

# Brewer - Clifton

As we near our fourteenth harvest producing wines together, it seems appropriate to reflect on recent developments as we consistently strive to improve and evolve with our appellation and wines. This period is marked by a continued strict adherence to our initial path coupled with new explorations in vineyard development as we plan for our future. We wholeheartedly embrace these new endeavors with confidence in the Sta. Rita Hills and our incredible teams in the vineyard and winery.

The 2008 harvest was another picture perfect season, reminding us of how blessed we are to be working where we do. While several of our lower lying vineyards were impacted by a rare spring frost which significantly curtailed yields, most of our sites eschewed the circumstance with their higher elevations. Just as with 2007, we found tremendous flavor development and balance at somewhat lower sugars than prior years prompting us to pick sooner than in the earlier portion of the decade.

We are happy to present two "new" vineyard sites this year, and while new to our stable both are certainly intriguing and quite mature. The first is the fabled Sanford & Benedict vineyard planted in 1970. Without the pioneering spirit of Richard Sanford and Michael Benedict our growing area may have never been initiated and for that we are forever grateful. The second is Gnesa (pronounced nē-sa) which is a gorgeous four acre chardonnay vineyard planted by Lee Gnesa in 1996 on his family's property originally purchased in 1916. We first gained access to this spectacular fruit in 2007, all of which was included in our Sta. Rita Hills bottling. We are proud to represent the Gnesa family name with 2008 and feel very privileged to have assumed the management responsibility of the vineyard starting January of 2009.

In addition to that farming commitment, our vineyard crew has been diligently working to nurture our new plantings at 3-D, Machado and the newly planted Hapgood. We of course are more intimate than ever with Mount Carmel which continues to blossom and gain renewed health under the astute guidance of our vineyard manager, Francisco Ramirez and soil consultant, Stan Kadota. We can not thank these two gentlemen enough for their brilliant minds and unwavering discipline and encourage you to read more about them on our website.

The current global economy has made us all extremely aware of the products we purchase and their corresponding value. We are very proud that the investments we have made planting and farming our own vineyards over the past five years have finally begun to "bear their fruit." Gladly, this situation allows us to pass these benefits on to you in the form of prices that harken back to years before these projects began. In addition, beginning in September, we will be offering opportunities to taste and purchase our current releases by appointment on Fridays. For all of you that would prefer to pick up your wine, we will also be holding our first ever "Pick - Up Day" on January 9, 2010. We look forward to showing you the facility and getting to know all of you better.

In closing we present to you three vineyard specific chardonnays in this newsletter from Sanford & Benedict, Gnesa and Mount Carmel. Those whites are complemented by a trio of pinot noirs from Zotovich, Cargasacchi and Mount Carmel. Our 2008 Sta. Rita Hills chardonnay and 2007 Sta. Rita Hills pinot noir are currently available on line through our website. Next spring, we plan to release the balance of wines from 2008 which will include chardonnay from Sea Smoke and Sweeney Canyon as well as pinot noir from Ampelos, Clos Pepe and Melville exclusively to mailing list members such as yourself.

In closing, please note that for this and all future newsletters we will be sending out a digital version to facilitate an easier ordering process and to ultimately reduce our environmental impact. Thank you all for your continued support of the Sta. Rita Hills and our work within the appellation.

## Fall 2009 Newsletter – Wine Notes

**2008 Sanford & Benedict chardonnay**                      **1,152 bottles produced**                      **\$48.**

We feel very privileged to have been offered chardonnay from this historic vineyard for the first time in 2008. Originally planted in 1970 and 1971, this old vine chardonnay section was taken out to be replanted immediately following harvest.

*Lychee, petrol and wet stone aromatics followed by river pebble and brine flavors with very subdued fruit. Very assertive, grippy and drying on the palate.*

**2008 Gnesa chardonnay**    **2,592 bottles produced**                      **\$52.**

Lee Gnesa (pronounced nē-sa) and his family planted this intimate four acre vineyard in 1996 on Highway 246 on a gentle north facing slope in the heart of the AVA. We are the sole recipients of this gorgeous fruit and assumed the responsibility of the farming with our vineyard team starting in 2009.

*Ripe white peach, flint and citrus flower followed by flavors of blood orange, nectarine and guava. Tremendous drying salinity in the mouth despite significant weight.*

**2008 Mount Carmel chardonnay**                                      **8,064 bottles produced**                      **\$56.**

This release marks the fourth growing season of this illustrious site under our complete management. Originally planted in 1991 by Ron Piazza (current owner), this monopole vineyard is now overseen by our brilliant vineyard manager, Francisco Ramirez and renowned soil expert, Stan Kadota. Of the twenty acres, six are planted to chardonnay on a steep, wind-beaten slope of botella clay and limestone.

*Aromas of pineapple, green papaya and flint followed by flavors of lime, orange blossom and brine. Elegant and dense without being weighty with tremendous salinity on the mouth.*

**2008 Zotovich pinot noir**    **1,728 bottles produced**                      **\$46.**

Steve Zotovich owns this well groomed vineyard planted in the mid 1990s on sandy soils along the Highway 246 corridor between Melville and Foley.

*Rose petal, lavender and plum skin aromas followed by wild strawberry, cherry and black tea flavors. Very tender and docile palate impression.*

**2008 Cargasacchi pinot noir**    **2,016 bottles produced**                      **\$52.**

Peter Cargasacchi owns and farms this dynamic sixteen acre site planted in the late 1990s entirely to clone 115. Very stark soil profile of predominantly diatomaceous earth on the western edge of the appellation.

*Aromas of baked cherry cobbler, mint and spice followed by flavors of black cherry, wild rosemary and Chinese green tea. Very elegant and balanced palate impression.*

**2008 Mount Carmel pinot noir**    **10,994 bottles produced**                      **\$56.**

This spectacular and challenging site consistently delivers fruit that we find particularly compelling and difficult to describe. Very steep slopes of botella clay, diatomite and limestone planted to a quintet of pinot noir clones with diverse spacing.

*Black mission fig, dried strawberry and graphite aromas followed by flavors of black tea, black cherry and carbon. Maintains an incredible synergy of tender assertiveness in the mouth.*