



sugarcreek vineyard & winery

newsletter

Fall 2016

Our First Newsletter

We're happy to share our first newsletter with you. We'll try to keep it fresh and interesting with periodic updates on our progress in the coming years.

2016 Sugar Creek Vineyard and Winery Happenings

2016 turned out to be a very busy year and also a very good year. First and foremost the winter of 2015-16 was normal for both temperature and precipitation. This allowed the vines a chance to mature normally and there was virtually no winter damage to the vines.

The vineyard was helped along with an average spring, too. The Marquette bud break began mid-April followed by Chambourcin the first week of May. We were very excited that after three years to finally see bud break on our white varietal, Traminette, which was still recovering from the "polar vortex" winter of 2012-13.

However, due to the slow recovery of the Traminette, about 1/3 of these vines were replaced with a more cold hearty varietal, Brianna. Brianna is a white, American hybrid grape developed at the University of Minnesota. It grows large clusters and makes a very nice semi-sweet wine with a honey-apricot-peach taste.

As pruning and spraying began in the vineyard, we received our first shipment of juice from Chile in April. SCW purchased ~220 gallons of both Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec. After fermentation, both were racked and put into 60 gallon French Oak barrels and stored. These will be bottled after 12 months in oak.

In mid-May, the 2015 estate grown Marquette and Chambourcin were bottled after resting in new American Oak for 8 months. Also bottled was the 2015 Zinfandel from California.

<http://www.sugarcreekwinery.com/>

In August, all three of these wines were entered into the Amateur Competition at the 2016 International Wine Competition held at Purdue University and we're proud to say the Zinfandel won a Gold medal, the Marquette a Silver and Chambourcin a Bronze. Over 2,400 wines were entered into the competition.

Standing in Front of the 2,400 Entries



Meanwhile back in the Vineyard:

Most of June, July and August were spent doing what we lovingly term MRO, short for "maintenance, repair and operations". This covers virtually everything that needs to be done in the vineyard, which includes but not limited to, mowing, spraying for insects, fungi, weed control and general upkeep.

Marquette veraison (color change) started in mid-July with Chambourcin showing signs in early August followed by Traminette.

Preparing for harvest



The 2016 Marquette harvest was on August 30th and had a yield of ~3,200 pounds of fruit. We harvested the Traminette on 9/10 with the weight coming in just over 1,600 pounds.

The Chambourcin continued to mature and was harvested on September 24th. This was by far our largest harvest to date. We were hoping for 2 tons, 4,000 lbs but the final total was 6,402 pounds which crushed to 758 gallons.

2016 Traminette Harvest Crew



This year's Sugar Creek Vineyard harvest of the three producing varietals had a total weight of 11,212 pounds, which yielded 1,228 gallons of must and 868 gallons of juice post press. As a point of reference, one gallon produces ~5 bottles, or for this harvest, over 4,300 bottles.

In addition to the SCW harvest, another 2 tons of 2015 Zinfandel fruit from Lodi, CA was received in September and is aging in French oak to be bottled no earlier than the fall of 2017 depending on the taste profile.

Current SCW Barrel/Wine Inventory



Looking forward:

The working plan for 2017 is to (1) hope for another normal/average winter in central Indiana, (2) supplement our harvest with additional South American juice in the spring and (3) continue to supplement with California fruit/juice to build finished goods inventory to support initiating commercial operations in Q2 2018.

A Robust Chambourcin Cluster



Using Child Labor Has Proven to be Very Cost Effective

