

## 2016 - The Year of Challenges & Rewards

(Drought, Advancements & Awards)



...such is life in an olive grove.

*The following is our 2016 Growing Season & Highlights which we've recorded throughout the year to share and mainly save on our website for historical reasons.*

• • •  
*The Largest El Niño  
condition on record  
and warmer than  
usual Pacific Ocean  
is set to Energize  
Storms...*  
• • •



**2016 Newsletter**

**1.10.16**

Like us, you're probably tired of hearing and seeing those forecast headlines, but yet it's still important to be ready for the worst. The months running from January through March usually account for the vast majority of rainfall for Paso Robles. Over the past 4 years, these months have been warm and sunny. Thankfully, that pattern may finally be broken with 2016 starting off with a robust series of storms!

**1.12.16**

In December we found out that we did not currently pass the strict COOC Sensory standard for EVOO. As we noted on our website & Facebook postings, that doesn't mean the oil is 'bad'. Many doors to learning opened from this circumstance, which is really what part of being a member of the COOC outreach education program is about.

Having said that, even though we passed on the very important Chemical Analysis, Sensory Evaluation will also affect certification as was our case. When highly-trained COOC specialists rated TosCana, they perceived a slight defect called "heated/burnt" (2.05 on a scale of 10.00.). This occurred during processing. We had a couple of issues with the new machine, one being the speed in which the paste from the malaxer was moving through the decanter; the other being an unsuitable thermal condition (a hot fall day reaching 90 degrees). These two factors may have just put us over and out of the recommended optimum temperature range of 77 – 86 degrees.

We are working with the COOC along with a friend/peer in the industry on a batch blend correction. Rest assured, the oil is not 'bad', just classified as "Virgin" at this point since it slightly missed the mark of EVOO – just until re-submission of a new chemical and sensory sample is passed.

Why does the California Olive Oil Council (COOC) stand by its very stringent Seal Certification Program? Recently, CBS News 60 Minutes aired an exposé on quality issues of Italian olive oil, adulteration, and the involvement of the Mafia. The program highlighted that 80% of the oil exported to the U.S. is fraudulent and mislabeled. Apparently, consumers have been deceived for years by Italy's seven best-known olive oil companies for allegedly passing off inferior olive oil as extra-virgin oil. Sadly, most really don't know the true color, extraordinary aroma and fresh taste of extra virgin olive oil!



**1.21.16**

Thursday evening we went out to Solana Farms, which is located northeast of Paso, for our olive oil 'blending' party. It was unanimous that the best combo would be 40% our Tuscan blend, 30% early harvest Arbequina (fruit forward, peppery – this is to cancel out the palate confusing heated/burnt essence) & 30% late harvest Mission (fruity buttery finish). Loads of fun!

**1.22.16**

We took a sample over to Baker labs the next morning. As before, it passed Chemical Analysis with flying colors. Huge thanks to Tom Baer for the help in saving oil thus far. He even arranged his guys to come out and prune our trees, only taking a day which probably would have taken us all month long to accomplish! We can't express our appreciation enough for all the help he's provided thus far.

### 1.29.16

We mailed the sample off to the COOC for Sensory certification. The new blend name will now be called Tusci (Latin for the Etruscans of Tuscany). Fingers crossed it passes this time, but we won't hear anything for a couple of weeks!



### 1.31.16

Fortunately, the rains that we've had so far have been steady & easy. The frequent, light rains allow the soil to slowly absorb the water, which, over time help to flush out the salts that have accumulated from the prolonged drought.

Since July 1, 2015 we've recorded 11.05", approaching almost as much last season's total of 11.50"! When walking through the grove in the mornings, there is a sense of relief as the thirsty roots of our olive trees and surrounding Oaks drink heartily. With all indications pointing towards a continuing pattern of wet weather, we need keep the water from running away and carrying off our valuable topsoil. So Mike placed berms between the hillside rows to inhibit run-off.

*"Where did El Niño go? Heat, dry spell stoke drought worry"*

*The Tribune – San Luis Obispo, Saturday February 23, 2016*

### 2.14.16

Right now the hills look beautiful with lots of green color, blossoms and contrasting blue skies, with daytime highs up into the 80s. Even the pre-bud micro advancement within our olives trees has started. As lovely as this is, it's an unwelcome switch-off for February, marking 14 straight days without precipitation – sparking jitters that El Niño is a bust. But we're not becoming complacent. According to PG&E meteorologist John Lindsey, El Niño may still deliver come March and April when the jet stream will shift southward over Southern California. This will allow the storm door to swing wide open the latter part of February. When looking historically at the 1982-83 and 1997-98 El Niños, they were late bloomers. So this could be the proverbial 'calm before the storm' because this year's very strong El Niño may be slow to start but fast to finish – putting a significant dent in this drought.

### 3.3.16

We just got news today that our second submission, 'Tusci Blend' has qualified for COOC Seal Certification! Once again, thanks to Tom Baer (Solana Farms).

Meanwhile, this past month was very busy getting things in order. For one, we submitted our 'dba' with the County of San Luis Obispo and ran it the required 4 times in the paper to make "The Partridge Family Olive Company" officially up and running to sell oil.

We've also entered, prepared and sent off bottles to the following 2016 competitions:

- COOC Competition
- Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition
- Cal-State Fair
- San Joaquin Valley Olive Oil Competition
- Central Coast Olive Oil Competition
- Paso Robles Olive Festival
- Yolo County Fair
- Napa Valley Olive Oil Competition



Besides our family and friends telling us they love our oil, hopefully these blind tastings critiques will give us (and Tom) some metal accolades! Results to come in the next few months.

### 3.28.16

Winners of the 2016 Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition Announced! And the medal goes to...



Northern Hemisphere Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Central Coast Blends  
**SILVER MEDAL**

The Partridge Family Olive Co.  
Medium, Tusci Blend, Paso Robles

**SILVER, AWARDS BY PACKAGING DESIGN,**  
*Effective Use of Design Standard*  
The Partridge Family Olive Co.  
Tusci Blend, Paso Robles



The 2016 Northern Hemisphere Competition received 571 extra virgin olive oils from 369 producers. There were a total of 6 Best of Show Awards, 26 Best of Class Awards, 125 Gold Medal Awards, 168 Silver Medal Awards, and 73 Bronze Medal Awards. .

Now in its 17th year, the Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition is the top ranking EVOO competition in the United States and fifth worldwide, bringing together the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in awarding medals to the best oils from around the globe.

These are 2 wins in the big league for us -Very exciting!

[http://www.lawinecomp.com/wos/olive\\_oil\\_competition/AwardsCelebration/winners.asp](http://www.lawinecomp.com/wos/olive_oil_competition/AwardsCelebration/winners.asp)

### 4.1.16

We are excited to once again announce we metaled at The CA State Fair Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition 2016!



**BRONZE**

The Partridge Family Olive Co.  
Medium Blend, Tusci Blend

Ever since the first fair in 1854, The California State Fair has showcased the very best. The tradition continues by celebrating the olive-growing and olive oil producing industries in California with programs like The California State Fair Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition!

<http://www.castatefair.org/california-commercial-extra-virgin-olive-oil/>

### 4.12.16

Trees have begun Pre-bloom stage.



### 4.16.16

Sustainability and water conservation are on everyone's mind these days and California is no stranger to drought conditions. So back in the fall of last year when the Water District issue was heating up in Paso Robles, we contacted Dr. Chahbani of Chahtech Technologies, Djerba Island, Tunisia. He has designed a new technique for underground irrigation (based on the old world concept of clay pots) that represents 50% less of what is delivered using standard drip irrigation.



Initially, for a few weeks we Skyped & emailed technical details back and forth. That was he could ensure correct irrigation fractions and timing for our blocks of trees with the diffusers according to the stages of fruit development when we placed our order. He was very knowledgeable & thorough since this is his field of teaching, and he too manages his own olive grove. By far, he has tested & established these diffusers as being the most cutting-edge, efficient underground irrigation system on the farming market.



We finally received the diffusers in March and installation has now begun. Irrigation pipe will be fully buried and diffusers are placed 60 cm (2 ft.) down to get the water and nutrients immediately where it needs to be, in the vicinity of the root ball. The initial costs & labor will outweigh the long-term benefits for saving water, energy, well pumps, dispensing fertilizers, weed control and for productivity.



We are excited to be one of the first in California to be installing these buried diffusers on olive trees! Best of all, watering is gravity fed and only applied 4 times a year - now that's smart water usage!

<http://www.chahtech.com/en/trees-buried-diffuser-presentation.html>



4.23.16

Flower buds now opening!

5.1.16

The birth of an olive!



5.14.16

Fruit Set. For olives, April and May is the month where weather can become an issue for crop advancement. In walking our orchard this Saturday morning, we could see that this crummy, very windy & hot spring has disrupted fruit set. This year will be a very small crop, which apparently everyone is reporting.



6.1.16

Getting our booth ready for our 1st appearance at this weekend's Paso Robles Olive Festival. If anyone local can make it, come on down and say hello! Booth Sp# 122 (to the right of the fountain on 12th Street side).

6.5.16

We had a fun time at the Paso Robles Olive Festival and met a lot of great people! A good experience and everyone seemed to like our oil and especially the laser label & diffusers. We also found out we won Silver in one of the 5 categories!



6.17.16

Now that the new irrigation diffusers have been in for 2 months you can see the trees are flourishing.

In the installation process, soil samples were taken to determine fertilizer requirements so proper amounts were put down in each hole prior to covering. The trees were given an initial good soaking, and just given the June watering so they shouldn't need another for a few months!



Winter pruning, an 'off' year, and the winds we had at flower time is going to make our olive season light, but all the new growth means an amazing crop for next year!



6.24.16

Back in April we thought that we'd update the Veneer supplier on how well the labels turned out for our bottles and that we had won a Silver medal at the LA International competition for Design Packaging as well. We also sent him a couple of bottles since he also loves olive oil.

Needless to say, he was thrilled by responding, 'What a beautiful label...and you make a fantastic olive oil!' He then asked if we wouldn't mind a photo and testimonial be used on their site the next time the testimonials page is updated - in which case he recently emailed stating it was now up! (Check out the link below if you get a chance because they are also a great source for beautiful wood veneers for other projects).

As we have noted before, the best critiques come from others - even beyond family & friends. (A full write-up is on [pfoliveoil.com](http://pfoliveoil.com), June 2016 PFOOC News). Thanks again to Sal Marino & Monster Woodshop (Brooklyn, NY)! [www.monsterwoodshop.com/customertestimonials.aspx](http://www.monsterwoodshop.com/customertestimonials.aspx)



*We also received all of our pretty 2015/16 bling. Not too bad for our first full year of production & competition presence!*



**7.15.16**

We set a new June record for heat.....looks like we may set another one in July, lots of days over 100 degrees. Olives don't seem to be bothered by it. We are really glad now we installed those deep irrigation diffusers! El Nino was a total bust. Rainfall Totals at our location amounted to 15.55".



**7.22.16**

AIRBNB 'LITTLE LOCUST LODGE' FEATURES PFOO!

Less than a 15 minute walk from downtown on the charming Westside, you find Little Locust Lodge, a quiet studio apartment with its own separate entrance. Shaded by a mature Oak tree, you will appreciate the privacy and charm of this sweet space.

Owners/Hosts Matthew & Caryn recently started this as a side business to welcome vacationers visiting Paso Robles or to go area wine tasting - and they are having great success! The stay includes thoughtful amenities such as coffee, snacks & waters. So we thought, why not offer our PFOO sampler bottles to them! No better way for guests to experience the Best of Paso with a nice bottle of wine, cheese, and some good olive oil!

<https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/13155935?s=tGPth8Eg>

**8.20.16**

What an incredible 2 days (Aug. 18-19) at the Advanced Olive Milling Seminar at The Institute for Food and Agriculture at Fresno State! It was a sold-out seminar at the brand new Jordan Agricultural Research Center that brought together olive millers & industry professionals of all levels from across California.

The panel included an expert-led powerhouse of the following people:

- David Garci-Aguirre, Corto Olive Co. Production Mgr.
- Pablo Voitziuk, Pacific Sun Farms & COOC Sensory Panel Member
- Gianni Stefanini, Apollo Olive Oil Head
- Thom Curry & David Scholder, Temecula Olive Co. & Olive 2 Bottle Mill
- Mary Bolton, California Olive Ranch Technical Service Mgr.

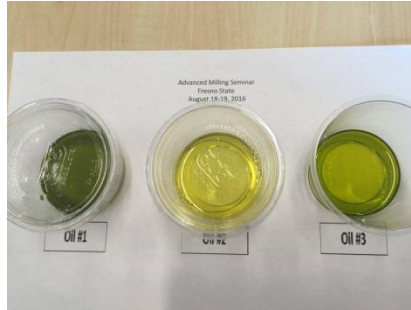
Topics Covered:

- The state of modern milling (chemical understanding, not all phenols are the same)
- Advance Techniques (fruit & milling temperature key, melax time to decanter time, filtering)
- Tastings & sensory evaluation (we had 3 sensory sessions & breakout discussions)
- Fruit care & harvest management (a field trip to the Fresno St. olive farms)



- Milling effects on flavor profiles & defect development (the sensory session that compared effect of heat on oil)
- Live milling, cleaning & maintenance standards (out at mobile mill for demos)
- HACCP planning & food safety (new FDA registration now required)
- Filtration, racking, hygiene & storage
- The future of olive oil production (the industry is in a state of transition)
- 

It was very awesome to be among so many great, knowledgeable people that were willing to help each other so all could be equally successful!



8.22.16

It has been the year of fires. A pretty sunrise today - the effects of the Chimney fire. Will smoke affect oil quality? The answer is, yes. It has been noted to create sensory overtones of smokiness.

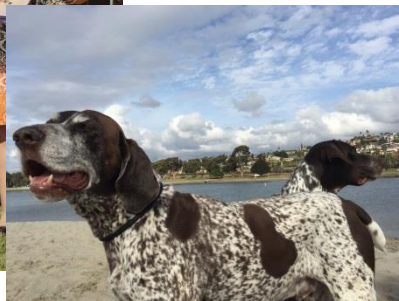


8.25.16

First signs of color change!

10.21.16

On a different note, Pongo (our younger German Shorthaired Pointer) won his first 3 Point Major at Harvest Moon in Pleasanton CA. Thanks to our friends Sandy & Amanda and to Judge Ann Yuhasz!



Uncle Wyatt was shown in the Specialty Sweepstakes the following day as an 11 year old Veteran Class dog receiving 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> overall – the first time in the ring his entire life! Not bad for our senior. Keepin up and being kept young at heart by his nephew! Tuscan would be proud of his Bro😊





**10.27.16**

We are happy to say harvest and processing is completed, although it ended up an extremely light year. The olives were much larger in size, just not a lot of them. All in all, we ended up with a little over 200lbs which gave us roughly 3 gallons of estate oil. So we'll probably source our olives this year to increase our volume.

We've heard many growers are having a light year as well. As we stated earlier, a number of factors lead to this, namely Off year & varietal type, wind, water, and pruning. We just had the whole gamut.

Looking forward, next year already looks promising to the extreme based on all the new growth! Until then, the trees can rest and regenerate.



**11.1.16**

How weird....1+ inch of rain in October. Starting the rain season early!



**12.3.16**

Things are quiet for a while now...the early rains mean we didn't have as long as a run on our post-harvest irrigation.

We are now experiencing chilly mornings, but the trees need a bit of a cold period (below 45 degrees F) to go into dormancy. This will give them the rest & replenishment of energy needed for a proper flower development starting in the spring.

**12.16.16**

Lab tested and now certified Extra Virgin! We will now get to play with percentages of each individual varietal to make a blend. We try to base it off flavor profiles & balance, but it really comes down to creating what WE LIKE. So we will have to just trust our palates and hopefully create something award winning. Plans are only to enter into the LA & NY International this coming year. Once the blend is created, a name and updated label will be decided as well.

**12.31.16**

And the rains keep coming...hooray and on to a new and better year!