Releasing 2014 Hillside Select®

Those of us who grow grapes and make wine have a moment at the start of every vintage when we mentally brace ourselves wondering what curveballs Mother Nature will send our way (and imagining the worst) – what bud break and bloom will be like, what the drama of harvest will have in store, and ultimately how the wines turn out. Today is the moment – when we announce the release of the wine – that we get to finally relax, when everything has turned out so well. The 2014 vintage is a beauty and it joins the ranks of some of our favorites, delivering on the promise of energy, richness, juiciness, and elegance you’ve come to expect of this Cabernet Sauvignon. We are very pleased to make 2014 Hillside Select available to you!

The Wired Collector

In this issue we asked wine writer Jordan Mackay to take a look at the apps and other online tools that help collectors seek out, purchase, inventory, and track the maturity of their treasured wines. We hope Mackay’s report will inspire you to try some new tools and make your collecting even more enjoyable.

Warm regards,

Caring for Your Wine Shipment

- We highly recommend having your wine shipped to a business address or to a FedEx or UPS store for pick up. The number one delivery problem comes from shipping to a home address.
- To ensure your wine arrives in peak condition, we will ship your Hillside Select in the cooler weeks of fall 2018.
- Always feel welcome to contact us with any questions or concerns!

Join us on social media

Get behind-the-scenes photos and updates from Shafer Vineyards by joining us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram.
**Liquid Decadence**

*From an early-start vintage comes a wine of elegance and lavish richness*

The 2014 growing season began with a drought and ended with an earthquake. Fortunately, in between, our hillside vineyards experienced long, steady, ideal days and nights that have produced a wine that earns its place along other notable Hillside Selects.

By January of 2014 Napa Valley had seen so little rain that a CBS news crew shot a segment about the drought on the dry bottom of our irrigation pond. Two major rains in February then filled our reservoir and set the scene beautifully for the year to come.

**Fruit and Fireworks**

Bud break started early and things stayed on the early side throughout the long, warm, even-keeled season. We were seeing the start of veraison, when the Cabernet grapes begin to turn from green to purple, at about the same time we were watching Fourth of July fireworks.

We started picking Cabernet Sauvignon on our hillside vineyards on September 1, a few days after the region experienced a sizeable earthquake, and we were off like a shot.

“It was one of the fastest harvests I’ve ever seen. We were seeing physiological ripeness at somewhat lower sugars and everything was ripening up at the same time. What normally takes six to eight weeks was condensed into three,” says Doug Shafer.

The last day of picking was September 23.

**Expertise and Tempo**

“From start to finish it was just fast and furious like a Peyton Manning ‘no huddle’ offense, pushing forward without any breaks... I felt fortunate to be working with a cellar crew who’d been together for almost 20 years.”

Elias Fernandez adds, “In the cellar we saw great color and concentration, along with pretty, rich aromatics, overall a great vintage in the making. In fact I’d say we have another 1978 on our hands – a very similar year coming off a long dry spell.”

**Winemaker’s Comments**

“This vintage opens with an aromatic wave of deep, intense fruit and spices such as black plum, blackberry pie filling, cassia, and anise, along with nutmeg, dark toast, and dried rose petals. The energy in the nose is just as dramatic in the mouth with open, beautiful ripeness, mocha, briar fruit, pomegranate, baking spice, and ripe tannins that collectors will recognize as offering the promise of sensational things to come in the cellar.”

— Elias Fernandez, Winemaker

2014 Hillside Select Reviews

“... incredibly intense and impactful on the nose, revealing notes of crushed black cherries, blackberries and fresh black currants with underlying notions of charcoal, sautéed herbs, black soil, chargrilled meat and pencil lead, plus a waft of violets. Very full-bodied, very rich and wonderfully concentrated, the wall of fruit is well matched by a firm structure of ripe, grainy tannins and plenty of freshness, finishing with great length and depth.” — Lisa Perrotti Brown, The Wine Advocate

“A fascinating nose of licorice, tarte tatin, blackcurrant compote, orange rind, ivy, holly, pine needles, ash, Christmas cake and even raspberry cheesecake as well as a slight minty/herbal note. The palate is so well-knit but powerful; it’s the sort of wine that takes no prisoners. Yet the vintage shines through, and it remains always fresh and balanced. Layers upon layers of fruit and a long, decadent finish.” — James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com

“... one of the more restrained, understated versions of this wine I can remember tasting. Medium in body (in relative terms) and beautifully persistent, the 2014 makes its case more with a total sense of harmony rather than with bombastic power, as is sometimes the case. Moreover, the 2014 has really come together beautifully since I last tasted it. In 2014, Hillside Select is a wine of precision, with expressive aromatics and finely-knit tannins that support the mid-palate and finish nicely.” — Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com
Doug Shafer’s new podcast offers revealing stories of food and wine

For 35 years Shafer has worked with some of the most interesting people in the world of food and wine and he says podcasting offers the chance to bring some of their untold stories to light.

Mainly, I’m interested in people’s stories – where they started, their struggles, successes, and how they ended up where they’ve ended up,” says Shafer. “While I know these folks on the professional level, I also know a lot of them from the grocery store, from bumping into them at my kids’ soccer games. I went to college with some of them, some I’ve known since I attended St. Helena High. So I thought with this perspective, maybe I could bring something new to food and wine podcasting.”

Since the launch, episodes have posted with Pete Seghesio of Journeyman and San Lorenzo wines and Journeyman Meat Co., Marc Mondavi of Charles Krug and CK Mondavi, and other guests.

Trailblazer Tales
For 35 years Shafer has worked with some of the most interesting people in the world of food and wine and he says podcasting offers the chance to bring some of their untold stories to light.

I wanted a series that was more personal than some of the other wine and food podcasts I’ve heard. I’m less interested in technical things like the ups and downs of vintages, their thoughts on food/wine pairing, and things like that,” says Shafer. “While I know these folks on the professional level, I also know a lot of them from the grocery store, from bumping into them at my kids’ soccer games. I went to college with some of them, some I’ve known since I attended St. Helena High. So I thought with this perspective, maybe I could bring something new to food and wine podcasting.”

Since the launch, episodes have posted with Pete Seghesio of Journeyman and San Lorenzo wines and Journeyman Meat Co., Marc Mondavi of Charles Krug and CK Mondavi, and other guests.

New to Podcasts?
A whole world of conversations, stories, news, and entertainment awaits! Use your favorite app to find and subscribe to podcasts such as “The Taste with Doug Shafer.”

iPhone Users
If you have an iPhone, the podcast app comes built into your phone. Just give it a tap and use the navigation icons at the bottom of the app. To subscribe to a podcast, tap Subscribe on the page for that podcast. To play a podcast, tap on any episode.

Android Users
If you’re on Android, Google’s music streaming app comes preinstalled on your phone and also supports podcasts.

Other Podcast Apps
There are numerous apps that give you various levels of listening possibilities. A couple other popular ones are Soundcloud and Stitcher. Exploring your options can be a lot of fun.

Shafer Website
You can always listen from our website: shafervineyards.com. Just click on the Podcast tab in the navigation, review the list of podcasts, and click on the ones that sound good to you. Enjoy!
The Wired Wine Collector

Apps and online tools for the savvy cellar – by Jordan Mackay

The three rules every wine collector knows (or should know) are: never buy just one bottle of a wine you really like; keep a record of everything you purchase; and never let a bottle die in the cellar. I’m hardly a wine collector in the grand sense, but I do buy some wine and try to respect those rules. The bad news is that keeping records and inventorying wine is not nearly as fun as buying and drinking it. The good news is, thanks to technology, the more quotidian tasks surrounding buying and collecting wine have never been more painless.

Hi-tech has gotten to the point that almost anything you can do with a laptop can now be done with a phone. Therefore stocking and managing your wine cellar have never been easier. While dozens of capable wine apps exist nowadays, there are only a few you really need. Many you’ve no doubt already heard of, so we’ll dispatch them with speed.

Reading Labels

The three major label-scanning apps compete with each other but have individual strengths. Delectable sports the best lineup of noted wine personalities to follow — sommeliers, winemakers, journalists — if you’re keen to know what the experts drink. Drync has a good lineup of curated lists of wine suggestions with such topics as inexpensive sparkling wines, albariño, and wines with screwcaps. The killer feature of Vivino is wine list scanning. It can read a page of a wine list, allowing you to compare retail prices with the restaurant’s markup. Warning: the value of this handy feature is questionable. (Comparing wine prices on your phone makes you a lousy dinner companion, and the markups you’re likely to find hardly makes for a convivial mood.)

Delicious Downloads

Conveniently, all these apps allow you to instantly buy the wine you’re looking at, so long as it’s in their network of partner retail shops. The app with the largest network, though, is Wine-Searcher, whose vast network can locate almost any wine in existence, and not just in the United States, but worldwide. For older vintages, Wine-Searcher’s search engine links to 340 auction houses. But the wired wine collector should also download WineBid, whose app makes it especially easy to find, bid on, and follow a panoply of rare wines, all sold by collectors.

Okay, you’ve now added new wines to an already bulging cellar. The next challenge is managing that collection, and here’s where the newest technology shines. But, first, the old technology. There should be a place in all of our hearts for CellarTracker, the original, online, free, open source cellar management app. This synced app and website makes cellaring simple, allowing for easy inventory management. Most valuable, though, is the vast library of user and professional tasting notes. Want to know how that 2006 Shafer Hillside Select is drinking right now? Simply look for the most recent user report (usually one a month for that wine).

Virtual Vino

More refined is Vinocell. Available for iPad and iPhone only, this app does everything CellarTracker does, but with more clarity and polish. It logs wines, has an entirely searchable database, records photographs, has pretty icons, and even allows for customizable graphical representation of your cellar to make finding bottles easier. So if you have shelves that run five berths wide and ten tall, you can “build” that image in the app to spatially record the location of each bottle. It’s brilliant. Vinocell’s only drawbacks are the lack of an interface for a standard computer, and CellarTracker’s massive database of user tasting notes (which are available online anyway).

Cellar Selections

However, what may be the apotheosis of contemporary cellar management becomes available this summer, taking all the above to its inevitable conclusion. The crowd-funded product of a team of ambitious French engineers, Caveasy One is the world’s first ‘smart’ wine rack. Simply photograph each bottle with your smartphone before sliding it into the sensor-laden shelf, and the Caveasy One logs the wine into inventory. Sensors on the shelf itself monitor the temperature and humidity of the storage environment. An alert will pop up on your phone when the wine reaches its peak. When you want to find that wine, simply tap on the wine you want to drink, and an LED on the rack will light up, signaling the wine’s location. When you remove the bottle, sensors will delete it from inventory.

Assuming it works (a big assumption), it will be the ultimate in e-cellaring management. And while I may be partial, romantically, to the disheveled mess of an analog cellar, the idea of automatic inventory, help locating bottles in the stacks, and reminders when a wine is going over the hill … is intoxicating.

With such leaps as these, the only rule a wine collector needs is the one I failed to mention above: don’t spend more than you have!

Jordan Mackay is a James Beard Award-winning writer on wine, spirits, and food. His work has appeared in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Wine and Spirits, Food & Wine, and many others. He is the author of five books; his sixth, The Sommelier’s Atlas of Taste (co-authored with Rajat Parr), comes out this October.

WINE CELLAR PHOTO: PATRICK WALLIN
Hillside Select Tasting Notes

Here’s a quick look at all the vintages of Hillside Select. For the full version of the tasting notes please visit the Hillside Select section of our website: ShaferVineyards.com.

2014 Opens with an aromatic wave of deep, intense fruit and spices. The energy in the nose is just as dramatic in the mouth with beautiful ripeness, mocha, briar fruit, pomegranate, baking spice, and ripe tannins that collectors will recognize as offering the promise of sensational things to come in the cellar. Drink now – 20 years

2013 An expansive wine balanced by energetic aromas and flavors of black cherry, dark chocolate, briar fruit, black tea, cola, blackberry, tobacco, and a touch of aromatic herbs. All this abundance comes wrapped in slate minerality and silky tannins. Sure to offer greater riches with time in your cellar. Drink now – 20 years

2012 Energetic dark fruit and white flowers, complex flavors of blackberry, cassis, and black cherry with delicate herbs, graphite, and smoke. Smooth, balanced. Drink now – 18 years

2011 Vibrant mulberry and bramble fruit with tantalizing layers of chocolate, black truffle, tobacco, herbs, cinnamon and a slatelike minerality. A long, lifted finish. Drink now – 18 years

2010 High-toned aromas and flavors of black cherry, cassis, espresso, vanilla, and wet earth with enticing rose petal, cranberry, and herbs. Smooth tannins, long finish. Drink now – 17 years

2009 Luxuriant aromas and flavors of black fruit with enticing layers of cocoa, black tea, spice, and ripe, silky tannins. Drink now – 16 years

2008 Elegant blackberry, dark chocolate, cola, cassis, black and red cherry, spice, and toast. Silky tannins. Drink now – 16 years

2007 Mouth-filling black fruit, mocha, cassis, juicy cherry, black tea, spice, and toast. Elegant structure. Drink now – 15 years

2006 Sensual black fruit, chocolate, black plums, red cherry, tea, and spice. Ripe tannins. Drink now – 14 years

2005 Enticing blackberry, cassis liqueur, black plum, spice, and tobacco. Smooth tannins. Drink now – 13 years

2004 Plush blackberry, cassis, dark chocolate, black cherry, pepper, integrated with silky tannins. Drink now – 12 years

2003 Expansive and juicy blackberry, black cherry, toast, mocha, herbs, with soft tannins. Drink now – 10 years

2002 A feast of black cherry, plum, cassis, and dark chocolate with toasty vanilla and cedar. Drink now – 10 years

2001 Rich and balanced. Blackberry, currant, black cherry, cola, vanilla, tobacco, and herbs. Drink now – 8 years

2000 Pleasing black fruit, pepper, spicy vanilla, and dried herbs. Cedar and tea. Drink now – 2 years

1999 Tantalizing blackberry, cola, tobacco leaf, and minerals with a core of sweetness. Drink now – 4 years

1998 Luscious blend of currants, vanilla, and mineral with a long finish. Drink now – 2 years

1997 Elegant cedar, tea, and tobacco. Rich mouthfeel with chocolate, spice, and black fruit. Drink now – 4 years

1996 Alluring aromatics and flavors. Plush black currant and dark spice with a long finish. Drink now – 1 year

1995 Richness, composure, and dark-fruit complexity. Velvety brick color and maturing flavors. Drink now – 1 year

1994 Complex layers of tea, cedar, tobacco, and leather. Lovely bottle bouquet. Drink now

1993 Plums, toast, and nice earth notes in the nose. Refined fruit with depth and finesse. Drink now


1991 Dense, juicy flavors, great length. Delicious complexities. Drink now

1990 Tea, herbs, spice, cedar, and mushroom. Mature and balanced, silky texture. Drink now

1989 Complex Cabernet aromas, flavors of dried herb, black tea, and cedar. Soft tannins. Drink now

1988 Floral aromas. Medium bodied, mature flavors, moderate tannins. Drink now

1987 Mature, herbal aromas. Complex flavors. Drink now

1986 Aromas of earth, mature fruit. Drink now

1985 Mature color, restrained flavors. Drink now

1984 Lovely color, herbal aromas. Drink now

1983 Mature color and aromas. Drink now