

MEMBER NEWSLETTER



J. LOHR

WINE CLUBS

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Spring 2024



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“Sustainability is woven into every part of our company culture, from the vineyards to the wineries to our warehouses and offices.”

— Steve Lohr

Hi everyone,

Happy spring! We hope this finds you well and that you are enjoying this beautiful time of year.

In our J. Lohr vineyards in Monterey, Paso Robles, and Napa Valley, spring is always heralded by budbreak on the vines and wildflowers between the rows. This winter saw our second year in a row of drought-fighting storms. Our soils have stored up the necessary water, and the 2024 growing season is well underway. The annual rhythms and cycles continue in the cellars, where our winemaking teams are busy assessing, blending, and bottling the earliest 2023 vintage releases from last year’s harvest.

As my father and winery founder Jerry mentioned in the previous club newsletter, J. Lohr is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year! A few weeks ago we held a company-wide party to mark the occasion. We are looking forward to seeing you during our golden anniversary at our Paso Robles and San Jose Wine Centers or out and about at various wine events and festivals.

At J. Lohr, we talk a lot about sustainability. Sustainability is woven into every part of our company culture, from the vineyards to the wineries to our warehouses and offices. For me, it’s personal. I have led our J. Lohr Sustainability Committee since 2008 and am the longest-serving board member of the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance, an organization that I have chaired twice since I joined it in 2010. While conscientious, “green” farming and winemaking protocols get a majority of the attention, an often overlooked but crucial aspect of sustainability is our commitment to the communities in which we live and work. J. Lohr has a long history of support and charitable giving. During this anniversary year, we continue that tradition through our “50 Years, States & Ways of Giving” campaign. We will be making a \$5,000 donation in all fifty states to local non-profits doing important community work. You can learn more at jlohr.com/50ways – there, you can even nominate your own favorite charity to receive an additional \$5,000 donation from us!

We hope to see you soon. Many thanks for your support of our family’s winegrowing efforts. Here’s to another fifty years of friendship and great wines!

Steve Lohr
President & CEO



2023 F&G Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc



The grapes for the F&G Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc are grown in the alluvial path of the Arroyo Seco River where vines struggle in the sand-laden, cobblestone soils that define the Arroyo Seco AVA. These rocky soils and the cooling winds off Monterey Bay keep yields in check and produce fruit with intensity, minerality, and exceptional weight. The long, cool growing season of the Arroyo Seco appellation ensures that the fleeting, exotic fruit flavors of Sauvignon Blanc are retained along with a vibrant natural acidity. The F&G Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc is crafted to be a New World expression of pure varietal character in a classic, Old-World style. Aged for six months sur lie in stainless steel (45%) and French oak and acacia barrels (55%).

Winemaker, White Wine Kristen Barnhisel and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"The 2023 F&G Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc is pale yellow in color. It presents aromas of honeysuckle, grapefruit, with a hint of fig. Bright flavors of ripe key lime, vanilla, Meyer lemon, and tarragon take center stage, with a rich palate texture and long finish. Enjoy this wine as an aperitif with goat cheese or oysters, or with a spring vegetable risotto or lemon-tahini chicken main course."*

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2023 J. Lohr Gesture Viognier



The grapes for the *Gesture* Viognier are grown on our Rain Catcher Vineyard in the Adelaida District of western Paso Robles. Rain Catcher was planted in 2010 and is the westernmost vineyard in the appellation. It captures the highest amount of annual rainfall of any winegrowing property within the Paso Robles AVA; its overall climate is nearly identical to that of the northern Rhône. Rain Catcher's warm days with southern and western exposures on its hillsides help to naturally develop ripe, lush flavors, while its nights allow for extra hangtime, giving the wine power and depth. The climate, combined with the well-drained soils of calcareous shale and weathered sandstone, makes this vineyard's terroir ideally suited to growing Viognier. After hand-picking and a 10-day fermentation, the wine was aged six months in acacia barrels and puncheons.

Winemaker, White Wine Kristen Barnhisel and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"Pale yellow in color, the 2023 J. Lohr Gesture Viognier offers aromas of gardenia, white peach, nectarine, and Meyer lemon. These aromas are complemented by the rich, balanced palate of lemon custard, ripe orange, and a long, textured finish."*

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2023 J. Lohr Stairway Vineyard Grenache Rosé



The J. Lohr Stairway Vineyard is in the Adelaida District of Paso Robles. Slopes can be as much as 50% at this ranch, making walking the vine rows challenging when traversing the steep, step-like chalk rocks. The climate at J. Lohr Stairway is ideal for growing the classic Grenache grape. Daytime high temperatures are moderated by early afternoon breezes from the nearby Pacific coast, just 13 miles away. Planted in 2018 and 2019, just 4 acres of Grenache Noir vines are dedicated to growing and producing this highly aromatic, Provence-style dry rosé. The grapes were hand-harvested at daybreak, destemmed, and held on skins for 24 hours prior to pressing. A slow, 45-day fermentation then occurred in an 800-gallon stainless steel porta-tank. No malolactic fermentation was induced, keeping the wine's palate crisp and bright.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"Displays grapefruit and wild strawberry aromas with accents of Asian pear, guava, and Crenshaw melon. The palate is crisp yet succulent, with tangelo and strawberry hard candy flavors that transition to a refreshing finish. This beautiful rosé is the ultimate sipper for afternoon get-togethers. Serve chilled with fresh fruit, quiche, and a charcuterie spread."*

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2022 J. Lohr Highlands Bench Pinot Noir



This J. Lohr Highlands Bench Pinot Noir comes from the Costa Vineyard, just west of the Soledad Mission in the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation of Monterey. The Santa Lucia Highlands is one of California's premier addresses for growing luxury-class Pinot. We were invited to partner with the Costa family in establishing a Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyard there in 2008. The vineyard's elevated, close proximity to Monterey Bay and its eastern slope and aspect provide a cool, sunny, ideal environment for growing intensely flavored Burgundian varietals. The Pinot Noir clones hand-harvested for the 2022 Highlands Bench bottling were a 70/30 blend of Dijon origin 667 and 777 clones. The fruit was cold soaked and fermented in 12-ton open top fermenters, with 15% whole clusters to add spice and peppery elements on the finish. The wine was aged eight months in French oak barrels from noted cooper François Frères.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"The 2022 Highlands Bench Pinot Noir begins with an aromatic core of black cherry and strawberry preserves followed by spicy elements of nutmeg, mocha, black pepper, and dried herbs. On the palate, bright raspberry flavors are wrapped in a creamy texture from our biweekly barrel stirring program. Delicious with beef carpaccio, oysters Rockefeller, or grilled lamb."*

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2022 J. Lohr Gesture Mourvèdre



Like our rosé release mentioned earlier in this issue, the J. Lohr Gesture Mourvèdre comes from plantings at our J. Lohr Stairway Vineyard (formerly called McCornack), located in the Adelaida District. This part of Paso Robles is an ancient, uplifted seabed; fossilized seashells are often found in the ground even though the vineyard is perched at 1,500-foot average elevation. Given the very steep hillsides, only crawler tractors can be used to safely farm this site. Our Rhône variety plantings, including Mourvèdre, do particularly well at this rugged location. After a whole-berry fermentation with light punch downs and six days on the skins, this wine was aged 16 months in three-year-old, tight-grain French oak puncheons.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"The 2022 J. Lohr Gesture Mourvèdre interfuses brambly red raspberry and candied cherry aromas with distinctly herbal, coastal chaparral notes. On the palate, peppery spice and wild sage meet finely tuned tannins and a plump, red berry finish. This wine is excellent with many of the specialties of southwestern France and Catalonia, such as pork roast or a platter of prosciutto tapas, Marcona almonds, fresh figs, and aged cheeses."*

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2021 J. Lohr Shotwell Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon



The J. Lohr Shotwell Vineyard is located in the El Pomar District of Paso Robles. The climate there is a moderate Region II on the Winkler heat accumulation scale, which characterizes it as a fairly cool location for growing the late-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon variety. This cane-pruned vineyard is laid out with 8 foot by 4 foot vine spacing on calcareous Linne-Calodo soil; it was planted from 2013 to 2015. The undulating hills at this location required that the row direction for planting follows the slope of each block. The Cabernet fruit for this limited bottling was picked on October 8, 2021. The wine was aged 18 months in 60-gallon French oak barrels, 20% of which was new wood.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"The winery-exclusive 2021 J. Lohr Shotwell Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon is a pure expression of this noble variety from eight-year-old vines. Fruit aromas of black currant and fresh blackberry are supported by hints of blueberry, anise, and olive tapenade. Black cherry and plum flavors follow, knit together by a firm yet energetic structure on the palate. The wine's classic Cabernet Sauvignon flavors pair well with hanger steak seasoned with green peppercorn sauce or spring grilled lamb chops."*

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2021 J. Lohr Buena Vista Vineyard Saint-Macaire



2021 J. Lohr Cuvée ST. E



This 2021 Saint-Macaire was grown at the Buena Vista Road Vineyard in the warmer Region III climate of the Paso Robles Estrella District; conditions here are ideal for late ripening reds such as this rare Bordeaux variety. This thick-skinned grape gets its name from the village of Saint-Macaire in the French appellation of Côtes de Bordeaux Saint-Macaire.

Over the past 50 years, plantings of this heritage variety have dwindled from several hundred acres to less than one acre in its native country – just as it has found a new home in California where it may be better suited for our drier climate. Clone 03 cuttings for this planting were secured from UC Davis in 2014. Saint-Macaire is a fruitful variety that sets a heavy crop of big clusters with large berries. The farming plan required pruning to one bud in the winter and thinning the crop extensively in mid-summer to capture dark color and flavor intensity. The grapes were hand-picked and then whole-berry fermented in a 6-ton open top fermenter with light punch downs daily. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, primarily fourth fill, from cooper Dargaud et Jaegle.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"The 2021 J. Lohr Saint-Macaire is inky purple in color. Aromas of ripe blackberry, black cherry, and milk chocolate are followed by unique smoky hints that are typical of this rare variety. Displays dense and fleshy texture with pure fruit intensity on the palate and a bright cherry finish. Enjoy with grilled red meats and roasted potatoes, or perhaps a board of quality cured ham and aged cheese."*

The inspiration for our J. Lohr Cuvée St. E comes from the Grand Cru wines of St. Émilion of Bordeaux's famed Right Bank region. These memorable wines are primarily composed of Cabernet Franc and/or Merlot. The 2021 vintage delivered unparalleled quality to the Paso Robles region. We received generous pre-season rainfall in January 2021, but an especially dry late winter and spring followed. The dry conditions forced the vines to produce small but concentrated berries, typical of drought years in Paso Robles. Happily, consistent mild daytime temperatures paired with cool nights kept berries fresh and allowed Paso Robles winegrowers the luxury of patience to harvest grapes at optimal ripeness. Cabernet Franc grown on Block 60 of our J. Lohr Home Ranch was farmed by vineyard manager John Pierini specifically for the Cuvée St. E program. This block consistently provides fruit of deep color, polished tannins, and the complex, savory elements cherished by Cabernet Franc fans. Clusters were hand-picked on October 21st and 23rd, 2021. The wine was aged in French oak cooperage for 20 months (44% new wood). Final blend: Cabernet Franc 80%, Merlot 20%.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood and VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"J. Lohr Cuvée St. E captures the savory side of the classic Bordeaux varieties. Sophisticated blueberry and raspberry compote aromas mingle with wild sage, cacao nib, and espresso. On the palate, fresh plum and black cherry flavors wrap around a dusty tannin core leaving a long, pleasing finish. A perfect pairing for filet mignon with a shallot-cream sauce or braised veal shanks over a bed of polenta."*

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2021 J. Lohr Carol's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon



The J. Lohr Carol's Vineyard lies in northern St. Helena along the storied Silverado Trail. The well-drained, gravelly, sandy loam soil and Bordeaux-like climate of the Napa Valley is ideally suited to producing richly textured, luxury-quality fruit. During the 2021 vintage, Napa Valley experienced its second consecutive year of drought conditions. The lack of rain led to natural vine balance and modest yields with small berries. The daytime temperatures in Napa Valley remained relatively moderate throughout the summer and autumn, allowing for patience in harvesting fruit at optimal ripeness. We hand-picked Cabernet Sauvignon on September 17th and October 8th and sorted berries using our Pellenc Selectiv system followed by a two-day cold soak. After fermentation on skins, the wine was racked to French oak barrels for 18 months of elevage. A \$3 donation for every bottle sold benefits National Breast Cancer Foundation outreach and services.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood's notes: *"The 2021 Carol's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon displays fragrant black cherry and cassis layered with hazelnut and patisserie aromas from French oak barrel aging. Dark berry flavors saturate the palate and intertwine with well-tuned tannins and spice notes of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cocoa. Pair with grilled ribeye steak with rosemary and shallots, or porcini pork tenderloin."*

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2014 J. Lohr Cuvée St. E – Library Release



The wines of the J. Lohr Cuvée Series are Bordeaux-inspired blends with a Paso Robles sense of place. Cabernet Franc is the backbone for the St. E release, emulating many of the Right Bank wines of Saint-Émilion. Every vintage has its own personality; a unique history of climatic experience that shapes the flavor of the wine we taste in the glass. 2014 was the third in a trio of strong vintages for Paso Robles. The wines are dense and aromatically expressive and are reminiscent of 2004. With less than half of the usual winter rainfall in the ground, spring growth rocketed as degree days ratcheted up at a faster pace than we'd seen in a while. A somewhat warm veraison period at the end of July in 2014 pushed tannin levels upward and led to the earliest picking dates on record for Cuvée St. E. Barrel aged for 18 months in French oak cooperage (65% new wood). Final blend: Cabernet Franc 59%, Cabernet Sauvignon 33%, Malbec 7%, Petit Verdot 1%.

VP, Winemaking Steve Peck's notes: *"After a several years of bottle age, the 2014 Cuvée St. E is still displaying its very dark color. The original aromas of red currant, hibiscus, espresso bean, and dark chocolate are there but matured, making for a very savory nose. The ripe plum flavors on the palate are supported by beautiful, fine-grained tannins – less tightly wound than when first released. Drinking very nicely right now, this library Cuvée St. E is a great match with springtime roasted lamb, just about anything off the grill, or aged cheeses."*

2020 J. Lohr Cuvée PAU



The inspiration for this blend comes from the Grand Cru wines of the Pauillac district of Bordeaux, which rely primarily on Cabernet Sauvignon, with accent contributions of the other classic Bordeaux red varieties. Paso Robles saw mostly clear skies at the start of the 2020 growing season. Happily, a series of storms in March and April saturated the soils just in time for budbreak. The Cabernet component for this luxurious wine was hand-picked on October 15th and 23rd of that year, from the steep, chalky slopes of our J. Lohr Stairway Vineyard in the Adelaida District. Including 21% Merlot in the blend brought lively red fruit elements, while a small addition of Malbec added depth to the palate. The wine was aged for 20 months in Bordeaux Export-style French oak barrels (62% new wood) from coopers Marcel Cadet and Saury.

Red Winemaker Brenden Wood's notes: *"Pure cassis and morello cherry are layered with espresso, cracked pepper and almond pastry. The palate is expertly balanced with ultra-fine tannins and a juicy yet elegant finish. Delicious with grilled rosemary lamb chops, garlic mashed potatoes, and roasted beets. Best enjoyed now through 2030."*

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