

RUBIDOUX RIDGE VINEYARD NEWSLETTER: 2022

Winter, Spring to Fall Harvest of 2022 at Rubidoux Ridge Vineyard: Murphy's law

As winter rolled around to Spring there was little rain in January forward till early May after pummeling us with tons of snow over the Christmas Holidays. Yes, it was our time share week to spend Christmas at west shore, Tahoe, but that never happened with closed roads and power outages!



In January we pleaded with our new event venue landscape company to finish an October project due time, by the end of January. He insisted that it would be finished if there was no rain. Well that never happened, nor was there any rain!



We bottled our Vermentino and Barbera Rose December 21, 2021, so it would settle down from any bottle shock (a temporary conditions when wine flavors are unsettled) before our first opening for guests at our tasting room, for Behind the Cellar door, March 26-27, 2022. We rushed forward to join the AVA, Amador Vintner's Association to get our Brand name on its map. Little did we realize all the work forward this would mean for 2022!

February 1, 2022, we had our winery concrete pad poured after plumbing and rebar was placed in the last week of January.

In March we had officially entered springtime now, and thought we were off to a great start after having the year begin with a tremendous snow load and rain. Our lower pond had filled up to the top ladder rail overnight. Unfortunately, more rains didn't return until after Palm Sunday with freezing temperatures in the low 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Very warm winter temperatures had tricked our vines and nectarine trees that spring was here, and buds froze during the frigid April 11th nighttime temperatures.

This was Rubidoux's first frost damage to plants that wouldn't show their true crop loss until harvest picks weighed in. As a result of this spring frost, we lost 2/3 of our normal crop load. What is normal these days is another question. Drought had hit our crop load the year before, so we had buckled down to do a lot of deep winter watering but that couldn't fix the drought or frost damage.

Meanwhile, At the beginning of February we had our metal building framing delivered. This came with its own problems when the loaned forklift ceased to function for the building parts to get removed from the huge flatbed because an emergency button had been hit accidentally. When 20,000 pounds of material had to get removed, I panicked and called Alan Hyatt and begged him to drive up his Grade All to remove the material from the trailer. What could have taken us 1 hour became 5 hours and then the delivery truck was on its way.

To get online with our web site we were working overtime to have onboarding meetings regarding our designers at Zatrox studios. They repeatedly tried to console us that it would be up and running by the time of our first event. Right, I told myself! Amazingly, it launched just in time for our first event.

A week before behind the Cellar Door March 26-27, our metal building shell had been erected and Hammer Trucking of Lodi came up to pick up the builder's scissor lift and tractor and managed to bend our wrought iron gate into a crescent shape. After informing them I would bring on the gate's builder to assess the damage they called and told me on the following Saturday, that they had bent it back into a flat shape! I was relieved to have it operable before our first event, even though I was hoping to get a new gate!



Two days after our event we called in the pruning crew to prune the winter canes that were nearly all beginning to bud out, except the Petite Sirah. I was beginning to worry that all this leafing out would take energy away from producing healthy grape clusters.

By April 9th my landscaping crew for our event center returned promising to finish up the job. They had 30 yards of bark delivered to place and coverup the mistakes of the irrigation and plants that were mostly close to death. Then on the morning of April 12 the night temperatures reached into the low 20's Fahrenheit. This frost stunted or killed the previous year's growth of my new replants in the vineyard and many buds on the spurs of our older plants. Approximately a week later, on April 21, 2022, we had torrential rains and hail falling on our

vineyard. Holy maceral, "What next could happen?", I said to myself.

May was kind of a quiet month waiting anxiously to see the vines shoots develop and later look for berry clusters to see how hard the frost had hit our vineyard. If I recall correctly, we had 2-3 wet rainy weekends on the farm which only brought on more need to mow the vineyard a couple extra times, but the heat stopped the final mow with fire being a concern.

Cooler days in May and June gave us time to distribute bark and cobble rocks to glorify our freshly laid new fescue sod that had been installed on what other than April Fool's Day. Plants began to show signs

of recovery after being planted in icy waters in our event area. Unfortunately, our plans for sunshade sails had to be shelved since our post were not strong enough for the potential wind load.

Healthy vine growth and suckering was done from the 8-10 of June as more attention to concrete pours around our winery building occurred in early June. So much detail to coordinate at once!

Electrical lines were brought from our switch gear existing pipes to the new winery building on June 28. We were getting nervous that we would not be able to produce 2022 wine in this building as the summer days were moving fast. Our Glycol chiller had to be installed before hot temperatures approached and fortunately June was mostly a cool month.

Time to equip the building with electrical 1 phase and 3 phase plugs and water lines had its own set of issues and labor timing was a challenge with most people wanting a vacation reprieve, but before all this could start framing lab/ temperature cooling rooms needed to be done. Drainage pipes and placement had to be assessed before placement of asphalt. Alleluia for asphalt. Dirt, dust powder slowed down.



July 13th, we had two deliveries of a “used” crusher de-stemmer and hopper for the bladder press. The word “used” we learned had issues that needed to be resolved before crushing. Thankfully we had Jason Sparks able to point out to us all parts that needed repair on the equipment, but it didn’t help that the hopper had one leg fall off the trailer while trying to get it removed by the forklift! This mainly resulted in needing new wheel casters, thankfully and later finding that the bladder press seed strainers were not given to us and the driver quickly departed. After a shopping trip to Napa, we got the crucial missing parts from the previous owners.

As the August heat started to rev up, we found our swamp cooler could no longer keep the steady temperature degrees of 70 F. We had to think fast where we could move most of case goods to our bonded house cellar and then some to our newly conditioned winery after the garage doors arrived after waiting over 5 months for them. Fortunately, half of our case goods were able to fit in our mini spit air-conditioned room in our Ag building until the winery was glycol temperature controlled.

After, over a steady week in the first week of September of temperatures in the 110’s and feverously deep watering our vines it became apparent that the picking season couldn’t wait. We always pick our white wine, Vermetino early for lower brix’s or sugar content, but some of the reds couldn’t wait before losing the crop to raisins or dried up fruit. New for farming at Rubidoux due to the dwindling labor force was that we picked using a mechanical harvester. Wow, this machine to me was like I imagine flying to the moon. Wheels adjust to the sloped terrain of our vineyard and the computer screen with all sorts of buttons amazed me.



Fortunately, our driver Josh Lyman did all the computing! Our first trial run happened to our Barbera with an August 31st crescent moonlight harvest. I got to stand on top of the machine for a couple of rows as it vibrated shaking the berries from the vines and my belly shook like a bowlful of jelly. Sound familiar?



Grape harvest ended September 11, but the processing of grapes into wine had just begun. Now my only harvest wish that came true was that we didn't get any stuck fermentation! But like any harvest there was a ton of dish washing or tank cleaning and rinsing going on to rack the wine which means getting all the yeast sludge out of the wine, so it sort of clarifies the wine.

Sheet rock and insulation have been going into the wine production building just in time for us to put all the wine to sleep, provided we get our reconditioned bad boy forklift back from the hospital mechanic soon. Maybe we can put ourselves to sleep soon, too. **We had a successful Big Crush weekend October 8-9! We had over 250 people visiting our grounds and listening to music by the Darcel Trio Band!**

This was just the beginning for us in business, reaping the delicious fruit from our vineyard as our new winery was being built.

We hope to see all our first year's guests return for grand openings and tours of our new winery in the coming year.

Come visit us November 25, for 20% off all our wines for those wearing plaid to celebrate the start of our holiday season 2022! Chocolate treats will be served to pair with our wines.

Marianne and John at Rubidoux Ridge Vineyard

Rubidoux Fall Wine Prices

Sparkling Barbera Rose 2021...\$34.00

Strawberry on the start with a watermelon finish and a touch of almond. Cheese: Pairs well with soft buttery creamy cheeses like Boursin

Barbera Rose 2021...\$28.00 **Fall sale \$22.40 till December 31, 2022**

This wine has a cantaloupe melon nose with a hint of new leather. It has a bright strawberry taste on the palate with a long strawberry-kiwi finish. Cheese: Manchego, Kingdom white cheddar (hazel nutty character works well with the strawberry finish).

Vermentino 2021...\$28.00 **Fall sale \$22.40 till December 31, 2022**

This white wine has a hint of lemongrass on the nose and color and a crisp honeydew finish. Cheese: Manchego, white cheddar

Sangiovese 2020...\$34.00

This wine has a rhubarb nose with bright red cherry, a touch of vanilla and white peppercorn on the palate. The finish is reminiscent of cherry and pipe tobacco with a touch of white pepper. The acidity and beautiful balance of this wine would pair well with a light tomato pasta dish.

Sangiovese 2016... \$36.00

This dark garnet colored wine features red plum and a mild cherry stone fruit on the nose. It has the same stoned fruit taste on the palate with a clean velvety finish of allspice and white pepper. This wine goes great with any BBQ meats. **Reserve Limited Quantities**

Barbera 2020...\$34.00

This wine's nose has a touch of new leather. The palate taste is of black cherry with allspice on its finish. This wine would pair well with a tomato meat sauce or tomato-lamb ragu. Cheese: My all-time favorite is Kingdom white cheddar with its nutty texture.

Malbec 2021

This dark inky colored wine has a velvety multi textures of richness of dark stoned fruits with white pepper on its finish with a hint of licorice. Delicious with all meats and game meat as well as poultry and fatty salmon. Wonderful to pair with harvest holiday meals. **Release to be in Spring 2023**

Petite Sirah 2021

This dark burgundy colored wine has a full body and a chewy mouth feel. It suggests earthiness and flavors of dark-berried fruit and dark chocolate. It can be a delicious compliment to a juicy beef steak. **Release to be in Spring 2023**

Volume discounts for non-Club Members:

10% off for 6 bottles or more

15% off for 12 or more bottles