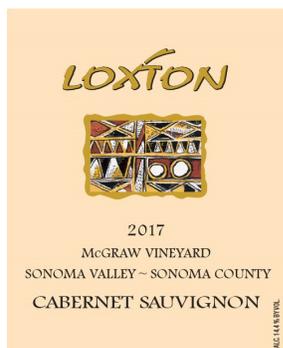
For this wine I've looked backwards to tradition and the use of larger oak casks, also called Foudres, for aging. This was the norm in much of the Rhone Valley and also in the traditional older wineries in Australia. As many of these casks had been used for a generation, the character of the wine came from the vineyard and fruit, not from the flavor of the barrel used. A weaker wine is easily exposed as oak flavor can help mask a wine that is a little deficient. It would be easy to argue that the bigger oak format cask is therefore the best way to showcase excellent fruit. These tanks have another positive attribute in that the thickness of wood reduces the evaporation through the staves (the angel's share) and slows down the amount of air getting into the wine during aging. This slow aging of the wine helps preserve the fruit flavors. We see this most clearly when we top up our barrels which is done every 3 weeks or so during the aging period. The wine loss is much less in the Foudre!

Following the excellent results of Foudre aging in our GSP wine, we purchased and second one in 2016 for this Reserve Ellen Syrah. As it was a new tank, there is some oak character in the wine, but the main character is the red fruit of Syrah that shows the best of the Estate and Rossi Ranch vineyards. There is an elegance and harmony that seems appropriate for a tribute to my grandmother and I expect the wine to drink well now and for the next 8-10 years.



We refill the casks periodically to replace what has evaporated through the wood.

2017 CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MCGRAW VINEYARD



Appellation: Sonoma Valley
Blend: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
pH: 3.79
Alcohol: 14.4%
Closure: Cork Finish
Production: 147 cases
Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered July 2, 2018
Release Price: \$35.00

One of my first jobs in the wine industry was working at a bigger Sonoma winery dedicated to Chardonnay. I was wanting to learn about how to make and deal with this important grape and one day the winemaker told me that he spent more time and effort deciding which cork company to deal with than he did on what day to pick the grapes! I was fresh out of the UC Davis enology program and wanted to learn about what type of yeast, fermentation temperatures and what kind of barrels to use. Packaging was just something to pick out of a catalog and this revelation was just a little deflating.

When I made the '17 McGraw Cabernet I thought that it was quite special. It reflects 15 years of experience with the vineyard, an excellent year for wines and was fortunately picked well before our fires that devastated much of the wine area in October of that year. It's a more intense version than previous wines, more structured, and reminds me more of my Mt. Veeder Cabernet of which the vintage was sadly lost in '17 due to smoke damage to the grapes. There is a core of red fruit, oak is present but only just so and has the potential for long age in the cellar if desired. I just couldn't bear that some bottles might end up tasting not as they should because of corks, but didn't think consumers would be ready for a screwcap.

Fortunately, technology has helped out and I'm confident that the wine will taste exactly as it was meant to be at bottling time. This is my first red wine bottled with a new generation "diam" cork. It's a natural cork product where bark is ground into fine particles, processed to remove any taint or off flavors (the same process used to remove caffeine from coffee beans) and then re-assembled with a food grade binder. This effectively eliminates the variability between traditional corks that results from the natural variation in the bark. I have opted for the deluxe version which guarantees to push back to make the seal for 30 years (long after the last bottle has been consumed!) and is guaranteed to not impart any off flavors into the wine. The only issue I've found is that if the bottle is only partially emptied they are a little more difficult to re-insert once opened, although for many of us this might be of theoretical interest only!



Sometimes the last step of putting a cork into the bottle can change the wine's flavor

2020 ROSÉ, VIN GRIS OF SYRAH

**Sonoma Valley • 100% Syrah • pH: 3.48 • Alc: 13.0% • 195 cases • Screwcap
Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered, March 1st, 2021 • Release Price: \$18**

The newest iteration of the Estate Syrah Rosé. This wine has been remarkably consistent in the last 5 years, needing no residual sugar to give it weight, but instead relying on great fruit and fermentation in well used Chardonnay barrels to give complexity without oak flavor. This style of rosé, light and fresh yet full of flavor, is such a great wine to have with a wide variety of meals like chicken salad, salmon, many pasta dishes or just sitting on the deck in the Summer.

SONOMA REDS - LOT 15

**Sonoma Valley • 53% Cabernet sauvignon, 32% Syrah, 6% Zinfandel, 9% Others
pH: 3.64 • Alc: 14.1% • 202 cases • Screwcap
Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered, March 1, 2021 • Release Price: \$19**

The Lot 15 Sonoma Reds reminds me of last Fall's Lot 14 version. For club members wanting an excellent everyday drinking wine, the last few years with big harvests of particularly high quality have been great news! The big harvests have meant that I've had excess production and have some excellent wines to choose from as blending options for the Reds program. As with the Lot 14, the basis has been Cabernet sauvignon and Syrah, with the remainder Zinfandel then Grenache, Pinot noir and Petite sirah. Case discounts make it a great choice for mid-week drinking that still has depth and complexity. It will also improve for a few years if cellared.

PETITE SIRAH - ESTATE

**Sonoma Valley • 88% Petite Sirah, 12% Syrah • pH: 3.58 • Alc: 14.3% • 79 cases produced
Screwcap • Bottled unfinned and lightly filtered, July 23, 2018 • Release Price:\$30**

Petite sirah is known for making bold and dark colored wines, ideal for hearty winter dishes. Here, I've added some of the estate Syrah to just lighten the wine up a little and give it a bit more elegance than usual, but without taking away from the essence of the grape. The Petite sirah was blended from the '16 and '17 wines that were in excess after blending of the GSP and were of such high quality that I have bottled them blended into a non-vintage wine. Drink now or age for another 6-8 years.

2015 PORT

**Sonoma Valley • 100% Syrah, Estate • pH: 3.70 • Alc: 18.2% Sugar 9.3% • 297 cases
Cork Finish • 500mL • Bottled unfinned and unfiltered, August 29, 2016 • Release Price: \$30**

Port can be a very traditional way to finish up the meal with dessert or cheese but many are too sweet. I have always used Syrah for my ports but have also tried to have enough acid and tannin in the wine to keep it all balanced. Its still a wine to have in smaller quantities, but the great thing is that the wine keeps for up to a month once opened. Try this with chocolate desserts or with a sharp cheese.

**Wine Club Weekend Pickup Days!
Every Weekend in April 11:00-5:00**

While we would love to get back to the tradition of our bi-annual club release party, we are unfortunately still unable to host a large event. To give you a chance to taste the new releases and make in-person changes before taking your order home, every weekend in April will be a Wine Club pickup day! We will have the new releases available to taste outside in our picnic area where groups will be socially distanced allowing you to relax and enjoy the new wines while looking out at the incredible views of the Mayacamas.

To make sure we can plan for proper social distancing and changing county regulations please let us know when you plan to pick up your wine and/or join us for a tasting by contacting us at winery@loxtonwines.com or 707-935-7221



Getting ready for the upcoming replant by using crushed oyster shells to adjust the acidity in the soil.

SHIPPING RATES

To help bring Loxtton to you, we will continue our flat rate shipping program:

CA, NV, AZ, ID, NM, OR and WA shipping is **\$10 per case up to 15**

All other states, shipping is **\$20 per case up to 12**

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

WINE CLUB ORDER FOR:				
PLEASE MAKE ANY CUSTOMIZATIONS OR UPDATES TO YOUR INFO ONLINE, VIA E-MAIL, MAIL OR PHONE BY 3/23				
STANDARD ORDERS WILL BE BILLED 3/29 AND SHIPPED 4/5, PICKUPS AVAILABLE STARTING 4/3				
CUSTOM ORDERS WILL BE BILLED AND SHIPPED SHORTLY AFTER THEY ARE RECEIVED				
Standard 6 <input type="checkbox"/>			Custom <input type="checkbox"/>	
QTY	PRICE	THE WINES	QTY	TOTAL
1	\$22	2020 SENCILLO, VIOGNIER-RIESLING		
1	\$32	2018 GSP, ESTATE		
1	\$30	2018 PIONEER CUVÉE, ESTATE		
1	\$35	2017 SYRAH, GRIFFIN'S LAIR		
1	\$40	2016 SYRAH, RESERVE CUVÉE ELLEN		
1	\$35	2017 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, MCGRAW VINEYARD		
OPTIONS FOR CUSTOM ORDERS				
0	\$18	2020 ROSÉ, VIN GRIS OF SYRAH		
0	\$19	SONOMA REDS - LOT 15 *25% DISCOUNT ON A CASE		
0	\$30	NV PETITE SIRAH, ESTATE		
0	\$30	2015 PORT 500ML		
6	\$194	SUBTOTAL	#	
	-\$38.80	LESS 20% WINE CLUB DISCOUNT *SONOMA REDS CASE DISCOUNT IN PLACE OF OTHER DISCOUNTS	-20%	
	\$155.20	PRE-TAX TOTAL		
CA	Out-of-state	8.25% SALES TAX ON CA ORDERS (LOCAL TAXES APPLY IN MI, NH, OK)		
\$12.80	\$0			
\$168.00	\$155.20	WINE TOTAL WITH TAX (IF APPLICABLE)		
		SHIPPING CHARGES (SEE TABLE ON OPPOSITE PAGE)		
		TOTAL		
MAILING ADDRESS		SHIPPING ADDRESS		
CREDIT CARD INFORMATION				
NEW VISA/MC:			EXP:	
SIGNATURE:				

P.O. Box 70, 11466 DUNBAR ROAD, GLEN ELLEN, CA 95442, PHONE (707)935-7221