



# Merry Monks

Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks

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## Gourmet Holiday Entertaining

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WC 2015-Q4

As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, we wish to express our gratitude to all of our wine club members. So many of you have become ambassadors of our winery and have helped our business to grow. Many have become friends, and all have enriched our lives in some way. We feel blessed!

We have chosen club wines this season that are particularly compatible with the way we like to celebrate the holidays. There are, of course, almost as many traditions surrounding the holidays as there are families. In our family, wine plays an important role in holiday festivities. The wines we have included for your enjoyment all play a special part, as we will explain.

### 2011 Petite Sirah, Estate

Harvest Brix: 25.5      pH: 3.58      TA: 7.01      Alc: 14.9%      ML: 0%      RS: 0%  
Cases produced: 261      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

Our new vintage of Petite Sirah from our estate vineyard is very consistent with past vintages—bold yet balanced, with pronounced blackberry characteristics. The tannins are still big, but they are showing signs of refining. We feel that in another few months, this one will likely match the 2010 vintage.

On the table: Petite Sirah is not always everyone's "go to" wine for pairing with food, but our non-malolactic, classical style gives this grape an elegance that it often lacks when made in other styles. We recommend this wine with the hearty stews and roasts that are often enjoyed during this festive season—and particularly with wild game, such as venison. We are accompanying this shipment with a slow-cooked venison stew recipe, available on hard copy as well as our website.

### 2010 "Madrigal" Late Harvest Semillon, Estate

Harvest Brix: 30.0      pH: 3.7      TA: 5.8      Alc: 14.8%      ML: 0%      RS: 5%  
Cases produced: 141      Vol: 375 ml      Barrel age: 4.5 years in mostly neutral European oak

We are very excited to release our new vintage of Late Harvest Semillon, just in time for the holidays! This dessert wine is similar in character to a French Sauternes, but with lower residual sugar. If you haven't tasted one of these yet, it is like ambrosia! We haven't made one of these since 2006, and that vintage was wildly popular, selling out very quickly. We recommend this wine if you are looking for the perfect gift for your favorite wine connoisseur.

On the table: If you are like us, we generally don't find many occasions to open a dessert wine through most of the year, but the holidays are a different story. Visits with family and friends often end with a Port or other dessert wine, accompanied by aged cheeses and nuts, or rich cakes. Our Madrigal is heavenly with aged blue cheeses and sliced Fuyu persimmons. Another favorite is Brie en croute with apricot preserve. Yum!

## 2006 “Library” Cabernet Sauvignon, El Dorado

Harvest Brix: 25.8      pH: 3.4      TA: 6.41      Alc: 14.8%      ML: 0%      RS: 0%  
Cases produced: 107      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

As a special treat for the holidays, we dug into our Library and pulled out a very special, rare old Cabernet—our 2006, which was an amazing vintage! One of the reasons we make classical-style wines is because we are passionate about old wines, and modern wines typically will not cellar well. A great advantage of being a Merry Monks Wine Club member is that we periodically make glimpses of wines that are well into the aging process available to you through limited releases such as this.

On the table: Cabernet is an essential wine for this season, because it complements so many holiday dishes. This particular wine is stunning with prime rib and other beef roasts and stews, as well as mushroom dishes. It is also ideal with savory meat pies. A holiday tradition in our household is to make “Tourtière,” a traditional Christmas Eve meat pie from Québec. This lightly spiced and herbed delicacy is wonderful with Cantiga Cabernet or Cab-Shiraz. We shared this family recipe with our club two years ago, but we are passing it on again, with the hope that you enjoy it as much as we do. (Please see accompanying recipe, either on hard copy or our website.)

## For Professional Wino (6-bottle) and Ambassador of Oenos (12-bottle) members:

### 2006 “Library” Troubadour, El Dorado

Harvest Brix: 25.9      pH: 3.46      TA: 6.4      Alc: 14.8%      ML: 0%      RS: 0%  
Cases produced: 88      Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak      Blend: 60/40

Even more limited than our 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon is our “Troubadour” Cabernet-Shiraz blend of the same vintage. However, we have just enough of this wine to share with our mid- and upper-tier members. 2006 was the first year we made this signature Cantiga blend using our Estate Shiraz. (Prior to this vintage, the Shiraz came from Monterey.) We feel that it is the best vintage of Troubadour containing estate grapes to date, and we are excited to be able to share it with you!

On the table: Our Troubadour pairs wonderfully with everything we would enjoy with Cabernet. Additionally, it is excellent with grilled or roasted lamb, and even with Middle Eastern and Indian cuisines. We highly recommend that you try the Tourtière recipe with this wine, as the spices align so well with it.

Our very best wishes for a wonderful holiday season! May you enjoy many moments of great food, accompanied by great wine, and shared with great friends!

Yours truly,

*Rich & Christine Rorden*