

gros ventre cellars

# QUARTERLY NEWS

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## OUR MAY RELEASE IS LIVE THROUGH 5/17

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AT [WWW.GROSVENTRECELLARS.COM](http://WWW.GROSVENTRECELLARS.COM)**

Greetings from Healdsburg, where we're doing everything we can to make the best of sheltering in place. That includes pulling corks on some incredible bottles of wine and enjoying some memorable meals. We hope you've been able to do the same.

To that end, we're excited to announce our latest release, including the first of our 2018 vintage single vineyard Pinot Noirs:



### **2018 Baranoff Vineyard Pinot Noir, \$62**

This is a beautiful vintage from one of our favorite sites, with aromas of lavender, rosemary, brambly red fruits, a touch of gunsmoke, nutmeg, and white pepper. The palate is silky and velvety, with pomegranate and black cherry fruit up front, and hints of winter spices throughout its lengthy finish.

### **2018 Campbell Ranch Pinot Noir, \$62**

This wild and woolly site on the far reaches of the West Sonoma Coast always yields a special Pinot, and the 2018 is no exception. It offers initial hints of ripe cherry, sweet basil, and dried tea, followed by subtler notes of potting soil, wet rocks, sun-dried kelp, and cinnamon. The palate is cranberry and dried citrus rind up front, and finishes with lush tones of red raspberry and fresh cherries.

### **2019 El Dorado Vermentino, \$28**

We're excited to share our fourth vintage of this crisp Italian white. The nose comes alive with Asian pear, white peach, citrus zest and fresh daffodils. On the palate, the wine is medium-bodied yet lush with flavors of grapefruit and lime, a crushed rocky minerality and hint of salinity. The 2019 finishes crisp and clean, with a slight almond skin bitterness and a need for another sip.

**FREE SHIPPING ON 6 OR MORE BOTTLES // VISIT [WWW.GROSVENTRECELLARS.COM](http://WWW.GROSVENTRECELLARS.COM)**

## IN OTHER GOOD NEWS... OUR LATEST SCORES ARE IN

Antonio Galloni/Vinous just released their Sonoma County wine reviews, and we were honored to receive some great scores and kind words. Check out all scores and reviews at [grosventrecellars.com](http://grosventrecellars.com).

**"This is a gorgeous set of wines from Chris and Sarah Pittenger. There are a number of fabulous wines in this lineup, but one of the things I find most admirable is how reasonable prices are for what is in the glass. Readers who have not tasted these wines yet owe it themselves to do so."**

If you purchased wines from our last release, you received the first edition of Quarterly News in your shipment. We were delighted to hear that people actually read it. We thought, since we all have a bit more time on our hands these days, and the mailbox is a source of a bit more excitement than usual, we'd send CV's Quarterly News to our entire list. We hope you enjoy.

It's sort of astonishing to look back at our last newsletter, before the pandemic struck. We talked about our upcoming events in Placerville and Jackson Hole, invited everyone to come taste at the winery, and chatted up our spring pick up party. **SCRATCH THAT.** A hundred year pandemic has gotten in the way.

Like so many families and businesses, it feels like someone has picked us up by the ankles and turned us upside down. School is now at home. No playdates for kids (or adults). Sports are done. And our business is upended. Our restaurant partners account for a huge part of our sales, and our passion. We're doing everything we can to support them, while trying to keep our wits about us as we look for different channels to sell our wine. We've tried to get creative and introduce as many ideas as possible to make it easier to get our wines to the people who appreciate them. We've added free shipping on 6 or more bottles, all the time. We've opened up allocations of wine that usually goes to restaurants. We've done more email marketing, added home deliveries, and developed partnerships with restaurants who are still open and offering take out.

And to an extent... it's working. Our online sales have seen an increase as people order more wine while they shelter in place. We've started conversations with more retail accounts and new international markets. We're a long way from replacing our domestic restaurant business, but... all this is helping. To each and every one of you who has ordered wine from us - **THANK YOU.** We feel very lucky to have a loving community of customers who not only has incredible taste (ahem), but who knows the importance of supporting businesses you like and want to see survive. You guys are awesome.

As our customers and friends, you may have some ideas and opportunities for us. We are allllll ears. Write chris or sarah @grosventrecellars.com with suggestions, ideas, comments, complaints, or opportunities. Riddles, puns, jokes, and reading suggestions are also welcome.

Take care of yourselves, mentally and physically. Drink some good wine, take some long walks, eat some good food, and know that whenever it becomes possible, we can't wait to raise a glass with you.

Cheers,

Sarah and Chris



Sheltering in place, April 2020



## THINK WHILE YOU DRINK: SPOTLIGHT ON GAMAY

By Zach Turner

Gamay is grape variety near and dear to our hearts, with a fascinating history. Originally part of Burgundian daily life, Gamay was outlawed in 1395 by the tyrannical Duke Philip the Bold who preferred Pinot Noir so much, he jailed anyone who grew it, and required all Gamay vines be ripped from the ground.

Pinot Noir was traditionally the wine of royalty, and Gamay from places like Beaujolais became known as working class wine. In the US we tend to think of Beaujolais not as a region, but the fruity, tart, inexpensive wine released and celebrated the 3rd Thursday of each November. That's thanks in part to some great marketing (Beaujolais Nouveau!) and newer French laws allowing the release of young wine. It's simple, one-dimensional, and can be a lot of fun. Nonetheless, it's a drinker, not a thinker.

An unexpected benefit of that marketing is the attention it brought to the region of Beaujolais, and the Cru-level Gamay wines that rival the best of Burgundy. The grapes are meticulously farmed in mostly granite soils on steep hillsides. They age and express terroir beautifully, and have become gems on fine wine lists and favorites of sommeliers for their elegance, structure, sense of place, and ability to pair with countless dishes.

This raised profile for Gamay piqued the interest of a handful of intrepid farmers in off-the-beaten-path regions. Growers like Ron Mansfield of Gold Bud Farms committed to realizing the potential of Gamay in the El Dorado AVA. With its granite soils, hot days, and cold nights, El Dorado has conditions ideal for growing world-class Gamay.

Chris and Sarah spent several years in El Dorado (where I first had the pleasure of working with Chris) and source Gamay from the Mansfields. Antonio Galloni just awarded 92 points to Gros Ventre's 2018 Gamay, which was quite an honor, seeing as how Gamay-based wines rarely rate above the 80's. Just 4 barrels of the 2018 Gamay El Dorado were made, and originally intended for restaurants. Given the current pause in fine-dining, we've made some available to purchase at [grosventrecellars.com](http://grosventrecellars.com).



## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SINGLETHREAD RESTAURANT // GROS VENTRE GAMAY

We were delighted to join with SingleThread, Healdsburg's own 3-star Michelin rated restaurant, in supporting Sonoma Family Meal, which feeds 200 underserved members of the community each day. Our 2018 Gamay is featured as part of an iconic wine 4-pack with all funds going to this great cause. Visit [www.singlethreadfarms.com](http://www.singlethreadfarms.com) to be a part of the effort.

## INTRODUCING *FUN WITH PAIRINGS*

And now it's time for... FUN WITH PAIRINGS! This new recurring column will share our discoveries of what pairs well with our wines, from books, to TV shows, puzzles, and more.

### **PAIRING #1: SHELTER IN PLACE READ & DRINK**

#### **Gros Ventre Cellars 2018 High Country Red + Gary Jennings's AZTEC**

It was undeniably difficult to reach an agreement on our inaugural Fun Pairing, with so many books, puzzles, Netflix series and Zoom events crowding our thinking. But after debating the lengthy list of pairable items in our cellar and around our home, we felt the shelter in place order called for something both unusual and unpredictable, serious but pleasurable, with staying power AND a hearty dollop of history, blood, and intrigue. We feel that this particular pairing checks all the boxes.

Our **2018 High Country Red** is a Passetoutgrain style blend of Gamay and Pinot noir. Beloved by those who truly know French wine, this blend is rarely seen in the US - in fact, we're the only producer in the US making it, as far as we know. It's geeky and historic, but juicy and easy to drink. It highlights the push and pull of the France of yesteryear... Bringing together the wine of the working class (Gamay) with the chosen varietal of the upper crust (Burgundy) to create something both angular and lush, rustic and fine, bright and delicious. It's a serious wine, but also a whole lot of fun.

**Gary Jennings's "Aztec"** is a great match for this wine. It offers its own story of rich vs. poor (the Spanish conquistadores vs. the native Aztec tribes) and is both lengthy and grabby - perfect reading for a pandemic. It was a bestseller in 1980 but has been overlooked for years. In fact, we doubt there's a single book club reading it right now, anywhere. It's sprawling, historic, full of intrigue, violence, astonishing facts, and steamy stuff. It's the epitome of a "great read," highly inappropriate at times, but leaving the reader with enough new learning to make one feel less trashy about reading it in the first place. As you read, you may pause to consider the nuances of the wine in your glass, but sooner or later you'll surrender yourself to the book and simply enjoy the wine as a another layer of pleasure.

**The 2018 High Country Red (\$34) is available at [www.grosventrecellars.com](http://www.grosventrecellars.com), and Aztec is available on Amazon (\$12.74).**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Planning events in these times is an exercise in optimism. Being optimists, here goes:

### **JACKSON HOLE OUTSTANDING IN THE FIELD // JULY 27TH, 2020**

We're awaiting word from Outstanding in the Field and keeping our fingers crossed that this event (one of our favorites every year) will still be happening.

### **GROS VENTRE WINERY BASH // OCTOBER 17TH, 2020**

Whatever the rules may be by this time, we're planning on doing SOMETHING to celebrate life, harvest, food, and wine. We'll get creative to make sure we're compliant with whatever rules are in place - even if it means being distant while socializing.

Cheers until next time!