

WINE NOTES

The Season:

The 2010 growing season was a memorable one for Northern California grape growers. The good news is that the vines saw abundant rainfall over the 2009–2010 winter, easing fears of drought. A very cold spring delayed the start of the growing season significantly. These cold conditions persisted until late summer and the fog over the Floodgate Vineyard often didn't burn off till early afternoon. For early-ripening grapes like Pinot and Gewürztraminer, things looked good. However, in an effort to avoid mildew, and hoping to hasten ripening, growers were forced to remove much of the canopy surrounding the grape clusters. In effect, this set up the perfect storm. On a single day, the temperature went from the low 50s to well over 100 degrees in the Russian River Valley, burning exposed fruit and shocking the vines. To maintain quality, we were forced to make three passes through the vineyard, dropping a large portion of the crop. Yield was greatly reduced, but the diligent field sorting delivered high-quality grapes to the winery just before another significant hot spell. Growers were happy to put this nerve-wracking season to bed.

The Vineyard:

The Floodgate Vineyard spans rolling hills and flatland adjacent to Mark West Creek on the south end of the Middle Reach section of the Russian River Valley AVA. This region is home to the appellation's most prestigious Pinot Noir vineyards and is a source for Cartograph Pinot Noir and Gewürztraminer. Frequent fog and daily cool ocean breezes define this location and create the perfect environment to grow premium fruit that thrives in cool climates. The Gewürztraminer is planted on the flats in very light loam that has a high percentage of river gravel. This allows for excellent drainage and these vines see very little irrigation, keeping vigor low.



Tasting Notes – July 2010:

This elegant, crisp, refreshing Gewürztraminer stands in contrast to the usually flamboyant Gewürztraminers that are produced in California. Its grace is first detected in the brilliant pale-straw color of the wine that sparkles across the glass. For those familiar with the famed Alsatian Gewürztraminers, you will find a kindred spirit in this wine's aromas. Aromas of orange blossom, stone fruits leaning toward white peach, melon, and honeysuckle dominate, with a spine of minerality that hints at the focused, crisp palate that is to follow. The wine is slightly viscous on the palate and the flavors are bright and focused, with pronounced acidity that stretches the finish out a good distance. There is a slightly phenolic grip on the finish of this wine that helps it stand up to many dishes that a less-structured white wine could not. This elegant Gewürztraminer also works well with moderately spicy foods like curry and other Eastern dishes with chilies.

Alan Baker, Winemaker



- Harvest date: Hand harvested September 17, 2010 (night pick)
- Brix at harvest: 23.5
- Crush and pressing: Whole cluster pressed to steel tank
- Fermentation: 16-day ferment, 100% steel
- Yeast: Enoferm QA23
- Aging: 5 months in steel barrels
- Alcohol: 14.1%
- No malolactic conversion
- Bottled: February 2011
- Case production: 90 cases
- Winemaker: Alan Baker
- Suggested retail: \$22

117°

118°

119°

120°

121°

122°

123°

124°

125°

126°

127°