

Marcassin



2013 Marcassin Vineyard Chardonnay

April 1, 2021

Dear Valued Marcassin Customer,

I Fine Wine in the Time of COVID-19: Marcassin is Still "Still Here"

First and foremost, a large and sincere apology for the hiatus in mailers. I am hoping that it is at least a partial excuse that I have been dealing with a fairly serious bout of cancer and its therapies. Thanks to a relatively new immuno-therapy, I'm still here, and happily in these (we all hope) waning days of COVID-19, I am still my smelling and tasting oenophilic self.¹ You can be sure I'm trying to pull the cork on really good bottles and only really good bottles, many of which are the 2013 Chardonnay being offered here.

Also, happily, Marcassin Vineyard on the Sonoma Coast and Marcassin Winery in Windsor were spared by the three harvest-time wildfires: the Tubbs in 2017, the Kincaid in 2018, and the Meyers Grade/Walbridge in 2020. There are excellent wines resting quietly in bottle from the 2014 – 2019 vintages. At this early stage the 2020 Chardonnay looks to be outstanding and, while some of the Pinot lots may not make the cut (smoke from the Meyers fire) it may be one of the few reds from the vintage to make it into the bottle. In any case, rest assured that we'll never release a smoke tainted wine and recall the 2008's—the Chardonnay (also 100 Parker points) is still drinking fabulously (yes, I recently pulled one of these corks), and the tainted Pinot went down the drain, a real pity because it too was great.

In the more good news department, Ryan and Amanda are still with us doing the exacting hands-on winemaking and other onerous stuff; Jaime and Obdulio, as they have from the beginning, are still caring for the vines; and Jen, of course, is looking after you. Most importantly, our resident Wine Goddess Helen hasn't gone anywhere. Well, actually December 2019 she went to Sacramento to be inducted into the California Hall of Fame. This puts her into the stellar rare food and wine company of Alice Waters, Thomas Keller, Wolfgang Puck, Robert Mondavi, and Warren Winiarski,² as well as sundry movie stars like Elizabeth Taylor and Jack Nicholson, not to mention great

¹ Without belaboring all the details, the cancer was (is?) squamous cell carcinoma with perineural invasion of cranial nerve #7 (the left facial nerve). Therapy has been a 12-hour surgery with excision of the left facial nerve and parotid gland plus mastoidectomy followed by 7 weeks of radiation therapy 5 times each week. After recurrence at about one year, I have been infused every three weeks with a mono-clonal antibody (Libtayo).

² That's it, all five from the world of food and wine. For the associated stories of Mondavi and Winiarski and of how California bested their French counterparts. See especially, George Taber "Judgement of Paris" (Scribners, New York, 2005). Note that the judges in this tasting were all French, including Aubert de Villaine of the Domaine de La Romanee-Conti.

athletes like Serena Williams, Joe Montana, and Tiger Woods.³ Here it suffices to note that Governor Gavin Newsom (and his first partner, Jennifer Siebel Newsom), recognized Helen for a “bold and uncompromising style that took California wine to new heights” and for putting “the Sonoma Coast on the map”. Brava Helen!!!

At Marcassin Vineyard we have just finished pruning, are anticipating budbreak, and are looking forward to what will be our 26th (or 27th) winegrowing season, and our 31st harvest for wine production generally.⁴ If the ever-expanding fire season can hold off and our nearly perfect mesoclimate for the “Burgundy varietals” can hang on, we will once again be striving to make something wonderful for “We Happy Few” who love degusting Marcassin. In the meantime, you’ll have to be satisfied with...

II. The 2013 Chardonnay

Without stopping to ponder the question of whether perfection has meaning for fine wine, we note that this is indeed the 100-point Chardonnay that Robert Parker recognized back in issue #223 of the Wine Advocate. I remember tasting it at our winery with him and Lisa Perrotti-Brown, recently installed as the editor-in-chief of the Advocate. Parker was enthusiastically expressing his pleasure in the 2012, also 100 points, when Perrotti-Brown noted even more enthusiastically, “Wait till you get to the 2013.” Perhaps you too have had to wait too long to get to this wine, but know that it is now thoroughly integrated and harmonious, mature, and elegant. Parker’s tasting note is still on point:

“the 2013 Chardonnay Marcassin Vineyard may be even better [than 2012]. Notes of caramelized citrus, hazelnut, apple blossom, lemon oil and orange marmalade are all present in this wine of dazzling aromatic and flavor dimension. It is full-bodied, again shows some wet pebbles...vibrant acidity, and no real evidence of any oak. Much like the 2012, the finish goes on for 45+ seconds.” (WA#223)

Having recently enjoyed both the '08 and the '02, both showing remarkable vitality as well as the complexity that only time can bring, we are confident that this wine will continue to evolve gracefully. As Parker Notes:

“any doubts about aging potential should be crushed immediately, as even in the most challenging vintages in California, Marcassin Chardonnays and Pinots have aged as well as, if not better than just about any grand cru white Burgundy.”

So, a wine to drink now until you run out while wanting more.

III TLC, What Is Coming, and Other Boilerplate

As long-time customers know, we “walk the walk” and neither fine nor filter our Chardonnays. For full enjoyment they require the TLC that has been codified and is included on a page in the box shipped to you with your wine.

We have tried to make allocations that reflect your previous orders, but if you want more wine, please include a request to that effect with your order. The 2013 Pinot Noir, also elegant and approaching maturity, will be offered in September/October 2021, and there should be enough for generous allocations.

Finally, we are pursuing permits to ship to the 10 states listed with California on the order form., and we will ship as soon as we receive the permits, **but only in suitable weather.**

As always, many thanks for allowing us to do what we love.

In vino bonitas,

Helen, John & Roscoe (still here)

&

The Whole Marcassin Gang

³ For a complete list go to <https://www.californiamuseum.org/california-hall-fame>. Tiger was inducted into the second class of the California Hall of Fame in 2007. His career, indeed life-threatening, car accident occurred one day after I wrote this. We, of course, hope he will be able (shades of Hogan) return to being competitive in more majors, the 2022 Masters perhaps. But if he never tees it up again, he will remain a serious candidate for GOAT.

⁴ Marcassin’s first five vintages were made with Chardonnay bought from the Hyde, Hudson, Lorenzo, and Gauer Vineyards. These wines were critically very well received—just didn’t hit the 100-point peaks of Marcassin Vineyard.