

# WINTER 2020

FEBRUARY

VENGE VINEYARDS & WINERY



## My Crystal Ball

At the end of every year I enjoy peering into my crystal ball with a good, three-finger snifter of single-malt Scotch on a cold, rainy day. There is something about the stillness of a day when the rains come that allows the soul to rest, especially when one is surrounded by vineyards after a long harvest season.

It is a new decade my friends and with that comes contemplation as to what our future will hold. For those of you who have so graciously supported us for most of the last decade, you will know that we had many firsts for our winery. So, the second decade will be adding to our foundation. What becomes obvious to me at this moment are three big items to attend in the 20's.

First, and perhaps most importantly, are vineyards. Without exceptional fruit, our little winery would be left behind by producers who are pushing the envelope on quality. What has become a trend that is now likely to be the norm for many decades to come, and this is the rising cost of fruit—both grown and acquired—especially here in Napa Valley with Sonoma now following suit. Consider the Beckstoffer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon in your winter shipment. Gone are the days of Cabernet that a winemaker could acquire for \$5,500 a ton. Anything that is worthy of the Venge name on the bottle now comes at a premium of \$9,500 a ton or more. That is a 72% increase! This is something I simply could not fathom just a decade ago.

Our second area of focus will need to be upon our new sister winery, Croix Estate. We have plans to slowly expand that effort through vineyard acquisition, refurbishment of existing assets, and building a new, state-of-the-art production facility. I recall pushing into the highly competitive arena of Sonoma County Pinot Noir with a good deal of caution only to be amazed at the growing reputation we are witnessing from our Russian River Valley winery. It has been nothing short of meteoric and spectacular! Thus, great care and dedication to perfection will win the day from our Sonoma winery.

Finally, we have to consider you. How do we intuitively meet your needs in a way that is thoughtful and considerate of our growing demand with extremely limited resources? I always like to remind everyone that works for Venge Vineyards that we can make great wine with the best of the best here in Napa Valley. However, what will set us apart is how we show appreciation for your continued support. Do we make mistakes? Absolutely, however, it is how we

respond with humility and empathy that will set the tone for our winery. Do we not have enough wine to make everyone ecstatic with their limited allocation on some wines? Yes, and we must continue to find the exception to the rule and bend a little if we can. Thus, I believe the balance is learning how we address the people in our lives who make the difference, while acknowledging that we will at times be subject to big limitations on production, visitation, and days in a year to interact with you. Making you feel special must be our top priority as it is the greatest privilege to undertake.

If we can manage these three big items over the next ten years, I think we may have a fighting chance to run with the best in the business for decades to come. When looked at that way, this wine business is entirely worth every ounce of effort because it is so bloody rewarding!

Speaking of the business of wine. I am delighted to introduce the second vintage of all three wines featured in our Winter 2020 allocation. As I said last year, I began experimenting with these vineyards five years ago — tweaking here, pushing there, fine tuning everywhere. All deserve to take *the* premier space in our allocation schedule.

First up is the refreshing 2018 Brown Ranch Vineyard Chardonnay from Los Carneros, Napa. Our fruit allotment sits adjacent to Jason Pahlmeyer's block where the fruit is divine and among the best-in-its-class. The next wine in your package is the monster 2018 Oso Vineyard Petite Sirah, from Howell Mountain. Named after the black bears that climb the electricity pole to jump the fence line and chow on clusters of grapes. The fruit is jet black and delicious. Finally, we reach for the Cabernet Sauvignon and introduce Beckstoffer's Missouri Hopper Vineyard located in the heart of Oakville. The 2017 is right on par with my high standards and has produced another stellar addition to our quiver of Cabernets.

As always, I express deep gratitude for your dedication to our winery and all that we do. Please come visit us the next time you are in Napa Valley.

Kirk P Venge  
Proprietor & Winemaker

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## 2018 Brown Ranch Vineyard “Dijon Clone 76” Chardonnay, Los Carneros, Napa Valley

*“The second vintage of Brown Ranch Vineyard Chardonnay is now finding its path to consistency and balance. We love the 2018 vintage as it has an elegance and balance that draws you right in for another glass.”*

In 2012 the Renteria’s purchased the 30-acre Brown Ranch (formerly associated with Saintsbury Winery and formerly a cattle grazing ranch taking its name from the former owner, Nadine Brown). The vineyard is in good company, bordered by HdV’s Hyde Vineyard and Beaulieu’s Vineyard No.9 on Old Sonoma Road.

Twenty nine acres of vines (Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) were already planted but most of these vines were afflicted with a fungi disease, Eutypa (otherwise known as the Dead-arm Dieback) causing trunks or arms of the vines to essentially rot and die. Rather

than pulling all of these vines out, their vineyard management team decided to keep the rootstock, cut off the trunk just above the soil to allow a bud from the varietal to grow, training it into a new trunk and then trellising it when it became of size. The Brown Ranch’s hillside alluvial soils, “Dijon Clone 76” set atop pre-existing rootstock, make a Chardonnay that is worthy of labeling under the Venge name.

Following tradition, our Chardonnay is harvested and whole-cluster pressed into neutral French Oak where primary and secondary native fermentation took place over a period of four months. The long, slow fermentation

process assures silky consistency. Aged *sur-lie* for an extended period without stirring, this wine was fined via gentle racking and cold stabilization, bottling unfiltered.

You will find that the 2018 vintage is freshly balanced and more refined than the 2017 vintage. A light, pale straw presence in the glass with a bouquet of toasted pine nuts, fresh tropical notes, mild all-spice, rocky flints, and toasted oak. The crisp, savory and sweet delicious apple and ripe pear lead to mouthwatering deliciousness.

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## 2018 Oso Vineyard Petite Sirah, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Our second vintage of Oso Petite Sirah is a big, powerhouse effort that will satisfy souls seeking concentrated, layered styles that require a spare toothbrush to cleanse ink stained teeth! This wine has an intense color and generous bouquet of sweet blueberries, blackberries, vanilla bean and hearty, roasted coffee, all in a remarkably approachable glass. This wine unleashes dark and luscious characteristics, with balanced tannins and a finish that brings home the goods.

Drawing its name from the

Spanish word for bear, Oso Vineyard is named for the California Black Bear that frequents the vineyard and feasts on the ripening grapes. The 95-acre Oso Vineyard, located between Howell Mountain and Sugarloaf on the East side of Napa Valley was purchased by the Michael Mondavi family 2006. Planted slopes facing the Northeastern side of Howell Mountain, growing out of rocky, volcanic soils, the vineyard is ideally located for growing Cabernet and Petite Sirah to

perfection, extracting intense varietal characteristics, firm structure, and excellent aging potential.

Petite Sirah earned its name from its small berry size. It is one of the biggest, most powerful and tannic varieties produced in America. Until the early 1960’s, Petite Sirah was one of the most popular grape varieties planted in the Napa Valley, second only to Zinfandel. We chose to produce this wine because of its dynamic flavor profile and jet black hue.

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## 2017 Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville

This Cabernet Sauvignon features a beautiful ruby red and purple hue that sheets the glass. The aromatics are plush and perfumed with ripe black cherries, clove, cinnamon, blackberries and currants.

The palate is balanced and expansive. There is no pocket of the mouth unfilled or escaping this wine's sumptuous composition. The flavors captured in this Cabernet Sauvignon wash over the front and through to the back of the palate for over two minutes past the initial impressions. Anticipated maturity is 2021 to 2036.

Located north of the town of Yountville in the Oakville AVA, Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper was originally part of a large piece of land owned by George

C. Yount, from whom the town of Yountville takes its name. Purchased by Charles Hopper and given to his daughter, Missouri, in 1877. The land was planted to wine grapes and, as much of the Napa land was at the time, prunes and walnuts. In 1960, the land was purchased by Bruce Kelham as part of the historic Vine Hill Ranch. Purchased by Beckstoffer Vineyards from the Kelham family in 1996, the vineyard is today planted with multiple clones of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. In 2002 the property was placed under land conservation easement that forever prohibits non-agricultural development.

Our second vintage of this wine comes from the 2017 vintage, where a moderate, long growing season lead the way to Cabernet Sauvignon yields that were balanced and moderate.

The fruit was destemmed into a combination of small stainless steel tank fermenters, concrete vats, and open top *barriques*. Time on skins lasted 14 to 45 days. The fruit was then separated to "free run" and "light press" fractions. The Cabernet was aged in 100% new, tight grained, French Oak barrels for a lengthy 27 months. We employ a variety of cooperages for Cabernet including Boutes, Sylvain, Taransaud, Gamba and Alain Foquet. 100% native, spontaneous yeast and malolactic fermentations were also key ingredients in the making of this wine.

The gentle use of gravity flow winemaking, whenever possible, is carefully exercised throughout the making of this and ever wine from Venge Vineyards. Bottled unfiltered.

*"The second vintage of this wine from a Beckstoffer Heritage Vineyard is sure to be a noble addition to your cellar with an ability to age for a number of years in proper cellaring conditions."*

*"100% of this wine will be sold exclusively to our members."*





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## Access Your Allotment

[WWW.VENGEVINEYARDS.COM/ACQUIRE](http://WWW.VENGEVINEYARDS.COM/ACQUIRE)

Your Allocation Awaits You

Due to very limited production and zealous demand for our wines, we strongly recommend a prompt response should you desire an allotment of our winter wines. Allocations are sold first come, first served until sold out.

Need personal assistance?

(707) 942-9100

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