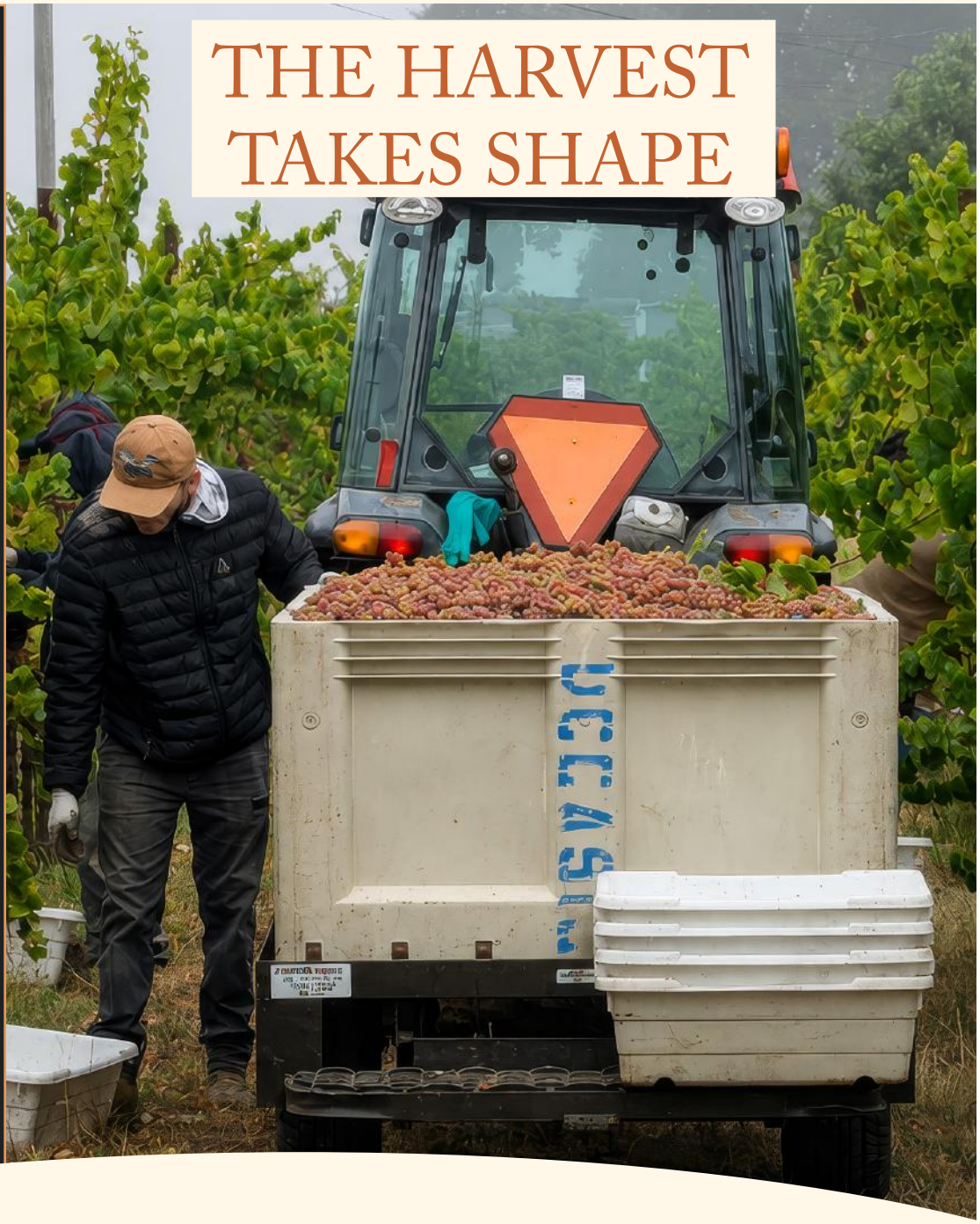
NOVEMBER 2026

POCKET WATCH

THE OCCASIO WINERY NEWSLETTER

THE HARVEST TAKES SHAPE



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WINE WITHOUT RULES.
NOT WITHOUT ROOTS.

OCCASIO
WINERY

THE 2026 HARVEST



Shake Ridge Ranch Syrah arrives at Occasio—2.25 tons of beautifully harvested fruit from Amador County.

Harvest began on August 10 with Gewürztraminer from the Russian River Valley and ended on October 7 with Cabernet Sauvignon from Coombsville. In nineteen years of winemaking, we have never begun so early. Between those arrivals came familiar vineyards, a returning favorite, and new possibilities for both the winery and the distillery.

Our first Gewürztraminer arrived in the cool of the morning. We pressed the whole clusters and settled the juice, protecting the fragrance that first drew us to the variety. Following our Riesling, it continues our exploration of aromatic whites—wines whose interest lies in the dialogue between perfume, texture, freshness, and place. The challenge is to preserve that expressive character while finding the balance that makes a wine inviting at the table. We will have more to share as this first vintage develops.

Late August brought 2.25 tons of Syrah from Shake Ridge Ranch in Amador County. Beautifully harvested, the fruit reminded us why we return. A vineyard relationship carries knowledge of the site, respect for the farming, and memories of earlier wines. We know something of what this vineyard can offer, yet each vintage asks us to listen again.

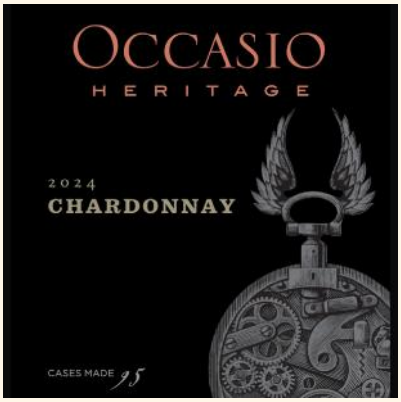
Chardonnay from Sunol Highlands arrived in only half the quantity we had hoped for. The amount was disappointing; the quality was excellent. In small-lot winemaking, available fruit and its promise do not always move together. The smaller arrival means fewer bottles eventually, but it leaves our attention firmly on what these grapes can become.

Here in Livermore, Fong Vineyard supplied the Grenache for our rosé. Rosé remains intentional: we pick for the wine we want it to become. Freshness, fruit, and balance begin in the vineyard, long before the juice takes its delicate color. Picking for rosé asks a different question of the grapes than waiting for the ripeness we seek in a red wine.

The final arrival was Cabernet Sauvignon from Coombsville, just east of the city of Napa. It closed the picking season while opening another conversation—whether the pomace remaining after pressing might replenish Sidewinder's grappa. Those skins and seeds still hold something of the vineyard and the fermentation, offering the possibility of carrying this harvest forward into a different expression of the grape.

With the fruit now in, the pace changes. Our work continues through the choices of the cellar and the time these young wines need to develop. We are grateful to the growers and harvest crews whose care brought us here, and look forward to sharing what this season becomes.

NOVEMBER RELEASES

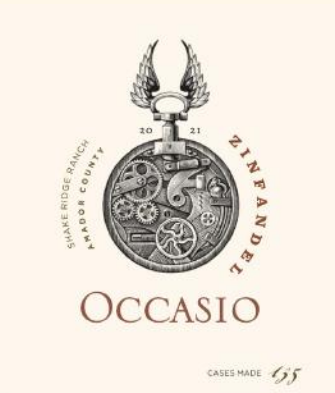


2024 CHARDONNAY

Sunol Highlands · Livermore Valley

Our first Chardonnay from Sunol Highlands comes from one of Livermore Valley's coolest sites. Bright freshness and minerality balance the texture of barrel fermentation and gentle lees stirring. Thoughtful malolactic fermentation brings depth to a refined, expressive wine.

13.9% alcohol — 750 mL



2021 ZINFANDEL

Shake Ridge Ranch · Amador County

Heart and Mendocino heritage clones give this Zinfandel generous blackberry and black cherry fruit. Bay leaf, sage, and clove add complexity, with a hint of white pepper. Fresh acidity and moderate tannins balance its full-bodied richness.

14.5% alcohol — 750 mL

AT THE TABLE *Click the recipe title or linked ingredients for the full recipes.*



BUTTERMILK ROAST CHICKEN

Samin Nosrat's three-ingredient roast chicken has become a winter Sunday tradition in our home. Pair with our Chardonnay.

INGREDIENTS

1 small whole chicken · 2 cups whole buttermilk · kosher salt.

METHOD

Salt the chicken and let stand 30 minutes. Combine buttermilk with 2 tablespoons kosher salt, pour over the chicken in a sealed bag, and refrigerate 12–24 hours. Wipe away excess marinade. Roast at 425°F for 20 minutes, then at 400°F until cooked through, rotating for even browning. Check for 165°F with a thermometer. Rest 10–15 minutes before carving.



A FIGMENT OF AUTUMN

Sparkling Malvasia Bianca meets Flavor Lab's fig and cardamom syrup, with a mist of orange to brighten the autumn spice.

INGREDIENTS

4 oz Occasio Sparkling Malvasia Bianca · ¼ oz Flavor Lab Fig & Cardamom Syrup · 1 mist Flavor Lab Orange Aroma Spray.

METHOD

Pour the syrup into a chilled sparkling wine glass. Add a little Malvasia Bianca and stir gently to blend, then slowly top with the remaining wine. Finish with one light mist of orange aroma spray over the surface.

A SEASON OF GATHERING



HOLIDAY IN THE VINEYARDS

Saturday & Sunday, December 5–6 · Noon–4:30 PM · Occasio Winery

Holiday in the Vineyards is one of our favorite weekends—a chance to welcome familiar faces, meet new friends, and browse craft vendors with a glass in hand. Join us at Occasio to discover wines and gifts for the season, then continue the afternoon at Sidewinder, where members and their guests can settle into the lounge for a cozy gathering among friends.

THE SMOKING BISHOP

Sunday, December 13 · 1:00–3:00 PM
Sidewinder Spirits Company
Warm Punches, Holiday Stories, Good Company

Smoking Bishop returns with a little Flavor Lab curiosity. Explore the holiday punch celebrated in Dickens's A Christmas Carol, alongside mulled wine, an apple spice hot rum, and an alcohol-free winter warmer. We'll share the preparations behind each glass—and practical ways to bring their warmth to your own holiday table.

A DICKENS CHRISTMAS DINNER

Thursday, December 10
Sidewinder Spirits Company
Back by Popular Request

We are planning the return of our Dickens Christmas Dinner—an intimate evening inspired by A Christmas Carol, with seasonal dishes, Occasio wines, and the warmth of friends around the table. We are working on the details and look forward to sharing the date, menu, and reservation information soon.

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 14
Quarterly Release Party

DECEMBER 3
Flavor Lab Thursday

DECEMBER 13
The Smoking Bishop



2245B South Vasco Road · Livermore, California · OccasioWinery.com

FROM THE CELLAR

OUR FIRST GEWÜRZTRAMINER



Our first Gewürztraminer arrived from the Russian River Valley on August 10, opening the earliest harvest in our nineteen years of winemaking. Following our introduction of Riesling, it continues an exploration of aromatic whites and the possibilities they bring to the table.

We pressed the whole clusters and settled the juice, protecting the fragrance that first drew us to this variety. Our interest goes beyond perfume: we are looking for the relationship between aroma, texture, freshness, and place—the qualities that make a wine worth returning to over a meal.

This first vintage is still developing. As we follow its progress in the cellar, we will share what we learn and how those observations guide our choices. For now, Gewürztraminer brings a new question to Occasio, and another reason to remain curious.



REVISITING GRAPPA

Grappa is one of the places where Occasio and Sidewinder meet. After the wine has been pressed, the grape skins still hold possibilities for another expression of the harvest. With Sidewinder's grappa out of stock for some time, we are considering this year's Coombsville Cabernet pomace for a new batch.

One question is still open: should we keep the spirit unaged, or give some of it time in barrel? Both approaches interest us, and this harvest offers an opportunity to revisit what we want our grappa to become.

For now, this is work in progress. We will share more as the decisions take shape, but we would also like to hear from you. Do you prefer your grappa unaged, or with a little barrel aging? Tell us the next time you visit Sidewinder. Your answer may help shape the conversation around our next release.