



Spring Newsletter 2005, Volume 9

New Releases, etc.

During the month of March we have been busy bottling a variety of exciting new reds. The reds include some of our TV Wine Club's favorites as well a completely new variety for Tularosa Vineyards. The new variety is a 2004 Pinot Noir, which is a wonderfully complex dark wine with interesting spice and berry aromas. Speaking of the vineyards, which are now completely pruned and cautiously awaiting bud break. Bud break is when the first green shoots of growth begin to emerge from the vines. It is a very important time and a very dangerous one as a cold spell below 28 F can cause minor to severe damage to the tender green shoots that shall bear the fruit for 2005.

Tularosa Vineyards winery invited to pour wine in the Napa Valley.

Tularosa Vineyards is among a handful of New Mexico wineries being invited to pour wine at the famous COPIA in the Napa Valley. COPIA is a fun, interactive center where you can investigate the fascinating cultural intersections of wine, food and the arts. Robert Mondavi is one of the original founders of this non-profit organization. We do not yet know the exact dates and times of the tasting, but TV Wine club members should receive an e-mail alert about this wonderful upcoming event. The plan is to feature some of Santa Fe's best chef's paired with none other than New Mexico's best wines. New Mexico food and New Mexico wine, now that's a breath of fresh air.

For the love of Sangiovese.

Sangiovese is most famous for production of wine in Tuscany's Chianti and in Brunello di Montalcino. It is widely planted throughout Italy from the north to the south. The name Sangiovese may have originated from sanguis Jovis—the blood of Jove (Jupiter) and the wine itself is famous for its striking ruby-red color. Tularosa Vineyards was the first New Mexico winery to produce Sangiovese as a varietal and has been producing the wine since 1996. Since that time Tularosa Vineyards has produced a string of awesome vintages with the 1997, 1998 and 1999's as standouts and finally with the 2001 vintage garnering 2 international medals the first time Tularosa Vineyards ever entered international competitions. Tularosa Vineyards has placed a high emphasis on our Sangiovese production by encouraging local growers to plant it. Tularosa Vineyards 2004 production is now over 300 cases. Many winemakers and grape growers will attest to the fact that Sangiovese is hard to grow and make. (Continued next column)

The two main clonal types of the grape are Sangiovese Grosso—a lower yielding plant with thick skinned fruits that make for better aging wines, and Sangiovese Piccolo. Both of which exist at Tularosa Vineyards. Both have proven to be a natural for the Tularosa Basin and for Tularosa Vineyards by consistently producing quality grapes and wine. In fact, a couple of years ago at a New Mexico Vine and Wine Society seminar our 2001 Sangiovese was chosen in a blind tasting as the best Sangiovese amongst a group of world class Sangiovese wines from around the world. Tularosa Vineyards Sangiovese expresses all of the qualities that really good Sangiovese should have. There are basically two modern distinct styles of Sangiovese wines on the international market place, besides the traditional Chianti which is a blend of other grape varieties; however the minimum amount of Sangiovese required in Chianti is currently 90%. Most modern Chianti's are a far cry from the once abundant and cheap straw basket types. One style utilizes Sangiovese as a base and blends in other non-traditional (a.k.a. international) varieties like Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. These wines are typically called Super Tuscans and are good wines, but the flavors of Sangiovese (especially the wild cherry aroma) are easily overpowered by these other varieties. Thus the wines taste more like the blended variety than true Sangiovese. The majority of California producers of Sangiovese blend Cabernet Sauvignon and other varieties. Again, good wines, but still mostly not Sangiovese. Wine critics and magazines have even dubbed the wines Cal-Ital wines to emphasize that they are California wines with Italian roots. The wines are good, but do not emphasize the true varietal characteristics of Sangiovese. The other style which characterizes our Sangiovese is a more pure style of Sangiovese with robust wild raspberry and wild cherry aromas and rose hip and cedar nuances coupled with a wonderful tart Bing cherry finish. Tularosa Vineyards usually limits the amount of other grape varieties that we blend into our Sangiovese so as not to smother the wonderful flavors this grape provides. All of our Sangiovese releases have been 100% Sangiovese except for our 2002 which had approximately 6% Syrah. Our Sangiovese is not Italian and not Californian, but New Mexican and we hope you enjoy them.



Left: David Wickham checking the Sangiovese grapes.
Right: Harvested Sangiovese grapes ready to crush.