

BIRICHINO VIN GRIS 2010



You can't be too rich, too beautiful or too *birichino*. For the Italians, it connotes mischievous, impish or nymphean – a mark of vitality and embrace of La Dolce Vita. As *habitués* of the Côte d'Azur can attest, The Sweet Life and dry *rosé* are rarely apart. Like the ideal Provençal *rosé* [though *sans* French passport], our *vin gris* allies the suggestion of citrus, rosehip, orchard fruits and violet pastilles with the enigmatic imprint of *garrigues* – the wild herbs which aromatize the Provençal countryside. Graced with a lightness of body which allows the *buveur* to remain a *flâneur*, our *rosé* is composed of the classical varieties *cinsault*, *grenache* and *rolle* sourced almost entirely from 100+ year-old vineyards in California.

WINEMAKING NOTES from John Locke and Alex Krause – Birichini at Large

Vin gris is traditionally made from the lightest pressing of the noblest red grapes, yielding a quite vibrant juice with the palest blush of color at the slow, steady increasing pressure on their skins. Cinsault vines that first bore fruit at the time of the Paris Exposition of 1889 are the starting point for our version, complemented by grenache that was sending up its first flowers as the Mann Act passed into law in 1910. Lastly, we round out the blend with a rich, and aromatic touch of rolle in the best tradition of the rosés of Provence. We ferment the *cinsault* and *rolle* in temperature-controlled stainless, and the more structured grenache in neutral French oak barrels. The blend is assembled over the winter, employing modest lees contact and *bâtonnage* to add a textural tether for the dominant floral, guava and Mediterranean citrus fruits that rise from the glass.

HARVEST NOTES

With each vintage, as the days grow shorter and the fruit enters the home stretch, we are nervous parents shuttling back and forth checking on our precious fruit, making sure no-one's getting sunburned, or not wearing enough chlorophyll, and we keep one hairy eyeball on the weather forecast until the last cluster is in the barn. 2010 made us [and most California vintners] more nervous than we care to remember, with an atypically long, cold, summer familiar to Mark Twain, a brief but infernal blast of heat in August [which put vineyards that didn't have 100-125 year-old root systems to the test] followed by an unseasonably early start to the winter rainy season. Fortunately, with extremely small fruit loads and a physiological memory dating back dating back to the Wilson administration, our vineyards know what to do when the mercury rises, and they didn't show any signs of water stress. When temperatures fell back to more moderate levels, ripening continued on trajectory to end up with fruit with more of everything; aromatic intensity, power, and natural acidity to sustain it. We threaded the needle of ripeness and acidity, bringing in the last *grenache* before the curtain of rain came down in late October.

PAIRINGS

Our Vin Gris enlivens many a savory dish including grilled fish, roast pork loin and *salade niçoise*. In short (in shorts) there is almost nothing that does not play well with our bone-dry rosé: bring on the anchovies, artichokes, olive oil, garlic, and more olive oil. With salmon it is sublime; its rosy hues completing a visual circuit with the wine. Szechwan peppercorns, chili-oil, and platters of charcuterie and antipasti get along famously with her. Think pink.

THE LABEL


Annabelle Verhoye, a New York illustrator born in Germany and raised in France, has contributed extensively to American, European and Asian magazines and journals, among them *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The (Asian) Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Times*. Her clients have included *Walt Disney*, *Playboy*, *Taschen*, *Chronicle Books*, and *Bonny Doon Vineyard*. www.annabelleverhoye.com

VITAL STATISTICS: Harvest: Oct. 7-21, 2010 @ 21-24.9° Brix TA: 5.9g/l pH: 3.42 Alc.: 13.0% RS: 0.3g/l (dry!)

VARIETIES: 66% *Cinsault*, 21% *Grenache*, 13% *Rolle*

COLOR: Pale salmon

SERVICE: 13° C

 **THINK PINK:** A portion of sale proceeds from this wine support Breast Cancer and Cancer research.

PRESS: watch this space

www.birichino.com