

**RETURN TO
TERROIR**
wine importers & educators

Our First California Winery !
AmByth Estate in Templeton, CA
(biodynamic, dry farmed)



AmByth wines are certified byodynamic (Demeter)

Return to Terroir is happy to announce that we have picked up our first California winery, AmByth Estate from Paso Robles.

Since starting the company in 2009, RTT has focused on producers that make wines without chemicals or unnecessary additives. We've been very selective. I don't think it is a service to anyone to work with wines unless we can get behind them 200%. With AmByth, we found a producer who not only shares our values but one who is making wines with immense purity and with a connection to a place.



Owner, winemaker Phillip Hart

Meaning 'forever' in Welsh, AmByth is owned by Philip and Mary Hart. Philip, a Welsh ex-pat, traveled the world before landing in California. Before trying his hand at winemaking, he imported hand-knotted and dyed rugs from India and Nepal. Located in Orange County, the business is still thriving and he distributes nationwide. All of this travel inspired a passion for wine and even as he ran his business full time, he became a true 'garagiste,' making wine out of his home in southern California.

The area of Paso Robles gradually came into play over the years. He used to bring his two eldest sons camping there and his best friend lived there as well. So when he and Mary decided to find a vacation home, this location was an easy choice.



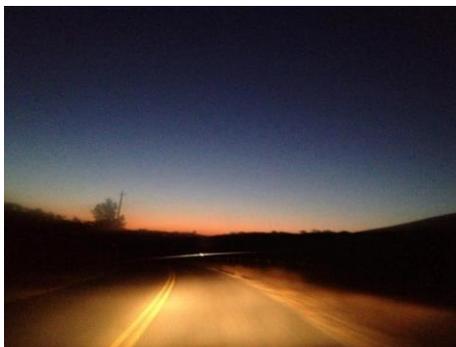
Phillip Hart surrounded by the RTT team (October 13, 2013)

In 2000, they purchased a 42-acre hill in the newly proposed Templeton Gap AVA. When his brother and business partner of 30 years passed away Philip started to take a "hard look at life." In 2005, he made the transition from being a "weekend farmer" to a full time Paso Robles resident.



Biodynamics

From the beginning, the Harts knew they did not want to farm conventionally but at the time "organic wine wasn't doing it for us." He ran into Philippe Armenier, a French ex-pat and former Châteauneuf-du-Pape producer who is a biodynamic consultant to numerous California wineries. A conversation about the bird and the bees, literally, ensued and, as Philip and Mary live in the midst of their vineyards, they "wanted harmony with nature." In 2006, AmByth became the first Demeter certified winery in Paso Robles.



October 14, 2013 (6:30am): driving to AmByth to harvest some Mourvedre

The 42-acre sprawl is truly a biodiversified paradise. Their dairy cows provide whey to ward off powdery mildew, and milk for drinking and cheese production. A mobile chicken coop shuffles the birds to different parts of the land every day where they roam the vineyards, playing with the dogs and cats, and fertilizing the soil at the same time. And, they provide the family with fresh eggs.

Finally, there are two beehives that cross-pollinate the diverse vegetation scattered throughout the property. Besides vines, they cultivate fruit, nut and olive trees, using the latter to make olive oil.



9:30am: today's harvest is finishing. Next steps: weighing the grapes then stomping

Twenty acres are planted to four vineyards: Mark's, (named after Philip's brother), StoneCross, Terrace and PlayGround. At an elevation of over 1000 feet, they are all planted on steep slopes and head trained, requiring that they be almost exclusively worked by hand. When they were planted in the early and mid 00's, as much as possible they were on their own rootstock. No sulfur or copper is used. Instead, biodynamic preparations including herbal teas are applied to protect and prepare the vines. Above and beyond biodynamic, the vineyards are dry farmed, not an easy decision in a place as hot as Paso Robles but they do it, Philip says, "because we feel true terroir can only come from a dry farmed natural vineyard."



10am: Return to Terroir team stomping the Mourvedre

The fruit is hand harvested and fermented with native yeast. The red grapes are crushed by foot, or, more aptly, feet and fermented whole cluster. Neutral barrels, stainless steel and amphora vessels are used to age the wines. The wines are not fined or filtered and starting with the 2011 vintage, they have been sulfite free. In addition to a variety of Rhône grapes, Tempranillo and Sangiovese are grown.



Recently purchased Amphoras

Philip and Mary's goal is to make wines that are terroir driven with moderate to low alcohol that showcase the inherent character of the grape as mother nature intended it to be, including vintage variation. They are dedicated and inspiring to work with and encompass everything we were looking for in a California wine producer.



AmByth Estates Priscus, 2011 | 33% Grenache Blanc, 33% Roussanne, 21% Marsanne, 13% Viognier. The Grenache Blanc, Roussanne and Marsanne are from the StoneCross Vineyard while the Viognier is grown on Mark's Vineyard. After spending a year in neutral oak it was bottled and released in July.

"This wine has a beautiful pale gold color. The first nose is very fresh and complex with lifted aromas of fresh citrus, orange blossoms and crushed minerals. It is medium-bodied with an intense energy carried by a perfect natural acidity. On the palate lime tree notes are on the foreground but you can guess more complex aromas that

will develop with time: young quince, butterscotch and smoky minerality. The finish is long, fresh and vibrant. No need to rush with this wine, it is refined and elegant, it is a serious white wine.”

AmByth Estates Roussanne, 2012 | 100% Roussanne

The Roussanne is grown on the StoneCross Vineyard, the steepest of the four. Planted in 2005, it is surrounded by Spanish olive trees. It was aged in neutral oak, bottled in June and is now being released.

“Medium gold color, the nose exhibits a medium intensity of ripe pear, citrus, fig and butterscotch. Medium plus body. The wine wants to act like a puppy but is kept in check by Mother Acid. Flavors of tarte tatin and fig are showing up in the background. An intense Roussanne that will age beautifully.”

AmByth Estates Counoise, 2010 | 100% Counoise

This minor Châteauneuf-du-Pape grape is not a complete stranger to Paso Robles but AmByth’s interpretation is most refreshing. One and one third acres were planted in 2005 in the StoneCross Vineyard. Spaced at 10ft on a steep hill, they are head trained vines. Bottled after spending a little over a year in neutral oak, it has had time to develop in the bottle as well having been released in April.

“This Counoise has a garnet robe of medium light intensity. The first nose is a mix of red berry fruit with leathery and earthy tones. It is very fresh, precise and complex. It has a lively attack on the palate, very youthful and vibrant, carried by a striking acidity with a beautiful core or red fruit with tannins easy enough to pair with any charcuterie or salumi. It has a “cru Beaujolais” sense to it, incredibly easy to drink with a serious side.”

AmByth Estates Grenache, 2010 | 100% Grenache

The Grenache is made from a steep, south facing seven-acre parcel on Mark’s Vineyard. Planted in 2004, the vines are goblet trained and spaced at 12ft X 12ft. Given the extremity of the angle, several passes are made as the top of the slope ripens earlier than the lower lying vines. It was aged in neutral oak, bottled in February 2012 and released this past June.

“Our estate Grenache is beautifully aromatic, with a few gamey notes but strongly mixed with blueberry/cherry and other red fruits; dry tobacco and Indian spices whisper in the background. The palate is intense with red currant and tart berry fruit. The tannins are soft, yet present and well integrated in this medium-bodied wine. The finish is long and clean, carried by a vibrant natural acidity. This wine provides great pleasure and versatility with food pairings and will age gracefully over a decade.”

AmByth Estates Mourvedre, 2010 | 100% Mourvedre

“Dark, deep garnet color. The nose is pleasantly open and generous with blue fruit notes mixed with light gamy aromas. It is already in place. The palate offers a great mix of generosity and tension. This Mourvedre offers a little extra layers of comfort that will please those that enjoy some volume. Make no mistake, it is not a monster. The acid structure keeps the wine in check and takes it on a long, rich and lively ride. Enjoy now and in the next decade...or more.”

