



THE HAWKES WINE CLUB

May 9th, 2022

A LETTER TO THE SHAREHOLDERS

“Best lyricist of all time?” Jeremy said.

“I’m going to surprise you on this one,” I said.

“I doubt it,” Jeremy said.

“Lou Reed,” I said. “Boom.”

Jeremy made a fart noise.

“Congratulations,” I said. “You just farted on Lou Reed,”

“That fart was intended for you,” Jeremy said.

“Nas?” I said.

“Like Nosferatu?” Jeremy said. “The vampire dude? He does musical numbers?”

“Just Nas,” I said. “The rapper.”

“Different category,” Jeremy said. “Duh.”

“You want me to say Bob Dylan?” I said. “I hate saying Bob Dylan.”

“Do I look like an old lady with a No Nukes sticker on her Volvo?” Jeremy said.

“Robert Johnson?” I said.

“The hotel?” Jeremy said.

“Different Johnson,” I said. “Leonard Cohen?”

“I forgot about him,” Jeremy said. “OK. Second best lyricist of all time?”

“Are you saying all time or our time?” I said. “Because I don’t really feel like we live in the age of the lyric, per se.”

“Alex Cameron,” Jeremy said.

“Who?” I said.

“Alex Cameron,” Jeremy said.

“Man or a woman?” I said.

“I can’t take you anywhere,” Jeremy said.

“Do you have an example of their work?” I said. “And what time is it? I feel like we should be drinking. Should we be drinking?”

Jeremy left and came back with a few tumblers and a bottle of wine and poured us some.

“What pale dross is this?” I said, holding it up to the light.

“It’s Cinsault,” Jeremy said. “It’s pretty much become my go-to morning red.”

“Aroma of rotten strawberry and bergamot,” I said. “Texturally similar to Kool-Aid. Color non-committal. Finish, on a scale of one to ten, zero.”

“I’d describe it as pleasant,” Jeremy said.

“Mark me down as a conscientious objector,” I said, drinking the wine.

In a moment, the sound of music came out the sliding glass door and found us where I sat by the pool.

Before I attempt to describe the impression the music made on me, in that moment, allow me to make a few



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observations about Los Angeles in general: it is a vast place that has been cut and cut and cut again into very small pieces, each one of them a sad little diorama of humanity: a stucco match box house filled with redundant people, a stamp of green in front and a stamp of blue in back, all connected by a vascular matrix of machines designed to fill the atmosphere with poison. And yet . . .

The simplest description of the way it makes me feel to be in such a place would be to say that it fills me with resounding certainty of the futility of not only my own life, but human life in general. However, that is an over-simplification. For, while it is true that we are doomed, it is not true that doom defines us. What defines us – humans – is our ability to find joy in an overwhelming atmosphere of doom.

“This guy is a fraud,” I said to Jeremy. “Truly lousy.”

“Your mom is a fraud,” Jeremy said.

“And the wine,” I said. “Next time you can save yourself a trip to the kitchen and just throw up in my mouth.”

“It would be my pleasure,” Jeremy said.

“I think the traffic noise is loosening my teeth,” I said.

“Such as they are,” Jeremy said.

We sat there and listened to the music. It was a record and, when the first side came to an end, Jeremy went inside and turned it over and came back with another bottle of wine. We sat there like that for many hours. When the side of the record ended – whichever side – we just flipped it over again and listened to the other side. Same with the wine. Regardless of how many times we emptied our glasses, they became full again.

“Have you ever heard of a book called A Man’s Search For Meaning?” I said.

“It sounds dumb,” Jeremy said. “Is it dumb?”

“I’ve never read it,” I said. “The title just pops into my head sometimes.”

“You should learn to control yourself,” Jeremy said and took a drink of his wine.

“That’s what I told your mom,” I said.

“You want to go?” Jeremy said.

“You mean fight?” I said. “Sure. Let’s go.”

I took a drink of my wine.

“Alright,” Jeremy said. “Let’s go.”

We both took a drink.

“You’re a dead man,” Jeremy said.

“I’m shaking,” I said.

About Alex Cameron: he’s not much of a singer and, as far as I know, he can’t play the guitar. But the art that moves us most is not the art that impresses us but the art that makes us feel seen and understood. The same can be said of our friends. We don’t need them to go skydiving or buy bottles of Champagne. We just need them to know who we are.



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Most of you have received a bottle or two of our 2018 Alexander Valley Cabernet with this shipment. I still think of this wine as newly released but, tasting it today, I notice that it has changed a good deal since my notes of only a few months ago.

As with every past vintage of this wine, the 2018 is a one hundred percent Cabernet Sauvignon blended from all three of our estate vineyards. And, while our flagship is always sourced from these same three vineyards, the percentage of each changes every year. In 2018, just over half the blend comes from the Pyramid Vineyard, a mountain ranch with heavily volcanic soils that consistently produces very dark, tannic fruit. The effect is an especially dark, robust version of the Alexander Valley Estate Cabernet.

Back in January, I found this to be an extremely tannic, almost standoffish wine. Only four months later, it has opened up considerably. I get figs and black cherry and cocoa powder on the nose and lots of ripe Santa Rosa plum on the palate. Still very tannic, but already entering the opulent, sensual stage of life. Drink now through 2040.

The other Cabernet in this shipment is the 2017 Pyramid Single Vineyard. This vintage of Pyramid has remarkable freshness and lift, given how dark the fruit is. And there's plenty of dark fruit here: Santa Rosa plum, blackberry, currant. Very aromatic; I get violets and coffee and baking chocolate on the nose. For all that generosity of flavor and aroma, this is an exceedingly tannic, tightly-wound wine. It should age wonderfully. Drink now through 2040.

Our 2019 Estate Alexander Valley Estate Merlot comes from the same few acres of vineyard that every vintage of this wine has drawn from. Our goal with this wine has always been to produce something with varietal purity and sense of place. Simply put: we are trying to make Merlot that really tastes like Merlot and tastes like it comes from Red Winery.

A hallmark of this wine and our Red Winery Vineyard, in general, are the beautiful floral, spicy aromatics of the wines it produces. In the 2019 Merlot, I get violets, clove, and allspice on the nose. A touch of star anise. The fruit is a bit darker than is typical for this vineyard and varietal. I get blackberry and cherry. The finish is still tannic and tight.

The 2019 Merlot is a pleasure now but these bottles tend to improve dramatically with age. The boldness of fruit recedes a bit and the tertiary aromatics and flavors that I have only ever encountered in great examples of this grape emerge – tobacco, cedar, and cassis – to name a few. Drink now through 2040.

When we first started making Hawkes Chardonnay, some twenty years ago, neither my dad nor I were fans of the way California had, thus far, expressed this varietal. The Chardonnays we had tasted, to that point, were all oaky and buttery. Many of them were sweet. Our own Chardonnay's style was formed as much in reaction against the existing style of Chardonnay as it was in search of anything else.

Today, this is wine I love. It sees no new barrels, does not undergo malolactic fermentation, and is as dry as my sister's sense of humor. It is a simple expression of the fabulous vineyard from which it comes – old vines growing in the gravel of an ancient riverbed on Chalk Hill Road – flinty, saline, citrusy.



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Thanks, as usual, for buying my family's wines and enduring my nonsense.

Be well and stay in touch. – Jake