

OCTOBER 2016

ALL ABOUT OLIVER ...



2015 HARVEST

2015 was our third drought year in a row. After struggling repeatedly for water, the vines' yields were way down. In some vineyards we saw as little as half the normal yield. Harvest also came early. We started in August and were done by early October. In a typical year we're still harvesting the last fruit in early November. While there were fewer berries and therefore fewer bottles of 2015 produced, the wine that we did bottle is deep, dense, and complex. It also shows a bright and

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At last we have a tasting room sign!



Oliver Tensley, 90's rap fan

Our son, Oliver, is now officially a teenager! In March he turned 13. This month he started 8th grade. Only one year away from high school! It seems like yesterday that I wrote the very first "All About Oliver" column featuring his absolute obsession with the song, "The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round..." His main interest now is still soccer. Joey is coaching the team again this year with our assistant

winemaker, Zac, as his assistant coach. We're only two games in with a one and one record and one goal scored for Oliver. Oliver is also working harvest with us this year. He was up early the day he scored that goal, picking the Tensley Vineyard Syrah with Dad before they hit the soccer field together. Ah, the life of a soccer playing winemaker. Here's to another great year!



Jen Tensley stocking tasting room



Oliver and Joey harvesting Tensley Estate Vineyard

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▶ WINE MAKER'S COMMENTS ◀

2015 O.G.T. Syrah Blend – (90-93 Vinous; 93-95 The Wine Advocate)

This year's OGT stays faithful to our tried and true blend of 50% Colson Canyon Syrah, 25% Thompson Syrah and 25% Tierra Alta Syrah. As many of you know, the OGT Syrah is named for our son, Oliver Gunnar Tensley. We've been making this wine since he was born in 2003, and each year we set out to make an OGT that is as interesting, imaginative and complex as our son himself. In 2015, we were in our third drought year. Yields were extremely low. Colson Canyon alone gave us half the fruit we usually get. The result was richly concentrated fruit that gave us deep, expressive, complex wines that – yes, remind us of the wonderful qualities of Oliver himself. This year's OGT shows the rich notes of chocolate, smoked meats, plums, pepper, and black currants offered up by Colson Canyon as well as the structure, grainy tannins and notes of earth that are always indicative of the Thompson Vineyard. The Tierra Alta lifts the blend and rounds it out with elegant floral notes, a velvety texture and bright notes of red berries. This will be the last vintage of OGT to include Tierra Alta Syrah, making it a particularly special one for us. Drink this wine now or let it evolve over the next ten to twelve years.

Price: \$90.00

Cellar Club Price: \$76.50

Cases: 235

2015 B.M.T. Syrah Blend – (90-93 Vinous; 93-95 The Wine Advocate)

This year our niece, Bailey Michelle Tensley, for whom this wine is named, turned 22 years old. We started making the BMT back when she was only nine. These days she is living on her own and is well on her way to a successful career as a stylist. As with the OGT, our mission with the BMT is to make a wine that expresses Bailey's unique personality and beauty as a person. We feel that we've hit the mark pretty well again this vintage. This year's BMT is made up of 50% Rodney's Vineyard Syrah, 25% Colson Canyon Syrah, and 25% Colson Canyon Grenache. The Wine Advocate's Jeb Dunnuck writes that this BMT "...offers fabulous notes of wild flowers, passion fruit, crushed violets and darker fruits in a full-bodied, elegant and layered style." Look for great structure in this wine and a long, lingering finish. While it is approachable now, it will also age beautifully over the next ten years.

Price: \$90.00

Cellar Club Price: \$76.50

Cases: 246



Harvest Continues...

refreshing acidity that keeps the wines light on their feet. Respected critic Antonio Galloni of Vinous writes of the vintage, "So far I have tasted only a small number of 2015's, but the wines I have tasted are nothing less than thrilling." We feel that most of the '15's are approachable now but will also be great for aging over the next 8 to 12 years.

2016 As many of you know 2016 was a very big year for us. It's the year that our dream of buying the Colson Canyon Vineyard finally came true! It's also been a great year for growing grapes. After three years of drought, we finally saw some rain this growing season. Not a lot of rain. We barely got our average rainfall, but it came early and helped sustain the plants through the season. The fruit set was great and temperatures were cooler so the grapes got more time to hang on the vine and develop complexity. All in all it looks like 2016 is going to give us a great crop and great wines!

ALL ABOUT BAILEY

It is truly hard for Joey and I to believe, but our niece, Bailey Michelle Tensley, is now 22-years-old! She's all grown up, working very successfully as a hair stylist and renting her first home in Bakersfield where Joey and his brother Jeff grew up. Bailey's even old enough to buy her own wine now! As for her favorite brand of wine? I think we all know the answer to that one ...



Bailey and her Dad

TENSLEY PHOTO PAGE

