

The Twisted Few's Letter

January 2012

Another Year... A New Few's Letter!

Dateline Vallecito, CA - Wednesday January 11th. In which we abandon the killing of trees and **sally forth** into the land of purely electronic publishing....

New?

Yes, but: what was old is **new** again. Long time members of the Twisted Few will perhaps remember fondly that this look is pretty darn close to what we **started** with in the wine publishing biz. After trying some other things along the way we decided that we **missed** the large format Few's Letter - the small format meant we had to leave out stuff - stuff like complete Geek Sheets and El Jefe's **pithy pwose**.

So here you are, an **expanded** Twisted Few's Letter - ready to print at home if you must - or to ready on your favorite computer, tablet, or telephone-with-above-average-brains.

Also, with this new expanded format we're not going to **limit** its distribution to the Twisted Few (and their brethren and... sisteren?). Nay, this missive is flying out to all of you who have been **foolish** enough to share your email address with us. (Ha ha!) You'll be able to enjoy all of the fun and **interesting** information within these pages, but alas not the wine (unless, of course, you decide to **join!**)

Meet the Perfessor!

We've mentioned it to you, the Few, that we brought on a **new winemaker** this past June - a young man named Brett Keller. Long time fans of Twisted Oak

Are you a member of the Twisted Few (or Twisted Freaks)?

If **not**, you should know that this Twisted Few's Letter includes information regarding the current month's selections for our club members. We will not be sending this wine to you. We would never stoop so low. Probably.

However, if you **do want** to start receiving our **Twisted Few or Twisted Freak selections**, all you have to do is visit twistedoak.com, or call us at 209-736-9080, and we'll get you started!

may remember that Brett has worked here before as our **Assistant Winemaker**, fresh out of school. We'd like to welcome Brett to our Twisted Few's Letter masthead with his first **Perfessor's Corner** column. We hope you enjoy it! (Why "Perfessor"? Because he's the only one around here with a winemaking degree!)



Pressing matters! (photo by El Jefe)

Heavens!

We're starting off our **Few Year** right this month! Your first selection is the 2008 vintage of our popular **Murgatroyd** blend. I'd like to tell you whats in there, but like legislation and sausage making some things are better left **unseen**.

The second selection is the 2008 vintage of the **Tanner Vineyard Syrah**, from our friends the Tanner family right across highway 4 in Vallecito. This chewy wine is sure to warm your cockles on a cold Winter night (and nobody likes **cold cockles**, do they?)

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2008 Calaveras County Murgatroyd

Tasting Notes

With a name like “Murgatroyd” you might expect this wine to smell and taste like a **pink mountain lion**. While this wine is as **dry and intense** as a night in the desert, and its spice and herbal aromas might be the result of a **romp in the sagebrush**, nothing could be further from the truth. Bright aromas of **raspberry and red currant**, and full fruit flavors of **raspberries, cassis and black cherry**, are certainly nothing like a pink mountain lion. Then again... why is he **pink**?



Production Notes

2008 was a real **challenge** to local growers, starting with devastating frosts in areas throughout the Sierra Foothills. At the Both Rolleri and Tanner Vineyards, **southern** exposures helped to avoid catastrophic frost damage that affected so many vineyards throughout the state. Petit Verdot, a Bordeaux Varietal, and Mourvedre, a Rhone Varietal, team up with Spain’s noble Tempranillo to make something in the way of a Spanish Style of **Claret**, sort of our Twist on a Bordeaux style wine!

At the winery, we destemmed the grapes into **open topped** tanks and small bins for fermentation, where we gently **punched down** the cap three times a day. After fermentation, the three separate components of the blend were aged separately in barrels which best suited the varietal **characters** that make up the blend. Tempranillo was aged in 100% French Oak, much of it new. Mourvedre was aged in neutral barrels to bring optimum fruit characters, and Petit Verdot was aged in American Oak barrels to develop more quickly and to give both power and finesse. After 30 months of care, the wines were blended together shortly before bottling.

Technical Nitty Gritty

Varietals & Vineyards:

38% Mourvedre from the Tanner Vineyard
38% Tempranillo from Rolleri Vineyard
24% Petit Verdot from the Tanner Vineyard

Harvest Date:

You Must Be Joking!

Oak Program:

45% new French & American oak, 55% neutral oak

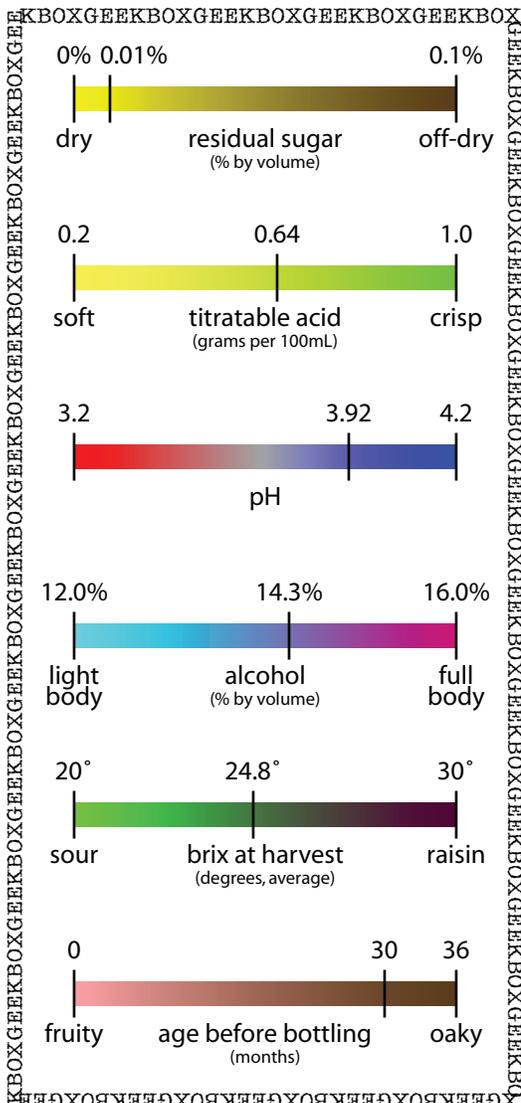
Food Pairings: Murginade!

Marinade tri-tip in Murgatroyd, soy sauce, ginger, honey.
Anything with a big marinara sauce - stinky cheeses or a nice cigar
Lamb Osso Bucco? Heavens to Murgatroyd!
Asian style marinated Flank Steak, served over a bed of angel hair pasta with horseradish cream.

Twisted Few & Freak Price: \$19.20

200 cases produced
twistedoak.com/murgy

Still Confused? Don't be! Just check out our “Geek Sheet Cheat Sheet”



2008 Tanner Vineyard Syrah

Tasting Notes

The Tanner Vineyard Syrah has the **classic heavy mettle** of Calaveras Syrah that **Led** us to **Going to California** and to make wine here. Spicy aromas of cherries, currants & blackberries are sure to leave you **Dazed and Confused**. We also expect you will have a **Whole Lotta Love** for the big cherry and plum flavors. Coffee, herbs and spices **Bring It On Home** for a nice finish. We know we could **Ramble On** about this **Heartbreaker** of a wine, but we don't want to end up swinging from the **Gallows Pole...** (OK, sure, we wanted to work in **Stairway to Heaven** - but it got **Trampled Under Foot**.)



Production Notes

2008 was a real **challenge** to local grapegrowers, starting with devastating frosts in areas throughout the Sierra Foothills. At the Tanner Vineyard, a **sunny** southern exposure helped to avoid catastrophic frost damage that affected so many vineyards throughout the state. Temperatures below 30 degrees farenheit **freeze** the emerging buds and young shoots, thus decreasing the fruitfulness of the vine. Light damage to the Tanner Vineyard resulted in lower yields, but the weather **blessed** us with consistent temperatures throughout the growing season, which gave good concentration of colors and flavors to the grapes, resulting in excellent quality Syrah.

At the winery, we destemmed the grapes into open topped tanks for fermentation, where we gently **punched down** the cap three times a day. At the end of fermentation, this Syrah was put to barrels in our "Cave of Wonders". We aged the wine in French, American and Hungarian Oak barrels for complexity and to soften the tannins.

Technical Nitty Gritty

Varietals & Vineyards:

100% Syrah from Tanner Vineyards, Calaveras County - Baby!

Harvest Date:

September 5th, 2008

Oak Program:

40% new French, Hungarian & American oak
60% neutral oak

Food Pairings: Carnivore Joy!

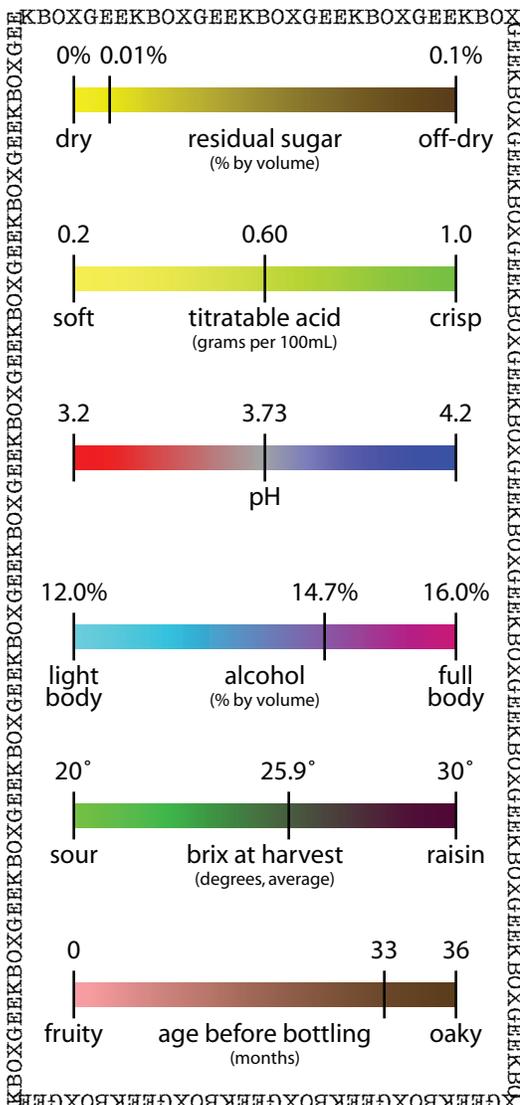
Any steak, plain or swimming in a big rich sauce!
For example: Top Sirloin topped with Dungeness Crab,
Porcini Mushrooms, and Gorgonzola cream sauce.
And of course cheeses. Stinky stinky cheeses.

Twisted Few & Freak Price: \$22.40

200 cases produced

twistedoak.com/tannersyrah

Still Confused? Don't be! Just check out our "**Geek Sheet Cheat Sheet**"



The Perfessor's Corner

RED ALERT!!! There is Brett in our Cellar!!!

Some of you, the Few, may have heard there's a new sheriff in town! Well, here I am, your new winemaker! Some of you may remember me a few years back when Fermento was the **brains** of this operation? Well, you might say I was the **hands**. In 2003 I started my wine-making journey here as Assistant Winemaker. That's the guy who works underground most of the year and rarely rears his **ugly** head! Back in those days I was fresh out of Fresno State University, GO BULLDOGS!! and found myself working in one **bitchin** winery, complete with a magical Cave of Wonders!! I do not know why I left in 2006, but I did have a chance to **learn** more about winemaking and viticulture by building another Calaveras County winery, consulting for another, and nurturing my own family's vineyard along the way. These years prepared me for the challenge of continuing a commitment to **excellence** (Go Niners!) here at Twisted.



The winemaker in his natural environment (photo by Robert Lee)

So far, since I started in June, I have truly enjoyed setting up house here, and getting to **know** some of you Twisted Freaks and Few at Cave Loot, the Spaniard Dinner and other events. There are always great challenges with the changing of the guard. We are making some changes to many aspects of the vineyards and winery. First, all of our Vineyard Management is now 'In House' by yours truly, which means I have the **unique** opportunity to get up close and personal with the secret of our success – Awesome Estate Grapes! For 2011, we have **terrific** Spaniard and Torcido wines cooking. We are making some changes in our winemaking as well, notably in **upgrading**

our barrel program to include newer oak barrels. AND, in an effort to being eco- friendly to the environment, we are finding creative ways to **save** energy and are looking for new ways to reuse and recycle our resources. So, reserve your **barrel planters** today! It's not easy being green!

This year's crush was a great **challenge** for a new winemaker. After eagerly awaiting the grapes for 2011, and then waiting some more, and waiting...we finally got into gear around the end of September, almost 6 weeks **later** than usual. We had a cooler than average summer, without any significant heat spikes, which gave **great flavors** with lower sugar levels and better acid balance than usual. This means we will see more **complexity** in the character of the 2011 vintage. We also saw excellent color in the crop, so we will have an awesome Torcido and the Petit Sirah is **darker** than sin. Now we enter into **racking** season (We love racks of all kinds here...) where we really get to see what we have. Truly good times!

I look forward to meeting you all in the future. Until Next Time! - Brett Keller, aka, The Perfessor (Why the Perfessor?? Jefe will explain... [OK, fine - jefe])

PS: So, you might ask, 'am I single???'

--Nope-- I have an **awesome** wife, Andrea, and two great kids, Alyse, 11 yrs and William, 6 yrs. My family is my life. Without Andrea's support and understanding of long hours and much...err...sensory evaluation...I really couldn't make it as a winemaker!

Coming up for the Few & Freaks!

Our next **Twisted bottling day** will be February 28th. Why am I telling you this? Well... since we will be bottling wine destined for the **Twisted Freaks**, some of the shipments will be going out on the 29th.

We think the Twisted Freak members will find this worth waiting for.

And, if you've never seen wine bottling and you're in the area, stop by and **check it out!**

Some other **important wine-enjoying events** to mark on your calendar....

Super Bowl XLVI: February 5

Dark & Delicious Petite Sirah Tasting, Alameda, CA: February 17

SF Chronicle Grand Tasting at Fort Mason: February 18

Players begin reporting for Spring Training: February 18

Calaveras Presidents Wine Weekend: February 18-19

Daytona 500: February 26

Next Twisted Few selections: Week of February 27

Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race begins: March 3

(Continued from the Front Page!)

For the **Twisted Freaks**, there is no selection this time - we did warn you that might happen - but we're gearing up to bottle an **unusual** white for you that is seldom seen from a California winery.

I also want to take a moment to **thank** all of you for taking the time to visit twistedoak.com and write a **review** of your favorite wines! It's amazing how much that **helps** new people (I don't mean people who have newly appeared on Earth or anything like that...) who visit our web site to make the **right** decision and order some Twisted Goodness for the first time.

If you would like to write a review, just visit twistedoak.com/wines and choose your favorite wine. You'll need to enter an email address to post a review but don't worry, it won't appear on the web site. Thanks for your support!



Why yes, that IS four-time Iditarod winner Jeff King, holding a Twisted rubber chicken! Nice of you to notice!
(Photo by El Jefe)

So, What Else is New?

Actually, nothing just yet. But soon....

Web site! Any day now we hope to roll out a brand new web site, with a **refreshed** look and some new features to make it even more easier and more funner to visit. Watch your email!

New wines! Also, during the 2011 harvest we were able to **snag** a few tons of a couple white wines - one that hasn't been in our lineup for a while, and the other brand new to us - and indeed a **rare** variety for California. Stay tuned for those!

Rubber madness! And... it's that time of year for you to join us in some **Twisted Rubber Chicken fun!** This time we are changing up the theme yet again. So get your rubber chickens **gussied up** and ready to go. Watch your email for details soon!

So, how was that?

We know that our grammar is iffy and our spellnig is **iffy-er**, but somehow we pulled through and I hope we pulled this off. And we especially hope you **enjoyed** it. Thanks again for being **Twisted!!!!** - El Jefe