Linden 2005 Petit Verdot

Aroma: wild strawberries, new leather, *bouquet garni;* dusty Tuscan road

Flavor: rich, ripe and gnarly. Ripe, dried fruit (prune Danish) middle with big gripping tannins.

Vineyards: Hardscrabble Vineyard (62%), Fauquier Co. on top of the Blue Ridge at 1,300 to 1,400 feet with an eastern to southern slope. Deep, well-drained mineral soils give cherry and berry character and good structure. Vine ages from 9 to 15 years.

Avenius Vineyard (38%), Warren Co. is just 1 mile north of Linden Vineyards at 1,300 feet contributes good acidity and verve. Vine age is 9 years.

Vintage: Much of the growing season was cool, but a welcome hot August helped accelerate veraison and ripening, although we were still a few days behind normal as September approached.
There was essentially no rain in September, but we were worried about drought stress in the later ripening reds. We were in that unusual situation where we were hoping for some rain during harvest to refresh the vines. We got more than we bargained for. Tammy dropped 4.5 inches of rain in a 24 hour period in early October. Picking stopped for 2 weeks as we waited for the soil, canopies and most importantly berries to dry out. Immediately after Tammy we had a very discouraging week of misty weather (NorEasterner) that did not add additional accumulation, but prevented things from drying out. The rest of October was mild and dry. Harvest was from October 21 to 30, 2005.

Winemaking: We hand sort before destemming and then again after destemming to remove pink berries and stem pieces. No crushing. 20 ppm SO2 added. Fermentation begins naturally (no inoculation) in small one ton fermentors. Yeast feeding relative to YAN test results. We punch down by hand once per day. Pressing takes place after about 7 to 10 days, usually well before fermentations are complete. Free run, light press and hard press fractions are kept separate. Overnight settling, then racking into barrels. ML inoculated. Assemblage in late winter. Rackings were in December 05, April06 and September 06. The wine was aged in new and old (neutral) oak barrels and puncheons (French and Hungarian) for 18 months. Unfined and unfiltered. 82% Petit Verdot, 12% Cabernet Franc, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. 308 cases produced. Drink now through 2015.

Petit Verdot at Linden Vineyards

3 vineyard sites: Hardscrabble, Avenius and Boisseau

soils: upland ridge granite (Hardscrabble and Avenius), greenstone clay (Hardscrabble and Avenius), valley silt loam (Boisseau).

climates: cool mountain (Hardscrabble and Avenius @1300 to 1400 feet); warm valley (Boisseau @ 600 feet)

training: GDC, Lyre and VSP; cordon and cane pruned

clones: "Linden", 400 and 2

rootstocks: 101-14, 3309

vine ages: 4 to 18 years

total acreage:4 acres

average harvest dates: Boisseau (younger vines) October 5; Hardscrabble and Avenius October 20

Characteristics observed:

workhorse grape: easy to grow and adaptable to many soils, unlike CS

bud break: 4 days after Chardonnay

winter damage: buds and wood are probably the most winter hardy of all the vinifera varieties I grow. PV also seems very resistant to wood/trunk diseases.

Suckers and water sprouts: PV sends out copious amounts of small non-count and non-fruitful shoots from old wood. It requires more de-budding, suckering and shoot thinning than most varieties, especially with cordon pruned vines.

cane vs. cordon: PV is adaptable to both.

training systems: high wire training works fairly well, except for fragile shoots breaking before bloom and the much higher picking time requirements (small clusters). VSP and Lyre require more passes with

shoot positioning because of procumbent growth habits. I have not observed quality or disease differences based on training systems with PV.

young vs. old vines: young vines have very irregular and awkward growth habits; long shoots and very large internode lengths. Older vines (starting at year 5 or 6) seem to settle down nicely with good shoot length balance.

Yields: PV is easy to overcrop in years of good fruit set. It is not uncommon to find individual shoots with 3 or 4 clusters. Our low vigor vines average 100gram clusters, whereas higher vigor vines in clay average 160gram clusters. 1#/foot of canopy (1 kg/m2) is my baseline yield for the highest quality wines. Younger vines on vigorous soils can produce 1.5#/foot in some vintages without compromising quality. 2#/foot will produce a lighter style wine in warmer sites, and will not ripen sufficiently in our mountain vineyards.

disease: PV is somewhat susceptible to PM, although not nearly as bad as Chardonnay. I have seen some bunch rot if the vines are overcropped and the fall is wet.

Mites: mites seem to like PV, or at least mite symptoms seem to express themselves more readily in PV.

Harvest parameters:

-typically ripens after CF, but before CS.

-berry shriveling is our number one indicator of ripeness. Once the shriveling starts in a given block, we have less than a week to pick.

-crop load: warm vintages, sites and soils can ripen relatively large crops before the shriveling gets too bad. Under cooler conditions, the shriveling will start before flavors, tannins and acids are in balance.

- high sugars: valley=25 brix; mountain=24 brix
- high acids; valley=6g/l; mountain= 7g/l
- low pH: valley= 3.4; mountain= 3.2
- ripe, but rustic skin tannins
- green seed tannins
- great intensity at low to moderate yields