

# WINE CLUB

## NEWSLETTER

# Graziano Family of Wines

SPRING (PRIMAVERA) 2023

## Chenin Blanc and the Wines of Loire



Well, it is that time again to talk about one of ours and hopefully one of your favorite white wines that we produce, Chenin Blanc. I am not sure how much more I can say that hasn't already been said by me or by the other contributors in the 20 something years we have been writing this newsletter. We are still producing it from one of the oldest Chenin Blanc vineyards in the country, the 50+ year old Ken Heil Vineyard which is located just below our home in the Ukiah valley. It still makes amazing wines though it seems like

less and less of it every year. The vineyard has seen it challenges for a non-grafted, non-irrigated, organically grown, heat, drought and deer ravaged vineyard. It is a difficult vineyard to make wine from because the way it ripens. There are always every degree of ripeness on each vine, unripe green berries, perfectly ripe grapes and swiveled raisins. To get the maturity just right we harvest the grapes at about 25 degrees brix and water back to about 23. To be honest I am not sure how many more years this 4-acre vineyard will be viable. It looks to me that because of the stresses mentioned the vine louse phylloxera may be slowly killing the vines. We are in active pursuit of another vineyard but there are only 4 in the county and the fruit is spoken for. In fact, I get calls all the time winemakers looking for Chenin Blanc grapes. Hopefully and luckily, I think I found a newly planted vineyard in the Ukiah Valley, I'll keep you posted. As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, we never produced a 2021 because the drought and the deer left nothing for us. The 2022 Graziano Chenin Blanc will be small when we release it later this year.

So, to continue our conversation about Chenin Blanc we are going to revisit a story written by our old-friend and tasting room manager Bob Meadows for the 2009 Autumn newsletter. We always enjoyed Bob's writing and the way he looked at life, like a story. So, without further ado "Who Am I This Time".

## Who Am I This Time

If you're a film buff like me, you're familiar with the names of Jonathan Demme, Susan Sarandon and Christopher Walken, three very talented people who combined some years ago to make a superb short film entitled "Who Am I This Time" about two people – Sarandon and Walken – who are so painfully shy that they can barely function in the real world, but who, when put on a stage, change before your eyes to become the characters they're playing. Amazing performances and powerful stuff.

The grape varietal we're looking into in this edition of The Newsletter, Chenin Blanc, is just such a butterfly, only using terroir and fermentation techniques instead of staging and dialogue to

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# GRAZIANO



## FAMILY OF WINES

Mendocino Wine Growers  
Since 1918

WINE CLUB EDITION



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*"When it comes to wine, I tell people to throw away the vintage charts and invest in a corkscrew. The best way to learn about wine is the drinking."*

— Alexis Lichine

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## Article

# Cutting Edge Selections, doing a great job in Ohio and the fabulous city of Cincinnati.



John Roebling Bridge 1866 BTW, his first major bridge before the Brooklyn Bridge

I have been selling wine in Ohio for over 18 years. First with a small company called Tramonte and now for the last 5 years with Cutting Edge Selections. Cutting Edge is one of the mid-sized distributors in Ohio but definitely one of the very best in the state. They are very particular about who's wines they sell and have a very discriminant selection of extremely high-quality producers from all over the world. It is an honor to be part of their sales book. Cutting Edge Selection was founded in 1991 by Cincinnati native Mark Maher out of his passion for fine wine which was cultivated while working around the US hospitality industry after college. What started as a one man, one van endeavor, is now one of the leading importer/distributors in the Midwest. Since Mark's untimely passing in 2016, this family-owned business has been led by his brother Stephen Maher, who is himself a longtime veteran of the hospitality and wine distribution industries. In 2015 I had the pleasure of meeting Mark during the Cincinnati Wine Festival which is one of the finest in America, when he came over to my booth and introduced himself and invited me to a local restaurant for drinks and food with his staff. He was truly one of the nicest people you could ever meet. In fact, everyone I ever met that knew Mark said the same thing. It has been a pleasure working with this highly professional team. The main people I work with are Steve Tucker who is my brand manager and Director of Purchasing, Eric Faber who is the president of the

Company, Austin Beeman who is the Director of Marketing, and Joe Leftin who is the General Sales Manager. Another wonderful thing about Cutting Edge is they possess one of the most knowledgeable sales staffs I have ever worked with and unlike many distributors, their sales staff has been with the company for many years. Cutting Edge is responsible for sales of my wines to wine shops and fine restaurants in Ohio and Kentucky. They are so dedicated to fine accounts that they do not sell to grocery stores. In fact, as you read this, I will be in Ohio and Kentucky in early March working with their sales team selling wine.

In those 18 years I have spent a lot of time traveling all over Ohio to help my distributors sell our wine. As I always say, "making wine is the easy part, selling it is the difficult part". When you are a small company with a limited amount of money to market your wines you must rely on quality, value, and the time you give selling the wine yourself and building relationships with the restaurateurs, store buyers, and the sales people who sample your wine to the trade. I have been lucky enough over the last 40+ years to travel all over this country and several others presenting our wine to accounts. I have sold my wines in almost every state and major city in the United States. The wine distribution business is very difficult and for a supplier like me, it's a constant moving target because distributors are either changing ownership or going out of business. For some reason I have always done well in the middle of the United States. Not exactly sure why but the people are honest, hardworking, and in general don't get impressed by expensive, overrated, and pretentious wines. They like good, well made and well-priced wines without all the pretensions like many places on the west or the east coast. It seems to me that when I come to middle America to sell my wines, people are actually happy to see me. When people ask me where my best markets are, again it is middle America.

One reason Ohio is a very good market for me is I come here often. Ohio also has 5 major cities with populations from 190,000 (Akron) to greater than 950,000 (Columbus), all of which are not very far from each other. I have been coming to the forementioned

## MARCH 2023 Wine Selections



**Blend:** 85% Aglianico,  
15% Carignane  
**Cases Produced:** 130  
**Alcohol:** 14.5%  
**Total Acidity:**  
0.73 g/100ml  
**PH:** 3.4  
**Residual Sugar:** 0.2% (Dry)

### 2019 Monte Volpe Aglianico

After acquiring our new five-acre property in the eastern foothills of the Ukiah Valley in 2002, which I named Bella Vista, I knew that it had special potential for olive trees on the hillside and a small vineyard next to our home on the flat land. I wanted to plant a small vineyard that was special, unique, and most importantly, Italian. Aglianico: the best and most famous red grape of southern Italy, often called the "Barolo of southern Italy." As a variety like so many other Italian ones, it has its own set of problems. It comes out very early, especially in my site, coupled with the early maturing rootstock 101-14; it is susceptible to our notorious spring frosts. Aglianico is also a very late ripener and we routinely harvest it during the last week of October. Because it is a late variety, it has developed a tough skin to protect it against the rain and the heat. However, this was a low tonnage year and the vines produced a ton and a half/acre and was harvested on November 2nd, 2019 at 26.5 brix, 0.75 titratable acidity, and 3.60 pH. As far as the wine is concerned, Aglianico is a fairly easy wine to make as long as you get it ripe. It has great color, tannin, and balanced acidity, which makes it a perfect wine built for ageing. Luckily, you can achieve this without the very high sugars that you may need in other varieties such as Zinfandel or Syrah. This is our 11th vintage of Aglianico from our Bella Vista vineyard and it makes up 85 % of the blend. 15% is old-vine Carignane from our Vincenzo Vineyard located in the western benchlands of the Calpella District. This wine was aged in French Burgundy barrels for 34 months of which 30 % were new. The wine was bottled September 22nd, 2022. Our Aglianico is a great wine to be served with roasted red meats or grilled rib-eye steaks. It can also pair well with traditional Italian fare such as Spaghetti Bolognese.



**Blend:** 100% Barbera  
**Cases Produced:** 600  
**Alcohol:** 14.5%  
**Total Acidity:**  
0.75 g/100 ml  
**PH:** 3.39  
**Residual Sugar:** 0.2% (Dry)

### 2018 Enotria Barbera

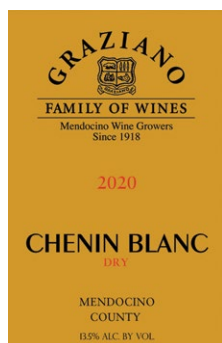
Once known as a peasant wine, this grape has grown to be one of the most widely planted varieties in the Piemonte region of northwestern Italy. Today, Barbera is one of the most exalted grapes of this rugged mountain region. It arrived in California in the 19th century when Italian immigrants brought it over, where it adapted well to the coastal volcanic soils. When produced in low yields and treated to barrel ageing, Barbera can make extremely exciting wines. This represents our 28th vintage of Barbera and we are one of the oldest continuing producers of this wonderful variety.

The warm sunny days, cool nights, and excellent sun exposure produced grapes that are superbly balanced and rich in fruit flavor. Three different vineyards in Mendocino County comprise this blend. 10 % is from the Burke Hill Vineyard, located in the western foothills of the southern Ukiah Valley, a vineyard we have been managing for the last 6 years. 5% is from the Lake Ridge Vineyard, farmed by Peter Chevalier which is located on an east facing slope above Lake Mendocino. The final 85% is from the first harvest of our new Vincenzo Vineyard, which is located on the western benchlands of the Calpella District, just south of the Redwood Valley appellation. Here we have several clones which thrive in the rich, white clay loam soils that are somewhat unique to Mendocino County.

All grapes were hand-harvested at an average of 25 degrees brix in mid-September to mid-October 2018 and fermented in small open-top stainless-steel fermenters for two weeks at 85 degrees F. The wines were made with a combination of both punch-down and pump-over fermentations. After a gentle pressing, the wine was aged in a combination of heavy-toasted French Burgundy and American oak barrels for 30 months. As is the Graziano tradition, the wines were left on their secondary sediments in the barrels and never racked, thus leaving these sediments to nourish and protect the wine during its long ageing cycle. The wine was bottled on January 15th, 2023.

This Barbera has a deep purple garnet color with complex aromas and flavors of juicy blackberries and red currant with hints of earth and toasty oak. Medium tannins and a great natural acidity lead into a finish that is clean and mouthwatering. This is a wine for immediate enjoyment or one that will age for many years.

This wine is excellent when served with braised lamb shanks, wild mushroom lasagna, venison scaloppini, grilled Portobello mushrooms, or hard-aged cheese.



**Blend:** 100% Chenin Blanc  
**Cases Produced:** 370  
**Alcohol:** 13.5%  
**Total Acidity:**  
0.85 g/ml  
**PH:** 3.09  
**Residual Sugar:** 0.3% (Dry)

### 2020 Graziano Chenin Blanc

Chenin Blanc produces some of the greatest white wines of France. In the Loire region, the wines of Savennieres, Vouvray, and Saumur produce a wide range of styles of Chenin Blanc from sparkling to sweet and everything in between.

100% of the grapes for this Chenin Blanc come from the Heil Vineyard, which is located in the northwestern section of the Ukiah Valley near the Russian River. This head-trained vineyard is over 52 years old and is situated on special Pinoli white clay loam that resists Phylloxera, allowing these vines to be on their original, ungrafted rootstock. This is one of the oldest and last of the Chenin Blanc vineyards in Mendocino County. In fact, there are less than a dozen in all of the north coast of California.

This Chenin Blanc was made in a dry, European style with crisp clean aromas and flavors of pears, apples, and minerals. The body is full and rich, but well-balanced by ample mouth-watering acidity. This wine was 100% fermented in neutral French Burgundy oak barrels and "sur-lie" aged for 16 months. No malo-lactic fermentation was allowed, which could destroy the wine's acidity and fruity aroma.

This wine combines the mineral-laced, steely acidity and structure of a classic Loire style wine with the rich, creamy texture, roundness and fullness of fruit of a California wine. Aromas of wet stone, peaches, pear, and citrus all come together in this racy, complex wine. This fabulous Chenin Blanc was bottled on April 13th, 2022.

Enjoy this Chenin Blanc with shell fish pastas in a white wine cream sauce, roasted free range chicken, or grilled halibut.

# Making the Final Package of Wine More Sustainable

These days one of the most talked about subjects in the wine business is how to be more sustainable. Well, what does that really mean? We have talked a little bit about that in our autumn 2022 newsletter when it concerns our vineyard. In this expose' I will talk about packaging; the bottle, label, cork, screw cap, capsule, and the box. When talking sustainably in wine packaging it means having as little impact on our environment as possible or using as little materials and making sure those materials are as organic and recyclable as can be. New studies have shown that the consumer, especially younger ones, are willing to pay more for sustainable packaging.

Let's start off with the bottles, probably the biggest environmental sink. The trend for a long time was to impress the wine buyer with a big, heavy, very deep punted bottle to show how much money you had put in to the package. A case of big heavy wine bottles, they are no fun to carry. I should know this because I carry cases of our sparkling wine all the time. Unfortunately, they must be thick and heavy to contain the pressure within. Big heavy wine bottles are in many ways no friend to the environment. They use a lot of material but more importantly they use more fuel to produce and more fuel to move to the winery and to the consumer. The industry is making a concerted effort to create lighter, stronger wine bottles to be more sustainable. A somewhat new trend is trying to use recycled glass to create new wine bottles. Although a good idea there are problems in production in using high proportions of recycled and 100% recycled glass. Visual imperfections are more evident when using higher proportions of recycled glass. The consumer may need to accept this which historically has been an issue.

The next biggest polluter to the environment in packaging is the label. In the old days, and the way we still do most of our labeling, is to print and cut paper labels then apply glue to them before applying the labels to the bottle. The new way, which is faster and easier to apply and to clean, is to print and cut self-adhesive labels to rolls of plastic or siliconized paper and apply them directly to the bottles, like the postage stamps you buy in rolls. All this backing material is not recyclable and ends up in the trash. Also, to create hipper, creative packaging, many wineries are using plastic for their labels, another non-sustainable approach. There are also plastic sleeves that surround the entire bottle, which is another approach to make hipper looking labels. Again, I believe we need to eliminate as much waste, especially plastic, in our packaging. Once in a while we will place our wine bottles in plastic bags or wrap them in tissue paper to protect the labels from scuffing. For us and many others this is a necessary evil to protect the integrity and looks of our labels. Unlike many other products you purchase at the store, many consumers will pass-by a scuffed-up, crooked wine labeled bottle. Would you do this when you buy a jar of mayonnaise? I don't think so.

The next most important component of wine bottle packaging is the capsule or foil that encases the cork and the top of the bottle. Historically capsules served to protect the integrity of the product from rodents, insects, bacteria, and mildew, but mostly tampering by humans. These days capsules are mostly decorative in nature. Capsules are made from tin, aluminum, plastic or a combination of these materials. Here of course, tin and aluminum are the most recyclable but the costliest. Regardless of what is used, most end up in the landfill. Today there is a trend to save money and to be more sustainable by not using these capsules and exposing the corks to the world outside. For several reasons this is a trend I am not a fan of. As far as the actual closure is concerned, we are big fans of corks, whether they are manufactured agglomerated or 100% natural real corks, not plastic imitations. We know that cork forests and cork production is extremely sustainable and very good for the environment. Cork forests sustain much wildlife and the cork trees produce oxygen and sequester CO<sub>2</sub>. Basically, cork is wood and when it enters the landfill it is 100% biodegradable. As you know from being a member of our wine club, we are also big proponents of screw caps, especially for our whites and easy drinking red wines. Although not carbon neutral and not totally biodegradable as cork, the screw cap is recyclable and will eventually degrade in the landfill.

Lastly, let's talk about the box. Because of marketing many wineries produce custom designed boxes for their wines. This is a much more difficult, expensive, and wasteful task, especially when you own 4 brands like we do. To be honest I believe this is done to make the producer feel better about their wine and most of the time the consumer never sees the box. Unfortunately, only white boxes are available to wineries to carry their wine bottles. We would much prefer to use brown unbleached cardboard which would be better for the environment, much like many of the brown envelopes we now see from our utility company invoices. So, in the end it is up to you, the consumer, on what you will accept as the norm from us wineries when it comes to our packaging. Please let us know your thoughts.

All the best, —**Greg Graziano**



# GFW Order Form

Wine	Reg. Bottle Price	Club Bottle Price	# of Bottles	Total \$
<b>SAINT GREGORY</b>				
Pinot Noir 2019	23.00	17.25		
Pinotage 2018	23.00	17.25		
Reserve Pinot Noir, Anderson Vly 2019	40.00	30.00		
Brut Rosé 2014, Sparkling Wine	40.00	30.00		
<b>MONTE VOLPE</b>				
Primo Rosso Lot-15	13.00	9.75		
Extra Virgin Olive Oil 2022, 375ml	16.00	12.00		
2022 Pinot Grigio	18.00	13.50		
2022 Vermentino	18.00	13.50		
2022 Ribolla Gialla	20.00	15.00		
2022 Greco di Tufo	20.00	15.00		
Negroamaro 2018	23.00	17.25		
Primitivo 2018	23.00	17.25		
Sangiovese 2019	28.00	21.00		
Aglianico 2019	40.00	30.00		
Peppolino 2019	40.00	30.00		
<b>ENOTRIA</b>				
Moscato 2022	13.00	9.75		
Dolcetto 2016	22.00	16.50		
Barbera 2018	23.00	17.25		
NV Moscato Elevato Fortified dessert wine, 375ml	35.00	26.25		
<b>GRAZIANO</b>				
Chenin Blanc 2020	18.00	13.50		
Zinfandel 2018	23.00	17.25		
Carignane 2018	23.00	17.25		
Petite Sirah 2018	23.00	17.25		
100th Anniversary Cookbook	25.00	18.75		
Zinfandel Reserve 2018	30.00	22.50		
Cabernet Sauvignon 2018	40.00	30.00		
Syrah Tawny Dessert Wine 2002 Fortified dessert wine, 375ml	40.00	30.00		

<b>Subtotal</b>		\$
<b>CA Residents - Add Sales Tax (7.875%)</b>		\$
<b>WI Residents - Add Sales Tax (5.0%)</b>		\$
<b>Add UPS or GLS Ground Shipping, packaging, and handling:</b>		\$
— \$30/cs Western States,		
— \$50/cs Middle America,		
— \$60/cs Eastern States		
<b>Total Amount Due</b>		\$

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



Come by and  
see us in Hopland  
for free tasting!

**Graziano Family of Wines  
Tasting Room**

John Reagh, Manager  
johnr@grazianofamilyofwines.com

13275 S. Hwy 101, Ste 1  
P. O. Box 774  
Hopland, CA 95449

**Office**  
707-744- 8466 (VINO)

**E-mail**  
info@grazianofamilyofwines.com

# NEW Releases!



All of us have been waiting for this wonderful release. After selling out quickly of the 2021 vintage we have produced more of this great wine to keep it around longer. Monte Volpe is one of the oldest producers of the sometime maligned variety. When grown in the correct climate and by good winegrowers such as ourselves, this wine sings quality. 100% barrel fermented and sur-lie aged for 4 months in neutral French Burgundy barrels gives this wine richness, complexity, and a nerviness few Grigios possess. Perfect match with grilled swordfish.

## 2022 MONTE VOLPE Pinot Grigio



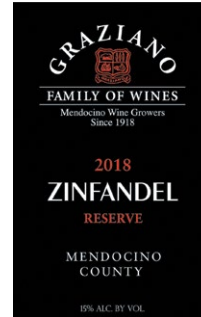
As one of the oldest producers of this variety in America it is now one of the new darling white grape varieties of the world. Grown in France under the name of Rolle and in Italy either Favorita or Vermentino, this wine has beautiful floral and mineral aromas and flavors with a clean and fresh structure. As with most of our white wines it is 100% barrel fermented and sur-lie aged without malo-lactic fermentation in neutral French Burgundy barrels to preserve its acidity. Grown in both our Nube Bianco vineyard and the Ruddick Vineyard in the Talmage district of the Ukiah Valley, this is a hearty variety and is one that needs control of its production to make great wines.

## 2022 MONTE VOLPE Vermentino



Our most important grape variety in the Graziano Family line-up is also one of Mendocino Counties best. We are lucky Mendocino County has a large supply of old vines grown by experienced long-time grape growers, many of them being of Italian heritage. The Tournour, Pacini, Ford, and Foster vineyards adorn this Zinfandel. Aged in French and American oak barrels for over three years, which is our norm, gives our zinfandels a richness and complexity many aspire to. Now with a new white label, will set it apart from the rest of our line-up. Drinks perfectly with Spaghetti or lasagna Bolognese (in our cookbook).

## 2018 GRAZIANO Zinfandel



This very complex and well structure Zinfandel is produced from our very best lots of the Tournour and Pacini Vineyards with a splash of Mendocino old-vine Petite Sirah blended in. Dark purple garnet in color with full, rich tannins, set this wine apart from most Zinfandels. Aged for over 3 years in French Burgundy barrels of which 30 % are new, produces a wine you can age for many years to increase its softness and drinkability. Aromas and flavors of dark blackberries and toasty oak, balanced by rich, full tannins and acidity satisfy the palette. A great wine with a grilled thick, rare rib-eye steak.

## 2018 GRAZIANO Zinfandel Reserve



Thought by many to be the finest white variety in the Campanian region of central Italy and maybe one of the best in all of Italy, this, like many Italian varieties is hard to grow. Late maturing, small pinot like clusters grow on spindly but vigorous shoots. Its clean, focused stone fruit aromas and flavors take time in the bottle to mature. Grown in our experimental vineyard plot in our Nube Bianco vineyard located at the southern end of the high elevation Potter Valley. 100% barrel fermented and sur-lie aged without malo-lactic fermentation in neutral French Burgundy barrels enriches this wine and preserves its acidity. A perfect partner for shellfish pasta or risotto.

## 2022 MONTE VOLPE Greco di Tufo



This northeastern Italian grown grape variety is thought to be of Friulan origin. It is grown in our experimental vineyard plot in our Nube Bianco vineyard located at the southern end of the high elevation Potter Valley. 100% barrel fermented and sur-lie aged without malo-lactic fermentation in neutral French Burgundy barrels enriches this wine and preserves its acidity. Ribolla Gialla derives its name from the very yellow-colored clusters denoting ripeness. Susceptible to botrytis bunch rot gives this variety an element of difficulty in the vineyard. Aromas and flavors of ripe apples and pears with a rich body and moderate acidity make for a pleasant early drinking wine. Enjoy with Chicken Kiev (in our cookbook) or many light pork dishes like Pork Piccata Scaloppini.

## 2022 MONTE VOLPE Ribolla Gialla

# News from the Tasting Room



What a great experience. You get to come to a quaint little town, Hopland, that hasn't sold its soul to the corporate machine. You get such a variety of wines of such good quality for such a reasonable price.

And you get to taste wine and talk all about winemaking, enology, and grape growing, viticulture, with a winemaker, me. I've been working in vineyards and wineries since college summers. Greg and I turned bankrupt La Crema Vinera into platinum medal winning La Crema. Before the marriage, mortgage, and babies I set off travel around the world but never made it past Cape Town South Africa. I made wine there and it was so nice that I stayed 19 years. I finally got homesick and came back to play in the Graziano Family of Wines tasting room. I have big winery experience but prefer hands on small wineries. Questions are always welcome and come up naturally. I look forward to giving you a unique slant on wine.



## DID YOU KNOW:

- Grape vines decide the size of next year's crop at veraison this year.
- Grape vines should never have red leaves. Only virus infected grapevines have red leaves. Unfortunately, the virus also lowers the grape quality, crop size and lifespan of the vine.
- Winemakers can fine tune their wine. Fining is adding something to the wine to take something out. For red wines we use protein which is positively charged to grab a hold of the negatively charged tannins and they settle out and your wine is softer and brilliantly clear. You can use gelatin from bones, casein from milk, isinglass from fish air bladders. We prefer using albumin from egg whites.
- For white wines we add negatively charged Bentonite clay to grab hold of the positively charged grape proteins and settle out. If the protein is left in the white wine it can form a very unattractive cloud in the bottle.

So come to happy healthy unincorporated Hopland and enjoy a plethora of really good wines at yesteryear's prices with little old winemaker me. *Cheers! – John Reagh*



Profile

## Edith “Edie” Ceccarelli



As I write this, the oldest person in America now resides in Mendocino County, just 15 minutes north of the winery in Willits; her name is Edith “Edie” Ceccarelli. Her secret to life?

“Have two fingers of red wine with your dinner, and mind your own business.” (According to a Jan. 4 article by the local The Press Democrat.)

Edie was born on Feb. 5, 1908, and is nearing her 115th birthday. By the time this is printed, she’ll have hopefully made it. The Press Democrat said that, “according to scientists with the Gerontology Research Group, the only people on the planet confirmed to be older than Ceccarelli are Lucille Randon of France, at 118 years and 328 days; Spain’s Maria Branyas Morera, 115 years, 307 days, and Fusa Tatsumi of Japan, 115 years, 255 days.”

So, I think we should follow this amazing centenarian’s advice! Let’s raise a glass of red wine to Mrs. Edie and hope she continues her wonderful life.



## Barn Cats – We Adopted One!

Barn Cat, Farm Cat, Working Cat... Whatever you want to call them, they’ve been around for a long time. Around 7500 BC cats were domesticated, probably with the intention of keeping them around to protect stored grains and dried goods from rodents and other small pests. Ever since then, cats and humans have had a tight bond.

We love our house cats, but often there are cats that do not adjust well to inside life, humans, or are abandoned and left on their own. These cats still deserve good homes, and luckily our local humane society has a barn cat program, where even the most independent of cats has the opportunity to be taken in and taken care of.

Barn cats are an awesome solution for pest control; they kill the initial pest population, then their pheromones keep any future pests away. This means there is no poison for animals or children to get into, it does not pass poison onto the predator that eats the pests (like foxes, coyotes, hawks, etc.), there are no traps to set... it’s really an organic form of pest control. Plus, you get to help an orphaned animal in need of home.

We enjoy our winery being out in the country side, but that means we are much closer to nature, for better or for worse. So, we adopted a barn cat of our own and named her Cipollina, after the Italian Cipollini onion because she is little but very intense! — **Alexandra Graziano**





# 2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## MAR

- **1st – 5th - Charleston Wine and Food**, Charleston SC
- **2nd – 4th - Jackson Hole Food & Winter Wine Fest**, Jackson Hole WY
- **4th, 11th, 18th, 25th - Mendocino Whale Festival**, Mendocino CA
- **9th – 11th - Cincinnati Wine Fest**, Cincinnati, OH
- **11th - Wine Club Pick Up Party**, Hopland CA
- **11th - Second Saturday**, Hopland CA

## APR

- **5th – 9th - Taste of Vail**, Vail CO
- **8th - Second Saturday**, Hopland CA

## MAY

- **13th - Second Saturday**, Hopland CA
- **14th – 15th - Hopland Passport**, Hopland CA
- **19th – 21st - Anderson Valley Pinot Fest**, Anderson Valley CA
- **26th- 28th - Bottle Rock**, Napa CA

## Feature Article

Who Am I Time (continued from page 1)

trigger its changes and manifest its personality, or, in this case, personalities. Poor Chenin Blanc, it's so misunderstood. "Who am I," it asks, "Dry or sweet? Off dry? Sec? Moelleux? New World/Old World paradigm? Jug wine fodder or noble white? What to do, what to do....I gotta call my agent....." Oh, the angst of it all....

I know, you are thinking, "What is this guy thinking?" And more importantly, what does moellux mean?

Before we get to that, though, let's take a look at this befuddling grape and what wines it's capable of making. In its native appellation of the Anjou-Saumur in the central Loire Valley, it is used to make some of the world's most renowned dry wines, white wines which may be aged for decades (!), as well as a procession of wine styles with varying amounts of residual sugar, and even sparkling wines which can rival the best of those produced in Champagne. Chenin Blanc also produces one of France's greatest sweet botrytis dessert wines, Quarts de Chaume in the Coteaux de Lyon region. Ooops – did we overlook one? Yep – brandy. It's hard to think of a varietal with so much versatility.

But can that much versatility be reconciled with flavor and quality? The answer lies, as it so often does, in the vineyard. If the setting is cooler, such as it is in its native Loire Valley, the grape will be able to develop the necessary complexity to maintain balance in all styles, including 'sec', (dry, 0 – 0.4% residual sugar), 'demi-sec', (semi-dry, .04 – 1.2% residual sugar), 'molleux', (medium-sweet, 1.2 – 4.5% residual sugar) and 'doux', (quite sweet, more than 4.5% residual sugar). In warmer regions, it's Chenin's natural tendency to develop plenty of acidity as well as complexity, and that brings us home, to California.

Which means that we must do a bit of a flashback for a second. In the 1960's and early 70's, most California wines were, to be kind, exceptionally average. By the mid-70's, though, Americans began to notice a new energy and a new style in wines grown and produced in California. Wines were improving, and California's better wines were being labeled by the predominate grape variety rather than by easy-to-pronounce French-sounding names, and Chenin Blanc quickly became one of the most-produced wines (in America, easy-to-pronounce is not a minor factor, folks, even today). It was made, of course, in the style of the day, fragrant, slightly sweet and pretty much devoid of acidity, or 'bite' in the vernacular of the day. Producers like Charles Krug sold tons of it. But Chenin's ascendancy was short-lived, for soon the very oaky, buttery dry Chardonnays arrived and Chenin Blanc was like the aging movie star, typecast, bereft of a following and put out to pasture, which in this case was Fresno County, where there are still over 5,000 acres of Chenin Blanc. Except for here in Mendocino County and a few other regions, growers and winemakers were forced to react to the times and soon moved on to other wines and Chenin Blanc was relegated to jug wine status.

Fortunately, however, like a classic old movie, Chenin Blanc is today undergoing a bit of a renaissance, and as usual Greg Graziano is leading the way. Our 2020 Graziano Chenin Blanc is farmed in the proper setting to the appropriate tons per acre, allowing the grape's natural acidity and complexity to develop. Just like a chef who depends upon the best and freshest ingredients for his creations, Greg has taken these grapes and, through the Old-World techniques of barrel-fermentation and sur-lie aging, created an amazing wine, one which would feel right at home beside the best Savennieres Anjou can produce. Using the time-tested 'swirl, sniff and slurp' technique, this gold-tinted wine will offer aromas of citrus and earth, with just a hint of sweet pear; on the palate, you're immediately struck by the fact that this wine has some weight to it, a gripping minerality that's most pleasing. The opening flavors are quince/grapefruit, followed by ripe pear and hints of wild honey, finishing with a hint of anise/fennel. Wow. Try it with Coquille St. Jacques or Saffron Mussels with fried new potatoes, or birch-grilled halibut with flash-fried spinach and cranberries – well, with this wine the list can just go on and on.

And since this whole piece has been sort of an extended mixed metaphor, let us throw in another – with Greg as director, the star of this movie is ready for her close-up, and believe me, she can stand the scrutiny. But, no popcorn, please.

The **Next Wine Club Shipment** will be in **JUNE 2023** and will feature:

**2018 Graziano Zinfandel**

**2019 Saint Gregory Pinot Noir Reserve Anderson Valley**

**2022 Monte Volpe Vermentino**

**Please contact us with any address, email or credit card changes.**

(Subject to change)



TRUDI & ALEXANDRA'S  
RECIPE

# White Lasagna

Serves 4

## BACKGROUND:

This is an adaptation of the Umbrian, farmer, restaurateur and reluctant celebrity chef Giorgio Barchiesi's White Lasagna recipe which I watched on Gambero Rosso TV. This is a very simple rustic dish so don't worry about being exact.

## METHOD:

In Georgios's recipe he makes his own fresh pasta but for unless you're up to that task, dried lasagna noodles will work just fine. In a large pot boil dried pasta sheets in salted water till just al dente then dry them separated on paper towels. I personally like to trim off the ruffled edges for better presentation. In the meantime, in a large pan, sauté sausage that is broken up and removed from their casings till browned. Remove to a plate. In the meantime, parboil green beans and Fava beans (if using canned green beans, do not parboil) in salted water and some olive oil till al dente and drain. Next, sauté cut up green onions in butter and olive oil and fat from sausage till onions are starting to get translucent then add garlic, rough cut green beans and add whole fava beans and frozen peas and sauté for a few more minutes more, then add back sausage and add cream and simmer for a few minutes till integrated. Meanwhile rub a medium sized lasagna dish with soft butter then pour some olive oil on top of that then laydown first layer of noodles making sure to go up all sides of the dish. Next, start to build layers with sausage-bean mixture, randomly place dollops of cheese, parmesan cheese, a couple of tablespoons of chicken broth and some lemon zest. Add another 3 layer of noodles alternating the direction of them and lay down sausage bean mixture and other ingredients finishing on top. You may need more or less layers depending on the size and depth of your lasagna dish. Also, randomly put dollops of butter and plenty of Parmesan cheese and soft cheese on top. Place lasagna in a 350-degree oven and cook for 30 minutes until lasagna is bubbling hot and top layer is well-browned.

Serve with Graziano Chenin Blanc, Monte Volpe Pinot Grigio and or Monte Volpe Negroamaro.

## Enjoy!

—Trudi & Alexandra Graziano



## INGREDIENTS:

- Olive oil
- Soft Butter ½ stick
- Cream 1 cup
- Salt
- Pepper
- Italian Stracchino cheese, or Italian ribola soft cheese or a ripe Brie cheese, one wheel or several wedges
- Mild Italian sausage, 3 links or ½ lb
- Fava beans or green lima beans, 1 cup
- Frozen Peas, 1 cup
- Fresh green bean (pods), 1 cup
- Green onions 8 stalks, include half of green stalks
- 4 garlic cloves
- Parmesan cheese
- Lemon zest
- 3/4 lbs dried lasagna noodles
- 4 oz's Chicken broth

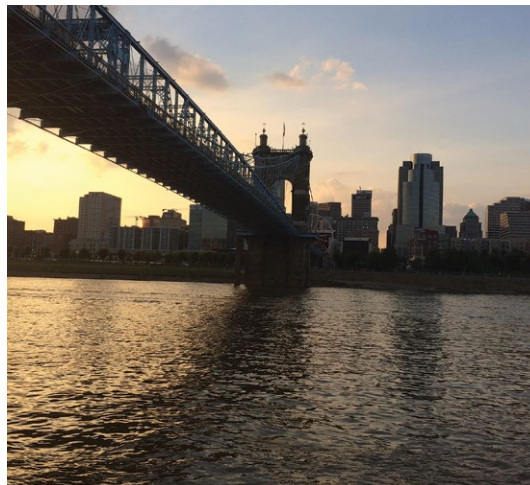




Greg Graziano

# Greg's Two Cents

*Cutting Edge Selections, doing a great job in Ohio and the fabulous city of Cincinnati. (con't from Page 2)*



John Roebling bridge and Cincinnati skyline

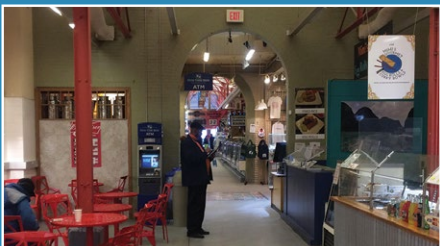
Cincinnati Wine Festival for over 15 years. One of my favorite cities in America is in fact Cincinnati. Cincinnati was founded in the late 1700's along the river bank of the Ohio river across from the state of Kentucky. With an estimated metropolitan area population of over 2.25 million people it is the largest in Ohio and the 30th largest in the country. In the mid 1800's it was established with a large German and Irish population who came here to work in the local industries. In fact, part of the city is called "Over the

Rhine". One of the special things for me about the city is its architecture with scores of beautiful red and yellow brick buildings, which for many years were in disrepair but in the last 10 years a major renaissance has been happening in the city. Run-down buildings and neighborhoods have been repaired and many new restaurants and bars have been established, so now the city is looked upon as a real leader in the mid-west restaurant and bar scene. In writing this piece I just discovered a friend and culinary legend Jean Robert de Cavel passed away in late December after a long battle with cancer. He was one of Americas great chefs and I had the great pleasure to eat his wonderful food for over 20 years. Jean Robert's Le Bar a Boeuf and other restaurants like Bakersfield (my favorite tequila and taco bar), The Senate, Sotto, Nicola's, Salazar, the Hilton Hotels' Orchids, Domo, Jeff Ruby's, Arnolds Bar, Dilly Bistro, and the Wildflower Café in nearby Mason are always wonderful establishments to visit. The city has also invested heavily in public transportation with a train in the downtown area but having walked these streets so often, things here are not that spread out. Another great feature of this city is the Findley Market which is full of food shops, fresh vegetables, and butcher stands. The city has also invested heavily in the national sport teams. Two beautiful stadiums have been built next to the Ohio River for the Bengals football team and the Reds baseball team. So next time you are anywhere near Cincinnati make it a point to spend a few days here and experience what I have for so many years.

*Sincerely, —Greg Graziano*



Cincinnati skyline



Findley market



New downtown train

**GRAZIANO**  
  
**FAMILY OF WINES**  
 Mendocino Wine Growers  
 Since 1918