

MURAM International AB
Nackagatan 27
SE-116 47 STOCKHOLM
Sweden

Telephone: +46-70-591 12 78
Fax: +46-8-714 57 50

E-mail: info@muram.com
Internet: www.muram.com



2002, FATHOM

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Almost 25 years ago, while I was going to school to study enology, I started working in a wine shop. I was exposed to so many wines, and the people working there were so gracious with their knowledge, that it was a time and place that opened my eyes. My world was not just winemaking all of a sudden. It was more of an aesthetic view of wine in general, and my horizons seemed to be infinitely broadened.

One of the lessons from back then had to do with a paradigm; "good wines made from Bordeaux varieties in Santa Barbara County do not exist." If I remember right, the paradoxical question (the joke) was "what's worse, a Cabernet from Santa Barbara, or from Monterey?"

Roughly 21 years ago, I remember thinking that my lessons from that wine shop were solid. I started making my first wines, and I met some of the local winemakers like Fred Brander (Brander Winery). Fred was actually out there saying such things as, "we will make great wines from Bordeaux varieties, just give us time." I was convinced, however, that the premises underlying the Santa Barbara-Bordeaux varieties paradigm were still valid.

Then, about 18 years ago, a couple of interesting things happened. For starters, improvements in viticulture really began to accelerate all over the state of California. In some areas, where certain varieties did not enjoy the benefit of an ideal climate, these improvements went a long way toward the development of good wines. In Santa Barbara County, for example, we started to see some nice Bordeaux styled wines from wineries like Brander, Foxen, and Rancho Sisquoc. Then came the discovery that, of all the Bordeaux varieties, it was Cabernet Franc which was making the best wines in the middle of the Santa Ynez. The word started to spread; of all the Bordeaux varieties, Cabernet Franc is the one that likes our cooler climates. I started to question the paradigm.

About 13 years ago, it became apparent to me that this was no fluke. I discovered that in many parts of France's cooler Loire Valley, they grow Cabernet Franc, while they rarely grow Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot. Thus, the red wines from appellations like Chinon are usually 100% Cabernet Franc. Ultimately, I was interested in a more traditional Bordeaux model, which would entail blending all the varieties. But as I started studying Bordeaux wineries, I became intrigued with another interesting fact. While all the wineries seem to grow at least a pinch of Cabernet Franc, they very rarely feature it as the highest percentage grape in their wines. St. Emilion, however, is the Bordeaux appellation where a few of the wineries do.

What I was starting to see was a place, Santa Barbara County, where the potential for great Bordeaux styled blends was starting to materialize, but in such a way that the lead grape could be, or perhaps institutionally should be, Cabernet Franc. While this seemed very enigmatic, the paradigm that one cannot grow good Bordeaux varieties in Santa Barbara County was, none the less, shattered. Fred Brander was right and, consequently, FATHOM was born. All we needed was a pinch of consistently outstanding Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, and we could rock the world.

Well, thirteen years later, some extremely fine Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, are being grown in the deep interior of the Santa Ynez Valley, some 35 miles from the ocean. In this new viticultural area it is finally warm enough for great wines from all of the Bordeaux varieties. Outside of FATHOM, my prediction is that in the not too distant future you will run into vineyard names like Estelle, Vogelzang, and Westerly (should be Easterly), and you will taste great Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon from these sources.

While climatically this end of the Santa Ynez Valley has the mojo for these grapes, there is also something great about the shallow rocky soils. Suffice it to say, the wines look great; so great that I have completely revamped my thinking. Instead of believing that FATHOM is a wine that features Cabernet Franc, now I believe that FATHOM is the best wine I can make from Bordeaux varieties, regardless of the blend.

At a couple of the vineyards they have even planted a little bit of another less heralded Bordeaux variety, Petit Verdot. If that turns out great, we really will rock the world! I used to think that I would never make wine like this 2002 FATHOM, at least not from grapes grown in Santa Barbara County. Now I have a dream that someday I will ask the wine cognoscenti the following: "What's the best place in the world for all the Bordeaux varieties, Bordeaux or Santa Barbara?" When I look at their faces and they are stumped, my dream will have come true.

FACTS

name:	2002, Fathom
item number:	02FATH
composition:	47 % Merlot - 23 % Westerly Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley (Happy Canyon) - 24 % Vogelzang Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley (HappyCanyon) 31 % Cabernet Franc - 31% Cabernet Franc: Vogelzang Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley (Happy Canyon) 22 % Cabernet Sauvignon - 14 % Cabernet Sauvignon: Vogelzang Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley (Happy Canyon) - 8 % Cabernet Sauvignon: Great Oaks Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley
alcohol:	13.5 % by volume
production:	943 cases 943 cases 12/750 ml 49 cases 6/1.5 Liter
release date:	Fall 2005
Price:	See pricelist