GREETINGS, CLUB MEMBERS

The wines in this month’s shipment are from 2012, a vintage that still has me grinning from ear to ear. I’m not alone in my appreciation; you may know that the 2012 FORTIS was awarded 96 points by Robert Parker in Wine Advocate, an endorsement I will gladly take.

The 2012 Charmstone and 2012 Merlot are palate pleasing in their own way as well. They both fall into the category of “approachable” reds, meaning wines that are a little softer, a little less tannic in structure.

So while you may want to tuck the FORTIS away for a year or two (if you can keep your hands off!), the Charmstone and Merlot are ready to enjoy right away.

Cheers!

Michael Beaulac
Winemaker, General Manager

2012 FORTIS CABERNET SAUVIGNON • 96 POINTS

The flagship, black-labeled 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon Fortis Napa Valley is truly a brilliant wine. Everything is perfectly proportioned: wood, acidity, alcohol and tannin. Notes of black cherry, blackcurrant and blueberry soar from the wine’s aromas. A touch of wood, lead pencil shavings and spring flowers are also present. The wine is full-bodied, but delicately strung together, à la high fashion. This is a real beauty – full-bodied, yet stylish. While drinkable now, it promises to continue to age well and possibly evolve for another 12-15+ years.

Robert Parker’s The Wine Advocate

2012 STAGS LEAP DISTRICT CABERNET SAUVIGNON

94 POINTS • EDITOR’S CHOICE • WINE ENTHUSIAST (UPCOMING JUNE 2015 ISSUE)

93 POINTS • Delivers a rich and massive, yet elegant, core of extracted dark berry, mocha, loamy earth, hard black licorice and dried herb. Impressively elegant, with diverse and developing flavors.

James Laube, Wine Spectator
**VINEYARD UPDATE**

There’s been a lot of vine growth in the last several weeks, so this month and next we’ll focus on shoot thinning (also known as suckering), where we remove unwanted growth from the vines. Cutting off this excess vegetation allows energy to be directed to the shoots we do want, and to the fruit that is starting to grow there. Suckering also balances the vine’s canopy, increasing air flow and allowing dappled sunlight to reach the fruit zone. Shoot thinning is time consuming hand labor, but it really contributes to quality.

_Gustavo Aviña, Vineyard Manager_

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**CELLAR UPDATE**

In the cellar we’re transferring our 2014 whites and 2013 reds from barrel to tank, getting them ready to bottle. We’re also bringing in all the supplies we’ll need -- glass, corks, labels, case boxes; it seems there’s always a truck in the driveway waiting to be unloaded. Though bottling is not the most glamorous aspect of winemaking, it’s satisfying to see the wines to the finish line. We’ve babysat them for many months. Now they’re grown up and ready for the world!

_Michael Conversano, Assistant Winemaker_

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**WINEMAKING UPDATE**

May is bottling time. We taste each wine right up until the moment it goes into bottle, making sure – one last time – that each is exactly as we intend it to be. Sometimes there are little tweaks here and there but for the most part these wines are ready. It’s a little nerve racking to know there’s nothing more you can do once the wines are bottled, but it’s also a relief. After all, there are plenty more wines in the cellar to nurture!

_Michael Bégalac, Winemaker, General Manager_
With consistently mild temperatures throughout spring and summer, 2012 was a stellar vintage in Napa Valley, allowing slow, even ripening and yielding exquisite, balanced fruit. For young wines, we suggest decanting for several hours before enjoying.

2012 FORTIS Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley • 96 Points

$175 | Member Price: $140

Presenting an immense and captivating bouquet filled with black cherry, boysenberry jam and cassis fruit, intermingled with nuances of freshly ground espresso, dark baking cocoa, sweet spice and toasty oak. The palate is exquisitely plush with flavors of ripe raspberry, blackberry pie and black plum, supported by elegant tannins and touches of creamy vanilla, silky chocolate and toasted brioche that remain throughout the lengthy, alluring finish. Try with this month’s recipe of Bavette steak with Cabernet-shallot butter.

Varietal: 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Petit Verdot, 5% Malbec
Appellation: Napa Valley
Alcohol: 14.5%
Barrels: 60% new French oak, 18 months
Aging Potential: up to 15 years

2012 Charmstone, Napa Valley

$60 | Member Price: $48

This wine boasts a luscious bouquet of chocolate-enrobed cherry, fresh raspberry and bramble, swirled amongst hints of cherry cola, toasted oak and vanilla spice. Flavors of sweet red plum, fresh red berries and raspberry jam, follow with notes of cigar box spice and sweet clove that linger throughout the mouthwatering finish. Pair with a variety of dishes such as spiced lamb burgers or Reblochon, a mild, fruity, semi-soft French cheese with a nutty finish.

Varietal: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Appellation: Napa Valley
Alcohol: 14.1%
Barrels: 60% new French oak, 18 months
Aging Potential: 7 years

2012 Carneros Merlot, Napa Valley

$48 | Member Price: $38.40

This wine expresses a delightful bouquet of bright red cherry and wild blueberry fruits enhanced by hints of olive, cola and subtle tomato leaf. The palate opens with lush flavors of red cranberry and cassis, transitioning to touches of dried sage, sweet caramel and black licorice that continue through the long finish. Pair with a savory dish, such as braised chicken thighs with lemon, olives and fresh herbs, or Infossato, an Italian sheep's milk cheese with spicy, herbaceous flavors.

Varietal: 83% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc
Appellation: Carneros, Napa Valley
Alcohol: 13.7%
Barrels: 50% new French oak, 18 months
Aging Potential: 5 years
COLLECTORS CLUB WINE SELECTIONS

IN ADDITION TO 3 PRE-RELEASE WINES, COLLECTORS CLUB MEMBERS RECEIVE 3 LIBRARY WINES. BEFORE SERVING, PLEASE ALLOW THE BOTTLE TO REST UPRIGHT FOR A MINIMUM OF 48 HOURS FOR ANY SEDIMENT TO SETTLE. AS OLDER CORKS MAY BE BRITTLE, USING AN AH-SO OR TWO-PRONGED PULL IS SUGGESTED.

2005 Andrus Reserve, Napa Valley

$155 | Member Price: $124

This dark brick red wine has enticing aromas of dark ripe plum, red currant and boysenberry fruits, followed with hints of toasted cedar and cigar box spice. The palate is clean and well-rounded, with bright black cherry, cassis and raspberry preserves that fade into nuances of brown butter, vanilla spice and sweet clove, lasting through the lengthy finish. This wine is luscious with excellent balance, supported by bright acidity and plush tannins.

VARIETAL: 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot, 8% Malbec, 5% Merlot
APPELLATION: Stags Leap District
ALCOHOL: 14% BARRELS: 75% new and 25% one-year-old heavily-toasted French oak, 16 months
AGING POTENTIAL: Enjoy now

2005 Stags Leap District Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

$160 | Member Price: $128

The nose of this red garnet wine is savory and effusive, swirling with notes of dark chocolate and baked plum fruits that give way to hints of brown sugar and crushed sage. The entry is silky and full, teeming with black cherry and blueberry fruit and enhanced by touches of molasses and fine cocoa that linger through the lengthy finish, supported by still-robust tannins and a rounded structure.

VARIETAL: 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot and 5% Merlot
APPELLATION: Stags Leap District
ALCOHOL: 14.1% BARRELS: 75% new and 25% one-year-old heavily-toasted French oak, 15-17 months
AGING POTENTIAL: Enjoy now

2005 Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

$110 | Member Price: $88

A delightful bouquet with notes of cinnamon graham cracker, dried cranberry and fresh blueberry with hints of vanilla spice and bouquet garni. Rich and opulent, the entry floods the palate with supple red plum, bright red cherry and brambly blackberry fruit intertwined with whispers of caramelized sugar, subtle sage and lavender crème brûlée that meander throughout the enduring finish, framed by round, velvety tannins and vibrant acidity.

VARIETAL: 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot
APPELLATION: Rutherford
ALCOHOL: 13.9% BARRELS: Aged in new, one, and two-year-French oak, 15 months
AGING POTENTIAL: Enjoy now
We first made the wine in 2003, drawing on our estate vineyards in the Stags’ Leap District, Rutherford, Howell Mountain and Oakville appellations of Napa Valley. Each year the percentage of fruit from each of these appellations varies; a few vintages have even included Carneros fruit. The percentages of varietals also changes with each vintage. Cabernet Sauvignon always forms the core, complemented by varying amounts of Merlot, Petit Verdot and Malbec.

What never changes, however, is our commitment to creating the best wine we can from each particular vintage. “FORTIS is the wine I like to make the most,” says Winemaker Michael Beaulac. “I love bringing out the qualities of each vineyard, making sure those characteristics really show up in the wine. I’ll tweak it down to the last one or two percent to get the blend absolutely perfect.”

Though the percentage of wine from each vineyard and appellation changes from year to year, there are certain “go to” blocks that Michael depends on to make the blend. One is Block 7 in the Pine Ridge Estate Vineyard in the Stags Leap District; another is Block 21 in our Rutherford Ridge Vineyard, a small block at the peak of a sloping hillside. “Block 21 is planted to a Cabernet clone from Mouton Rothschild – it came from cuttings Gary Andrus (Pine Ridge’s founder) brought back from France,” says Michael. “It always makes a killer Cab.”
Carneros AVA

When Pine Ridge began planting vineyards in the Carneros AVA in the 1980s the region was still mostly pastureland, with many more cattle and sheep dotting the land than grapevines. In fact, it was only in 1983 that the appellation, which is the only California AVA to span two counties – Napa and Sonoma – was granted official AVA status.

Located at the southernmost edge of both Napa Valley and Sonoma, Carneros is profoundly influenced by the maritime breezes and fog that flow in from the San Pablo Bay, which forms its southern border. This marine climate contributes to the slow, even development of wine grapes, resulting in an optimal balance of sugar and acid.

“Carneros is a great place to grow Merlot,” says Winemaker Michael Beaulac, who notes that in climates that are much warmer Merlot grapes can ripen too fast. “Merlot needs time on the vine to develop character and flavor, and having enough acid in the grapes at harvest time is crucial to maintaining the wine’s structure.”

Pine Ridge’s vineyards, located in the relatively northern reaches of the Carneros appellation on the Napa side, feature close spacing and rootstock selected specifically for the clay loam soils typical of the area. “Most of our Merlot comes from a hillside in the corner of our vineyard on Buhman Avenue; the vines there are a little stressed, not overly vigorous, so energy and nutrients go into fruit development.”

Our Carneros vineyard stands out for another reason: it was one of the areas most affected by the Napa earthquake of August 24, 2014. “You can see a distinct line through the property now, and places where the earth has cracked or sunk down,” says Michael, who says that it wasn’t until the vines dropped their leaves after harvest that the damage could be seen. “We’re still straightening out the end posts and irrigation lines, but the vineyard’s going to be just fine.”

“A view of our vineyard on Buhman Avenue in Carneros.”
The “Trials” of a Cork Sniffer

In the Urban Dictionary a “cork sniffer” is a term used to describe a person who overanalyzes things, but at Pine Ridge, it refers to the person who makes sure our wines are free as possible of TCA – the compound that can impart musty odors and flavors to wine.

That job falls to Pine Ridge Vineyards’ enologist, and part of this position is to conduct “aroma trials” on the corks we use to seal all of our wines. Other than the bottle itself, the cork is the only thing that comes in contact with the wine after bottling. We want to make sure our corks are free of anything that might affect the wine negatively.

Each spring, shortly before bottling, our enologist works closely with our cork suppliers to identify the specific lots or “bales” of corks we’ll use. Each and every bale is tested – approximately 80 bales in all – by randomly selecting six corks from each, soaking them overnight in a neutral white wine, and then sniffing each wine to find any “off” aromas. The aromas we look for – which might present themselves as old newspaper, mold or even wet dog – really stand out using this procedure, and when ‘off” aromas are present, the entire bale of corks is rejected. In the end, testing about 80 bales and purchasing only 60 leaves us room to choose only those bales of corks that merit as closures in our wines.

There is also another method of detecting defects in the corks that Pine Ridge uses for their large format (3 liters and over) bottles. Known as the “dry soak method,” it allows us to test those larger corks for the same defects as the smaller corks, temporarily over-humidifying the corks in individual containers, but then extracting the moisture out of each to use as a final bottle closure, making certain that every cork we use in these larger bottles is TCA-free. The vineyard and winemaking teams work hard to make great wines and by adding this extra step of quality control, our enologist ensures the corks we use are perfect.
Pine Ridge Recipe Contest

We know that many of our club members love to cook; and we also receive questions from club members about wine and food pairing. So we’re thrilled to announce the Pine Ridge Recipe Contest, a chance for our club members to submit their favorite, original recipes created to pair with one of our Cabernet Sauvignons.

If you’re a home chef, here’s your chance to prove your mettle. The top three submissions will be chosen by our Winery Chef, Susan Lassalette, and will be prepared by the Wine Club staff. Judges will include our Chef and Winemaker, and the winning recipe will be featured in our November 2015 club newsletter! Good luck!

Contest Rules & Regulations

Recipe should be designed to pair with any Pine Ridge Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon.

Must be original and cannot be copied from cookbooks or websites.

Include no more than 15 ingredients and be simple enough for home cooks (and wine club staff!) to prepare; please include substitutions for hard-to-find items.

Please provide details on how to prepare, cook and serve (no more than 250 words).

Add 1-2 sentences on why you think the pairing worked well.

Include a photo of the dish (at least 300 DPI or 8” x 10”; no smart phone photos, please).

Deadline is midnight Pacific, August 31, 2015.

The winner’s recipe will be featured in the November 2015 club newsletter.

Send submissions and/or questions to wineclub@pineridgewine.com.

Note: Employees of Crimson Wine Group not eligible.
**Bavette Steak with Cabernet-Shallot Butter**

* A pairing for Pine Ridge Vineyards 2012 Fortis Cabernet Sauvignon • Serves 4

The Bavette Steak is extremely flavorful and brings the fruit flavors of the 2012 Fortis into the forefront while the Cabernet-shallot butter softens the tannins and accentuates the lasting velvety finish. A great steak to grill and serve family-style on a lovely springtime evening.

- Chef Susan Lassalette

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**INGREDIENTS**

**Steak:**
- 1½ to 2 lbs Bavette Steak, cleaned of sinew and excess fat
- Sea salt, to taste
- Olive oil, to taste
- Fava Leaves (pea tendrils or pea shoots may be substituted)

**Cabernet-Shallot Butter:**
- 1 cup Cabernet Sauvignon
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 large pinch, cracked black pepper
- 1 pinch, sea salt
- 5 oz butter, softened
- 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped
- Olive oil

**Suggested Side Dish:**
- Roasted potato and fennel wedges

**DIRECTIONS**

**PREPARE CABERNET-SHALLOT BUTTER:** In a small saucepan over medium heat, place wine, minced shallot and a large pinch of pepper, and reduce wine mixture by three-quarters. Add a pinch of sea salt and continue reducing until a few tablespoons of syrupy mixture remain. Set aside to cool.

When cool, work the wine mixture into the softened butter, add a squeeze of lemon and the chopped parsley. Chill to firm (the butter may be made a few days in advance).

**PREPARE BAVETTE STEAK:** Remove the steak and the Cabernet-shallot butter from the refrigerator and set aside, room temperature, for 45 minutes before cooking.

**TO COOK:** Sprinkle the steak liberally with sea salt. Heat a grill or grill pan to high. Lightly drizzle the steak with olive oil and grill until golden brown on both sides and cook to your preferred temperature (medium-rare is approximately 130–135°).

Let the Bavette steak rest on the cutting board for ten minutes to seal in the juices.

**TO SERVE:** Thinly slice the Bavette steak against the grain and arrange on a platter. Spoon the softened butter over the steak - the heat from the meat will slowly melt the butter. Place a small mound of the fava leaves on top of the steak. Accompany with roasted potato and fennel wedges and serve.
## Current Release Wines

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<tr>
<th>WINES (750ML)</th>
<th>RETAIL BOTTLE PRICE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014 Chenin Blanc + Viognier</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014 Encantado Rosé</td>
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<td><strong>92 POINTS</strong></td>
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<td>2010 Black Diamond Port</td>
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*No discount due to limited availability*

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PRICES AND VINTAGE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. SOME VINTAGES ARE ONLY AVAILABLE THROUGH THE WINE CLUB AND NOT AVAILABLE IN THE TASTING ROOM OR ON THE WEBSITE.

APPELLATION 6-BOTTLE AND 12-BOTTLE AS WELL AS COLLECTORS CLUB MEMBERS RECEIVE 50% SAVINGS ON SHIPPING WHEN PURCHASING A MINIMUM OF 6 BOTTLES (PER ADDRESS).

THE WINE CLUB STAFF WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR WINE ORDER, ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS, OR SET UP A COMPLIMENTARY TASTING AT ONE OF OUR SISTER PROPERTIES: SEGESIO VINEYARDS IN HEALDSBURG, CA; CHAMISAL VINEYARDS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA; OR ARCHERY SUMMIT WINERY IN DAYTON, OR, WHERE YOU MAY ENJOY 15% SAVINGS ON YOUR DAY-OF-VISIT PURCHASES.

**CONTACT US:**
MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, 8:30 AM UNTIL 5:00 PM. • (800) 400-6647
SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, CONTACT WINE CLUB LIAISON DANIKA BUTLER • (707) 257-4702
WINECLUB@PINERIDGEWINE.COM
UPCOMING WINE CLUB EVENTS

SUNDAY LUNCH IN THE VINEYARD
SUNDAY, JULY 19 | 12:00 PM TO 3:00 PM
$125 WINE CLUB MEMBERS (LIMIT 2) | $145 PER GUEST

A California twist on a French classic, join us for a leisurely Sunday lunch in the heart of our Stags Leap District vineyard. Enjoy a private tour of the winery followed by Winery Chef Susan Lassalette's alfresco menu, served family-style and paired with some of our rarest wines from the surrounding vineyards.

FOR RESERVATIONS: EVENTS@PINERIDGEWINE.COM OR (707) 257-4734

FORTIS RELEASE PARTY
SATURDAY, JUNE 27 | 11:00 AM TO 3:00 PM
COMPLIMENTARY FOR 2 MEMBERS | $45 PER GUEST

Open-house style, join us between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm at the winery to taste new releases paired with small bites; day-of-event wine specials; and more.

LIMITED TO 250 PEOPLE • WINERY WILL BE CLOSED FOR THIS EVENT • RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED
FOR RESERVATIONS: CONCIERGE@PINERIDGEWINE.COM OR (707) 257-4722

SUNSET AND VINES
SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 | 6:00 TO 9:00 PM
$175 WINE CLUB MEMBERS (LIMIT 2) | $205 PER GUEST

An elegant dining experience featuring our single-appellation collection wines, paired with an exquisite meal prepared by Winery Chef Susan Lassalette. Only the food and wine will rival the beautiful views of the Stags Leap District Palisades.

FOR RESERVATIONS: EVENTS@PINERIDGEWINE.COM OR (707) 257-4734

TO VIEW A COMPLETE LIST OF OUR 2015 EVENTS, VISIT US ONLINE AT PINERIDGEVINEYARDS.COM/VISIT US/UPCOMING-EVENTS.