

2014 Fall Release Letter

“In water one sees one’s own face; but in wine one beholds the heart of another.” ~ French proverb

“Jamie, your tanks are here!” I will never forget the late evening in the midst of harvest, when *finally* our wooden tanks arrived from Burgundy, France. I was at the back of the winery when another young winemaker yelled out to me. I felt my heart leap as I began to run and jump, fists pumping in the air. Honestly, it felt like Christmas morning as I ran to tear into my presents.



2012 marked an incredible year of growth for *Kutch*. We not only produced the first vintage in our new facility, but we purchased over 30 wood and stainless steel tanks that have helped us preserve the integrity of our beautiful Sonoma Coast fruit.

It started back in 2008, when I visited Domaine de la Romanée-Conti in Burgundy France. Arguably the finest domaine in the world, Romanée-Conti has a long and rich history dating back to Roman times. On a visit to the great domaine, I was in awe of these beautiful pieces of art in which they fermented their Pinot Noir. Wooden tanks were lined up like soldiers, each tank inscribed with a small plaque that said “Grenier.” Returning home, I quickly commenced my search for Grenier, calling coopers and colleagues and searching the internet for any information that I could find.

Usually, it’s quite simple to order a French barrel. French coopers (barrel makers), have representatives in the U.S. who accept orders, obtain a shipping container, schedule a cargo ship, clear customs, organize trucking logistics, pay duties, convert currency, etc. - all of which makes it a rather easy process. That wasn’t the case with Mr. Grenier. He is a one-man operation, unlike almost all international coopers, and we would be forced to take care of all of the logistics ourselves. After sending two emails in English that went unanswered, I used Google to translate them into French. Et voilà! Marc Grenier responded in French, which I quickly translated back to



English. Even with dialogue, I still found it challenging to place an order or even know what it was that I was ordering! So with that, my wife and I jumped back on a plane for another trip to Burgundy.

I grew up the son of a master craftsman. My father refinished luxury boats for a living, so walking into Marc's shop felt wonderfully familiar. His workspace was a small extension of his home, and we immediately connected with the assistance of a translator. The art of making a single barrel is quite remarkable, but a 4-ton tank seemed amazing. Marc showed us both finished tanks as well as those in construction. After some input from us, he began sketching what he would eventually craft for *Kutch Wines*. As we drove away and Marc waved goodbye, I realized that my initial impression had been confirmed. These tanks were truly works of art, assembled without nails or glue by a craftsman in whom I saw a lot of my father and now myself.



2012 Sonoma Coast: The Season

As for the vintage, it started off slowly and then quickly caught up before bloom; and from that point on, it was relatively seamless. Early in the season, humidity was lower than average; the evening fog wasn't rolling in as it usually did. Just when we were becoming mildly concerned that this might negatively affect the delicate Pinot Noir skins and cause them to dry out while dropping acidity, we were sprinkled with a very light rain, and the fog began to re-introduce itself as if on cue. Late in the season, I recall thinking to myself how incredibly fortunate we were with the weather. It seemed like Mother Nature herself was controlling the weather knobs in our favor. A few short bursts of warmth were followed by short bursts of cool weather. It was amazingly orchestrated, like a symphony. This created a slow and even ripening process that helped build the flavor and complexity apparent in the wines today.



Perhaps the most bewildering thing we saw in 2012 was that initially, the grapes were ripening from the inside out. At multiple sites, grapes had brown seeds at very low sugar levels with pulp and juice that were ripening and colored up, yet hard skins that were very slow to develop. My hypothesis was that the early lack of moisture was responsible for the delayed skin ripeness. When the skins finally caught up and were fully ripe, we immediately began to harvest on the 7th of September, with fine acidities and good sugar levels. The fruit was clean, and in two days, we brought in nearly 50% of our fruit! We made a conscious choice, because of the grape quality, to ferment everything with 100% stem inclusion/whole cluster.

Working with a new facility and equipment meant that our native yeast populations were small, leading to a slow start to our fermentations. Most fermentations averaged 18 days on the skins. As the first fermentations finished, we quickly observed darkness in color we'd not seen in our wines before. The length and the finish on the palate were also incredible, with alcohol levels in the restrained 12 to 13% range. We knew we had something special and that these wines would see very old bones. Once the wines went to barrel, we waited patiently while our longest and slowest malolactic fermentations took place. Finally,

when the weather began to warm up again, the wines finished their second fermentation in May 2013. We plan to bottle on January 27th, sixteen months postharvest.

Our vineyards were harvested in the following order:

September 7 McDougall Ranch, Sonoma Coast

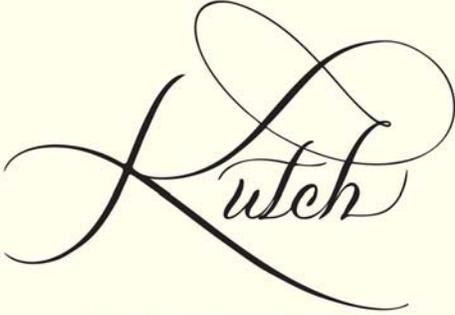
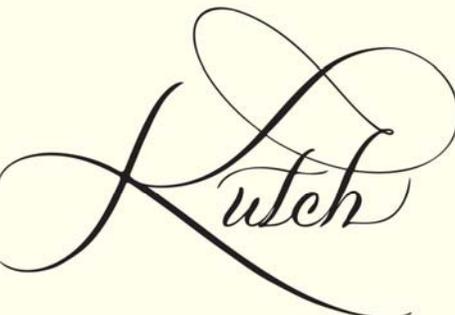
September 8 Campbell Ranch, Sonoma Coast (1st pick)

September 17 Sonoma Stage, Sonoma Coast

September 18 Campbell Ranch, Sonoma Coast (2nd pick)

October 5 Falstaff, Sonoma Coast

Please try and be patient and allow the wines to recover from both bottling and shipping before opening. They will provide more enjoyment with age. If you are anxious, be sure to provide the wine plenty of oxygen by decanting and allowing the wine to breath.

<p>2012</p>  <p>MCDUGALL RANCH Sonoma Coast</p> <p>PINOT NOIR</p>	<p>2012 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir</p> <p>"A dark, brooding beauty, the 2012 Pinot Noir McDougall Ranch is deep and intense to the core. Smoke and new leather notes add intrigue as this rich, structured Pinot blossoms in the glass. Even with all of the richness, the balance of fruit, acidity and whole clusters is magnificent. The 2012 is aging in 50% new French oak barrels, all of which it is handling well. This is a Pinot of serious depth and density, perhaps a bit more than the Kutch wines have had in the past." <i>100% whole cluster, 12.9% Alcohol</i> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media (92-94 points)</p> <p>\$59 per bottle</p>
<p>2012</p>  <p>SONOMA COAST Sonoma Coast</p> <p>PINOT NOIR</p>	<p>2012 Kutch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir</p> <p>This wine is a blend of two great vineyards from the Sonoma Coast. Two-thirds of the fruit comes from Campbell Ranch, a vineyard located on an extremely rugged portion of the Coast, at the very northwest edge of the appellation. The soils here comprise marine siltstone & fine sandstone and are fairly young, at about 3 million years. The formation is called Ohlson Ranch, and the site creates very energetic wines. The other one-third of the blend comes from Sonoma Stage, which is located at the northern edge of the cool San Pablo Bay, just north of San Francisco. Sonoma Stage is planted on adobe claystone and provides the power and length to the blend. The combination offers a focused and spicy expression of Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir that we feel is every bit the equal of our vineyard-designated offerings. Tasting Note - <i>Deep nose of dark fruit, cinnamon and clove. Delicious and generous on the palate, with great intensity, focus and balance. The long finish offers both spice and a touch of graphite. This screams for a decanter and air and has the structure to improve for several years. 100% whole cluster, 13.2% Alcohol</i></p> <p>\$39 per bottle \$78 per magnum</p>