



BUTTONWOOD FARM

WINERY & VINEYARD

Buttonwood Bellwethers – Leading the herd with Farm grown Food & Wine



Spring has SPRUNG here! Although we did not get as much rain as we had hoped, the precipitation that did fall has resulted in the “greening” of Buttonwood Farm. The almonds and peaches are already setting fruit, the vineyard has awoken and we are seeing not only bud break, but the first tiny clusters of the 2016 vintage. The pastures are lush, and our herd of goats is being put to work to “mow”. It is a beautiful and exciting time of year – now please everyone cross fingers and toes that we have no springtime frost!

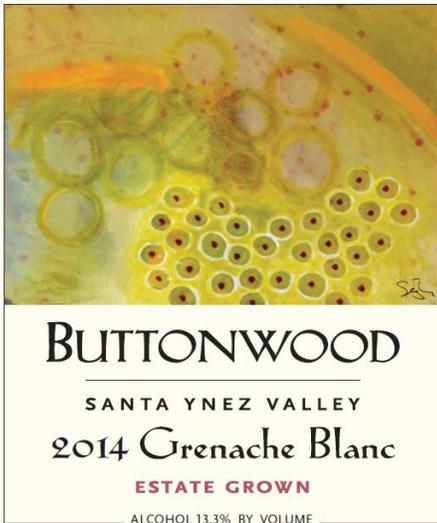
We recently hosted two delicious culinary events here that got us inspired to take advantage of the first greens and produce of the season. Pascale Beale launched her new cookbook, *Les Fruits*, with a cooking class and then Chef Conrad Gonzales of ValleFresh created a Farm to Table dinner that just rocked. Which leads us to....salads! We're pleased to share our seasonal obsession with you, our Bellwethers!

This Bellwether selection leads off with *Salade*, the award-winning cookbook from colleague, friend and Chef Pascale Beale. The cookbook is chock full of creative dishes that are classified humbly as salads, but in essence can be an entire meal. Recipes that call for vinegar in the book can substitute the chef-geeky Verjus, which is a product we make here on the Farm from under-ripe wine grapes (Verjus translating literally to “green juice”.) To add to your spice cabinet of possibilities, we've also included a jar of our dried oregano.

Salads are actually a difficult thing to pair with wine, particularly if they include any of the “A” vegetables of this season – asparagus, artichokes, avocados. Grenache Blanc to the rescue! Our “Summertime in a Glass” wine pairs beautifully with these dishes, and even the “A's.”



From the Vineyard:



2014 Grenache Blanc

Our one+-acre block of Grenache Blanc merrily marches between two of its Rhôneish cousins – Grenache (noir) and Syrah (our block for Rosé). It requires lots of crop thinning, canopy shading on the south side to prevent sunburn, clipping off “wings” from the cluster, and even more crop thinning to achieve balanced ripening.

A perfume of poached pears and hints of jasmine waft from the glass. Fresh and tangy, with reminders of homemade applesauce, white peach, Asian pear and a hint of garden herb and nutmeg spiciness on the finish. Enjoy now.

Verjus

The grapes are a result of a “green drop”, wherein we cut off any grape clusters that are behind in the ripening cycle. These are then pressed and bottled without fermentation, and are used as a substitute for lemon juice or vinegar in the kitchen.

It has a nice green apple-y, citrusy taste and can be used in a variety of culinary ways, to add depth with deglazing, marinades, sauces. Use in recipes for vinaigrettes, dressings, or as a poaching liquid for fish. Verjus also adds a refreshing lift to desserts, and you can even enjoy using it in summertime cocktails! After opening, keep refrigerated for freshness.

From the Farm:

Tucked back behind our office is Seyburn and Abel’s herb garden. As you walk through this aromatic wonderland, you’ll find basil, chives, comfrey, lavender, lemon grass, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, sorrel, spearmint, tarragon, thyme and winter savory! Many of these are dried so that we can enjoy this spice cabinet year long, and we’ve included oregano.

From Pascale:

Please do check out the section in the cookbook that shows Pascale’s technique for dressing a salad! And here is one of her zesty and tasty vinaigrettes for you to make with the Verjus.

RECIPE

Huge thanks to Pascale Beale for providing us with this recipe. Learn more about Pascale at www.pascaleskitchen.com and look forward to her next cooking class at Buttonwood coming soon!!

Simple Vinaigrette by Pascale Beale

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon verjus
- Pinch of salt
- 4-5 turns of freshly ground black pepper

1. Combine all the ingredients together in a small bowl and whisk together vigorously to form an emulsion.



This vinaigrette can be refrigerated for 2 weeks. If it separates, re-whisk together to recreate the emulsion. This vinaigrette can be used on all green salads. Use a lighter wine vinegar (white wine or perhaps an apple cider) when serving with delicate greens such as Mache or butter lettuce. Use more robust vinegars, such as Jerez or balsamics when serving heartier greens, such as mesclun, dandelion or arugula.



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