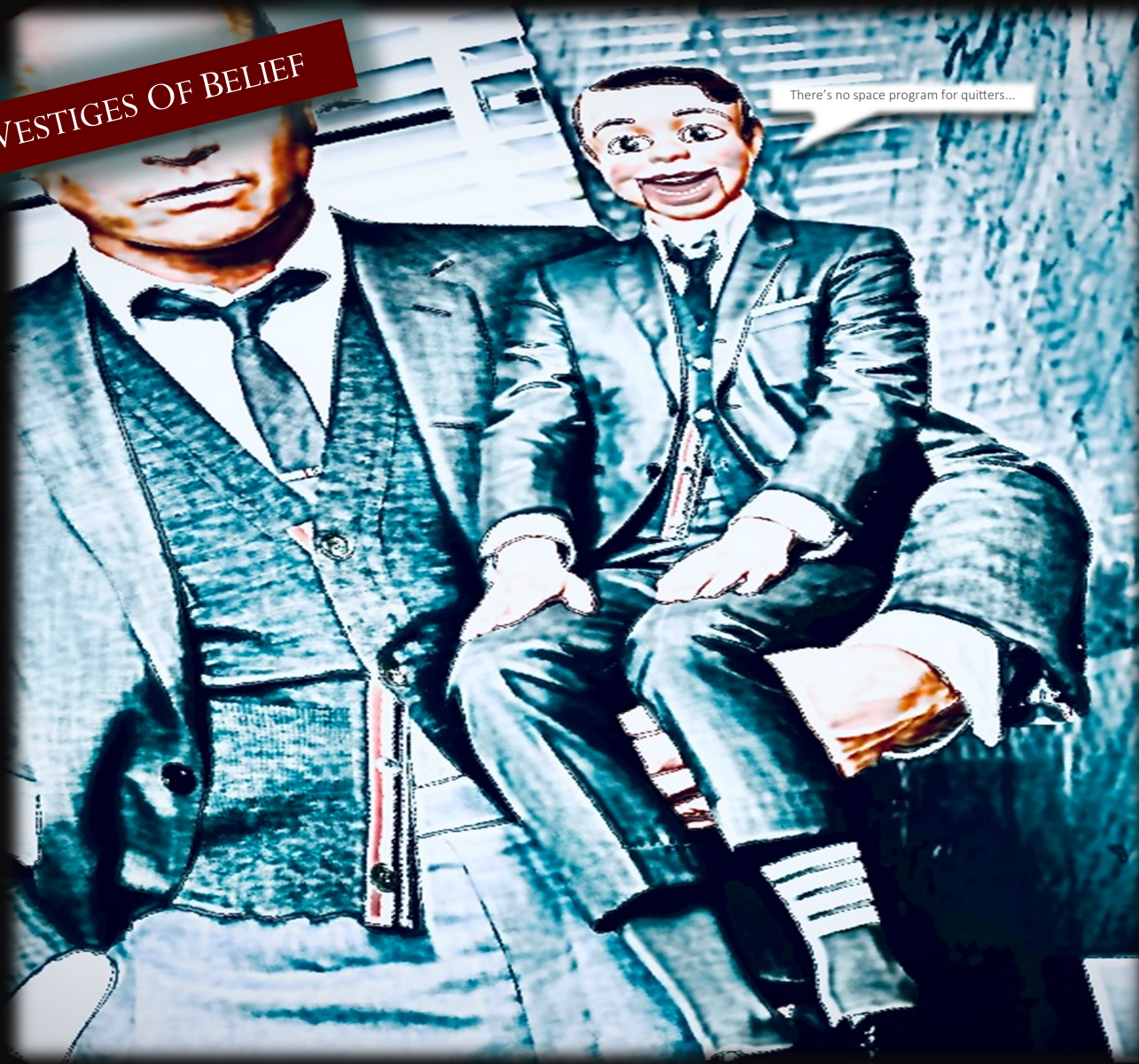


VESTIGES OF BELIEF

There's no space program for quitters...



CROIX ESTATE

AUTUMN 2023



VESTIGES OF BELIEF

The Money Men were on site looking dreadfully serious for the occasion. One would have taken them for archly nerdy Don Draper suit-types who veer towards Thom Browne's uniform ideals of shrunken grey suits with their high-cuff cuts were it not for the shoes and the \$50,000 watches that disclosed their profession. Honestly, there is something deceptively disarming about an unmatching, full-length sock when styled under the ankle grazers. It makes for a bit of whimsy amidst a serious brow. Like a high school band-nerd who's earned serious, disposable financial resources who is now fortified with the attitude and protection that only wealth can secure, yet hasn't strayed from his high-water, wedgie attracting roots. No one would dare wedgie these guys now. These dudes had the sand to back their swagger.

The power they now held over our *fait de accompli*, driven by our belief's exceptional-glory premise, was palpable. These were four, power-primed executives from First Republic Bank (yes, that bank), who, upon arrival toed delicately around a mud-pocked, gravelly parking lot. Their brushed leather laced Oxfords were scuffed to ruin before the first word of our financial pitch was ever uttered.

To be honest, the winery we purchased before it became Croix Estate (the winery you know today), was in rough shape, yet it was filled with deep, personal love. It was evident – to us – that the bones of the place had been cared for and labored over – by hand – for well over a century. A classic, all-American wine production story that we now owned. Belief had led us here. And belief would take us to experiences, good and bad, as we leaned into manifest our destiny.

When we first ripped this winery apart – took it squarely down to the studs – we believed that this was the path to stating our brand, rebuilding it in our fantastic image for Croix Estate. Our demolition experience was both good and bad. Bad, because we knuckle-headed our initial building progress with the assumption that our construction was done up to county code. Good, because the big, fat, red-tag closure of the property caused us to pause our belief system for a great number of months.

The closure of construction *forced* us to slow down, feel the place, the history, and to find the balance within our agronomic surroundings. It

allowed us to get comfortable in our new skin, to become friends with our neighbors, and develop a new set of beliefs. What became of that initial misstep was a more holistic understanding and respect for the entirety of our place within our community.

Frankly, the experience made us better people, because, prior to this development, we faced our vision in eccentric veneers of belief – some quite uncomfortable to reflect upon even now.

For example, we recall a plan to rip and replant the old-vine Zinfandel (planted in 1904) from the ground of the estate and plant it to Pinot Noir before being saved by a miracle-ripple in our destiny. (*Oh, the shame of such thoughts!*) We also recall elaborate wood boxes; shiny tissue-wrap paper; espresso-stained barrels; gold plated wine openers; soft, angelic acoustic guitar played over Sonos during our tastings; and unnatural brand language written in the third person that made us sound like pompous jack holes. We recall believing we would become the new cult winery – *whatever the hell that means* – never having to do any work to spread our gospel according to Croix Estate because we would arrive and simply be GREAT! After all, there was no space program for quitters!

And, we remember pitching our plan before the principles of First Republic Bank, painting grand visions for a luxury brand dedicated to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir production. Big dreams, big bottles, big wines, big epiphanies. At the end of our big presentation, the bankers had just one question – *just one*: “How much lipstick are you going to have to put on this pig?”

Kind of makes you shudder, doesn't it? It does us, even to this day.

You see, beliefs must adapt, evolve, and stand on a solid foundation of humility and gratitude because we rise, we fall, we fly, we crash, we bend, and sometimes, we break.

Bringing this Croix Estate thing into reality, holding it together, pushing through rough stuff requires more than just our beliefs. It requires that *you*, our core enthusiasts, believe in our work, because if we are not adapting in pursuit of our vocation with integrity...well, then...this great, big adventure is just a pretty pig and another vestige of belief.

- ✦ **Speaking of pigs...and cows!** Better hang on to your swim skivvies because you are about to jump into the deep end of a wonderful pool filled with a full serving of lip-smacking deliciousness. The two wines featured in our Autumn allocation are stunning renditions you will not want to miss. One named after the California wild boar, and one born from a 300-acre dairy farming family turned exceptional winegrower.

2021 WEST PYRAMID PINOT NOIR | Bucher Vineyard, Middle Reach, Russian River Valley

Variety: 100% Pinot Noir, Pommard Clone | Method | 80% *Pellenc* Destemmed, 20% Wholecluster, 5 Day Cold Soak, 100% Carbonic Native Inoculation Open Top Fermentation, Hand Punch Down Cap Submersion, Free-Run Transfer Via Gravity Flow | Aging Regimen, 50% New French Oak, 16 Months | Clarifying Via Barrel To Tank | 10 Barrels Produced

The Bucher family operation is an all-American, immigrants make good on a dream through self-determination story. Joe and Annemarie immigrated from Luzern, Switzerland in 1950, settling first in San Jose with a dream of owning a dairy farm in Northern California. Born in 1929, Joe came from a family of dairy farmers in the tiny town of Inwil. With dairy farming in his blood, Joe was determined to establish his own operation to continue the family legacy in the United States. By 1958 Joe and Annemarie had located a 360-acre dairy for sale just outside the town of Healdsburg. The two invested their life savings on the purchase and began their journey with just 50 head of dairy cows and a few calves, making the decision to produce organic milk from cows raised on a strict diet of organic alfalfa and hay. This would set the bar high for parceling land from which to farm grapes. Their son John graduated from UC Davis in 1984 and returned to Healdsburg to manage the dairy operation. John recognized an opportunity to diversify their land with a high value crop in *vitis vinifera*, in particular, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Convincing his parents of the decision to branch into the winegrowing business, the first vineyard blocks of Pinot Noir were planted in 1997.

Located adjacent to Bucher Farms on Westside Road, in the heart of the Middle Reach of the Russian River Valley AVA, Bucher Vineyards consists of 38 sustainably farmed acres, two of which are planted to Chardonnay. The **36 acres of Pinot Noir** are broken into **14 distinct blocks**, utilizing **10 distinct clones: Opa's (943, Mariafeld, Calera), Rock Ridge (Pommard), Saddle (Swan), West Pyramid (Pommard), North Pyramid (Pommard), Pear Tree (Dijon 667), South Hill (Dijon 115, Mt. Eden), Frost Hill West (Mt. Eden), Frost Hill East (Mt. Eden), North L (Dijon 777), Torry's (Pommard), Raspbery (Pommard), House (Dijon 115), and South L (777).**

An exotic, perfumed, yet masculine aromatic mix of honeysuckle, charred meats, bacon fat, orange rinds, and Morell mushrooms leads the way to light herbal scents of earl grey tea, lavender, sweet stone fruits and a dash of cayenne pepper. Wow, this wine grips your attention. Big, luscious dark fruit with forward tannins leads into fleshy plum, crushed red delicious apple, cherry syrup, subtle notes of fresh straw complimented by structured acidity and an exceptionally long finish. **Simply stunning!**

List Price—\$68 | Your Privileged Price—\$61.20 | Any Mix Of 12 Bottles Or More—\$57.80 |

2021 LA CINGHIALE GSM, Red Blend | Kick Ranch Vineyard, Fountain Grove, Sonoma County

Variety: 59% Syrah, 23% Grenache, 18% Mourvedre | Method | Open Top Fermentation, 11-Day Cold Soak, 100% Carbonic Maceration With Hand Punch-Downs, Free-Run Transfer Via Gravity Flow To French Oak, Utilizing 100% Native Yeast Primary and Secondary Fermentations. Aging Regimen | 60% New French Oak, 18 Months | 10 Barrels Produced

Small lot Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre and the blended GSM captured our hearts decades ago coming up in the industry... (Continued)

WOW! This is wonderful!!

Grown to perfection and in the right locations, there was magic in the bottle of these off-variety productions that offered a range of styles from quaffable, aromatic beauties to hedonistic ink bombs that everyone seemed to pan at our wine parties, despite not a drop being spared in the bottles of the heartier efforts. It was, particularly during the late 1990's, with Zinfandel and GSM productions that we witnessed a cultural shift in production from lower alcohol wines to more fruit forward, fully-ripened renditions. While we find great pleasure in debating the attributes of both style preferences, there is an argument to be established in any Northern California, wine-country tasting room that California began to define itself outside of traditional French-based winemaking practices during this period, and much to the flavorful benefit of the consuming public. That's where we come in with our version of GSM. Croix Estate enthusiasts have come to recognize that we are not shy about growing fruit to its optimal ripeness. However, where there is ripeness, there is balance and harmony, and our Croix Estate 2021 La Cinghiale GSM Red Blend is no exception on both fronts.

To the Northwest of Cazadero Station lies a hidden foot trail that leads backcountry hikers on what is perhaps the most breathtaking, yet dangerous, treks out to the Annapolis ridgeline overlooking the coast at Stuart's Point. Experienced hunters say the wild boar is more dangerous to hunt than most animals. Weighing in at 600+ pounds at full maturity, the males are territorial of all intruders and the females violently protective of their young. To the casual hiker, approaching the Kings Ridge section of the hike requires a soft shoe and keen hearing, lest you encounter the ferocity of these feral beasts. The boar was not indigenous to California, yet it has managed to survive and thrive untamed in the densely wooded, northern regions of the state. A testament to the strength and character of the species.

Ripe, blackberry and rhubarb pie notes cascade into zesty, crushed pomegranate curd, toasted oak char, white smoke, black pepper, dense red berry fruit and Cape jasmine waft from the glass drawing one's curiosity. And that is just on the nose! The palate is rich and spectacular, revealing flavors of ripe black plum, blackberry, sweet cassis, with hints of black pepper, espresso and semi-sweet cocoa. The finish is lengthy and viscous with vibrant acidity adding substantial length to the session. **Do not miss this wine!**

List Price—\$60 | Your Privileged Price—\$54 | Any Mix Of 12 Bottles Or More—\$51 |



Your Autumn Allocation Awaits

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