

HARRINGTON



Harrington Wines is a small producer hell bent on bringing to light the obscure, forgotten grapes of California as well as producing clean, stable wines made without sulfites.

The winery was started in 2002 to produce California Pinot Noir. Over the years, a great deal of energy has been spent researching, locating and working with some of California's long-forgotten Pinot Noir vineyards. Ultimately, the vineyard sites chosen are challenging viticulturally, either because of age, climate or terrain. Of these three criteria, older vineyards have become most valued as they have adapted to and been changed by their environs and produce subtle wines more deeply imbued with Pinot's characteristic flavors and aromatics.

Over the past decade, this search for older Pinot Noir vineyards has brought a keen awareness of the forgotten viticultural treasures of California. There are vineyards full of history and potential scattered throughout California and wonderful wines can be made from the rare grape varieties coming from locations other than Napa and Sonoma.

So in 2008, the Pinot-only regimen was stretched to include a Nebbiolo from two vineyards located on the limestone ridges of westside Paso Robles. They call Pinot Noir the "heartbreak" grape... actually, Nebbiolo is much trickier to grow and to vinify into a great wine.

The Nebbiolo is produced in much the same manner as the Pinot, meaning picking at night, multiple-day cold soaks with dry ice, vinifying in half-ton or one ton lots, argon blanketing, whole berry fermentations with native yeast, hand punch-downs, gentle pressing, barreling-down dirty, lees stirring, no fining/filtering, restrained use of new French oak. It seems to be working, especially as this Nebbiolo is grown on limestone, the soil native to Piemonte.

In any case, these are the methods which can elevate even humble grapes to be a very pleasurable drink. And that is the idea behind the current direction: to make wines from not only the forgotten vineyards of California, but also to coddle these forgotten grapes and to vinify them with the same great care afforded the best Pinot Noir. While the winemaking is care-driven, the wines are meant to be enjoyed spontaneously at the table, robustly, as befits the spirit of the grape. So in the last few years the doors of the winery have sprung wide open for a roster of such unusual grapes as Fiano, Chabono, Teroldego, Lagrein, Trousseau, Aglianico, Sagrantino, Grenache Blanc, and a lively Carignane from a 100 year old vineyard.

Finally, there are the no sulfite **Terrane** wines. All **Terrane** wines are mostly sourced from organic vineyards and employ a pro-biotic approach to wine stabilization. No sulfur compounds are used at any time to preserve Terrane wines. The desire to produce an ageable and *drinkable* Pinot Noir without sulfites has been one of the main goals at **Harrington** as it is my belief that the use of this strong chemical has a profoundly negative impact on the fruit and the structural definition of fine wines. So in 2007, a connection was made with a group of Swiss scientists who were experimenting with a new approach to wine preservation. Utilizing organic extraction technology, specific molecules are isolated from plant materials (grape seeds) that are rich in oligomeric proanthocyanadins. OPCs are a class of phenolic compounds that stabilize wines, both from oxidation and from microbial damage. My Swiss friends and I have worked closely together for the last six years to create an increasingly better anti-microbial/anti-oxidant agent that preserves the wine and is entirely transparent in the wine. A number of European wineries are becoming involved with this process now, but Harrington is the only winery currently using the process here in the US. The best part of this approach is that the preservative comes entirely from grape seeds, a natural and healthy ingredient.

Up to this point, only Pinot Noirs have been made under the **Terrane** label, but in 2012 and 2013, many different wines were vinified with this process.

Bryan Harrington