

Cellar Club News



A Note From The Owners

In these uncertain times it is something of a comfort to reconnect with the many friends and loyal customers who are part of the Claiborne & Churchill Cellar Club. When we started this program back in the early 1990s we had just a handful of names and addresses of friends and family. Since then the club has expanded a hundred-fold, but happily still includes a number of the original "Charter Members."

To you and all the others who, since the forced closure of our Tasting Room, have taken advantage of our recent online wine promotions, we send our heartfelt thanks. We are overwhelmed by your generous support! It is fair to say that without these shipped orders and "curbside pickups" we would have been hard-pressed to make ends meet. — *Claiborne Thompson and Fredericka Churchill Thompson*

2019 DRY GEWÜRZTRAMINER

This is always one of the first wines from the fall harvest to be released, and what a winner it is! I do not remember any previous vintage of this signature wine that packed such intensity of aromas and flavors as this one. And we're talking thirty-six vintages!

With notes of white flowers, pineapple and lychee, our 2019 Gewürz boasts a creamy texture and a long, lingering finish. Try it as a lively aperitif wine, or as a worthy accompaniment to spicy cuisine such as Thai or Cajun.

ALCOHOL 13.6%

RESIDUAL SUGAR 0.2%

HARVESTED November 4, 2019

VINEYARDS 100% Viento Vineyard,
Monterey County AVA

AGING 100% Tank Fermented and Aged

BOTTLED April 9, 2020

CASES PRODUCED 1,092

RETAIL PRICE \$24



2018 ESTATE DRY RIESLING

I wonder: is it possible to have more than one "signature wine"? If not, our Dry Riesling is going to feel very left out! Bear in mind that our first crush in the fall of 1983 consisted of three tons of Gewürztraminer grapes and three tons of Riesling. This bottling of Riesling comes off our own Estate "Claiborne" Vineyard, planted in 2005 to two clones of Riesling, one of German origin and the other from Alsace.

We think of our Rieslings as "comfort wines", placid and agreeable wines that take us to a better place and make everything we eat taste better too! In the 2018 we find hints of peach and tangerine, and a citrusy note that brings to mind a nice slice of lemon pound cake. Try it with anything; it craves food and goes with everything!

ALCOHOL 12.5%

HARVESTED October 15, 2018

VINEYARDS 100% Estate Claiborne Vineyard
Enda Valley AVA

AGING 100% Tank Fermented and Aged

BOTTLED March 5, 2019

CASES PRODUCED 214

RETAIL PRICE \$28



2019 CUVÉE ELIZABETH DRY ROSÉ

Okay, could we have three “signature wines? If so, we have to include this crowd favorite, a harbinger of spring that we started making back in 1997. At that time it was unusual in California to make a rosé wine that wasn’t sweet. (Now it’s all the rage.)

The first thing to point out in this new bottling of “Cuvée Liz” is its lovely pink hue, a little lighter than in the past and more in keeping with the iconic dry rosé wines of Provence. It is beautiful in the glass and beautiful in the bottle, as it contrasts with the colorful label (with art work by our daughter at age 11!). The wine itself is everything you want in a springtime quaffer: a taste of strawberries and watermelon, a little rhubarb, bright acidity and a refreshing finish.

ALCOHOL 13.1%

HARVESTED September 26, 2019

VINEYARD 100% Estate Twin Creeks,
Edna Valley AVA

CLONES 100% Martini

AGING 100% Tank Fermented and Aged

BOTTLED February 20, 2020

CASES PRODUCED 340

RETAIL PRICE \$26



2018 TWIN CREEKS PINOT NOIR

The grapes for this “Signature Wine” (that makes four) come from small vineyards on Twin Creeks Way, just a stone’s throw from our winery. We have had exclusive rights to all of the fruit from these vineyards since the first vintage in the year 2000. Since we have long-term contracts and share management with the owners, we are also able to consider the vineyards “estate.”

The 2018 Twin Creeks is the first vintage to include some new Pinot Noir clones planted a few years ago. I believe they have contributed to produce a spicy, light and elegant wine that fairly dances on the palate. It also shows good red fruit, soft tannins, a hint of oak, and a smooth finish. What more could you want in a Pinot Noir?

ALCOHOL 13.9%

HARVESTED October 16, 2018

VINEYARD 70% Estate Twin Creeks Vineyard
20% Wolff Vineyards
10% Estate Claiborne Vineyard
Edna Valley AVA

AGING 30% New French Oak
Aged 10 Months in Barrel

BOTTLED August 16, 2019

CASES PRODUCED 238

RETAIL PRICE \$46



RECIPE: SMOKED TROUT PÂTÉ

This can be made with any smoked fish including salmon which is the most commonly available, but I think that smoked trout is the best base to make it from. You can make it in a food processor. I prefer to chop it all together by hand in a wooden bowl using a mezzaluna. In that way you can control the texture better and taste as each ingredient is added. This is a simple dish that can be thrown together quickly just before a party. If you toast some baguette slices to serve it on it’s very elegant, and everyone will think you are a much better chef than you really are – ideal, right? It can also be served on cucumber slices for a little bit fresher variation. If you want to be extravagant you can add a little bit of caviar on top of each toast. This recipe is wonderful with white wine before the meal.

8 oz. smoked trout or other smoked fish
2 Tb chopped Italian parsley
1 Tb minced shallots or onions or 1 tsp minced garlic
1 Tb brandy or white wine
2 Tb butter – room temperature
½ cup whipping cream, buttermilk, or crème fraîche (the buttermilk or crème fraîche will give a little bit lighter taste)
Salt to taste – the smoked fish may bring enough savor

Finely chop or blend the fish. Add the parsley, shallots, and brandy.
Add the butter.

Begin adding the liquid (cream etc.) until the texture is smooth and just slightly looser than spreadable. You may not need all the liquid – or you may need more. This step is critical to achieving the correct texture – take it slowly! Press into serving bowl, and decorate surface by pressing leaves of parsley over the surface after you’ve smoothed it.

Refrigerate to set for an hour or so. It will keep for days so it can be made in advance.

