



FOXEN VINEYARD

Master & Commander Club Newsletter

Fall 2026

Happy fall, friends! We hope you all had a wonderful summer and are excited for wine club releases to start again... we know we are! Thank you to all our members, old and new, for your continued friendship. We love sharing our wines with you.

There is something about fall in Santa Barbara County that is truly special. Even though it is our busiest time of year, it is also a time to slow down and take it all in. The vines are changing, the cellar is buzzing, the wines are coming to life after harvest, and the landscape is beginning its annual shift from summer green to harvest gold.

Here in the Santa Maria Valley, we experienced a fairly mild summer with long, warm, and sunny days followed by cool and foggy coastal evenings. The major heat spikes didn't happen like they normally do until after Labor Day Weekend, but we experienced our earliest harvest on record! We had our first pick of Pinot Noir from Riverbench Vineyard on July 25. We wrapped up our entire harvest by the end of September... another record! Every vintage is different and has its unique challenges, and this one was no exception, so we just do what we always do -- roll with it!

While the harvest was early and finished quickly, we are thrilled with the quality of the fruit and are so excited to see what happens in the cellar with this vintage. We are working with two new vineyards out of Santa Rita Hills: Our Lady of Guadalupe and Peake Ranch. We love getting to work with new farmers and offer these as single vineyard Pinots to you all. Stay tuned for those releases... you will be the first to know as usual.

Fall wouldn't be complete without getting our club members together. We hope you will join us for our Fall Club Day, October 24, at The Shack. This is a private event for our members where we will be pouring a special tasting list, including the wines in your release. We will also have some fun snacks and maybe another surprise or two. Please contact our tasting room team for reservations at tastingroom@foxenvineyard.com or call (805) 937-4251.

Finally, we want to thank you all for your patience while we have been updating our sales system. This summer, we decided to update our website and email systems so that they will be more efficient and easier to use for our customers. Of course, this couldn't happen without a few hiccups, but we are hopeful that things will be running smoothly from here on out. We really appreciate your understanding while we figure it out.



Wine Notes

2023 Pinot Noir, Riverbench Vineyard

This 2023 Pinot Noir from Riverbench Vineyard is made from selected blocks on the south bank of the Sisquoc River. Elevation is low here (around 400 feet) and soils are made up of alluvial sand and cobblestone. Three different clones of Pinot Noir go into this: Dijon 115, Pommard, and Wädenswil. The various blocks were harvested across the last week of September and first week of October, and all lots were fermented in stainless steel open-top tanks, with a touch of whole cluster. The finished wine was put into French oak barrels where it rested until the following spring, when it was racked off the lees and assembled into the vineyard blend. Overall, this wine sat in barrel for a total of sixteen months.

The 2023 Riverbench Pinot Noir is a perfect example of Pinot from the eastern side of the Santa Maria Valley: round, opulent red fruit notes with a bit of baking spices, and hints of vanilla and toasted oak from the barrel aging. This will pair nicely with duck breast, or herb-roasted chicken. Drink now through 2032.
- P. Bingo Wathen, Associate Winegrower

Production: 303 cases | SIP Certified

Retail: \$64.00 | Master & Commander Club Price: \$51.20

92 points - Vinous



Wine Notes

2023 Syrah, Williamson-Doré Vineyard

The 2023 vintage began a three-year run of cooler years from 2023 through 2025. With late-summer temperatures rarely exceeding 80 degrees, the long, cool growing season slowed ripening and allowed the grapes to stay on the vine until the ideal harvest date. We're excited to start sharing some of the 2023 reds with you.

Our Syrah from Williamson-Doré Vineyard was picked on the morning of October 5th and fermented on its skins (with 10% whole cluster inclusion) for twenty-one days. It then spent a total of twenty months in large format French and Hungarian oak barrels (500L) before bottling in June of 2025.

This 2023 Syrah is dense and concentrated, with core aromas of blueberry, boysenberry, and black peppercorns accented by cacao, road tar, and leather. It is similarly concentrated on the palate, with moderate tannins and medium acidity. Enjoy this with a rack of lamb and roasted winter squash. Drink now through 2038.

- P. Bingo Wathen, Associate Winegrower

Production: 336 cases

Retail: \$50 | Master & Commander Club Price: \$40.00

96 points - Vinous

2021 Los Potreros, Cabernet Sauvignon

Potrero, a loan word from the Spanish language, is a geographic term for a long mesa that at one end slopes upward to higher terrain. Los Potreros, in this case, refers to the hillside vineyards in Happy Canyon where we source the Cabernet for this wine. Happy Canyon, located at the Eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley, does not benefit from as much ocean influence as those areas farther west, so temperatures are more extreme there: cold nights and warm days throughout the ripening season. This turns out to be an ideal place for growing thick-skinned, hearty varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon. In 2021 the Los Potreros was sourced entirely from Star Lane Vineyard, a high elevation estate deep in the northeast end of the canyon.

Harvested on October 9th, the Los Potreros was given an extended aging regime of twenty months in French oak barrels (43% new), then bottle-aged for an additional three years before release. The cooler climate of Santa Barbara County, along with the higher altitude of these vineyard sources, makes this a lighter style Cab than those coming from Napa or Paso Robles, yet it is still full of intensity. On the nose, aromatics of blackcurrant and cherry are backed up by notes of cedarwood, mint, leather, and backcountry sage. My go-to pairing with the Los Potreros is a Ribeye or New-York Steak, grilled Santa Maria style over red oak, or hot and quick under a broiler. Drink now through 2036.

- P. Bingo Wathen, Associate Winegrower

Production: 163 cases

Retail: \$68.00 | Master & Commander Club Price: \$54.40

93 points - Vinous

91 points - Jeb Dunnuck



Holiday Tasting Room Hours



Thursday, November 26, 2026 - Thanksgiving - CLOSED



Upcoming Events



October 7, 2026

**Wine Down Wednesday at Dana Adobe
Rancho Nipomo - Nipomo, CA**

Join us for the final monthly affair at DANA's Vineyard, where local wineries showcase their finest. Experience the essence of the curated wines, set amidst the picturesque backdrop of this historic vineyard. Includes music, two glasses of wine, and a light snack.

For more information, please visit <https://www.danaadobe.org/events/winedown-oct/>.

October 17, 2026

**Santa Barbara Vintners Festival
Firestone Estate - Santa Ynez, CA**

This year marks the 42nd annual Santa Barbara Vintners Festival. Join FOXEN and 70+ other wineries from Santa Barbara County for a day of wine, food, and friends.

To buy tickets and learn more about this event, please visit
<https://www.sbvintnersweekend.com/buy-tickets.html>

October 24, 2026

**Fall Foxen Club Day
The Shack Tasting Room - Santa Maria, CA**

Take advantage of a special day designated exclusively for our Wine Club Members!

We will be pouring a special tasting list, including the Fall releases for Master & Commander, Mariner, Anchor, and Compass Clubs. For more information, please contact us at tastingroom@foxenvineyard.com.

November 14, 2026

**Rhônes By The Bay
Fort Mason Center - San Francisco, CA**

The Rhône Rangers Ride Again! Returning to San Francisco for the first time in 10 years, join the Rhône Rangers for an unforgettable afternoon celebrating the best domestic

Rhône-style wines from across the United States. Whether you're a longtime Rhône enthusiast or just beginning your wine journey, this is your chance to sip, discover new favorites, and connect with the people shaping the future of American Rhône wines, in one spectacular tasting experience in the heart of San Francisco.

To buy tickets and learn more about this event, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rhones-by-the-bay-tickets-199370347771?aff=oddttdtcreator>.