



## MEDIA KIT

<https://www.prima-materia.com>

### PRIMA MATERIA VINEYARD & WINERY & HOW IT GOT THAT WAY

“The ‘famous secret,’ and the basis of the alchemical opus is the unique prima materia, which is the chaos and raw material out of which the refined substance or “gold” is produced. To the alchemists, there was a spirit hidden in the darkness of the prima materia, a divine spark buried in the darkness of matter.”

- Carl Jung

Prima Materia “is carbon, it is gold, it’s everywhere and nowhere. It is in the tallest castle and under the lowest bridge. It’s not this and it’s not that. It is a reference to how in alchemy, it’s the first substance of primal material that everything evolves out of.”

- Pietro Buttitta

Pietro Buttitta – founder, viticulturist, winemaker of Prima Materia Vineyard & Winery – is a self-effacing sort, who will tell you in all sincerity, “I’m not one of those people who is comfortable putting their name on the bottle. That’s just a little too arrogant for me.” Instead, he says of Prima Materia, “It is a bottom-up adventure that begins with digging holes and pounding stakes. That’s literally true. I have a lot of respect for winery owners who have planted their vineyards by hand. There’s something slightly virtuous about that. I’ve screwed up some plantings for sure, but there’s some sense of integrity and transparency and honesty here. We’re just part of an ordinary transformation, from grapes into wine, but it’s not without a mysterious element to it, too.”

Buttitta grows his grapes at 1,500-foot elevation in Lake County’s Kelsey Bench AVA on red volcanic soils between the Mayacamas mountain range and the extinct Mt. Konocti volcano. He doesn’t use herbicides or pesticides, and he does not fine or filter his wines, using methods that produce ageable, balanced bottles that reflect what his 12-acre vineyard, with 13 varietal blocks, gives him.

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Prima Materia is the product of Pietro Buttitta's two decades working in vineyards, wineries, and cooking in restaurant kitchens that ranged from Michelin-starred establishments to consulting for hamburger and fried chicken joints. His culinary background is integral to his winemaking approach, as the wine strives to capture a distinctive, old-world sense in harmony with California's evolving wine history.

Buttitta spends constant time in the vineyard first and then the winery which is in Kelseyville on the western edge of Clear Lake, just a mile-and-a-half away. The wines – about 1,500-1,800 cases a year – are crafted in “criminally” small batches of two to 10 barrels each. The winemaking and grape-growing are intensively hands-on, using stems and time, gravity and buckets, rather than fancy, impersonal machinery or mechanized processes. Prima Materia's wines are unsulfured for much of their lives, allowing them to evolve as living things; and new oak is rarely used. The wines are also hand harvested, and hand bottled, and they are clean, stable and made for long-aging. The goal is to respect the location, soils and climate with signature Lake County ripeness up front. But through the wine and vineyard practices the wines echo earthy profiles through texture and acidity on the finish.

Buttitta became interested in the family property in 2007 when he helped plant the vines and harvest the grapes – which were mostly planted to just five Italian varieties. “There was something very calming about vineyards – the organized chaos. Plus, harvest is just like working in a busy restaurant,” is the way he characterizes the epiphany. The next year he realized the necessity to change the vineyard practices being utilized, led to his edict, “No more lazy winemaking or grape growing.” He began to implement new trellising, which meant no VSP configurations, plus intensive hand work on the vines. “We reinvented what we were doing in the vineyard.”

It was in 2009 when “we were on a better trajectory.” But it wasn't until 2012 that “We started becoming more consistent, understanding the nature of the vines and fruit, and figuring out fermentation and ageing to highlight varietal character. The clockwork was in place with what Prima Materia would become and starting to form,” he explains. Prima Materia's first commercial release was with the 2013 vintage.

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## PIETRO BUTTITTA

*"I've been coming to terms with the fact that I'm a bit of a classicist. I'm interested in the historical stuff. That's kind of the theme in general: reaching back while looking forward."*

■ *Pietro Buttitta, 2020*

Reaching forward, Pietro Buttitta – with 14 vintages behind him – is looking to mark the third decade of the 2000s by bringing his vineyard and winery into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He hand-grows wine as would an Italian *viticoltore*, with nominal manipulation– no new barrels, minimal watering, little sulfuring, no filtering or fining– to produce decidedly Californian wine. That is, with delicious fruit, balanced by goodly doses of acidity and medium tannins, all of which make his wines substantively memorable with affinities toward food and substantial discussion.

The cultivation did not come easily to this 47-year-old, who set out studying philosophy and history at Portland State University. Pietro Buttitta (pee AY tro boo TEET a) spent the first quarter of his life in the Russian River Valley of Sonoma where he got his first taste of agrarian life working in his grandfather's 42-acre vineyard off River Road. "As kid I liked working in the field, being around grapevines. I was fascinated, and I thought the Golden Chasselas was gorgeous; I was always into picking and pruning." The French Colombard, Carignan, and 85-year-old Chasselas were sold to Sebastiani, Korbel, and Seghesio.

Buttitta became interested in food when he started "devouring" the 'Great Chefs of the World' on TV. "My mother's cooking was bad I created a fantasy world; baking cakes and making food. There was some kind of innate interest; some sort of technique-driven, physical disciplines and fulfilment at work."

But before entering culinary school in Portland, Pietro raced bicycles for much of his 20s until he interned at the Napa Valley iconic country kitchen **Terra**, "Where we were the kind of restaurant that catered to people who didn't go to the French Laundry." He was the sous chef at Portland's **Gilt Club**, **Fratelli**, and **Giorgio's** the latter of which was "the worst kitchen I ever worked in but the best food I ever made in my life; but one of the worst experiences." He cooked there with alumni of the recently departed Gray Kunz, who Buttitta characterizes as "the dark lord of high technique" when Kunz had the great since-closed New York starred Lespinasse.

"Making food and sauces, dovetailed nicely with wine," says Buttitta, who has earned a level 2 sommelier certification.

“Helping out during crush at Rosa d’oro Vineyards in 2006 was a big transformation for me,” he says. “Once I got my hands on the agricultural side, I began piecing together the winery side. I was always interested in history and philosophy. If I’m going to grow Sangiovese, I want to know everything about it, from the ground up through 20 years transforming in the bottle.”

#### PIETRO ON FOOD

“The transition from food to wine wasn’t that hard, if anything cooking paved the way perfectly. The weird part is how much winemaking requires *letting go*. It is a very narrow and deep dive, like the chef obsessed with the perfect Platonic pizza, or very specific charcuterie. Wine has this metaphysical time factor that doesn’t exist in kitchens, which is all about white hot immediate heat and energy. Sure, I’m multitasking three things at once to run a vineyard, winery, and business just like in a kitchen, but there is this deep undercurrent of uncontrollable time and nature that opens up a whole other world in the wine equation.

“In kitchens you want to control everything as much as possible, and you can change things that aren’t working right, the next day – just put the duck on the chicken setup, and change the sauce. *With a vineyard you are signing a long-term contract with nature, and admitting that you won’t reach full potential or deep understanding for at least 10 years. What kind of idiot does that?* But there is something totally intoxicating about it though; and almost healthy in admitting that you aren’t totally in control.”

#### PIETRO ON HISTORY

“I’m definitely not into forcing education down people’s throats, but I like the idea of it being there as a reference point if somebody finds that interesting,” he says. “I think we’re seeing history evaporate around us in a lot of ways.”

## PRIMA MATERIA'S WINE PORTFOLIO

### Barbera & Aglianico Rosé 2019

Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

Grown at 1,450-foot elevation on red, obsidian-strewn volcanic soil resulting from Mt. Konocti's violent upheaval in the Mayacamas runout, this rosé gives a tip of the hat to the dark rosati of Abruzzo.

**Vineyard:** The Barbera half was planted in 2004, Aglianico in 2003. These are portions of the blocks that ripen ahead of the main blocks, so we picked them earlier for rosé.

**Winemaking:** This was a fun one, since in a way it is just a standard bleed-off rosé made from ripe red grapes, unlike our other two dedicated rosés. The trick was getting the Aglianico portion with a touch of tannin, bramble and spice. About 45 days of fermentation to go dry. It also went dangerously reductive and stinky, needing lots of air to stabilize before bottling. Very un-rosé-like behavior.

**Vintage:** 2019. Lots of rain, more than double "normal average" with an inch falling in June! It even rained lightly three times before the end of the season, practically Tuscan-like. July and August were very hot, taking us from two weeks late to on time in those two months. The temperature rollercoaster was a good thing in macro however, even though 10 days without electricity at the winery was challenging. Cold nights came fast after the hot early season. From mid-September on, things were gloriously mild with cold nights and days kissing 85° F over and over again. A year to pick on acidity in the end.

**Label Image:** "But of the Green Lyon of Fools, this we say, that from it with a strong fire is drawn Aquafortis, in the which, the aforesaid Philosophers' Lyon of the Mineral Stone, ought to be Elixirated, and assumes its Name. Raymundus saith, it were better, or safer, to eat the Eyes of a Basilisk, than that Gold, which is made with the Fire against Nature. And I say also, that the things from whence the same Aquafortis is drawn is green Vitriol and Azoth: i.e., Vitriol Natural, not Artificial, viz. the droppings of Copper, called also Roman Vitriol, Roman Gold, by many of the Philosophers, from the abundance of its noble Tincture, the which Tincture must be fermented with common Gold."



50% Aglianico saignée

50% Barbera saignée

Aged in 2 neutral barrels for 6 months aging

Racked for bottling,

No filtering or fining

Bottled by hand on 5/01/2020

pH 3.39

TA 6.9gm/l

13.9% abv

50 cases produced

\$25 SRP

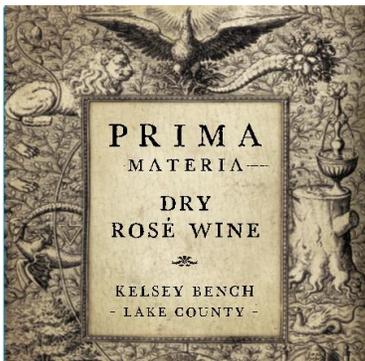
## Rosé 2019 (Sangiovese/Primitivo)

Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

**Vineyard:** All Sangiovese planted in 2011, Primitivo planted in 2004. The Sangiovese block was intentionally managed for rosé with extra shading and heavier crop load to capture acidity.

**Winemaking:** The Sangiovese was harvested at 13.5% abv because pear season went late and we couldn't get pickers, so a little riper than planned. After destemming the grapes were all moved manually by bucket to be direct-pressed in our wood basket press as a dedicated rosé. The Primitivo was treated the same. Stems were added back for a couple days in tea bag form to add an herbal phenolic element. We also wanted to avoid the vapid bubblegum flavors that ripe Sangiovese can have. It spent eight months spent on lees. We do not rush to bottle.

**Label Image:** From *The Journey of the Fortunate Prince* in 1610 we see full alchemical drama in play. The eagle is Mercury, linking heaven and earth while the lion (Sulphur) with severed paws is the living axiom to dissolve the fixed and coagulate the volatile. Burning trees, ouroboric dragons, old men eating the moon, a metallic tree stump being revived by the fountain of youth, an eternal hourglass demanding focused patience while all things are encased in the myrtle tree of love. All these things are connected by a strong branch growing from metals below to life above. Clearly French alchemy in fine form.



80% Sangiovese

20% Primitivo

Fermented in stainless with one aerative racking back to the stainless tank

Racked once, no filtering

Bottled by hand in June

pH 3.34

TA 6.7gm

13.5% abv

90 cases produced

\$25 SRP

## Tocai Friulano 2019

“Baby Orange”

Potter Valley - Mendocino County

Grown at 1,100-foot elevation, Potter Valley is a high-altitude gem with huge diurnal swings. Importantly for Friulano, the valley holds onto acidity while allowing gradual ripeness at a slow, even pace that holds natural brightness; even with a touch of botrytis.

**Vineyard:** Friulano from an AVA known for developing botrytis due to shading and river-derived humidity. Yes, please! Clones and roots are unknown to me, and my good friend and vineyard manager Greg Graziano isn't quite ready to dig through the file box to find out, but most likely these were suitcase clones, and much more yellow skinned than some Sauvignon Vert/Friulano.

**Winemaking:** Foot stomped, about 70% whole cluster, but stems were completely lignified due to frost and the inability to get pickers for two weeks. Cold temperatures held acid up and kept sugar levels moderate. Fermented 15 days with regular punchdowns, then pressed dirty into neutral barrels with native ML in barrel. No sulfur until bottling. Friulano loves oxygen so we don't see it as fragile or needing protection until bottling.

**Label Image:** One of several Spring goddess/human/nymph frescos from somewhere between 89 BC and the destruction of Pompeii in 79 AD. *Primavera di Stabiae* is considered one of the greatest examples of the 3<sup>rd</sup> style, though the dreamy architectural surrealism we love so much is missing. The styles themselves are a fascinating aesthetic mirror, strongly paralleling today's impending cultural implosion.



### 100% Tocai Friulano

Wood-basket pressed with lignified stem inclusion

7 months in neutral oak racked only for bottling

No filtering or fining

Bottled by hand on 6/10/2020

pH 3.53/TA 6.3gm/l

13.8% abv

50 cases produced

\$32 SRP

## Grenache NV ('18/'19)

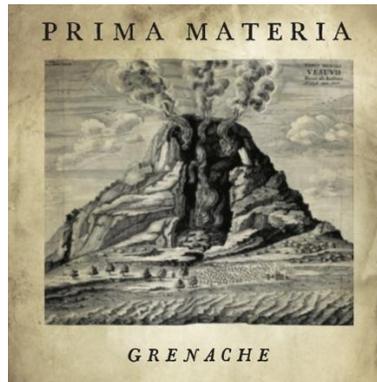
Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

**Vineyard:** Estate grown on California sprawl trellising, planted east/west on a 10% slope. We originally planted this light-colored clone for rosé use. Heavy leafing on the shade side, no leafing on the sun side. No cluster thinning, just a little shoot thinning. We want pretty aromatics rather than phenolic development for our Grenache. Tablas Creek clone D. By the way, Grenache loves Lake County heat and adapts well to volcanic soil. It is woefully underplanted here.

**Winemaking:** More laissez faire than many of our other wines, stem inclusion is by vintage feel at about 20% here, sometimes a little air-dried Sangiovese is added, sometimes a little Roussanne if on hand, in 2019 a little Chardonnay juice kicked off the fermentation. Some foot stomping. The goal is a light, bright charming red with low tannin and just enough texture and acidity to act as the canvas. Average time of 9 months aging in old, thick-stave oak barrels before bottling. In a lineup full of *sturm und drang* wines, this one is joyous.

**Vintages:** 2018 was a fire year, and Grenache is smoke sensitive, so one barrel from 2018 was added to two barrels from 2019. After 2020 and 2018, 2019 seems like an idealized dream. Sure, there was heavy rain, and enough heat to take harvest from two weeks late to one week early, and there were weeks without electricity. But there was no smoke, so we could use stems, we could use press wine, and we still knew what love was, at least in some abstract way.

**Label Image:** The label image is Athansius Kircher's 1638 drawing of Mount Vesuvius' eruption in his *Mundus Subterraneus* opus on global volcanism. All the fruit in this wine came from the lower pyroclastic slopes of the Mt. Konocti volcano that stands guard over our vineyard.



**95% Grenache/5% Sangiovese**

20% whole cluster

Yield: 4 tons per acre

3 neutral 225ltr barrels used for aging

No racking until bottling

Unfined, unfiltered

pH 3.89/TA 5.6gm/l

14.3% abv

72 cases produced

SRP \$35

## SANGIOVESE 2018

### Estate Bottled/Kelsey Bench - Lake County

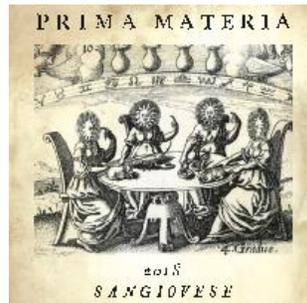
Our Sangiovese combines four clones in a focused package that reflects our region while respecting the grape's clear Italian heritage.

**Vineyard:** Clones include Brunello 06 and Biondi-Santi 05, Prugnolo Gentile, and Romagnolo VCR 23 on 1103 and 110 roots. Planted in 2010-13 on bilateral cordon utilizing "California sprawl" trellising and varying between north/south and east/west row orientations. Though canopies are very vigorous, little fruit thinning is needed beyond occasional clipping. It seems acidic soils and our rain pattern does a great job of limiting cluster size, which can be a problem on vigorous soils. No pesticides. Hand harvested.

**Winemaking:** All clones hand harvested between 9/14/18 10/01/18. Brunellos last. All clones fermented separately in bin and tank. All hand punched. Fermentations lasted 12 to 25 days before wood-basket pressing and then combining. No sulfur added for the first year in barrel, no racking until bottling 22 months later. **Sangiovese has been a failure in California, and we are committed embracing the beautiful elements of it that others call "faults" or "hurdles", like acid, bristly tannin, hollow mid-palate, and a phenolic nature.**

**Vintage:** Ah 2018! It started fast and furious. We avoided the drenching rain of 2017 and it felt like a normal drought year with summer being quite warm. Just as the vines started to look tired came magical cooling with shockingly slow-ripening 82° perfection that allowed great vine recovery and slow maturation.

**Label Image:** Johann Mylius was a composer, physician and ardent alchemist. His *Philosophia Reformata* was a deep dive into scientific principles. Here the four alchemical sisters sit under the zodiac, each with a color and sign that is a stage in transformation while winds propel them. The metaphor extends neatly into the culinary realm, of which Sangiovese is a famed accomplice.



### 100% Sangiovese

4 different clones from separate vineyard blocks all fermented separately

Yield: 3.3 tons per acre

12 neutral 225ltr barrels used for aging, mostly old thin stave French and thicker Hungarian oak

No racking until bottling

Unfined, unfiltered

pH 3.66/TA 6.0gm/l

14.1% abv

265 cases produced/SRP \$30

## Barbera 2018

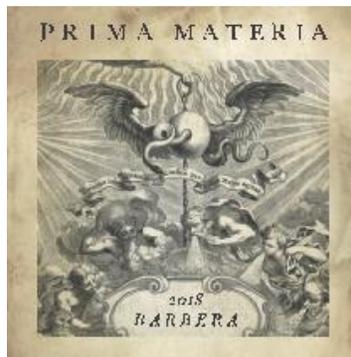
Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

**Vineyard:** We planted one block of Barbera in 1999, another block in '04 to clones 02 and 09, both on St. George rootstocks. Clone 13 planted in '13 on 1103R roots. Bilateral cordon training planted north to south on California sprawl trellising. Barbera requires massive hand work to keep the notoriously vigorous canopies under control. Barbera is famous for throwing suckers.

**Winemaking:** Hand harvested 10/17/18, destemmed and fermented separately by clone in stainless (and one bin) to different temperatures. Fermentation lasted an average of 15 days. Wood-basket pressed at dryness and combined. No sulfur added for the first 9 months, then bottled after 19 months of aging.

**Vintage:** It started off fast and furious. We avoided the drenching rain of '17 and as summer progressed it got hotter. Three weeks of 100-degree days, and just as the vines started to look tired, came fire. August was spent in smoke, with evacuations and power outages. And then came magical cooling for months, slow-ripening 82° perfection. While what became a great season was marred by the specter of smoke, our grapes tested clean, and fruit-forward reds became possible, as did clean whites and rosé. In fact, Barbera tested the lowest of all our varietals for smoke.

**Label Image:** This is a small segment of Athanasius Kircher's encyclopedic *Mundus Subterraneus* (1664) frontispiece in which he documented and illustrated a treatise on geography and volcanology. A true polymath who wrote on every topic and travelled relentlessly, his dense image depicts the creator's hand suspending the earth while angels blow winds through the sky, animating the world and every human soul with divine breath.



### 100% Barbera

3 different clones from separate blocks, fermented separately

Yield varies widely (biggest block very light crop, newer clones are much heavier)

10 neutral 225ltr barrels used for aging, mostly 6-12-year-old thin stave French and Hungarian oak

No racking but bungs were left off for a couple hours every month to control reduction

Unfined, unfiltered

pH 3.53/TA 6.3gm/l

14.2% abv

240 cases produced

SRP \$30

## Sagrantino NV ('15/'16/'17)

Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

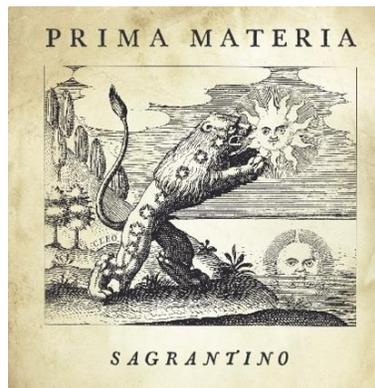
**Story:** Planting Prima Materia's acre of Sagrantino in 2012 required an 800-mile trip to eastern Washington to pick up the vines, which were unavailable in California, then losing 35% of them under a foot of snow in 2013. Something about the vine makes it a most troubled and demanding love. The first bottling is being released 7 years later. A complicated relationship to be sure.

**Vineyard:** Sagrantino here offers a serious terroir match. Altitude, clay and rock soils, and a warm Fall. The trick is to get the crazy tannins under control before the sugars go ballistic. Its leafy nature photosynthesizes rocket fuel, sometimes reading 13% before imagining picking with the raw, face-ripping tannin. We snap laterals and remove leaves to choke the sugar accumulation to buy tannin maturing time.

**Winemaking:** Moved by hand and buckets, bin fermentations usually taking two weeks and handled gently.

**Vintages:** This blend is one barrel each from each vintage. Young vines equal more fruit and less tannin, and each showed a different face, creating a more complete picture. Plus, bottling just one barrel is sad, so going non-vintage and bottling three was slightly less silly.

**Label Image:** The image depicts the green lion eating the sun ("vitriol" purifying matter and yielding gold) in a 1622 alchemy text, which was a common and frequently reproduced instruction manual for making gold. This image is controversial in the alchemical and metaphysical sense due to the backward operations, and it may apply to an individual being purified by the lion eating them, or its opposite destructive meeting. Such ambiguity is not uncommon in the highly interpretive alchemical arts.



**100% Sagrantino** (Clone FPS 01)

Imported by Pepi, originally thought to be Sangiovese

Yield: 1.2 tons per acre

3 neutral 225ltr barrels used for aging, mostly old thin-stave French and thicker Hungarian oak

No racking until bottling

Unfined, unfiltered

pH 3.78/TA 5.7gm/l

14.4% abv

72 cases produced

\$40 SRP

## 2019 Negro Amaro

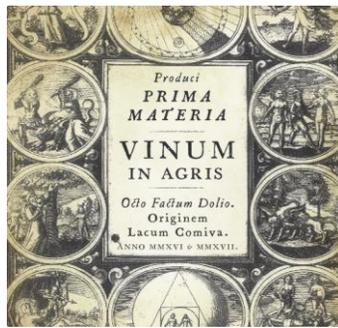
Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

**Vineyard:** Clone FPS 02.1 (imported by Sutter Home) on 1103P rootstock. Planted in 2012 on bilateral cordon utilizing “California sprawl” trellising in a north/south orientation. Strangely, Negro Amaro hates direct sunlight, so an elaborate trellis-weaving technique is used to block afternoon sun. This works because the canes are huge, thick, and straight. Nearly dry farmed. No pesticides. Hand harvested. **One of only 30 producing acres in California,** this is usually one of our earlier picks.

**Winemaking:** Harvested 9/12/19. Fermented in a small tank after destemming. No stems used to preserve maximal aromatics with a clean palate. Fermentations lasted 14 days. Wood-basket pressed. No racking or sulfur added until bottling. We want true fruit and maximal transparency with a little gritty seed tannin to frame the package.

**Vintage:** Lots of rain, more than double normal average with an inch falling in June! Rained lightly three times before the end of the season, practically Tuscan-like. July and August were very hot, taking us from two weeks late to one early. The temperature rollercoaster was a good thing in the macro, even though eight days without electricity was challenging. Cold nights came fast after the hot early season. From mid-September on, things were gloriously mild with cold nights and days just kissing 85° F over and over again. A year to pick on acidity in the end.

**Label Image:** Johann Mylius was a composer, physician and ardent alchemist. His *Philosophia Reformata* from 1622 was a deep dive into scientific principles and doctoral theology divided into 7 parts, and 7 of the 10 emblems link to the iconography of previous alchemists. The phrase “Vinum in Agris” means “wine of the countryside,” alluding to Negro Amaro’s humble but satisfying nature.



**100% Negro Amaro**

Yield: 3.0 tons per acre

Aged 8 months in neutral barrels

No racking until bottling

Unfined, unfiltered

pH 3.76/TA 5.4gm/l

14.1% abv

150 cases produced

\$30 SRP

## Zinfandel NV ('18/'19 Vintages)

Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

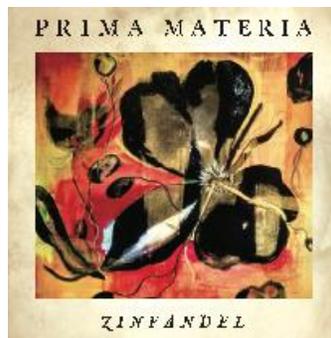
Our Zinfandel combines two blocks with the hope of finding dignified Primitivo-ness in the land of Zinfandel.

**Vineyard:** Zinfandel was one our first vines planted in '99 and then another block in '04. It's a mix of DuPratt Zin and clone 03 Primitivo, on St. George rootstocks. The blocks are trained differently and planted in different orientations. California sprawl and quadrilateral training. Small amounts of estate Petite Sirah and Aglianico were blended in post-fermentation.

**Winemaking:** All blocks hand-harvested and fermented separately in stainless and bins. Fermentations lasted 14-16 days and were spontaneous ferments after destemming. A touch of whole cluster was in the mix in '19. Wood-basket pressed at dryness. About eight months in barrel on average before spending four months in tank before bottling. Maintaining some of Primitivo's phenolic bramble character was important, especially with the darker bass-y tones of the blenders.

**Vintages:** 2018 was a fire year for Lake County, with many days over 100° F but with abnormally cool nights. 2019 was more modest, and wet. Sure, there was heavy rain, and enough heat to take harvest from two weeks late to one week early, and there was a week without electricity. But there was no smoke, so we could use stems, and we could use press wine. 2018 was brash, 2019 was more delicate.

**Label Image:** Contemporary artist Bill Gian has been a friend of Prima Materia's for some time, and we were excited when he offered his "Black Poppy" painting to use. Much of Gian's art explores his Greek-American heritage, and it felt like a worthy match to Crljenak Kastelanki's own cultural identity inquiries, both past and present. Also, the black poppy is quite metal, with links to sleep, death, and Morpheus' binary world of dreams as child of Nyx.



**85% Zinfandel /8% Petite Sirah/7% Aglianico**

50% 2018/50% 2019

Fermented mostly in stainless, a little in bins, wood basket pressed

Yield: 3.5 tons per acre

20 neutral 225ltr barrels used for aging, mostly thin stave French and Hungarian oak

No racking

pH 3.78/TA 5.6gm/l

14.2% abv

480 cases produced

SRP \$25

## Refosco NV ('17/'18 vintages)

Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

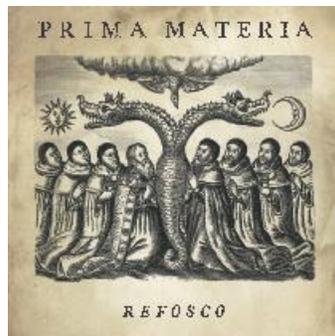
**Vineyard:** Planted in 2010 on bilateral cordon, north to south on California sprawl trellising. Lots of handwork to keep Refosco's vigorous nature focused. Small bunches are plentiful and beautiful but tons of canes and spindly secondary shoots are the norm. We will change to cane pruning soon. Refosco does well in our acidic volcanic soils surprisingly, moderating the sometimes aggressive acidity, though with only 20 acres in California, some of which is actually Mondeuse, it is hard to compare.

**Winemaking:** Both vintages followed similar winemaking protocols with destemming, spontaneous fermentations, and fairly long fermentations of around 18 days in small bins, then wood basket pressed at dryness. No sulfur added for first 10 months of elevage, and then bottled at an average age of 24 months in barrel.

**Vintages:** A study in contrasts. 2017 for us had double "normal" rain fall, and a rollercoaster of heat spikes and cool days, yielding an acid-driven, spicy Refosco of lower alcohol. 2018 was back to sustained heat, and less than on-quarter of the rainfall the prior vintage enjoyed, yielding a broad palate, lower acidity and deeper color and fruit tones.

**Why non-vintage?** A. Small quantity. B. The two vintages complemented each other surprisingly well. C. We had six-weeks of fire in Lake County during 2018, and blending vintages insured that smoke levels would be undetectable.

**Label Image:** Taken from Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* first published in 1652, the label depicts the descending bird as the breath of God, and the dragon is the complex life force which the breath sets into motion. The alchemical scholars seek to learn its secrets which include the spirit of life, both destroying, creating, and many other transmutational manifestations.



100% Refosco "Nostrano" biotype

(not peduncolo rosso)

Yield: 2-3 tons per acre

6 neutral 225ltr barrels used for aging, mostly 10-15-year French and Hungarian oak

No racking, leading to intentional reduction before bottling, to let it breathe

Unfined, unfiltered

pH 3.65/TA 6.2gm/l

14.1% abv

148 cases produced

\$40 SRP

## Aglianico NV ('17/'18 vintages)

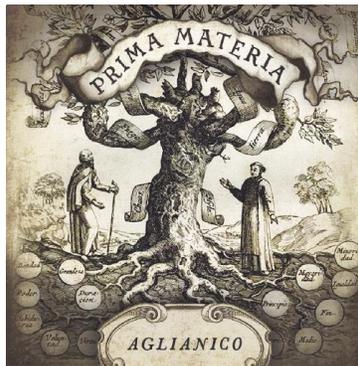
Estate Bottled Kelsey Bench - Lake County

**Vineyard:** Taurasi Clones VCR 2 (virused with red blotch, tight bunches, larger berries, acidity plus earth, beautifully rustic) and 7 acres (fruit, spice, small open clusters, more “modern”) planted in '03 on bilateral north/south cordon utilizing “California sprawl” trellising and St. George rootstock. We are seeing that Aglianico is susceptible to pruning wounds, so we’re chopping arms and starting over with cane pruning. Approximately 7% Montepulciano interplanted. Nearly dry farmed. No pesticides or herbicides.

**Winemaking:** Hand harvested. Native fermentation in bins, gentle hand punchdowns after a cold harvest and a 4-5-day soak. Bins fermented to different peak temperatures. 16-20 days fermenting then wood-basket pressed at dryness. No sulfur added for one year, no racking until bottling 30 months later (average). Aglianico does not have reduction issues, though it does completely shut down for years.

**Vintages:** A study in contrasts. 2017 for us had double “normal” rain fall, and a rollercoaster of heat spikes and cool days, yielding an acid-driven, spicy wines of lower alcohol. 2018 was back to sustained heat, and less than one-quarter of the rainfall the prior vintage enjoyed, yielding a broad palate, lower acidity and deeper color and fruit tones. 2018 also had abnormally elegant fine-grained tannins, with Fall perhaps mirroring its homeland in the volcanic Campanian mountains.

**Why non-vintage?** We had 6-weeks of fire in Lake County during 2018, and blending vintages insured that smoke levels would be safely undetectable.



**Aglianico** with approx. **7% Montepulciano** interplanted and co-fermented

40% 2017/60% 2018

About 3 tons per acre

11 5-15-year 225ltr barrels, all neutral

No racking until bottling, occasionally aerated on lees by pumping to a drum then back into barrel

Unfined, unfiltered

pH 3.69

TA 6.1gm/l

14.3% abv

260 cases produced

\$35 SRP

## PRIMA MATERIA'S LAKE COUNTY

### KELSEY BENCH VINEYARD

The vineyard – first planted in 1993 – is located in the Kelsey Bench AVA of Lake County at 1,500 feet elevation. It is 12 acres, with 13 varieties (see Map B below), which is the perfect micro-manageable size to provide the grapes Prima Materia needs, and assuring that Pietro Buttitta personally touches each vine at least four times before harvest. (Yes, he does that.)

All of Pietro's vines are farmed without herbicides or pesticides, and they grow on roots suited to a dry-farming future. Some blocks, such as the Sagrantino, Negro Amaro, Primitivo and Dolcetto are planted to a single clonal type, while other cultivars such as Sangiovese are planted to four different types and in different row orientations and cultivation techniques. The Nebbiolo block has three types on two different roots and all are interplanted with a different stylistic paradigm in mind. Aglianico is planted in the same way with a range of ripeness and rusticity desired at harvest rather than uniformity.

Prima Materia's red volcanic Forbesville soil lies above a pyroclastic lava flow and is very diverse with large amounts of obsidian, yellow and red clays, and rock washes from Mt. Konocti and the Mayacamas mountain range upheaval. It is high in iron, drains extremely well, and the proximity to ancient Clear Lake and the Mayacamas means frequent cooling winds balance the summer heat. In this spot, there is no fog and the humidity is low.

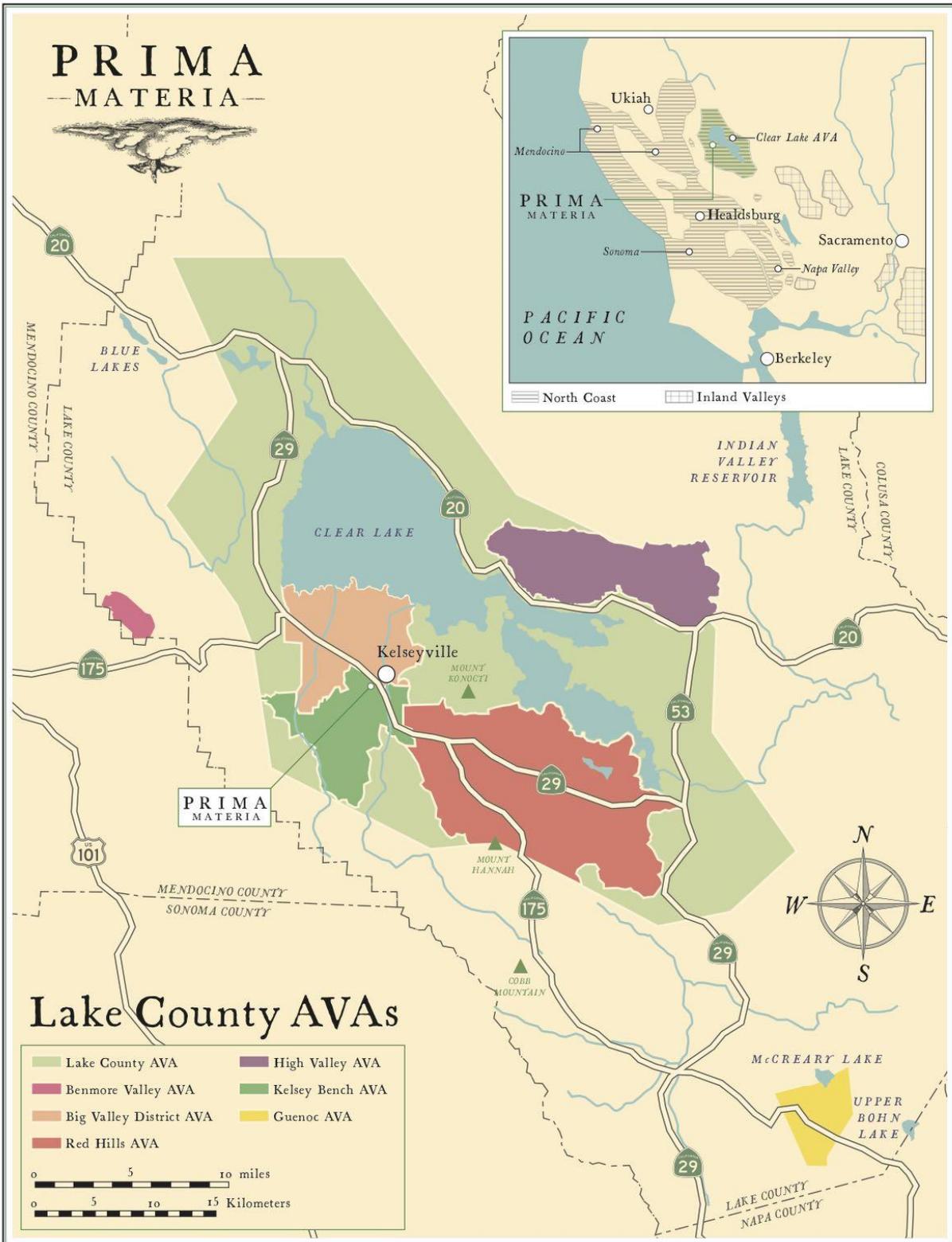
At harvest Pietro uses 35-pound tubs which are taken to the winery about 100 yards away. Different techniques are used depending on the grape and winemaking goals.

### VARIETALS GROWN IN PRIMA MATERIA'S VINEYARD

Chardonnay  
Sagrantino  
Negro Amaro  
Primitivo  
Sangiovese  
Zinfandel  
Aglianico

Refosco  
Petite Sirah  
Barbera  
Dolcetto  
Nebbiolo  
Grenache  
Cabernet Franc

# PRIMA MATERIA



## Lake County AVAs

	Lake County AVA		High Valley AVA
	Benmore Valley AVA		Kelsey Bench AVA
	Big Valley District AVA		Guenoc AVA
	Red Hills AVA		

0 5 10 miles  
0 5 10 15 Kilometers

# The Vineyards of PRIMA MATERIA

- A) Tuscan Olive Trees - Frantoio, Pendolino, Maurino, Leccino, Coratina
- B) Dolcetto - FPS 02 on St. George roots, planted in 2000
- C) Arbequina Olive Trees
- D) Primitivo - FPS 03 on St. George roots, planted 1999
- E) Barbera - FPS 02 on St. George roots, planted 1997
- F) Chardonnay - Wente clone on unknown roots, planted 1993
- G) Aglianico - Taurasi clones FPS 02 & 07, on 1103 and St. George roots, 7% clone 07, planted 2003, Montepulciano interplanted 2006
- H) Nebbiolo - FPS 06, 08, and 11.1 on 110 and 1103 roots, planted 2010 and 2011
- I) Sangiovese - Brunello clone FPS 06 on 1103 roots, planted 2010
- J) Petite Sirah - unknown clone on St. George roots, planted 2010
- K) Grenache - Tablas Creek clone 4 on 1103 roots, planted 2010
- L) Cabernet Franc - FPS 03 on unknown roots, planted 2010
- M) Sangiovese - Romagnolo clone VCR 23 on 1103 roots, planted 2010
- N) Sagrantino - FPS 01 on 110 roots, planted 2012
- O) Sangiovese - Biondi Santi FPS 05 on 110 roots, planted 2012
- P) Sangiovese - Prugnolo Gentile VCR 102 on 1103 roots, planted 2011
- Q) Negro Amaro - FPS 01 on 1103 roots, planted 2011
- R) Refoxo - "Nostrano-Faedis" FPS 03 on 3309 roots, planted 2009
- S) Primitivo - FPS 03 on St. George roots, planted 2006
- T) Barbera - FPS 09 on St. George roots, planted 2005
- U) Barbera, VCR 19 on 1103 roots, planted 2013



## KELSEYVILLE BENCH AVA

### A Sub-AVA of Lake County

The Kelsey Bench sub-AVA in Kelseyville, Lake County was established in 2013. It includes about 9,100 acres with two bonded wineries (**Prima Materia** and Smiling Dogs Ranch) and 27 vineyards. Vineyard land totals about 900 acres with most planted to red varietals. The term “bench” was selected to reflect the topography of the area with higher elevations and hills. Rich soils mixed with large amounts of rock and fine sand cover a large portion of the Kelsey Bench with good drainage favorable to growing grapes. The boundaries of the Kelsey Bench AVA are the Big Valley District to the north, the 1,600-foot elevation line that runs east of Kelsey Creek to the east, Kelsey Creek Drive to the south, and Adobe Creek Drive to Highland Springs Road to the west.

The following comprises the Kelsey Bench terroir:

#### GEOLOGY

Three faults that are part of the San Andreas Fault system run beneath the Kelsey Bench viticultural area: The Big Valley Fault, the Wight Way Fault, and the Adobe Creek Fault. At various times throughout history, the movement of these faults, along with the San Andreas Fault, has uplifted the region and contributed to the terraced landscape within the area. The terraces and benches of the region reduce the risk of frost because cold air drains off the terraces at night and into the lower, flatter valley to the north. The Kelseyville Formation is a major geological feature. The formation was created during the middle Pleistocene era, between approximately 780,000 and 126,000 years ago, and consists mainly of sandstone, siltstone, and mudstone. The formation contains two volcanic ash aquifers which serve as the water resources of the area. The “ash” consists of angular fragments of volcanic rock. These fragments are quite permeable and allow water from stream courses and saturated confining strata to leak into and recharge the aquifers, providing a source of water for irrigating the vineyards. To the east and northeast are Mount Konocti and the established Red Hills Lake County viticultural area. Both regions are part of the Clear Lake Volcanics, formed in the middle Pliocene Epoch, and have rocks composed of basalt, rhyolite, and other volcanic materials. The Mayacamas Mountains lie to the south and west.

## SOILS

The soils of the Kelsey Bench were shaped over time by the forces of geology, water, and weather. Three general soil map units are found extensively within the viticultural area: The Manzanita–Wappo–Forbesville unit (MWF), the latter of which are found in Prima Materia’s vineyard. MWF soils are deep and well-drained and formed in alluvium. Most of the vineyards within the area are planted on soils of the MWF general soil map unit, a fact that attributes to the relatively milder slopes of soils associated with this unit, as well as the greater presence of the MWF soils. MWF soils are acidic, with pH levels between 5.0 and 6.5. The acidity in the soils allows for nutrient uptake by the vines but is low enough to prevent the vines from absorbing nutrients at levels that could become damaging to the plant. Clay accumulates at depths of 16 to 70 inches, which limits root depth and prevents vines from growing too vigorously. MWF soils are low in fertility, which provides lean conditions that result in grapes with high concentrations of flavor, although the yields may be lower than those of vineyards planted on more fertile soil.

## CLIMATE

Wind: There is only one official weather station located within the Kelsey Bench. Summer winds can become so strong that the stomata on the grape leaves close, reducing photosynthesis and delaying the ripening of fruit. As a result, grapes within the area usually have a later harvest date than those in within the nearby Big Valley District, even though both vineyards are planted with the same variety of grapes.

Temperature: The temperatures in the Kelsey Bench are generally warmer than those of the Big Valley District to the north and cooler than those of the Red Hills AVA to the east. In comparison to the Big Valley District the Kelsey Bench has warmer daytime temperatures and a longer frost-free period. The longer growing season provides a longer time for the grapes to ripen, which can compensate for the slower ripening conditions that the windy conditions within the area create.

CLEAR LAKES' VOLCANIC INFLUENCES ON PRIMA MATERIA'S VINEYARD

The town of Clear Lake lies within the volcanic field as does much of the 43,000-acre fresh water lake of its namesake. The Geysers steam field, which sits at the southwest margin of the volcanic region, is host to one of the world's most productive geothermal power plants, producing enough electricity for 850,000 homes. The heat driving the geothermal system emanates from a zone of partially molten rock (magma) deep below the greater Clear Lake volcanic system. The most prominent volcanic feature is 300,000-year-old Mount Konocti, rising about 3,200 feet above the southwestern shore of the lake. The most recent eruptions occurred about 11,000 years ago around Mount Konocti. Although Clear Lake volcanic field has not erupted for several millennia, sporadic volcanic-type earthquakes do occur, and the numerous hot springs and volcanic gas that seeps out in the area, point to its potential to erupt again.

PRIMA MATERIA'S NEIGHBORING VINEYARDS

**Luchsinger Vineyards** (property directly behind PM, another block about 500 meters away, and then its Portuguese cultivars and Trousseau are about half-mile away). Luchsinger has gained a reputation for producing premium Sauvignon Blanc and dessert wines such as late harvest Semillon and Port, consisting of true Portuguese varieties. Bernie Luchsinger's Vineyard Management and Services has developed over 800 acres of vineyards in Lake County and continues to farm approximately 200 acres.

**Catfish Vineyard (oldest in Lake County, owned by Steele)** The vineyard is located on the Bell Hill bench of Lake County just south of Kelseyville. Catfish Vineyard, planted in 1901, is head pruned and stands on its own roots. Steele Wines purchased the vineyard in 2000.

**Beckstoffer.** With more than 2,000 acres of vineyard planted in Lake County, its Crimson Ridge Vineyard on the southwest shoulder of Mt. Konocti, is four miles away from PM, within the northern edge of Red Hills AVA.

**Sol Rouge** – Two miles away, just inside Red Hills, which has consistently produced high scores wines.

Silva Ranch

Eutenier Ranch

Arkley Vinyard

WINERIES PURCHASING KELSEY BENCH GRAPES FOR THEIR WINES

Kendall Jackson	Clos du Val	Treasury Wine Estates
Obsidian Ridge	Stag's Leap Cellars	Francis Coppola
Gallo of Sonoma	V. Sattui	Pacific Star
Dancing Crow	Arnott-Roberts	Swanson
Parducci	Miraflores	Joel Gott
Sutter Home	Ficklin	

## PIETRO BUTTITTA'S VITICULTURAL/WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHIES

**In the vineyard**, Pietro Buttitta practices what he believes to be the historical and philosophical truths about growing grapes, and making wine. His hands are meant to maneuver the grapes and wine to their final destination, rather than manipulating both into commoditized and unrecognizable entities.

"I'm a mix of hands on and hands off; unlike what one would do raising their kids by keeping them locked in the basement and controlling the outcome. By leaving them to grow, you get better grapes, by not adding lots of fertilizers; and when you prune, you treat each vine as its own singular entity. I one hundred percent disagree with uniformity."

Among viticultural maneuvers he allows, is to keep the fruit shaded but surrounded by ambient light. In his vineyard, Buttitta does not utilize the fairly standard practice of vertical shoot positioning (VSP) trellising system, instead favoring old-school "California sprawl" in order to keep the alcohols to a minimum, and to preserve more rustic flavor elements. Raisin-y grapes are a real danger in the Kelsey Bench' sunny climate; and he has also planted all of his vines with the idea of dry farming. Further, vines he espouses, should be coaxed into becoming as independent as possible, rather than being controlled through drip irrigation unless absolutely necessary.

"The goal is to highlight the aspects to which Lake County excels. Such as high structure, good ripeness through warm summers, evolving minerality with vine age and forward fruit while keeping all in check and referencing what each cultivar's history has shown us in the old country."

Buttitta strives for balanced vines with a proper crop load that does not lose acidity or become overripe easily, and retains old-world characteristics of earth and mineral. Prima Materia does not hedge or dramatically alter the vines in any way, mid-journey. Buttitta also defers to the classic wisdom in many cases, of cane pruning **Nebbiolo** to eight buds per vine(!) with one bunch per shoot in the Piemontese tradition; while **Negro Amaro** is treated very differently, as are the **Barbera** selections and **Sangiovese**, with different clones carrying different crop loads according to their vigor.

**Refosco** is often split into several pick times – one for acidity and cool-climate tones then for fruit and tannin two weeks later. **Sangiovese** is picked multiple times depending on clones, and fermented with and without stems for varying lengths of time. Aglianico is planted in the same way with a range of ripeness and rusticity desired at harvest rather than uniformity.

**In the cellar**, "As a history major, I knew that old-world knowledge was important, even when disproven, but I knew too that philosophically, tasting old-world wines was most important to understand context and aspiration. But it's a balancing act, not slavishly trying to imitate something because they (Italian wines) are cornerstones, but trying to respectfully fill in the lines. If you're going to label something varietally, there's a tacit agreement between winemaker and consumer; there are some historical markers you want to hit. It doesn't have to be varietally correct, but there has to be something in the wine that is consistent with its historical lineage, and manifestations. There's a responsibility to maintain typicity. If you're making a California Sangiovese you should have a sense of what Chianti subzones produce."

Buttitta then uses his knowledge of food to emphasize the point: “If I’m making pappardelle tikka masala you can do whatever crazy flavor combos you want, but there is some core element that has to be papperdelleish i.e. technique, texture. I don’t believe you should label something **Barbera** that tastes like **Grenache**.”

As in the vineyard, in the cellar Buttitta is also “Very controlled and cautiously hands off”. Meaning, he minimally sulfurs, employs spontaneous fermentations, while “being a very responsible parent.” Additionally, he strives for longer fermentations and more earthy extractions, by using whole clusters, and stems when possible. As examples, he maintains warm-climate California **Sangiovese** needs some stem inclusion. At Prima Materia there’s long barrel aging in multi-used vessels back to 1996, with the age generally in the 5-to-15-year range. Thin-staved Bordeaux and heavier Hungarian barrels are used. Furthermore, racking is often not practiced, and sometimes wines are aerated and returned back to their barrels and original lees. “The goodness of all the dead yeast cells is very important, protecting the wine and fortifying it over time. Lees are gold, and I think that they are an important part of the wine” And nothing gets sulfured the first year. Finally, he doesn’t utilize any lab work until right before bottling (he does not test the juice in a laboratory). “I pretty much do it by taste” and “I try to match the varietal to what its hunger for oxygen is,” Buttitta concludes, though, that he saves testing his wines in the lab for a final cursory glance before bottling.

**Nebbiolo** he believes, “is the California heartbreak grape, the one grape that is almost impossible to get close to its historical representations in Barolo. Nebbiolo has “face-ripping” tannins and high acid in need of extensive aging and reacting unpredictably with oak. “Nebbiolo just makes no damn sense, and that is why the good ones are so amazing and the unbalanced ones are horribly abrasive and charmless. And Sangiovese needs time. No other grape changes so much with time.”

Nebbiolo and **Aglianico** will always be open-top, hand-punched ferments while stainless tanks work well for a portion of Barbera and **Primitivo**. For the Grenache blend, various grapes are sometimes dried for two weeks *appassimento*-style (natural partial dehydration to produce greater concentration of colors, aromas and flavors, as is practiced in Valpolicella) before co-fermenting with the Grenache, as is a portion of the **Sagrantino**. “If everything went right in the vineyard, then the general trajectory of the wine is in motion before a grape is even picked, and then it is a matter of aging, watchful patience, and learning of each grape’s quiet language.”

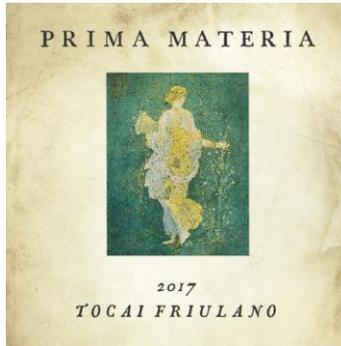
Why plant so many varietals? His succinct reply: “I would probably not do it again, at least not in the same way, but each one teaches something unique and beautiful.”

## PIETRO ON HIS PRICE POINTS

Why are Prima Materia’s prices (ranging from \$20-\$40 SRP) relatively low?

“They don’t feel all that low to me” Pietro Buttitta responds. “I’m going with my philosophical beliefs; I didn’t grow up around expensive wine, and I still rarely buy expensive wines. I feel guilty for instance, asking \$28 for Negro Amaro, because there aren’t many Negro Amaros for \$28 from Italy. I’ve spent years in wine retail, and know how farmers make so little for their crop in Italy, in Portugal, France, especially with uncommon grape cultivars. I guess I feel some sort of solidarity, a responsibility to keep prices as reasonable as possible.”

## PIETRO ON ALCHEMY/LABEL DESIGN



Pietro Buttitta, having studied history and philosophy, has synthesized the two disciplines as he approaches life and winegrowing. As attested by the labels on his wines, the alchemist's hand and the world of fantasy (and not so imaginary) is but a part of who this viticulturist and winemaker is.

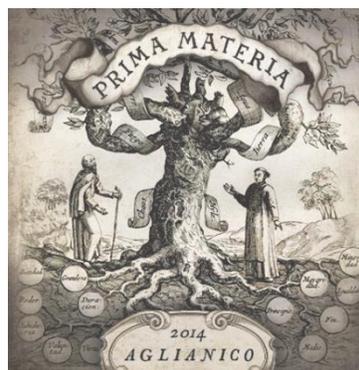
### >Alchemy

Alchemy, he believes, "is about transforming things while gaining knowledge of underlying substances (i.e. lead becoming gold). Alchemists try to understand their own souls. It's the human side of terroir. It encapsulates the journey that can be as high-minded as you want; or simply the sum is greater than the part."

Dragons are "transformative, good and bad, very context dependent. They hold a primordial chaos, and have great strength in that, earth's fundamental id where contrasting elements coexist rather than cancel. Winged dragons are spiritual while the wingless are material, but the alchemist's goal is to face and merge with them. Like planting a vineyard, it is a long journey."

### >Labels

Enchings from alchemical publications; visual puzzles that the alchemists were trying to solve; and hiding their meaning from the church, informs Prima Materia's labels. (Please refer to individual wine profiles [Pgs. 6-16] for further explanations of Buttitta's labels' meanings.)



## PRIMA MATERIA'S TASTING ROOMS

### RIGGER'S LOFT

1325 Canal, Richmond, CA

510.233.2065

info@RBcellars.com

At the beginning of 2021, Prima Materia's wines will be made at the 12,000 square-foot wine and cider custom crush facility, tasting room, café, event space, and live music venue. The Loft, housed in a large converted World War II shipping warehouse, is on the border of Richmond and Point Richmond, and sits on San Francisco Bay with 180-degree views from a large patio, of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge and the Bay Bridge, Mt. Tamalpais, and Berkeley and Oakland.

Food is provided by Arlington Caterers of Kentfield, which traditionally focuses on seasonal California cuisine.

Reservations highly recommended due to Covid  
Day of Reservations: 508.692.8414

Thursdays and Fridays from 4-7pm

Saturdays from 1-7pm

Sundays from 1-7pm

### TEMESCAL

Pietro Buttitta opened his first tasting room in the heart of Oakland's in-vogue Temescal District. Off the main drag that his Telegraph Avenue, Prima Materia's tasting room/cum café, resides in one of two quaint alleys that are replete with small bespoke shops. It is the only wine bar in this *au courant* neighborhood, where Buttitta's cooking is sometimes on display.

Open 1-5pm Saturday and Sunday for outdoor wine tasting  
(reservations are necessary as seating is limited)

The Prima Materia tasting room is located at 482 49th Street  
in the Temescal Alleys of North Oakland  
one half-block east of Telegraph Avenue, just behind  
Pizzaiolo, Shoe Palace, and Esqueleto.

At the tasting room Prima Materia offers up to 10 wines as a tasting or by the glass  
with outdoor seating,  
and cheese plates (or other specialties) are also available  
Children are welcome

We are open **only** on Saturday and Sunday 1-5p.m. at this time.

## DISTRIBUTION

Prima Materia is represented by

[Authentic Wine Selections](#)

in California

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

Florida – online via [www.libdib.com](http://www.libdib.com)

New York – online via [www.libdib.com](http://www.libdib.com)

Illinois – online via [www.libdib.com](http://www.libdib.com)

## PRIMA MATERIA PODCAST

The Prima Materia podcast is a growing collection of classes and discussions with Pietro Buttitta on many wine topics and, naturally, covers Prima Materia wines. The PM pod is found on:

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/33532Hnt0fsbAhUUX7GIDm>

Apple Podcasts: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/talking-wine-with-prima-materia-vineyard-winery/id1485658366>

Google Podcasts:

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9hbmNob3luZm0vcy9jODQ5ODkwL3BvZGNhc3QvcnNz>

### *On YouTube*

A growing video collection of Zoom discussions, classes, and specific tastings of Prima Materia wines:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjEVx7ZKm28tU6UOuXk9ngA>





