

Bridge Street Social

Sept '23 WINE FAM

Greetings awesome fam!

How's everybody's summer going? Hurry and soak-in every last drop, wherever you are! And drink all the summer wine your heart desires! They say rosé season ends on Labor Day, but we never agreed with that silly 'rule'. Remember that in November :)

Speaking of rules, we kinda bent them for this release, in the best way possible. It's our passion to trek the pathways and blaze the trails to procure all types of interesting, rare, and hidden gem wine, all for you. And it takes a good chunk of time to accomplish this. But not this month. Our executive chef/owner, Mike, hit the motherload upon a spring break trip to California this year. Here's something from Mike:

Hey all, we ended up trekking to California for spring break this year. It ended up being a bit adventurous. The original plan of the trip was to hit up Kings Canyon/Sequoia National Park but 10 days before departure we got word the park was closed to snow/rain/flooding. We quickly tried to veer and decided to take a trip up the PCH to Monterey...only to be thwarted on that two days before leaving as the PCH was closed from Ragged Point to Monterrey due to mudslides essentially. That left me with a quick pivot to add some activities to our trip...and thus our trip to the Ballard Canyon was born. I had met Pete Stolpman during his visit to BSS in 2018 and a nice friendship was born then along with a great appreciation of the Stolpman Wines.

Stolpman is located in Ballard Canyon (northwest of Santa Barbara) and is considered part of the greater Santa Ynez Valley AVA along with being recognized as part of the Central Coast growing region. Situated in the heart of the East-West maritime chute known, Ballard Canyon experiences cold nights and short periods of day-time heat. The diurnal swing approaches 40 degrees

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and it is typical to have daytime highs over 90 degrees Fahrenheit and lows around 50 during the growing season. The climate and soils in the region lend themselves well to growing Rhone Valley varietals, which Stolpman spends much time on.

Stolpman Vineyards was founded by Tom Stolpman in the mid-90's, mainly as a growing operation and quickly developed a reputation as growing amazing grapes for wine. Some of the early clients of Stolpman were Sine Qua Non and Daou. His son, Pete, took over in the late 2000's and shifted the focus to wine making. From there the wines produced by Stolpman have achieved amazing acclaim.

During our visit we spent the day touring the vineyard, tasting through their wines, and enjoying what was a beautiful spring day in Ballard Canyon. We were able to drink Great Places syrah amongst the vines that produce the juice in those bottles, we walked the mother row of vines (a neat project that stems from planting vines directly from Rhone on an eastern facing hill in the heart of the vineyard) and found the mother vine. It truly is different drinking the wine in "the terroir". It just hits differently.



As the visit went on, I casually started to talk with Pete about sending A SINGULAR wine once a year that we can't find in Michigan to feature in our Wine Fam...those discussions continued upon my return to Michigan. And those discussions resulted in them sending us FOUR wines for us to feature in our Wine Fam each September. It might be a bit above our budget that we set for each

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edition of the Wine Fam, but we think it is important to showcase smaller producers that highlight the ideals and styles of wine that we enjoy.



As mentioned previously, we have hosted Peter Stolpman at BSS for a wine dinner, we have poured their wines on our list, we have featured them in our Wine Fam, and even 100% featured their wines in our first edition of Beyond the Cork this spring. Now you get to experience a four pack of their wines that haven't been available in Michigan before. We hope you find these wines as wonderful as we do. We find them to be truly exceptional.

Don't forget, (and don't be shy) about our private Facebook group just for us: 'BSS Wine Fam'. Please request to join, and I'll accept your request within 24 hrs. We'll post pics of our wine enjoyment, mixed-in possibly with your surroundings, pets, food, etc. See you soon on our FB page, and at the restaurant. In the meantime, let's all hold on to summer as long as we can!

Cheers!

Joe Todd
general manager
certified somm - cms

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Stolpman Vineyards - Ballard Canyon, Santa Barbara, CA
'Pliocene' (2020)

You'll get used to 'Ballard Canyon', as Stolpman is 100% responsible for making Ballard Canyon an officially recognized wine growing region. Think Napa, but a little closer to the Pacific Ocean, in Sonoma County. The term for official winegrowing regions in the United States are, 'AVA' (American Viticultural Area).

First off, what lovely and unique artwork. It perfectly encompasses the complexity and superb experience of the juice inside. So let's get right into it. Essentially, most of these mourvèdre (mure [like 'pure'] ved-rah) grapes are purposely left on the vine until mid-October to optimally ripen. Some are picked earlier for the making of Stolpman's rosé. Typically a grape commonly found in France and Spain, Stolpman is doing phenomenal things with it.

The color is somewhere between midnight purple and garnet. The aroma gives-off wildflowers, blackberries, cassis, wet rocks/gravel, and hay. Once this glorious liquid passes my lips, I'm tasting much more of the floralness found in the aroma. Lilac and lavender come to mind, maybe some violets. Lots of steely minerality (calcium, chalk...) mixed with an abundance of dark fruits and peppercorn. This is a BIG wine that's light on its feet. The (mouthfeel) grip is firm, yet gentle. It simultaneously sticks to the insides of my cheeks, and is uncharacteristically buoyant. Basically, I was expecting my palate to be taken hostage, but it turns out it's free to roam all throughout this big flavor rollercoaster. I hope this doesn't sound confusing, but it's a lot to process. Good thing I've got the whole bottle to explore. Hands-down a phenomenal wine!

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Stolpman Vineyards – Ballard Canyon, Santa Barbara, CA
'Own Rooted Field Blend' (2019)

This wine comes from Stolpman's 'So Fresh' line. We have carried the Red on our list previously (Sangiovese) and currently pour the Crunchy Roastie (Syrah and Viognier) and the Orange, so if this one tickles your taste buds we highly recommend checking out the rest of the line.

'So Fresh' sounds like fun, right? But what does it mean (for this wine)? It's Stolpman's moniker of how the grapes are 'crushed' into juice. Most grapes are pressed, yeast is added, it all sits in a tank. It's stirred, tweaked, and eventually bottled. Now let me get nerdy. The method used in turning this wine's grapes into juice is called carbonic maceration. Basically, whole clusters of grapes are placed into a sealed tank and fill it with carbon dioxide. In this oxygenless environment, the grapes will ferment (without yeast) by bursting from the inside out, (rather than bursting from the outside-in by normal pressing). The result in carbonically macerated wine is a less-dry (light to no tannins), lighter in color, lighter in acid, more fruity, and an overall fresher tasting product. So Fresh!

Blending grapes is fun. Like blended whiskey, (vs. single malt) it's fantastic to let the producer mix/blend various batches of finished batches from different juices to create a final product whose sum is much greater than its parts. The grapes blended to make this field blend are; mourvèdre (40%), syrah (30%), and grenache (30%). This blend is commonly found in many French wines, particularly from the Rhone Valley.

The color is a dusty purple. I'm smelling raw cinnamon, cassis, and dirty strawberries. There's a faint metallic (iron) note on the palate, (courtesy of the mourvèdre) lots of dark and tart fruits, gunpowder, and some coffee. There's also a quick hit of strawberry shortcake in here as well – So Fresh! The body is on the lighter side of medium, and there's just a touch of dryness.

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Stolpman Vineyards - Ballard Canyon, Santa Barbara, CA
Sangiovese (2018)

It's not wrong to say sangiovese is the official grape of Italy. It's what makes Chianti. There are many distinguished grapes in Italy, (shout-out to nebbiolo!), but this is the most widely known in most wine circles. And I absolutely love what Stolpman does with this grape!

While maintaining the core character of this iconic grape, Stolpman, by way of their vintification and actual soil/climate, pulls-off a phenomenally fantastic rendition of a Californian sangiovese. Comprised mostly from the 10 acre vineyard Tom Stolpman planted back in 1994, this gem has all the hallmarks of the Tuscan original. It is aged in neutral French 500 liter oak barrels (puncheons) for about 2 years. And it's worth it.

My half-full glass shows a beautiful ruby purple liquid. I tilt the glass and place it over a white sheet of paper, showing a deeper shade of purple body with a salmon-colored rim. Smelling this elixir, I'm reminded of mesquite smoke and fresh mixed berry pie. All the strawberry, blueberry, and blackberry you could ever pack into a handmade flakey crust. Then there's a faint smell of tomato leaf and garden spices. It's very streamlined and tight at first, then the glorious aromas relax and linger. I'm very eager to taste this beauty! The initial fruit flavors are red and black plum, melded with nutmeg, cinnamon, and a touch of vanilla. It's like the aromas all converged onto my tongue. Another 2-3 hearty sips discover orange zest, cranberry, and toasted nuts. How good is this?!?! The body is silky soft, with deft dryness. Not too dry, not too fruity. The medium body carries a lingering, wonderfully flavorful finish.

This wine will pair great with any red sauce and roasted eggplant. All the pasta you can throw at it. Roasted chicken and pork. Root veggies and sturdy cheeses. Let me know what you think!

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Stolpman Vineyards - Ballard Canyon, Santa Barabara, CA
Roussanne (2019)

The roussanne grape is full-bodied and native to southern France. It's kind of rare, and it flies under the radar (mostly). But the Stolpman tribe, in all of their daring glory, decided to give this big white grape a go. Sometimes confused with Chardonnay, this grape finds a good home on any Thanksgiving Day table. But, we'll talk about food later.

'Rousse' means rust (French). And these grapes need a lot of sunlight to give them their much needed tan. And because the grape takes a long time to ripen, it requires a lot of attention and hands to rotate the clusters and prune the leaves for maximum sunlight exposure. The Stolpmans knew they were taking on a big chore of a grape, but the payoff is more than worth it, if done right. And right was done!

"Aromas of Asian pear and honeysuckle sprinkled with citrus tell the tale of a rich, indulgent Roussanne ready to coat the palette in full-bodied splendor. On the nose, one can almost smell the rich texture and the mouthfeel doesn't disappoint. While opulence carries the day, complimentary notes of lychee, lemongrass, and jasmine bring a more delicate prettiness. Aromas of white flowers give further lift while golden hay - the only evidence of toasty oak barrels - brings the wine to a long, luxurious finish." - Stolpman Vineyards. I couldn't have said it better myself.

This big and round wine will pair beautifully with all kinds of hearty dishes. I'm curious how it'd taste with brats & kraut (?). As for waiting to put this on your Thanksgiving Day table, good luck!