



**September 2011**

*Hello Friends of Democracy!*

***Fall Festival Season is Here!*** – This weekend kicks off Democracy Vineyards' fall festival schedule. See below for details. This year, we are offering 10% off case purchases and 5% discounts on purchases of three packs.

Reston Great Grapes Wine, Arts and Food Festival, Saturday September 10 and Sunday, September 11 from 12 noon to 6 pm at the Reston Town Center. For tickets and more information go to <http://www.uncorkthefun.com/reston-virginia-fall/site-info>.

Virginia Wine Festival, Saturday, September 17 and Sunday, September 18 from 11 am to 6 pm at Bull Run Regional Park in Centreville. Go to <http://virginiawinefest.com> for more information and to buy advance tickets.

Yorktown Wine Festival, Saturday, October 1, from noon to 6 pm at the Riverwalk Landing at Chisciak Green. For information and tickets go to:

[http://www.villageevents.org/yorktown\\_wine\\_festival.htm](http://www.villageevents.org/yorktown_wine_festival.htm).

Fredericksburg Area Wine Festival, Saturday, October 8 and Sunday, October 9 from 11 am to 5 pm at Old Mill Park. Ticket and event information can be found at

<http://fredericksburgwine.com>.

Richmond International Wine Excursion – Saturday October 28 and Sunday October 30 at the American Civil War Center at Tredegar Iron Works. Watch this newsletter for upcoming details or check [www.wineexcursion.com](http://www.wineexcursion.com).

***It Wouldn't Be Democracy Without Voting*** -- As an extra bit of fun, those who buy a bottle of our wine during the festival season get to vote in the Democracy Vineyards GOP Presidential Tracking Poll. Ballots will be available at each festival for you to write in the name of your preferred GOP Presidential candidate [we would print the names but the roster keeps changing and that would increase our printing costs!]. In our October newsletter, we will announce the current state of preferences for the Republican Presidential nomination as expressed by Friends of Democracy.

***From the Vineyard/Orchard*** -- Harvest time is here! Just before Labor Day, we were out in the vineyard checking the sugar levels on the grapes to see how close they were to being ready to pick. This process involves taking grape samples from throughout the vineyard, squeezing a little juice onto a device called a refractometer and reading what numbers it registers for brix – or sugar – levels.



When grapes reach a certain level of brix, they need to be picked in order to provide the best flavors in the wines they will eventually make. Pick too soon and wines can taste “green” or vegetative. Pick too late and the grapes deteriorate, attract rot and other diseases and, if they get rained on, lose their optimum sugar levels. That latter issue was a growing concern as weather forecasts predicted strong and steady rains beginning sometime over the holiday weekend.

Still, after we delivered the grape samples to Virginia WineWorks for analysis, we were somewhat surprised when Michael Shaps, our winemaker, announced, “you’ve got to pick the Viognier now!” When the grapes are ready to go, they gotta go. So the Sunday after our Birth of Democracy festival, Ed Martin and his son, Rob, Paul and Laura Lewis [a pair of very gracious friends who had come down for the festival and stayed over], Jim and Susan headed out into the vineyard to bring in the Viognier harvest that will become part of the 2011 Declaration. Starting soon after dawn, with the mists still hanging low over the vines, we began filling lugs [crates for grapes] placed along the trellis panels. Several hours later, we delivered over 3000 pounds of Viognier grapes to Virginia WineWorks.



The Merlot will be the next up for picking, most likely later this week. After that, we anticipate bringing in the Petit Manseng, followed by the Petit Verdot. The Chambourcin can hang on the vine a little longer and will probably be ready for harvest toward the end of September. All the grapes should be off the vine and fermenting at WineWorks by October.

Although it is rewarding to see a year's worth of hard work, often in the cold, the rain or miserable heat, come to fruition in a successful harvest – there is a certain wistfulness at seeing these gorgeous grape clusters snatched from the vines and carted off for pressing. They look so pretty one wishes they could just stay there in all their “postcard picture-esqueness”. But, then, see the preceding paragraph about rot and loss of sugar content. Pick those grapes!

*Latest Awards for Democracy Wines* – The results for the Winston Salem (Mid-Atlantic/Southeast Wine Competition) came in recently and Democracy Wines once again received significant recognition. Velvet Revolution received a Gold medal; Declaration and Unum received Silvers; and Emancipation and Alabaster received Bronze designations.

*Suffrage 2010 Has Arrived!* -- Suffrage 2010, our Chambourcin varietal, is now ready for release! It will be available at all our fall festivals and many retail outlets in the near future! The wine is full bodied, with a deep dark color, and a robust flavor on the palate. This wine will sell for \$17.

*A Fun Birth of Democracy Festival* – We were delighted to see so many Friends of Democracy at our festival on Labor Day weekend! Many thanks to Boomie Pederson with Hamner Theatre for hosting our Friday night wine tasting, to Claudia Gibson for catering a delicious dinner and to Nathan Hittle, a second year law student at “The U” who provided some mighty fine piano jazz in the background! Although the skies threatened and some lightning cracked a bit too close for comfort, the rain held off long enough for our guests to enjoy our wines, hamburgers and hot dogs from the Nelson Ruritans and some rockin’ music from The Lost Souls. We were pleased to be joined by Nynn’s Creations, makers of handmade crocheted jewelry, and Grapevine Designs, purveyors of hats, handbags, jewelry, glassware and other enchanting keepsakes. Thanks to Liesl Arends, Dee Culver, and Lydia Coleman for their essential assistance. Finally, we extend our gratitude to Laura Lewis for her guitar accompaniment at our harvest blessing and deep appreciation to Reverend Eugene Thomas of Clarendon United Methodist Church for conducting a very moving and lovely service.



***Cheers!***

***Susan & Jim***

[www.democracyvineyards.com](http://www.democracyvineyards.com)