



Frogtown Cellars

*Setting the Quality Standard in Georgia and the Entire East Coast
for World Class Premium Wines*

Established 1999

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May, September, and December 2020 Winemaker Notes

Dear Frogtown Citizen:

OOPS!

The above date references are correct! I simply have not dedicated the time to reflect on the task of creating meaningful Wine Maker Notes (WMN) for the past two Wine Club Releases, May and September 2020; extend such inattention to the upcoming December, 2020 Release? No, totally unacceptable. So, here we go.

Frogtown's GA and CA vineyards; growing Season and harvests?

All harvests at Frogtown's Dahlonega Plateau, AVA, Georgia, and Paso Robles AVAs Geneseo District and Adelaida District, California, vineyards are completed and the final stages of winemaking are occurring.

Harvest and winemaking results from the Dahlonega Plateau AVA vineyard

The weather patterns in North Georgia were a sort of weather pandemic - lots and lots of rain and then lots more rain. Most weeks there were very few clear sunny days before the next rain fell. If I wrote these WMN before harvest commenced, I would have informed you that I had major concerns about the quality and quantity of grapes to be harvested on Frogtown's Dahlonega Plateau vineyard. I can report the quality and quantity of our Dahlonega fruit is just fine for Marsanne, Roussanne, Chardonnay, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. The harvest, however, of Tannant, Touriga, and Petit Verdot were fine on quality but short on

tonnage. Painfully, very short on tonnage for Sauvignon Gris, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc and Malbec. Frogtown's vineyard associates did a herculean job during this growing decision. Without the substantial knowledge gained from prior vintage years over the last 21 years, our farming could not have delivered the results achieved in 2020. Frogtown did not just "survive" the 2020 vintage year, Frogtown achieved what is most important in winemaking, the receipt at the crush pad of quality harvested fruit. I am thankful for the grapes harvested and have little concern with making Frogtown quality wine from this 2020 harvest. Winemaking started immediately at the destemming and pressing of the grapes. I saigned our red grape fermentations as much as I have ever done in the past. Look at past WMN for a description of the saignee process and what it means to winemaking at Frogtown's Dahlonge Plateau AVA vineyard.

Harvest of Adelaida and Geneseo AVA vineyards in Paso Robles CA and initial winemaking results.

While the quality and quantity of fruit at harvest in California was very good, there was some serious concern whether the fires in Napa, Sonoma and even closer, Salinas, caused smoke damage to the grapes. Low levels of atmospheric smoke hung over Paso Robles for a significant amount of days. The fires in Northern California have underscored how little is known about smoke taint and how ill prepared CA is for the event.

Prior to the actual harvests at Adelaida and Geneseo, some of our fruit in "laboratory fermentations" tested positive for the presence of the elements that cause smoke taint. This did cause significant concern. This concern has dissipated substantially, as the actual commercial fermentations by Frogtown and our grape customers do not appear to have detectable levels of smoke taint in the 2020 wines.

Let's discuss the newest and most significant wines Released in the previous two Releases and to be Released shortly.

[Preface: I am very proud of the quality of Frogtown Wines Released in February, and May, 2020 and to be Released in December, 2020. Are these the best wines ever made at Frogtown? Do I consider any of these wines to be my favorite wine(s)?]

The two most frequent questions I am asked about Frogtown or our wines are:

- (1) how did you come up with the name Frogtown? and
- (2) what is your favorite wine?

The first question is answered directly and meaningfully, as I cherish Georgia's Cherokee Indians who long ago were the stewards of the special 57 acres which constitute Frogtown's Dahlenega Plateau AVA vineyard. Frogtown is an anglicized form of the Cherokee name for "the place of the frog". Not a difficult choice by me and Cydney in 1999.

The second question The most direct explanation given is "I do not have a favorite." Can not imagine a more direct and definitive answer to the second question. But people are generally persistent and do not accept this clear, direct, and definitive answer. So the follow-on comment is "come on you must have a favorite."

OK, since the clear (unambiguous), definitive and direct answer **does not end the inquiry**, I provide a further explanation in a tangentially indirect manner most people do understand and accept! I ask the inquiring person, "how many children do you have and which one is your favorite?" Whether or not the inquiring person in fact has (have) children they immediately understand what I want them to understand. Oh, I get it they say. If an affirmative answer is given to this favorite child question, usually the response must be highly qualified (well, it depends). **Oh, Mary has not called me in weeks, so Joan is my favorite child.**

2017 Reserve Disclosure Cabernet Franc. With the above in mind, I love and am very proud of the 2017 Reserve Disclosure Cabernet Franc (that is a high accolade from me).

Is it the best Cabernet Franc I ever made? Possibly yes, possibly no. What about the 2004, 2008, 2009 Frogtown Cabernet Franc wines. These Cabernet Franc wines have aged gracefully and beautifully. Because of the development of the 2009 Cabernet Franc in the bottle, this Cabernet Franc today also receives my highest accolade.

The age worthiness of Frogtown wines is one of the most gratifying accomplishments of our winemaking! Our wines age well. In my opinion, world class, well. Just astonishing!

I was planning on bottling this 2017 Cabernet Franc as a Kritzer Family Reserve 100% Georgia wine. One day before the scheduled bottling, I noticed one barrel

remained of the 2017 vintage Cabernet Franc from the Paso Robles Adelaida vineyard (the other barrels were used to make the 2017 Compulsion and Convergence).

I made a sample blend - eleven (11) parts Dahlenega Plateau AVA Cabernet Franc (all eleven barrels I had in the tank) to one (1) part Adelaida District, Paso Robles, AVA Cabernet Franc (the one barrel I noticed). I liked what the small amount of Adelaida Cabernet Franc did for the wine. So the 2017 Disclosure Reserve Cabernet Franc was bottled as 91% Dahlenega Plateau, Georgia and 9% Adelaida Paso Robles, California.

Not to go into an explanation most of you already know, since the wine did not contain 100% Georgia, the wine was put into a Disclosure, American labeled wine and not a Georgia labeled wine.

This wine is quintessentially Cabernet Franc. It could be the poster child for Cabernet Franc wines. Rich spicy fruit flavors and very supple; could even be described as creamy smooth. Just the right amount of acid required to make the wine lively and refreshing and food friendly. Full elegant integration of French and American Oak on the palate adding vanilla and to a less extent tobacco nuances to the wine. I have previously written about the tobacco nuances in our Cabernet Franc wines. Extremely elegant with underlying tannin structure that should afford aging of this wine for 15-30 years. Just yummy!

The 2017 Reserve Disclosure Cabernet Franc just won a Gold Medal at the prestigious 2020 San Francisco International Wine Competition.

2019 Reserve Enabler Roussanne. For those who attended the 2019 Harvest Day with Craig you may remember as the 2019 Roussanne grapes were being harvested, I opined the Roussanne grapes were the best Roussanne grapes ever harvested at Frogtown. I further opined an incredible Roussanne wine will be made with these grapes.

Fast forward to the 2020 San Francisco International Wine Competition and the awarding of a Gold Medal to this 2019 Reserve Enabler Roussanne.

The making of this Roussanne wine was as non-invasive as any white wine I ever made in my 20 years of making wine. Generally non-invasive means don't do anything that will diminish the potential quality of the wine. That is, don't add fining or stabilizing agents that will take away from the wine. Use a carefully controlled aeration protocol during the early stage of fermentation to bring out the full flavor of

the grapes, and bottle the wine as soon as it is ready (don't let it remain in the tank for any extended period of time).

Similar to what I said about the 2017 Disclosure Reserve Cabernet Franc above, this Roussanne can and should be a poster child for what world-class Roussanne is all about. Very proud and gratified to produce this wine. Is it my favorite wine?

The flavors of this Roussanne are what great White Hermitage is all about. This Rhone Valley white grape wine demonstrates that delicious white wine does not require citrus flavors. Rich in apple, pear, honey, and the essence of almonds and hazelnuts, these flavors combine to make this Roussanne distinctive. The wine is rich and creamy due in large part to frequent lees stirring in the tank. Made in all stainless steel.

2015 Kritzer Family Reserve Tannat. Ho Hum, another excellent bottling of Frogtown Tannat. Frogtown would not be Frogtown without the Tannat grape. Tannat wines have delivered quality as 100% varietal labeled wines, like the 2015 Reserve, or as excellent blending contributions to our red blends. The blending can be very obvious like in Shotgun or Bravado, or subtle to add nuance to a wine in a background manner. Some of our most awarded Georgia wines have enjoyed some amount of Tannat blended into the wine.

The wine on the palate is super intense. Big amounts of cassis and dark fruit are evident. Since this wine spent 4 years in oak barrels, the presence of oak is completely in the background where it should be. As with other Tannat wines, test this wine's character by enjoying the wine with a fatty premium steak. It is definitely not the wine to pair with any spicy foods (i.e. a bowl of hot chilli). How long will this wine age in the bottle? I wish I could be there to find out!

The 2018 White Wines were some of the best white wines ever made at Frogtown. Awards of Gold and Silver Medals were received from major US competitions for many of these white wines. But watch out for the 2019 White Wines. Not only Gold for the 2019 Roussanne. In my opinion, these are Gold designations to be awarded for some additional vintage 2019 White wines.

2019 Frogtown Viognier. It has been a significant period of time since the last wonderful 100% varietal labeled Viognier has been made and offered at Frogtown. There are many lightly flavored wines made with the Viognier grape in this county. That simply is not Viognier wine. If you are one of the lucky persons who have experience tasting a Condrieu wine (100% French Viognier), particularly a Condrieu

from **Château-Grillet**, you know how wonderful a full flavored Viognier tastes and smells. The perfume nose is just that, perfume, with flavors of peach, honeydew melon, tangerine, and honeysuckle. This perfume and flavors are what you receive from our very full-bodied 2019 Viognier. I just like to drink this wine as an aperitif without any food influencing my enjoyment.

2019 Frogtown SBG, the new “identified by the letters” white Frogtown wine. Not to be mistaken in the slightest for MRV, this is a neat marriage of Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris.

I have tried blending some amounts of Sauvignon Gris into our Sauvignon Blanc wines and also some Sauvignon Blanc into Sauvignon Gris wines. I was never convinced that such blending made either a Sauvignon Blanc wine or a Sauvignon Gris wine better. You blend to make a wine better.

The SBG wine is different, I am not trying to make a Sauvignon Blanc or a Sauvignon Gris labeled wine better. SBG is not to be confused with either a Sauvignon Blanc or a Sauvignon Gris. It is a wine on its own. SBG is a true blend in that it does not resemble either a varietally labeled Sauvignon Blanc or Sauvignon Gris wine. Let’s see how this highly grapefruit nuance wine develops over the course of 2021. It has been well received by our Citizens.

2016 Frogtown Priority and 2016 Kritzer Family Reserve Touriga.

Arriving in the December Release are the 2016 Frogtown Priority and the 2016 Kritzer Family Reserve Touriga, both 100% Dahlenega Plateau AVA wines.

The 2016 Priority is the second bottling of a Priority labeled wine. This blend of Priority consists of 60% of Nebbiolo, 25% of Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% of Teroldego. The wine screams of Nebbiolo. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Teroldego are along for the ride to give subtle texture and color to this wine. Front and center is the Nebbiolo with its distinct high acidity and tannin. Nebbiolo, despite its lighter color when compared to other premium red wines, is a full bodied tannic wine intended to enjoy considerable bottle age. To me Nebbiolo has a very distinct aroma that can be described as rose scents with a combination of anise (licorice) and bright cherry and sometimes recognizable raspberry flavors.

Nebbiolo, as I have noted previously, does not grow well in many regions outside of the Piedmont region of Italy. I speculate Frogtown’s Dahlenega Plateau AVA vineyard with its extensive clay and schist soil components aid in the classification of

the Nebbiolo we grow as very recognizable (Piedmont) Nebbiolo. A valid descriptor of a Nebbiolo wine is minerality. The minerality (schist) in our terroir significant Nebbiolo wines does play a part in describing our Nebbiolo as varietally correct Nebbiolo wine. Go back to my WMN describing the Kritzer Family Reserve Nebbiolo that won a double gold medal at a major US competition. Nebbiolo, along with Touriga, to be discussed next, are wines very distinctly different from other premium red wines made with different red grapes.

The 2016 Kritzer Family Reserve Touriga is a dead ringer for the 2014 Kritzer Family Reserve Touriga. Touriga is a terroir influenced wine. It is safe to say that our Touriga wine's aroma, flavors, texture, and color are consistent and unique to our terroir.

My enjoyment of Touriga wines is accentuated by the unmistakable presence of aromas of violets when smelled in the glass and that same sensation continues when the wine is tasted. Touriga wines are the "richest" flavored and textured wines I have experienced. Our Touriga wines can be described to have blackberry, plum, and anise flavors that are enhanced by vanilla nuances. I can say with confidence our Touriga wines express more recognizable vanilla oak nuances than any other Frogtown wine. Touriga was made to bathe in oak barrels.

2018 Frogtown Clos Equal Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc and 2018 Frogtown Clos Primavera Proclivity.

Arriving in the December 2020 Release, Extended California Citizens will be receiving two wines grown, produced, and bottled from our Geneseo District, Paso Robles, AVA vineyard: 2018 Frogtown Clos Primavera Co-Equal Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc and 2018 Frogtown Clos Primavera Proclivity.

2018 Frogtown Clos Primavera Co-Equal, as the name Co-Equal suggests, the wine contains equal amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. This Frogtown Clos Primavera wine is bottled with reference to being an Exemplar Series wine. The reference to Exemplar is added to the description of the wine to indicate the wine is an excellent example of what it is intended to be, i.e a blend of equal parts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc.

Because this Clos Primavera wine has just been bottled, it is hard to adequately describe the wine. One of my early observations is the wine is NOT what a Paso Robles Bordeaux blend usually delivers. The wine at this stage of development can be described as resembling a European Bordeaux style wine in its elegance and finesse,

while also delivering lots of fruit flavors found in California wines. It is not flabby, as some Paso Robles wines can be. Integrated acid gives the wine elegance and “levels out” the presence of lots of fruit. Unless more “Paso Robles” characteristics develop as the wine ages, this wine will deliver a relatively more elegant complex wine than what is typically made in Paso Robles. Definitely more food friendly.

2018 Frogtown Clos Primavera G Series Proclivity. It is a G series wine because this wine is a blend of 51% Garnacha, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 9% Teroldego. G Series wines are Grenache blended wines intended to be similar to wines made in regions of Spain, particularly Priorat, Spain.

Like the 2018 Co-Equal Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, it is difficult to definitively describe this wine due to the fact the wine has just been bottled. It definitely is not a close sibling to the 2017 Frogtown Clos Primavera G series Propensity. The 2018 Frogtown Clos Primavera Proclivity is more elegant than the first G series bottling of 2017 Propensity. It is less fruit forward.

Keeping in mind what I said about the 2018 Frogtown Clos Primavera Co-Equal, one might speculate the 2018 vintage wines made from grapes harvested at our Paso Robles Adelaida District, and Geneseo District vineyards can be characterized as wines delivering less fruit forward wine(s) with more elegance and finesses than what is generally typical of Paso Robles AVA wines. Time will tell and please when you see me ask me for updates.

Presently, the 2018 Clos Primavera Proclivity delivers the unique plum flavors I get from Grenache red Blends. The Teroldego gives the blend color and added backbone to complement the intensity which Grenache delivers with it lighter and distinct flavor characteristics. The Cabernet Sauvignon is at this time difficult for me to identify. Again, let’s see how this wine develops in the bottle.

Heads Up. Recently, I have enjoyed drinking the 2015 Sangiovese and the 2016 Penchant. These wines have developed beautifully in the bottle.

As always, our very best wishes, especially for a Wonderful Holiday Season and New Year, Craig, Cydney and John

