



Cartograph News: October 2020

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Hello

Well, 2020 continues to be an interesting year, with curveballs coming at us fast and furious. We do have a bit of good news: We're delighted to let you know that the Cartograph 2018 Russian River Valley Pinot noir earned 95 points and won both Double Gold and Best of Class in the 2020 Sunset International Wine Competition! Read more about it in November's issue of [Sunset magazine](#).

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HARVEST 2020: CHALLENGES AND GRATITUDE

This is a long update, but it's been a wild harvest, and there's really no way to phrase it in sunny terms: Harvest 2020 was tough.

In mid-August, thousands of dry lightning strikes across Northern California ignited dozens of fires that stretched firefighting resources very, very thin. The Walbridge Fire that ignited near Healdsburg in the hills west of the Russian River Valley and Dry Creek Valley threatened homes and ranches in the remote forested hills, but the fire was kept away from the wineries close to the valley floors. Our hearts go out to our many friends and neighbors who lost property in these fires.

The big issue for us grape growers is the lingering smoke that these blazes produce: When grape skins absorb wildfire smoke, their aromas and flavors can be affected. While we're filled with gratitude when we see huge air tankers dropping fire retardant to save our homes, the smoke in Healdsburg was oppressive. Twenty miles south of Healdsburg at the Cartograph Estate vineyard, the haze blew in and out but remained mostly off the ground, giving us hope that we had dodged a bullet. We were also benefiting from fresh air blowing through the Petaluma Gap, which helped clear the skies.

And then, a small fire ignited at the Point Reyes National Seashore. I can't even find a name for this fire; I think it got lumped in with the LNU Lightning Complex Fire that stretched way over into Napa County. With few buildings to protect, CalFire understandably put few resources on that fire — and the smoke blew through the Petaluma Gap right into our estate vineyard. When we looked at the lab results received by neighboring vineyards before the testing labs were overloaded with samples, we realized that we were not going to harvest Pinot noir this year. It was a heart-wrenching decision, but we know it was the right decision.

We did harvest six tons of Pinot to press for Rosé. The volatile compounds that ruin wine are stored in the skins and stems of the grape, so if you press juice off the skins for Rosé you stand a good chance of making a good wine. Our Rosé and Riesling are tasting and smelling wonderful.

The other vineyard we were watching was Perli, up north in the Mendocino Ridge AVA. Perli was smoke-free until days before harvest, so we feel confident that we can make a good wine from the fruit we got there this year. That said, we're testing, tasting and sniffing frequently to make sure nothing goes to bottle that we won't be proud of.

We're thankful for the amazing support we received from the first responders who worked tirelessly to keep us safe and in our homes during an almost inconceivable series of fire events. While this is a blow to our production this year, the good news is that we have unreleased library wines in the warehouse — so we'll still have new wines to bring to your cellars in the next couple of years.

As always, thanks so much for your support. If you've been affected by the fires or other challenges during these crazy times, please don't hesitate to reach out — we want to help if we can.

Alan



WINES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Halloween is just around the corner — we've loved seeing the Facebook photos of the great costumes kids have created and the awesome DIY projects people have done to turn their homes into haunted houses!

We're so looking forward to Thanksgiving. While it's been a nightmare year in many ways, we have a lot to be thankful for, and that will be our focus. We'll miss having family and friends around the table with us, but we're still going to spend the day making a great meal paired with fabulous wines — and, hopefully, we'll have a lot of leftovers to get creative with the rest of the week.

[Turkey shawarma](#) was one of our great leftover discoveries from last year.

You'll want to get your holiday wine orders in soon: We're offering reduced rates through Oct. 30 for next-day air delivery. After that date, we recommend shipping via two-day air to avoid potential freezing in the Midwest or too much heat in the South.

After Thanksgiving comes the mad rush to get gifts shipped to friends and family — luckily, we make wine so we always have a gift to send. Here are a few gift ideas for you:

- Sparkling for celebrating: a bottle of [2013 Brut Rosé](#) and a bottle of [2013 Brut Zero](#) with tasting notes
- [Magnums](#) for celebrating BIG!
- A vertical of [Pinot noir](#) from your favorite vineyard: Cartograph Estate, Starscape Vineyard or Perli Vineyard
- [Cartograph logoed tumblers](#): a great stocking stuffer or accompaniment to any wine gift



NEW FALL RELEASES



As you're thinking about holiday wines for meal pairing or gift-giving, we hope you'll think about the new wines we released this fall! Our two clone-specific wines, [Pommard](#) and [115](#), are in very limited supply, so we're keeping what's left for Cartograph Circle members, but the other four — [2019 Petaluma Gap Riesling](#), [2018 Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir](#), [2018 Cartograph Estate Pinot noir](#) and [2018 Perli Vineyard Pinot noir](#) — are all available and on the tasting room menu right now and [online](#).



#LIBRARYFRIDAY

We're having so much fun exploring a library wine each week that we've decided to continue Library Fridays through December.

Here's the schedule:

- Nov. 6: 2014 Starscape Vineyard Pinot Noir
- Nov. 13: 2016 Perli Vineyard Pinot Noir
- Nov. 20: 2012 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
- Nov. 27: 2015 Starscape Vineyard Pinot Noir
- Dec. 4: 2012 Leonardo Julio Vineyard Pinot Noir
- Dec. 11: 2013 Transverse Pinot Noir
- Dec. 18: 2009 Floodgate Vineyard Pinot Noir

If you're new to library wine, here's the lowdown: A library wine is a wine that has been cellared for the purpose of enjoying a vintage well after its initial release. How long can Pinot age? We believe Cartograph Pinots can typically age for 10 years or longer.

As a Pinot ages, the bright fruit flavors that are present when it's young fade into the background and its earthy, mushroom characteristics emerge. Some wines get more subtle as they age, while some wines get bolder. We've noticed that the majority of Cartograph Pinots tend to gain palate weight as they age.



BACK TO WORK WE GO

We're headed back to the vineyard to see how the olives are doing and call a pick date for this vintage. We'll also check on the new vines to make sure the rootstock is growing well, and continue preparing the ground for the new vines that will arrive this spring.

Take care and stay safe.

Cheers,

Alan and Serena

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