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Markko Vineyard

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Il winter in the valley the river whispers along, so soft at night your ears cannot convince your dream you are actually there. But you are learning to make that sound of river late in spring. I will show you how. Make your mouth half open. Now shape your lips like an almond and breathe in a steady breath, thinking the word hoo, but not so fast you make even the hint of hiss. Now you know the river is at your side. You reach out a hand, drop it like a bird’s head to test the river. Cold.

Stephen Dunning
Professor of English & Education
University of Michigan

A VIEW FROM THE HILL

After a relatively mild winter with a low of only -10°F, the Vineyard looks healthy with bud-kill running about 10-15% on the first go-through. We’re closely watching the new trunk development after two damaging winters in a row — (’83 & ’84) — and are carefully pruning to avoid the possibility of over cropping; achieving a balance of yield and vigor is critical. We’re expecting 40% more vineyard acreage will produce fruit this season. With good spring weather, it should be a harvest to celebrate.

CELLAR NOTES

The newest member of the Markko family is enologist, Ali Nuernberg who comes to us from Amherst, Massachusetts with his wife, Susan, and two daughters, Bena and Pie. Ali is a native of Algeria where he received the equivalent of a Bachelor of Science degree from Faculte de Medecine d’Alger. Further education led to a Bachelor of Arts degree in French Literature from the U. of Mass. in Amherst and a Diplome Technicien Oenologue and Diplome National d’Oenologue (National Diploma of Enology) from the University of Dijon, France (Bourgogne).

His winemaking experience was gained in the cellars of Chateau de Poncie, Fleurie, Beaujolais where he worked as assistant winemaster and later in the laboratory under the guidance of distinguished Alsatian winemaker, Bernard Schoffit at the Domaine Schoffit, Colmar, Alsace. At the University of Dijon, he worked as an analyst in the Enology laboratory while writing a comprehensive study on carbonic maceration — a technique used in the making of Beaujolais.

Ali’s invaluable experience in the vineyards of France and his skill as winemaker and analyst brings us to another turn in the road: the chance to refine our winemaking techniques through careful analysis and planning, to achieve the best and most characteristic wines this region can produce. We’re grateful to have this nice family with us and hope you’ll take advantage of our invitation to stop by and meet the Nuernbergs.

Markko wines captured 5 bronze medals at the Ohio Grape-Wine Short Course Competition held February 18 in Columbus. Included in the list of award winners were the ‘80 Cabernet (lot 02), ’82 Cabernet (lot 21), ’83 Pinot Noir (lot 30), ’83 Chardonnay (lot 321), and the ’84 Riesling (lot 404).

One thing to remember about competitions in general: medals won’t necessarily make you like the wine any better or any less, they simply recognize a certain “quality” in the wine that is helpful to a consumer when making their selection. Ultimately, you are perhaps the best judge of our wines. We are constantly working to improve our quality. With a break in the weather and the skill of our winemaker, we hope to do just that.
BROTHER DAVID
— his legacy

On November 14, 1985, Brother David Petry, O.S.B., a monk of St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana, died peacefully after a long illness. This gentle, most unassuming man, with the optimism and generous nature of a Saint, was a friend and mentor for many years. He began his life in the monastery as a baker and left it as a knowledgeable winemaker and grape grower — a man to whom Arnie turned to for advice and wisdom in the early years of Markko. Arnie and Bill Worthy were fortunate to visit St. Meinrad a number of years ago as guests of Brother David, and remember his vigor and enthusiasm for the work that consumed him. His brothers wrote of him “He was not one given to frenzied activity ... He was a man of measured life. He loved the out-of-doors and found in Creation a real source and inspiration for his prayer life.”

The Ohio Wine Producers have established an annual scholarship in Br. David’s name to be awarded at the OSU Grape Wine Short Course. It will go to an individual in the wine industry who best exemplifies the character and dedication he displayed. The first recipient at the annual meeting in February was Br. Dominic of St. Meinrad who has taken over the management of the vineyard there.

TAKING STOCK
We took on a small grafting job this winter, selecting only the hardiest vines for propagation. With the help of Greg Johns, manager of the Kingsville Grape Research Station, we were provided with the time-saving Omega grafting machine resulting in 800 or so grafts ready for the nursery in the spring. We’re experimenting with a small number of Pinot Gris which we thought would be an interesting trial if they take.

California researchers are looking at a particular bacteria that causes ice to form on leaves and plants in freezing temperatures nicknamed “ice plus”. By removing a certain gene from this bacteria, it appears that it’s possible to lower the temperature at which water will crystallize producing what’s called “ice minus”. California growers may test the new bacteria this year.

HAVE TRUCK . . . WILL TRAVEL
We’d like to thank our many Markko friends who took advantage of free delivery service during the Christmas holidays. Your response gave us one of our best months for sales in history. We would like to be able to offer this service more often if there’s a need, so check with us before you order to see if we plan to be in your neighborhood. We are pleased with the UPS service and feel they do an excellent job of low cost delivery in a very short time. Either means of delivery should allow for quick service and convenience. All we need is your order.

WINE LIST . . . update
Availability of award-winning wines is limited in some lots as follows:
Pinot Noir - 10 cases remaining
Riesling (404) sold out
’80 Cabernet (02) 20 cases remaining
Several nice Rieslings are scheduled for release in the next month or so. Notices will be sent to all Case Club members.

LOOKING AHEAD
May 31 . . . Blessing of the Vines, Markko Vineyard, 12:00 noon
June . . . Ohio Wine Month
June 14 — Picnic, music by Barb and Uncle Dave, on the hammer dulcimer and guitar
June 21 — Chardonnay Cup Chess Tournament, 9:30 a.m.
August 16 — Rotary sponsored Walleye Derby, 6:00 a.m.
For more information on any one of the events, call the Winery.
Additional notices will be sent.