



**FROSTWATCH** *Vineyard & Winery*

**Annual New Release Newsletter  
October 21, 2016**

Greetings and News from Frostwatch Vineyard & Winery! This mailer is our annual effort to reach out and offer our mailing list customers an opportunity to buy our new releases and in some cases, limited quantities of our past vintages. Since the past vintages have been reviewed by a number of wine critics, you will get an opportunity to purchase these wines with help from their input! We are offering six new wines and two previously released wines, both with special pricing - 10% off single bottles and 20% off one or more cases. We invite you to start your holiday shopping here!

For the last five vintages our wines have been made exclusively from grapes grown on our vineyard in Bennett Valley. While we have worked in the past with other exceptional Bennett Valley Vineyards, we have concluded that at this time it is best to control the entire process—from bud break through bottling. We do the vineyard development, the farming and the winemaking. As such, we can better guide the process to achieve the desired result—wines with complexity, depth and balance. In this mailer we will offer wines from our 2013, 2014 and 2015 vintages. Each of these vintages in Bennett Valley is of exceptionally high quality. A quality vintage in Bennett Valley typically involves plenty of sunshine, yet is accompanied by moderate temperatures with cool evenings. These weather conditions equate to lengthy grape hang times, which in turn lead to complex, yet intense flavors. These types of vintages make it easier for the winemaker to produce memorable wines. We hope you enjoy them!

**New Releases**

**2014 Frostwatch Bennett Valley Chardonnay**—This bottling is our largest production wine, a whopping 651 cases! As such, it is very important to get the wine just right and employ the same level of detailed oversight of each barrel as we would for a smaller lot. For the past two vintages (2012 and 2013) this non-reserve wine was fermented and aged in French oak for 11-12 months. While the wines were excellent and received great reviews, we believed we could make them even more complex by additional barrel aging and Sur Lees treatment (barrel stirring that re-suspends the lees and contributes mid-palate richness and better oak integration). As a result, we decided to return to an 18-month barrel aging regimen. The decision was not an inexpensive one--additional barrel aging results in higher costs but we felt the result was worth the cost. As in the past, the wine is a blend of our two Chardonnay blocks, the densely spaced Platt Wente Clone Block and our more traditionally spaced Clone 4 Block. The wine, as always, is barrel fermented utilizing both native indigenous yeasts and malolactic bacteria, which results in long, cool, and most importantly, complex multi-layered fermentations. This results in a chardonnay that has layers of flavors that evoke a number of different, and sequential, unique sensations on the palate. The initial impression is that of ripe red apple followed by citrus notes of lemon, lime and orange peel. On the mid-palate the wine exhibits a rich silky mouthfeel with just a nuance of well-integrated French oak. Finally, the wine concludes with a lengthy finish that is supported by good, but not over-powering acidity. The wine's bright finish allows it to pair well with a variety of foods and soundly avoids the all too often made complaint that a second glass of chardonnay is cloying and palate fatiguing. The wine was topped, stirred and re-topped weekly during its six month malolactic fermentation. After malolactic was done in early March of 2014, the wine was topped, stirred and re-topped every month. The wine was bottled unfiltered on April 14, 2016 after 18 months in barrel. The two previous vintages of our Frostwatch vineyard bottling were well received both scoring 92 and 93 points from Connoisseurs Guide to California Wines. The 2013 vintage also received 90 points from the Wine Enthusiast and Gold Medals from



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the 2016 San Francisco Chronicle Competition and the 2016 American Fine Wine Competition. As 2014 was equal to or better than the 2012 and 2013 vintages, we are confident that this release will be equally well received.

**651 Cases Produced**

**TA: 5.3 g/l**

**PH: 3.49**

**Alc.: 14.8%**

**2014 Frostwatch Ophira Bennett Valley Chardonnay**—As always, our decision to make a reserve chardonnay (labeled as “Ophira” meaning golden child) is a year-to-year one. Not surprisingly, we are more likely to make the Ophira in an outstanding vintage (2009, 2012, 2013, and 2014). Each year we taste through each barrel to see if a particular barrel speaks to us, meaning that the barrel stands out above the others and deserves a reserve designation. Given that our fermentations utilize indigenous yeast, aside from oak considerations, each barrel is unique because the fermenting yeast and fermentation dynamics are different for each barrel. For the 2014 vintage, we chose three barrels of the Platt Wente clone that exhibited exceptional concentrations of fruit, complexity and texture. One barrel was new and two barrels were one year old. The 18 months of barrel aging and frequent lees stirring, coupled with the exceptional fruit from the Platt Wente Clone in 2014, give this wine its laser-like focus, complexity and unctuous mouth feel expected from our Ophira reserve. The wine is drinking beautifully now but will get even better for several years at a minimum. The last vintage (2013) of the Ophira received excellent reviews (94 pts Wine Enthusiast, 91 Points, 2 puffs Connoisseurs Guide, 90 Points Wine Advocate, Gold Medal Chronicle Wine Competition) but we feel that this vintage will be even better.

**75 Cases Produced**

**TA: 5.6 g/l**

**PH: 3.49**

**Alc.: 14.8%**

**2015 Frostwatch Bennett Valley Kismet** —Kismet is our trademarked White Bordeaux style pairing that combines the vivacity of Sauvignon Blanc and the textural niceties and complexing traits of Semillon. The blend this year is 76% Sauvignon Blanc and 24% Semillon. Previous vintages of the Kismet were embraced by the critics, for example the most recent vintage received 90 points from both Robert Parker as well as the Wine Enthusiast. This vintage displays peach, apricot and fig notes. The wine will continue to evolve over the next few years and pairs well with seafood, pasta and white meats. Note that we are also offering the **2014 Bennett Valley Kismet** thru this mailer. We released this wine earlier this year and sent it out for review. We think we may have jumped the gun as it is has developed into quite a stunner. If you are so inclined, you can try them side by side to measure the impact of a single year of bottle age on an age worthy white wine.

**238 Cases Produced**

**TA: 5.9 g/l**

**PH: 3.35**

**Alc.: 14.8**

**2015 Frostwatch Bennett Valley Semillon**—We produced a Semillon in 2013 that was labeled “Vice Versa” because the wine was the opposite of our Kismet in a number of ways. It was predominantly Semillon rather than Sauvignon Blanc, it was off dry rather than dry and it was barrel fermented rather than fermented in stainless steel. While everyone loved the Vice Versa, many of our customers urged us to try producing a dry, rather than off-dry, Semillon. After experimenting with various blends, we settled on this cuvee which is 83% Semillon and 17% Sauvignon Blanc. The resulting wine is voluptuous with a silky smooth mouthfeel and a very nice acid balance. The wine exhibits traditional Semillon notes of fig, but also expresses honeydew melon aromatics and flavors. Semillon is susceptible to botrytis cinerea which is known as the Noble Rot. In general, we can’t resist anything that increases complexity in our wines. We note the intense honey-like flavors typically associated with noble rot but also an additive complexing due to our use of indigenous



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fermentation. This Semillon is weightier than our Kismet and is perfectly suited as an aperitif wine but can also be enjoyed with spicy Asian cuisine or meat dishes that utilize salty-sweet marinades.

**53 Cases Produced**

**TA: 6.1 g/l**

**PH: 3.38**

**Alc.: 14.8%**

**2013 Frostwatch Bennett Valley Pinot Noir**—As with our previous Pinots, the 2013 is sourced from the Frostwatch Vineyard which is planted exclusively to the Swan Clone. This clone is known for excellent fruit with small clusters and berries which produce wines with extreme concentration. The sole downside of these tiny berries and petite clusters is an extremely low case production per acre. (We continue to hope, as the blocks mature, future vintages will be larger!) The evolution of this particular wine from the 2013 vintage has been a complex one. The wines prior to bottling were effusive and showed generous fruit and well-defined structure. Post-bottling they were more closed and not as generously proportioned. However, as they have aged in bottle, they are emerging from their slumber and starting to become what they promised in barrel. This vintage may require patience. If you are looking for something to savor down the road, I would invest in the 2013. On the other hand, if you want a Pinot to drink next week, I would buy the **2012 Frostwatch Bennett Valley Pinot Noir** which we are making available to thru this mailer.

**237 Cases Produced**

**TA: 5.7 g/l**

**PH: 3.80**

**Alc.: 14.2%**

**2013 Frostwatch Bennett Valley Merlot**—Frostwatch Merlot has become one of the benchmarks for New World Merlot production. The 2011 received a 91 point score from the Wine Spectator at a price point of \$30/bottle. The other eight wines that received scores between 90-92 points averaged about \$81/bottle. The 2012 vintage received a 91 point score from the wine Spectator and received a double gold medal from the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. It also received 91 points from the Wine Enthusiast and was picked as one of the top 100 wines from Sonoma County in 2015. Robert Parker of the Wine Advocate requested to taste the 2013 vintage and in March 2016 scored it at 94 points. He wrote “[it] has an impressive opaque purple color and offers a big blast of fudge and black chocolate along with a dense cherry and blackberry fruit. Unctuously textured, full bodied and rather classic for Merlot, this has a super concentrated style that one rarely sees these days. This is a gorgeous Merlot built for 20+ years of consumption. Actually, it hearkens back to some of the great early Matanzas Creek Merlots from the early 1990’s. This is a stunner.” Mr. Parker nailed this one. The wine is an impressive, yet balanced effort that will continue to improve in the bottle for many years.

**266 Cases Produced**

**TA: 5.5 g/l**

**PH: 3.74**

**Alc. 15.4**

**Notes About Ordering:** In addition to using our order form (via mail/fax/email) and ordering by phone, you have the option of using our secure online purchasing option. The wines can be picked up at our production facility or at the vineyard by prior arrangement. However, if pick-ups do not work for you, we offer free shipping within California and a \$20 credit toward shipping on out of state orders of one case or more.

Best regards,

***Brett Raven and Diane Kleinecke***