

Véraisson

WINTER 2016 VOLUME 1 NUMBER 6

Sharing the seasons at Oakville Cross with our Friends and Family

Through our kitchen window...

Harvest is over ~ the anticipation, worry about the weather, and frenzy of the picking crew have subsided. The 2016 vintage is on its way to the oak barrels to age for two years before bottling. The vineyard is resting. My mind drifts to some of the unsung heroes in the vineyard ~ Michael captured this photo of a visiting honey bee on one of the grapes. Although grapes are wind pollinated, cover crops like spring mustard need bees, so they are always a welcome sight. Bees have had a tough life recently – shrinking environments and pesticides have taken a toll – good to see a nice healthy one.

Although birds are a major problem in some vineyards, we can appreciate and marvel at their building prowess



– a bird's nest found in the vines by our friend Carli Seaver

was fun to inspect and see what materials this creative pest found to build its family home. Piece by piece she assembled a sturdy – yet soft – place to lay her eggs and hatch her babies.

It's a peaceful time. Soon we will have to rev up for the holidays, but for now – enjoying the quiet!



Our 2012 Cabernet is the perfect winter wine...

It is ripe with vibrant aromas of plum and cherry with a hint of vanilla and anise. A long soft finish teases for another sip. We pair it with our holiday meals to add just the right amount of specialness when our growing family congregates around the table ~ can't wait! If you need to order a bottle or two for the coming holidays click [here](#).



Cab for Two...

Before we get too busy with holiday commitments and preparations, Jack and I like to have a leisurely afternoon snack and take time to recharge. A simple plate of charcuterie, a nice hard cheese like Manchego, some crispy crackers spread with fig butter and some dried fruits and a few nuts is quick and easy to put together. It's a nice time to catch up on family news and figure out what needs to be done before family and friends drop in. It's our favorite time of the year!

A hearty stew is the perfect dish for a cold day...

There is really nothing better than coming into the kitchen from outside and being met with the aroma of something wonderful in the oven ~ I think the old adage "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach" applies equally to females. This recipe can be made for a family or easily doubled.

Greek Stéfado

Heat oven to 350 – serves 6-8
2 - medium to large onions, thinly sliced
½ cup butter
3 lbs. lean beef stew meat – cut into 1½ cubes

Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 bay leaf
2 Tablespoons dried currants
1 - 6 oz. can tomato paste
½ cup dry red table wine
2 Tablespoons wine vinegar

1 Tablespoon brown sugar
1 large clove garlic minced or mashed
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon cumin
⅛ teaspoon ground cloves

¾ lb. of cheese (diced Monterey Jack, diced Muenster, or ½ lb. crumbled feta)

¾ - 1 cup walnut halves

In a heavy kettle, sauté onions in butter until limp. Season meat generously with salt and pepper, add to kettle stirring gently to coat each piece with the onions. Add bay leaf and currants. Stir remaining ingredients together and add – stir to blend. Cover and place in oven until meat is tender – about 2 hours. Sprinkle with cheese and walnuts and place uncovered in oven until cheese softens.

Serve over rice or cous cous, add warm crusty bread and a green salad – and a nice glass of OVC CAB!!



*As always, we wish you and your family and friends a wonderful holiday season full of good conversation, good food, and good drink!
Peace and Joy, Jack and Ruthie*

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