



FUTURES NOTES

Wine Garage Hot Deal

June 2010

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Wine Garage "Hillside" Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 Napa Valley FUTURES \$25/btl \$300/case

As I tasted this wine with Massimo in the cellar, I dropped the wine thief on the floor and my expensive glass implement (that we use to draw out wine from the barrels) shattered in an explosion of shards. I really didn't give a rat's ass, because I just tasted the best wine we ever made. We knew this was going to be a special wine – for several reasons – but I really didn't think it was going to turn out quite like this....

The 2008 growing season started out in a panic when several very hard frosts hit right in time for bud-break. The frost—the worst in decades—led to an uneven set, a reduced crop and staggered ripening times where attention to the vines was paramount.

The Bella Vista Vineyard is the sole fruit source of this wine. Bella Vista sits 1100 feet high on Diamond Mountain and I bought the fruit from the steepest and highest block on this vineyard. Tom Eddy is the vineyard consultant – and my good personal friend, who turned me on to this vineyard in 06. It sits 30 yards across from the boundary of the Diamond Mountain AVA. I get Diamond Mtn fruit for the price of Valley floor fruit.

This wine goes into a cuvee that Tom makes from several mountain vineyards in Napa Valley that sells for \$85 per bottle. Tom Eddy is one of the Godfathers of the wine industry. He advised me all throughout the perilous growing season of 2008.

I was so lucky because the 08 vintage – in the wine press at least – is a polarity of resulting outcomes. Frost reduced crop sizes. The lowest parts of a vineyard get frozen first, but since this vineyard sits on top of the mountain, we didn't have that problem.

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The heat spikes during the flower set however reduced the crop at Bella. Less fruit produces more flavorful and concentrated wine. We let the fruit hang until October 13th when it was at 27.5 brix – very ripe indeed.

There was a shortage of fruit overall in Napa Valley in 08. At Bella Vista we saw a very short crop with small berry size and loose bunches. Small berries produce powerful, concentrated wines with strong tannins. Loose bunches let air flow evenly throughout the grapes and reduce any threat of bunch rot.

We used wild, native yeast – a first for us, since we have inoculated every wine we made in the past with designer yeast stains that were purchased. We left the grapes on an extended cold soak with 20% whole clusters intact. Massimo even added French oak staves to the fermenting must to add body and complexity - something he learned at Silver Oak when he made Cab for them.

We punched down the cap 3 times per day by hand. The fermentation lasted almost 9 months – very slow and beneficial. Instead of using new Hungarian oak like we did with the 06 Hillside, the cooperage employed was 100% new French oak. The 2006 Hillside was barreled for two years – this will be in barrel an additional 6 months. We are keeping the wine in French oak for a longer period of time to tame its tannins and pull small more creamy vanilla components from the oak.

This wine has turned out to be a monster. Super dark in the glass – no other grape was used other than 100% Cabernet (i.e. Petite Verdot) to attain the dark color. Aromas of fresh picked berries, rose petal, and smoky oak.

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The front palate yields gorgeous, concentrated flavors of blackberry, currant, and huckleberry. Then, black pepper, cigar box, licorice, cedar, clove, and black olive come to attention in mid-palate, and then an amazing ride is in store on the finish. Gushes of blueberry pie, smoky tannins, gooey hot fudge sauce, imagine ripe plum juice oozing down your wrist - standing in the orchard on a lazy summer day.

The mouthfeel is generous and silky. Very firm tannins on the finish with great acidity – which will welcome this wine to your cellar for many, many years. tannins on the finish with great acidity – which will welcome this wine to your cellar for many, many years. I think this wine will age gracefully for 15 to 20 years easily. I am very excited about this wine and I truly feel that when I submit this to the Spectator we will get in excess of 95 points. Yours for only \$25 freaking bucks, only 200 cases available at the futures price. We will retail this wine for \$45/btl – same price as our 06 Hillside Cabernet. When we sold that wine as a future offering we priced the wine at \$35/btl futures, \$430/case.

PLUS, we are offering free shipping of any full case orders. Our label is already approved so there will be no delay when we are ready to ship this wine in May 2011.

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