

The Ukiah DAILY JOURNAL

John On Wine – An early Thanksgiving

By John Cesano
05/13/15



Susan Johnson and John Cesano at Passport to Dry Creek Valley.

I know I am supposed to save up all my gratefulness for the year and post it in a cliché Thanksgiving post toward the end of November, but Thanksgiving is coming early this year.

During the recently passed Hopland Passport event, one of our visiting tasters told me that she wished she could have my job. Everybody sees greener grass outside their lives; I would love to have Anthony Bourdain's job, but I do recognize how blessed I am.

The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley invited me to attend the Passport to Dry Creek Valley for the third consecutive year, and I am extraordinarily grateful. This year, I was accompanied by my good friend, Susan Johnson. Susan and I used to travel the country doing tradeshow, winemaker dinners, and corporate events for wineries, and then moved together to work for the Wine Appreciation Guild where we visited hundreds of wineries and tasting rooms throughout California.

Susan now works for a company that provides winemakers the tools to make great wine, and of course I pour great wine at one job and write about great wine in my other job. Although we came at each wine tasted from a different perspective, Susan looking at what could have made a wine better and me taking each wine as it is, we both were absolutely impressed front to back with the line ups at media check in host winery DaVero, Gustafson Family Winery, and Seghesio. Talty did the best job amplifying social media marketing, Selby had the best single bite of food, and Blanchard had the best 'story' wine.

DaVero produces organic or biodynamic wines from Italian varieties, and I shared the names of some Mendocino growers when asked by winemaker Evan, but if you grow grapes in the county, certified organic or biodynamic, and they are Italian varieties, then Evan wants to hear from you. Terrific wines that you will

not taste anywhere else, plus they have farm goods for sale — and you know how much I love an organic farm stand & tasting room!

Gustafson is a long drive from any other winery, but absolutely worth the time to get there. Best winery views ever, fantastic wines, whimsically wonderful presented tasty food creations, and a dream property for vacation rental. Gustafson joins Preston and Truett-Hurst as one of my three favorite Dry Creek places to spend an afternoon with wine and food.

In spite of my desire to visit new wineries each Dry Creek Passport, Seghesio pulls me in year after year. Between wine, food, and music this is probably the most dependably solid stop for complete satisfaction.

Within seconds of a #DCVPassport post by me, about any participating winery, Talty was sharing or retweeting it. Visit them if you like Zin, Zin, or Zin. Selby's duck and andouille sausage gumbo with crayfish cornbread was the best food I tasted all weekend. Blanchard had the best music with the Rosetown Rmblers covering Grateful Dead tunes, and each bottle sold of their "Helicopter" blend sees a donation to help the families of our military's special operators.

None of my opportunities would be possible without invitations from others, and those invitations come because I write for you, my readers, here in the Ukiah Daily Journal and online at JohnOnWine.com and you are the reason I have a life worthy of gratitude, of thanks, and of appreciation. I'm not waiting until Thursday, November 26, Thanksgiving day 2015; let me say it now (and possibly again then): Thank you!

Read the full article here:

<http://www.ukiahdailyjournal.com/lifestyle/20150513/john-on-wine-x2013-an-early-thanksgiving>