



**SPRING MOUNTAIN**  
VINEYARD  
ST. HELENA *Napa Valley* CALIFORNIA



## Winter News 2014

### Assemblage - The Art of Blending

by Valli Ferrell

Early in each new year, the winemaking team makes the Elivette and Estate Cabernet blends. This process, which takes place over many months, is called *assemblage*.



The first step is selecting a 'base blend' of Cabernet Sauvignon which will serve as a foundation of the blends. The tasters are looking for a core of Cabernet for the two wines, but different characteristics for each. For the Estate Cabernet they seek wines that exhibit the power and richness of Spring Mountain. For Elivette, it is elegance and complexity they seek. They taste every lot of Cabernet Sauvignon from the vintage, marrying the lots in trial blends to find a core of Cabernet Sauvignon that meets their goal.

Once they have the base blend to serve as the blend's core and structure, they move to the second step in the blending. Here they look critically at the base blend and find ways to embellish and complete it with select lots of Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot

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March 21 & 22: Austin Rare &  
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and Malbec. This takes many days, because the winemaker has so many choices to consider from the 135 distinct blocks that comprise our vineyard.

I recently sat in on a late stage blending trial with consulting winemaker Patrick Léon and SMV winemaker Patrick Sullivan as they crafted the 2012 Elivette blend. On the table were scores of barrel samples and, as various blends were made and tasted, a spirited exchange of ideas ensued as they moved ever closer to the final Elivette blend.

Various blends were made, tasted and fine-tuned. Imagine two experienced chefs collaborating on the perfect sauce – or two painters creating a visual composition. Naturally, any creative process takes time, and blending Elivette is no different, often taking months to marry the specific lots and varieties that hit the mark for Elivette, our signature wine. Elivette expresses the most elegant, complex and age-worthy wine we can make each vintage.

Léon and Sullivan apply their experienced palates to not only how the blend tastes now, but more importantly, how it will taste in 2-3 years – after the wine completes its barrel and bottle aging. Artful blending incorporates knowledge and experience gained by tasting many wines over time and knowing how each might develop.

Remarking on one possible 2012 Elivette blend, Léon said as he rejected it, “It’s too good today. It needs more body and complexity.”

Another blend was made at his direction.

“Ah” says Léon, “this has a very long finish, and while not as lush as the previous blend, it’s a more complex wine.”

Often, when the goal is to make only the best, many lots get left out. It’s a highly selective process.

Says winemaker Sullivan, “At Spring Mountain, blending is about creating the most beautiful wine. It’s not about finding a home for every wine made during the vintage. It may be less practical and economical, but it is by far a most enjoyable process because it’s not based on those things. We don’t have any goal in mind as it relates to number of cases. Our focus is on how each component relates to the whole.”

Léon agrees. “It’s not mathematics. It’s philosophy.

Blending is about our perception of the components, how they express terroir and how they add complexity to the blend. We have power built into our wines because of the terroir. Our goal is to achieve elegance and balance in the wines.

We never do the same thing in blending. There is no recipe.”

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## **First Look at the 2013s**

Like parents comparing one child to another, we often compare the wines from different vintages, especially consecutive vintages.

The 2012 and 2013 wines are beautiful in different ways – a reflection of the growing season.

The idyllic 2012 vintage gave us lush, precocious wines with round tannins – real crowd-pleasers right out of the barrel.

The 2013 vintage was early and compact. The wines, in their infancy, are firm, full-bodied and have great balance. We think they will be long-lived.





*Wines are a product of the vineyard, and we let them be what they are....what they want to be. Sort of like children.* Patrick Sullivan

## Newly Released

### 2011 Estate Bottled Pinot Noir

#### 2011 Estate Pinot Noir



"Intriguing aromas of Asian spices, cherry and earth introduce the 9<sup>th</sup> vintage of estate Pinot Noir. On the palate, the wine is round and generous with bright, intense fruit, spice and cola. Subtle tannins gently shape this voluptuous, mountain grown wine."

**\$75**

*Winemaker Patrick Sullivan*

*\$75 per bottle*

*Production is limited. To order or reserve your allocation, call the winery at 707.967.4185 or email [doris@springmtn.com](mailto:doris@springmtn.com).*

*10% Discount on case purchases. Wine Club Member discount is 20%*

*Advance Release to Wine Club - General release - March 1st .*

## Upcoming Events

### February 15: San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition Tasting

San Francisco – Fort Mason – tickets: [Click Here](#)

### February 20: SMV Dinner at Mia Francesca & Davanti Enoteca – San Diego

Call for tickets: 858-519-5055

For Tickets [Click Here](#)

### March 1 & 2: CabFest – Yountville, CA

Wine, Food, Music and Education harmonize at this brand new event at the Lincoln Theater! From a "What Makes Great Cabernet Sauvignon Great" seminar with Karen MacNeil (featuring SMV Cab) to a Jeff Bridges concert, this fundraiser for the Performing Arts Center will be a fun, Cab-filled weekend.

For discounted tickets, use code **SpringMtn20**

[Click Here](#) or call 707 944 9900

## **March 21 & 22: Austin Rare & Fine Wine Auction – Austin, TX**

### **21: Winemaker Dinner - Franklin BBQ**

Winemaker Patrick Sullivan and legendary BBQ will kick off the 29th Austin Rare & Fine Wine Auction

### **22: Auction at the Four Seasons**

SMV and Winemaker Patrick Sullivan support Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas

For tickets to the Austin events: [Click Here](#)

## **On Our Winter Table**

### ***Mushroom Risotto with 2011 Pinot Noir***

Savory comfort foods sustain us, especially during the cold winter months. Gather in the kitchen to share a glass of pinot noir and the slow, pleasurable task of stirring this mushroom risotto into creamy perfection. It can be made in less than an hour and served as a main course or a partner to roast chicken.

*Serves 4 - 6*

1 oz. dried porcini mushrooms, wiped of grit

7 C low sodium chicken broth

1lb. fresh mushrooms, cleaned and sliced. *We like a mix of Portobello and Crimini.*

6 T unsalted butter

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 shallots, finely chopped

2 C Arborio rice

1 C dry white wine

1 C freshly grated Reggiano parmesan cheese

1 T truffle oil, divided

2 sprigs fresh thyme or a pinch of dried

Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper



In a small bowl, reconstitute the dried porcini in 1 cup hot chicken broth for 15 minutes. Remove porcini and rinse. Set aside. Strain porcini broth through a coffee filter or paper towel. Add strained broth to remaining chicken broth.

When ready to cook the rice, heat the broth in a saucepan and keep warm over low heat.

**Mushrooms:** In a large skillet, melt 3 T butter over medium high heat. Add fresh mushrooms and thyme leaves. Cook until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the porcini and cook, about one minute more. Drizzle with truffle oil, season with salt and pepper and set aside.

**Risotto:** In a heavy pot, melt remaining 3 T butter. Add chopped shallots and onion. Cook over medium to low heat until translucent and tender, about 5 minutes. Add the rice and stir quickly until it is well-coated and opaque, about 1 minute. This step cooks the starchy coating and prevents the grains from sticking. Stir in wine and cook until it is nearly all evaporated. With a ladle, add 1 cup of the warm broth and cook, stirring, until the rice has absorbed the liquid. Keeping the rice at a strong simmer, add the remaining broth, 1 cup at a time. Continue to cook and stir, allowing the rice to absorb each addition of broth before adding more. You may not

need all of the broth. The risotto is done when it is slightly firm and creamy, not mushy. At this point, add the mushrooms to the rice and combine. Stir in the parmesan cheese and cook briefly until cheese is melted. Add a drizzle of truffle oil and serve immediately.

## Visit Us

When your travels bring you to Napa Valley, we hope to see you at SMV where great wine and a friendly welcome await you.



### Contact the winery toll free at

877.769.4637, locally at 707.967.4188

or email [reservations@springmtn.com](mailto:reservations@springmtn.com) to make your appointment.

You can book online too: [www.springmountainvineyard.com](http://www.springmountainvineyard.com).

**Wishing you all the pleasures of Red Wine Season!**

*~Your Friends at Spring Mountain Vineyard*

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