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Subject: Monserate Winery - brief update of what's been happening
Date: April 22, 2018 at 6:27:34 PM PDT
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## Monserate Property and Vineyard Update

We have received a number of questions about what is happening at [Monserate Winery](#).

In short, lots!

As *everyone* driving along Gird Road has noticed, we have cleaned-out the old golf course irrigation pond. For the past 4-weeks, we have been working to find the bottom of the pond while at the same time finding and removing the various parts and pieces of the old irrigation pump and electrical panel. (In the process, we also "found" a number of buried, clogged and forgotten drainage culverts at the bottom of Canonita and Via del Cielo - we probably haven't found all of them yet!). In the next few weeks, we will be setting in-place the new pond liner and installing the new pumping system. Our plan is to irrigate all the grapes and landscape with well water.

Yes, we did bury some of those trees....though we also made quite a bit of mulch! There are many reasons we chose to bury some of the larger tree stumps: too big for a chipper (quite a few eucalyptus 40-56" diam!), the cost to bring back the barrel/tub grinder from last season's non-native tree removal on the east side, and the benefits of keeping the trees in a larger format and burying the stumps means they will take years to breakdown - a process which sequesters the carbon from the trees and keeps it in the soil where it can do some good feeding microbes and scrubbing water as it percolates and replenishes our ground water. An interesting side note - in vineyards, it is standard practice to dig soil test pits to "read" the soils before you plant vines. Digging these holes gave us a great view of what the grapes will be growing in: DG and granite rock - hardly a surprise! Once the hole got below the 6-8" of soil the golf course could actively manage, there was very little to "read"....no drastic horizons, no fire

history, quite a few small clam shells, but not much else. Thank goodness well-drained soils grow amazing wine grapes!

Also on the west side, we are busy installing the trellis hardware and irrigation for the vines to be planted in 2018, 2019 and 2020. These blocks will be planted to a combination of both red and white varieties, much as the east side was in 2017. Our final percentage will be ~60:40 reds to white.

On the east side of Gird Road, we have just finished "2-budding" the vines. What this means is that the canopy of growth the vines grew last year has been removed and the vines will re-grow from the bottom 2 buds above the graft union. This process is commonly done in wine grapes to help concentrate the vine energy into producing a strong, straight trunk and to help even-out the first-year vine growth differences across a variety block. The protective cartons will stay on the vines just a bit longer, maybe to early June, to help protect the vines from bunnies, squirrels and wind. We will make continuous passes through the vines this season tying and tucking shoots into the trellis wires. And how about those shiny new trellis wires, aren't they nice! The wires will help us manage the vine canopy as it grows, allowing us to keep the shoots in an upright position, keeping dappled sunlight on the wine grapes and reducing the incidence of powdery mildew, among many other benefits.

We will finish mowing the barley cover crop on Monday. The barley cover crop was planted to help: begin the long process of building soil tilth and health, provide a reliable method to "read" where the soils in the vineyard are compacted or shallow, provide an interception surface for rain drops and improve infiltration, reduce sheet erosion, reduce wind erosion and dust, provide vertical competition for the bermuda grass and other weeds, keep the soil cool during a winter of uncertain weather, to have something green and growing after the vines went (frost) dormant, and to give our huge lady bug population somewhere to hide, eat and breed. This year, we chose barley as the cover crop because it has a deep root system, grows with very little rainfall, "reads" the soil very well, looks nice and green, and is easy to manage. Next year we will diversify the cover crop based on how well we manage/reduce the bermuda grass this season.

Hopefully that has helped answer a few questions. Have more questions? Please contact me directly via email, text or flag me down. We will work on getting updates to you on a more frequent basis.

PS

Congratulations to Dolly and Cheryl on the beautiful photos in the Source Book. Well done ladies! Thank you for making us look so good!

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