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INTOXICOLOGY REPORT
all the lafite and twice the street

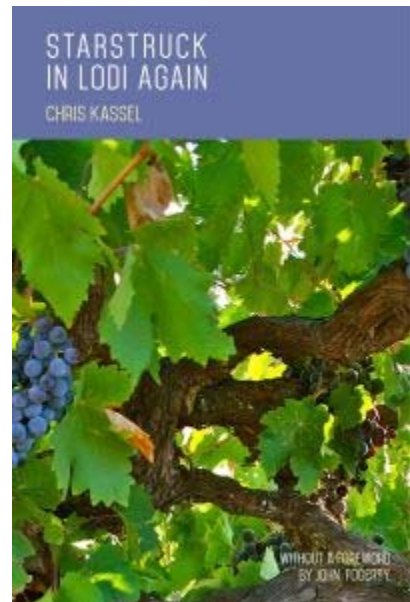
Leaving Las Lodi: Final Chapter

Posted on August 18, 2016 by intoxreport

I must say, last week in Lodi I finally discovered the secret of a successful, personally-gratifying book signing, where dozens of friendly faces were delighted to have me scrawl my illegible signature and indecipherable dedication in the frontpiece of *'Starstruck in Lodi Again'*:

The secret, fellow authors? Give the books away for free.

Of course, that was due to the largesse of Anthony Scotto, patriarch of Scotto Cellars, who purchased enough copies that every single attendee at the Wine Blogger's Conference could get a free one in their swag bag. If, in fact, you were one of those who didn't get your copy, fret not. Stop by the spanking new Scotto Cellars tasting room in downtown Lodi (on School Street) to get one, or message me with your address and I'll send you one myself.



Chef Warren Ito

Meanwhile, on the night of the WBC's opening ceremony, the extended Scotto family—Anthony, his wife Graciela, wine-wise kids Anthony, Paul, Natalie and Michael, who are the real muscle behind the brand—threw a welcoming shindig for the bloggers inside said tasting room. They

brought in celebrated Stockton Chef Warren Ito to cater a four course dinner with a theme they called Mexital; fusion cuisine borrowing elements from both traditional Mexican and Italian cooking. This makes sense once you understand that Anthony

Scotto is of Italian decent and his wife Gracie is of Mexican decent, so the family-run winery is eager to celebrate both branches of the family tree.

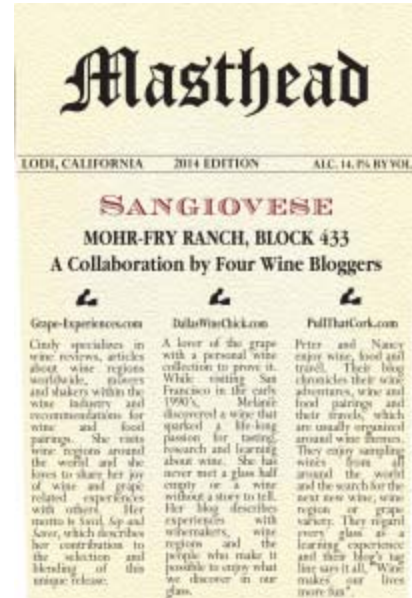
The meal was sensational, too, with the proper balance of guido, gringo and guapo; Chef Warren, who blew away the group, somehow managed to do everything without access to a formal kitchen.

The wines poured were from Scotto Cellars, of course, but the featured wine was a new concept wine, the collaborative work of Scotto PR man Bradley Gray, winemakers Paul Scotto and Napa legend Mitch Cosentino and... wait for it... *four bloggers*, who slurped and suckled and swirled through three hours of barrel samples from eleven lots of selected Lodi-designated wine. Afterward, they conferred and compared notes, finally coming up with a blend they all agreed upon.

This has now been released as 'Masthead', the first commercial wine ever blended entirely by that lowliest species of journalist, the blogger.

Why yours truly, the lowliest of the lowly among wine bloggers, was not asked to participate? That remains unknown, but the fact that I wasn't may explain why I have to give away books at wine conferences.

Anyway, other than Pete Best, who wants to be the fifth Beatle? The four consulting bloggers in the Masthead project did just fine without me, of course. They were Nancy Brazil and Peter Bourget from www.pullthatcork.com, Melanie Ofenloch of Dallas Wine Chick of <http://www.dallaswinechick.com> and Cindy Rynning of www.Grape-Experiences.com.



Mitch Cosentino

In fact, in Chef Warren style, they outdid themselves. The wine is killer; the ultimate, mutually-agreed-upon blend is not a varietal blend at all, but 100% Sangiovese from the Mohr-Fry Ranch, aged partially in Hungarian oak, partially in American oak. They made these decisions without input from the winemakers, but a nod afterward indicated that Mitch Cosentino thought

they'd gone down the correct path. His praise for the single variety choice is a

testimonial still more remarkable when you consider that among other accomplishments, Cosentino is one of the founding fathers of America's most well-known blend, Meritage.

Masthead's Staff Directory

I agree with him, and with the bloggers. Both in character and pedigree, the wine is pure Sangiovese; it is rich, fruited with luscious cherry and warm strawberry compote, but—as in a Brunello—wrapped in a package of earthy, leathery sophistication. The palate length, now brief, will almost certainly improve with a little age—there may have been a touch of bottle shock, soon to be settled out of it.



'Masthead'—a name reflective of the journalistic ju-ju of the quartet who created it—will sell for around \$30. 50 cases were made, and I suspect it will be a hit among bloggers and bloggees alike.



of wine country hospitality.

It was wonderful to be back in Lodi near harvest time—what a difference a few months made. The scraggly, diabolical-looking zinfandel vines that I saw mid-winter had enjoyed heavenly repatriation, now thick with green foliage and heavy with grape bunches. The temperatures, hovering in the low hundreds, were about what I'd expect in Satan's vineyards, but the good folks of Lodi—the Scottos especially—remain unchanged: The portrait

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