

Ceritas

FALL 2012 ISSUE

Dear Friends,

There is a wonderful story in Sergio Esposito's *Passion on the Vine* in which he recounts an important lesson of humility in the face of true wine – wine that speaks clearly of its place of origin and growing season - learned from the late maestro of Barolo, Bartolo Mascarello.

Time and again our vineyards demonstrate to us our appreciation of the mystery in a wine that is expressive of its terroir. Many of the masters of our craft have shared that even after a lifetime of growing and making wine, they are still surprised by that which can be experienced yet neither understood or mastered.

We haven't been at this for nearly as long as others, but we're learning that if allowed to "make itself" as much as possible a true wine will have something to say. And there is always the unexpected.

This is certainly the case with the 2010 vintage for the sites we've worked with longest, Porter-Bass for Chardonnay and Escarpa for Pinot Noir, both of which have surprised with their expression of site in this year.

2010 was the most challengingly cool vintage for Ceritas to date, and particularly so for our north facing vines in Porter-Bass. We love how this northern exposure's fruit results in wines that tend to retain energy, and worked hard to capture the year's particularly vibrant character.

This is also our most slow to develop Porter-Bass, at this point a full year behind our previous releases evolution at the same point in time. It's all there - the lime blossom, beeswax, lemon curd and saline minerality that are the hallmarks of this great site - but is, so far, only revealing them slowly.

We believe that the cool vintage and the subsequent cold fermentation season, during which the native yeasts struggled to complete their work, were important factors in its tightly wound character.

But then we're compelled to remember what was different in the vineyard from previous years and consider the importance of the specific growing season as part of terroir - regardless of what the vine has

experienced previously, it has never before been exposed to those exact conditions and is reacting to them for the first time. This is the mystery, the unknown influences that shape a wine allowed to express itself.

2010's cool conditions made tending Escarpa's east facing Pinot Noir vines just as demanding, yet they responded to their unique environment quite differently - this Escarpa is surprisingly fruit expressive despite its firm underlying structure, where at this point in past years it has been broodingly backward.

Such a vintage informs us that much is beyond our ability to comprehend and control and that trust in the fruit's own path, with as little intervention as possible, will reveal the unique expression of site and season.

We've strived to do this with our 2010 Porter-Bass Chardonnay and Escarpa Pinot Noir and are delighted by their unique characters. We hope you enjoy these wines.

Thank you for your continued support. Be well.

John Raytek & Phoebe Bass

As a last note we must let you know, due to even more challenging conditions during the 2011 growing season, that there will be no Escarpa Pinot Noir bottled as a vineyard designate. Unfortunately, this is the price for choosing great but marginal sites - some years the risk doesn't pay off.

Yet we are very excited about our new long term partnerships with growers tending vines in truly inspiring sites.

Belief in the idea that it takes a fine site to make fine wine has made our ability to meet demand difficult - it takes time to identify those places and establish relationships, but this approach should reward our patience. Stay tuned!