

Message from the Proprietor



Hello once more to all of our returning club members, and a warm welcome to all of our new subscribers. I've been thinking lately about the standing of British Columbia in the wider world of global wine. So many people seem unaware of the potential within our province, and yet I am continually impressed by the world class wines that emerge every year. Last fall the fourth annual Judgement of BC was held by the BC Wine Institute, pitting 6 BC Bordeaux-style blends against 6 benchmarks from the USA and France. 99 BC wines were submitted, 6 were selected (plus another 6 to compare sparklings), and then 37 international judges of the highest calibre tasted them blind. Our Axiom blend was chosen as a competitor, and in the end was ranked #5 overall, and #3 within BC. The top two spots were both from BC as well. This accomplishment fills me with a professional pride not just in the success of our own wine, standing toe-to-toe with French bottles priced three-times higher, but in our industry as a whole. I hope you will all appreciate the fruits of our labour in this club pack, and the next time you're perusing the international section of liquor store, I hope you'll keep wandering through to the local BC VQA aisle.

Sincerely,
Bruce Schmidt

Early 2019 Winery Report

By *Melissa Smits*



*Lead Winemaker and
Vineyard Manager*

Hello Wine Club!
It's bottling season again! This year we'll be doing our greatly anticipated 2018 Rosé,

2017 Milepost Merlot, 2018 Riesling and a new, exciting project—a skin-fermented Riesling!

There have been a few great examples of "orange" and "natural" wines in BC and I saw an opportunity to create one with one of my favourite white varieties. Some nice, clean Riesling was hand-harvested and then processed into a bin without enzyme or sulfur, then fermented on the skins for 20 days in order to deepen the colour and give it the structure that is a hallmark of these "orange" wines. The result has the acid and intensity of Riesling, but with a little more texture and a bit of astringency. The idea behind these skin-fermented whites is to develop a wine where

nothing is "lost" and allowing those skin tannins to give the wine protection in aging. Look forward to it in the summer!

- Over the winter, we've had our Viognier and Marsanne from 2018 sit in neutral French oak barrels with frequent lees stirring. When the yeast settles after ferment, its job isn't completely done—it helps bring some complexity and weight to balance the bright fruit character, and enhances nuttiness in the Marsanne.
- In this pack we have included the 2016 Sauvignon Blanc, which had about 80% of the aging period happen in neutral barrels as well. I've found it very versatile with lighter foods like lettuce wraps, salmon, salads and pho.
- We've been letting our 2018 reds age in barrel as well; we'll check in on them to top them up but they'll be happy hanging out in barrel while we get on with our busy spring and summer work.

In the Vineyard

- We had some very cold temperatures in February this year! Luckily we have a couple of fans for frost protection, and opted only to pre-prune the vines (by trimming off the tops) until temperatures



rose. The majority of our pruning on the sensitive varieties (Viognier, Merlot) ended up happening from late February to mid-March, so the buds will be more productive in the growing season. Grapes are pretty tough—even when exposed to extreme cold they'll still produce new shoots, they would just have less fruit on them.

- We've started tying our grapes in preparation for the coming growing season, this time in a very warm and sunny March. It's been good to work outside in this weather, and I think budbreak will probably be closer to April 15th-April 20th. Something to watch for!

Cheers!

Melissa

Today's Lesson: RS stands for "Relatively" Simple

By *Moss Scheurkogel*

Director of Marketing and Education



When visiting our tasting room for the first time, a lot of people ask me: "how sweet is your [insert wine name]?"

Sweetness is, of course, one of the most easily recognized traits of a wine, and is one that many people put high stake in. A person is more likely to have strong opinions about whether they like a sweet or a dry wine than they are for, say, acid or tannin. But the nature of sweetness in a wine has many facets. The first thing to know is that we do not add sugar to wine. It's possible to do, sure, but the measurement unit we

use is called RS: Residual Sugar. This measures latent sugar that comes from the grape juice, and that we haven't fermented away into alcohol. RS is measured in grams of sugar per litre of juice, written "g/L." A sweet wine might have 50+ g/L, while a semi-sweet may have 18-50. An off-dry wine has somewhere around 10-18, and a dry wine (and remember that dry just means low sugar - it does *not* mean that the wine needs to taste dry or bitter) typically has less than 9 g/L, frequently having less than a single gram. That's not much (consider that a sugar cube is 4 g, and that our Viognier, in a 750 ml bottle, has <0.5 g/L). So why then do some dry wines still taste sweet? Well, the ripeness of the fruit can persist beyond the sugar left in, meaning that sweet smells and juicy fruit flavours can emerge from a wine that has had its sugar

removed. Some other wines like our Sauvignon Blanc (0.59 g/L) benefit from a hint of oak, which conjures an association of sweet toffee or caramel from the toasting of the wood fibres. When you compare that to, say, our Riesling, which is our sweetest wine at 8.52 g/L, the difference can seem pretty extreme. The Riesling is literally more than 14x sweeter than the Sauv Blanc! And yet some people have said that they find the Sauv or the Viognier sweeter because of the balance of sugar and acidity. With the right counterweight like acid or tannin, a little sugar can be quite graceful. And when you think that 10 g/L of RS sounds high-calorie, just remember that a gin and tonic has around 90 g/L and a Starbucks latte has almost 200 g/L. So go on a diet, and stick to the wine :) Pretty neat, eh?

Moss

Melissa's Chicken Pho

Pair with Sauvignon Blanc

- ✗ 4 onions
- ✗ Thin sliced ginger root
- ✗ 4 L chicken stock
- ✗ 2 tbsp fish sauce
- ✗ 1 tbsp soy sauce
- ✗ 2 limes, juiced
- ✗ 3-4 cloves sliced garlic
- ✗ 2 cooked chicken breasts
- ✗ Chili flakes
- ✗ 3-4 green onions
- ✗ 1 package rice noodles

Mel's Note: The lime juice and lighter meat (rather than pork or beef) work with the SB's acidity, plus the chili and funky

fish sauce play well off the oak. This also works great with the Riesling.

1) Quarter 2 onions with the peel on. Lightly char them and the ginger with peanut oil in a stock pot for 2-3 mins, then add the chicken stock in there to simmer.

2) Strain out the veggies when the onions are very soft and the colour has darkened, reduce heat to medium. Discard veggies.

3) Add fish sauce, soy sauce, juice from two limes, black

pepper, and sliced garlic, and simmer for an extra 10 mins. These quantities can vary depending on preference.

4) Thinly slice your remaining white onions, and slice the cooked chicken breast (or any bit of boneless chicken). Add both to pot and simmer until white onion softens a little. Add a bit of chili flake, and chopped green onions. Turn off heat.

5) Boil rice noodles according to package and strain, divide right away between deep soup bowls.

6) Ladle soup over the noodles, serve with a variety of garnishes: fresh basil, fresh dill, pea shoots, bean sprouts, sesame oil, more fish sauce, soy sauce, sriracha and/or lime juice.

Extra pho broth keeps in the fridge for a couple of days, or freezer for a couple of months. Noodles must be made right before serving for best results.



2016 Sauvignon Blanc *Drink now through 2022 (optimal 2019-2020) - 299 cases made*

A brand new release, and a new take on our classic oaked Sauv Blanc. The 2016 comes from a cooler season, lending more traditional crispness to this vintage of SB. To balance the cleaner fruit of this edition, we took a lighter touch in the cellar, using only the most subtle oak to accentuate a hint of toasty sweetness - like sprinkling brown sugar on your morning grapefruit. Bright, fresh, and lively, we've been drinking this with Asian noodle dishes and seafood.

2015 Riesling *Drink now through 2023 (optimal 2019-2020) - 743 cases made*

The last of our most successful batch of Riesling to date. A lively, aromatic minerality comes crisp and strong on the nose, intermingled with fresh green apple. On the palate, a brief honey sweetness is swiftly cleansed by continued green apple and lime zest. A clean, refreshing finish leaves the mouth watering for more.

As a bright, refreshing wine, the Riesling cuts through fat and cools the sensation of spice. Pair with goat cheese salad or oysters on the half-shell with grated horseradish.

2016 Milepost Merlot *Drink now through 2025 (optimal 2020-2022) - 588 cases made*

A pure representation of Merlot from 2016, this vintage of Milepost comes from a slightly cooler season than its predecessors, meaning more aromatic development from a longer, gentler ripening period. This MPM has gorgeous red berry tones on the nose, with a ripe fruit-forward palate nicely balanced between ripeness and acidity. Pairs well with light but savoury meat dishes like beef rouladen or roasted yams with fresh cracked pepper.

2014 Silica Merlot *Drink now through 2029 (optimal 2021-2026) - 453 cases made*

A vibrant and concentrated red fruit nose leading into luxurious raspberry torte on the palate with a long, elegant finish. Excellent structure from a deliciously ripe year coupled with long skin maceration and a strong oak program means this wine balances its crisp underlying acidity and full, firm tannin in superb harmony. A decadent and robust wine, the Silica pairs beautifully with rack of lamb or with pancetta and baked olives.

2014 Axiom *(Equal parts Cab Sauv, Cab Franc, Merlot)*

Drink now through 2030 (optimal 2021-2026) - 244 cases made

A blend of our acclaimed Alluvia Merlot and Cabernet Franc, with the inclusion of Cabernet Sauvignon to set this wine among the great classic blends. The inaugural release of this new staple boasts a full, robust structure with toasty tones of cassis, plum, and black cherry. A wine with significant presence, catch the Axiom now in its early stages and age to great effect over the next decade.

Pairs beautifully with beef tenderloin and bordelaise sauce or crispy roast duck.

For more tasting notes, visit www.xwine.ca/wine-list

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