



10.21.17

## Fire and Flood

As I write this, in the midst of pressing, I exhale a bit and that mental break from the immediacy of caring for the fruit we have received allows the mind to wander a bit. For me, I can't wander too far without thinking of the numerous natural disasters that have befallen the US this year. Between Houston, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Northern California fires it has been a serious year for weather driven disasters.

I was speaking with a friend, Miguel Garcia, from Puerto Rico yesterday who mentioned that 80% of the country was still without power. Even with amazing support from all US resources they are in for a long struggle just to get back to normal.

I've spoken to so many individuals from each of these affected areas. While there have been tragic losses of life, and loss of irreplaceable structures, there is a consistent theme from everyone that they will not only survive but rebuild in a way that is better, stronger..... and smarter. The power of the human spirit is incalculable.

Meanwhile...we in the Willamette Valley have enjoyed stunning Autumn weather. Protected from the west by the Coast Range and from the east by the Cascades we are, by contrast to so many other regions, nestled safely in this beautiful place. Make no mistake though. Our threats are those of a longer-term nature but perhaps ultimately more devastating than the fires or the flood. The entire Cascade chain is composed of live volcanoes. Mount Rainier, Mount Hood, Mount Jefferson and Mount Washington are all capable of blowing up at any time. St. Helens showed them the way just a few years ago.

The Cascades exist because they are the point at which the Juan de Fuca plate, which subducts under our coastline, emerges violently above ground once again. Just saying Hi! Let's call that "point of contention number one". The location where the marine based Juan de Fuca plate subducts under the continental plate, many miles west into the Pacific from any Oregon beach you stand on, is "point of contention number two". At this location you have the meeting of two enormous physical masses. Everything has been hunky dory for as long as there have been written records or that any human being can remember but our best geologists believe that there have been consistent violent slips between the two plates. The interval between these violent slips is debatable and unsure but what all believe is that when the "slip" (think of a sudden fall of a 1000 mile plus coastline) does happen it will cause a massive tsunami and earthquakes the likes of which we have never seen.

The last several years were very warm. 2017 was a throwback to the classic vintages we have experienced over 30 plus years. Bud break (first green tissue) happened at the time we normally

expect. Bloom (flowering of each individual grape) was also when we normally expect this phenomenon, mid-June.

As those who live in Oregon know, we experienced one of the longest dry periods in our history through July and August. No precipitation for 56 days. Stupid dry.

When we first checked sugar levels they were abnormally high. The sugar level was not in sync with the physiological ripeness of the fruit. Seeds were green, and the fruit was pulpy.

We thankfully received over an inch of rain mid-September which lowered the sugar and brought it in line with the natural acid of the fruit. From that point forward the fruit matured with great balance. This is a year that reminds me of 1988, which aged so effortlessly (and is still amazing), though this year has more power and concentration.

Please join us on the 24th and 25th of November for our annual winery open house barrel tasting.

Best,

Ken