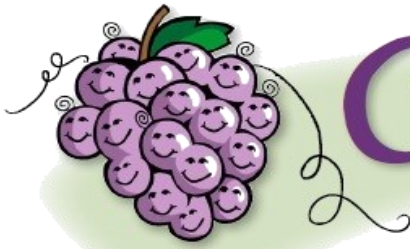


April 2015



Carol's Bunch

CAROL SHELTON WINES

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Spring has arrived, everyone – Mother Nature is running hot and cold lately, with a week of heat followed by a week of gray clouds and even a sprinkling of rain. Not enough rain to make a dent in this endless drought, unfortunately. Water restrictions seem to be on everyone’s minds, but there is good news – if you want to cut back on your water consumption, we have lots of yummy wine for you to sip instead!

Here at the winery, I have been trying to fit blending trials in between trips to various markets like New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Ohio, Indiana and Kansas. The 2013 Reserve wines, set to bottle on May 19-20, are my focus right now, with extensive barrel samples to taste through in order to tweak my final blends. The 2013’s are big wines, full in both fruit and tannin, so my tongue is a bit sore, but I am pleased to say that the vintage shows great potential, if I can just get them all tamed and rounded out to fit my style and high standards. It’s hard work (yeah, right!) but someone has to do it!

You may have seen this picture of me (above) on Facebook. There is a bit of a story behind it: about 10 years ago, Oliver’s Market in Santa Rosa made a big poster of me for their wine section. Oliver’s Market has been a great partner to us over the years and I was excited that they still had a copy in their archives that they were willing to share with us.

I hope you’re excited about the next Club shipment, as there is one brand new wine and some tasty new vintages of some of your favorites! You will be getting a bottle of our new 2014 Wild Thing Chardonnay. This isn’t your average Chardonnay, nothing so boring for all of us! It’s got a splash of Viognier in it to make it more complex in flavor and give the aromatics a little boost with exotic fruit and florals. We are re-introducing you to the 2013 Wild Thing Zinfandel and 2012 Pizazz Zin after a visit and interview with Charlie Piazza (check out page 2!), as well as the 2012 vintage of Karma Zin, Rockpile Cab and Rockpile Petite Sirah . Thank you, once again, for your support and enthusiasm – it is what makes my job so much fun! Don’t forget to Save the Date for the Luau: July 25th – I hope to share some Aloha with you!



Photo courtesy of Hole Photography.



SAVE THE DATE:

LUAU

SATURDAY, JULY 25TH
11AM-4PM

Special Thanks to Oliver’s for sending us Carol’s photo!

Oliver’s
Real Food. Real People.®

Carol Shelton

Piazza RANCH, LODI

Source of our Pizazz Zin

Charlie Piazza always knew he would be a farmer. So, it is no surprise that after half a century in agriculture the grapes he grows are some of the best to come out of Lodi. Charlie started farming with his father while he was in high school, and after a four year break to play football at the University of Utah, he has kept at it so long his confidence and success in his craft are unquestionable.

The Piazza Ranch and Vineyard

Driving through Lodi is a scenic journey past picturesque cattle ranches, dairy farms, fruit and nut farms and lots of vineyards. Charlie Piazza's vineyard stands out, with its gnarly, head-trained vines planted in perfect rows on his perfectly manicured 80 acres of land. In 1973, Charlie bought a 160 acre lot that had previously been used as a dairy farm and made the decision to plant grapevines. It took 3 years to convert all 160 acres to vines, while trying to make ends meet growing tomatoes and bell peppers on the plots that didn't have vines on them. When Charlie had finally finished laboriously planting his vines by hand, the only readily available contracts for Lodi grapegrowers were with big production wineries. Some of the wineries Charlie sold his Zinfandel to over the years informed him his grapes went to a reserve wine program, some years to Zin blends labeled Lodi, and one vintage even went into a White Zinfandel wine. Much to his frustration, there were some years he didn't know into which wines his Zinfandel was blended.



42 year old head-trained Zinfandel, Piazza Vineyard, Lodi, California.



Piazza Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel.

In 1988, Charlie sold off half his acreage in order to maintain his high standard of farming, and kept 80 of the original acres, still working the vineyards himself. As his daughter Katie says, "What he won't tell you about himself is that he does all the work in the vineyard, and has from day one." Looking at Charlie and the beauty of his property, it's easy to believe he tends to his vines by hand. There is not a dead vine or empty stake in Charlie's vineyard, every head-trained vine has a thick wooden stake to help it grow up straight and strong. There is no doubt that he has put every effort into making sure his vines are healthy and able to produce flavor-packed Zinfandel.

Why Lodi? Why not Lodi?

With all the time and effort he puts into his vineyard, Charlie says, "It gets frustrating to see your neighbor who does nothing in their vineyard get the same amount of money because they have lots of sugar in their fruit." For Charlie, this is one of the biggest issues: Lodi's image as the source for cheap and sweet Zinfandel. Lodi has a long history with wine, dating back to the 1850's (see the appellation spotlight, page 3). Today, over 100,000 acres of this robust agricultural region are planted to vines. More and more, growers like Charlie Piazza are trying to upgrade the image of Lodi Zinfandel to reflect the quality of their efforts.

"Lodi can be just as good as Sonoma. The problem in Lodi is that there are still some people who talk about high tonnage. They don't say, 'Hey, I have a beautiful crop.'" Growers who want a high quality of grapes keep the yield of grapes per acre, or tonnage, lower. There is scientific evidence to back the quality of lower yield vineyards, and many of the great wine producing regions in the world follow this practice. But, this means less money for the grower, as they are paid by the ton, so growers run a frequent dilemma between quality of fruit versus profit. Charlie's philosophy and dedication to quality are slowly starting to permeate a number of Lodi growers and shift the wine community's long held prejudice against Lodi Zinfandel. Yet, even with his 'beautiful crop' of Zinfandel, Charlie had never tasted a wine made exclusively from his own vineyard. It appeared that was not going to happen with his fruit locked into contracts with big production wineries... not until he met Carol Shelton in early 2011.

“As long as I enjoy growing grapes, which I do, I’m going to keep at it.” -Charlie Piazza

When the stars align

and the wine gods smile mischievously...

Charlie and his son-in-law, Austin, started attending ZAP events and meeting Zinfandel producers. If anyone could appreciate the quality of Zinfandel coming from his vineyard, it would be a winemaker that has built their reputation on making outstanding Zins. With this in mind, Charlie approached Carol at a wine dinner in Bodega Bay in 2011. “Why don’t you make a Lodi Zin?” Charlie asked her. He handed her his business card and waited to hear from her.

It turns out that was a loaded question. Carol recalls “when Charlie asked me why I don’t make Lodi Zin, all I could think was: Ugh, I don’t like Lodi Zins. Too sweet, too much alcohol and they taste like raisiny, cooked fruit.” But Charlie talked her into taking 2 tons, about one acre’s worth of fruit, and she decided to experiment with it.

Carol insisted they pick the fruit at a lower sugar level, 24.5 Brix, to avoid the loathed “stewed fruit” quality. From there she barreled the Zinfandel in different types and toasts of barrels to discover which best suited the wine. After months of ageing the barrels in the cellar, Carol invited Charlie and his family to come taste the different barrels. “She involved us in what she was doing. We got to see what a good winemaker can do with our fruit,” says Charlie’s son-in-law, Austin. Carol and Charlie were both impressed with the different barrels, and the next harvest, 2012, Carol took 10 tons. This would become the first vintage of Pizazz Zin, the first wine made exclusively from Piazza Vineyard’s Old Vine Zinfandel.

Charlie and the Zen of Carol Shelton Zinfandel

After decades of perseverance and hard work, Charlie finally has a wine that is as meticulously hand-crafted as he keeps his vineyard. Carol Shelton is known for her unpretentious style and dedication to each vineyard site’s unique terroir. The result is a catalog of wines that represent the range of what Zinfandel can do in California. Lodi Old Vine Zinfandel now has a converted fan in Carol. As Charlie says, “Carol is taking these grapes and making them in her style, and that’s why they stand out.” Without a doubt, we can look forward to more spectacular vintages of Pizzaz Zin as Charlie and Carol develop the elegant synchrony between the vine and the wine.



Charlie Piazza & Belle (in back)

**A P P E L L A T I O N
S P O T L I G H T :
L O D I**

Grapes have grown wild in Lodi as far back as human memory. Fur trappers in the area called one stream “Wine Creek” because of the scope of wild vines along what would later be called the Calaveras River in southern Lodi. Vineyards were producing fruit and homemade wines in 1850 and by 1858 El Pinal Winery was established as the first commercial winery. Although grain & watermelons were the bigger business for Lodi farmers, vineyards persisted. During Prohibition, from 1919 to 1933, most of the grapes grown in Lodi were sent to the East Coast in rail cars for home winemakers, enabling farmers to maintain their vineyards while commercial winemaking was illegal. Surprisingly, or perhaps not so surprisingly, the demand for grapes went *up* during Prohibition; likely, because wine was no longer readily available to buy, more people started making wine at home.

Zinfandel has been a part of the vineyard landscape in Lodi since the first commercial winery was established. This diverse varietal flourished both then and now in Lodi. In fact, Lodi has been dubbed the “Zinfandel Capital of the World”, and since they produce over 40% of California’s Zinfandel, they appear to have a valid claim. Today, there are about 80 wineries, and over 100,000 acres of grapes planted. The region is known for its Old Vine Zinfandels, and as a winemaker famous for her Zins, Carol is happy to have found a vineyard that grows high quality fruit and expresses the unique character that is Lodi.



Piazza Family (left to right): Cindy & Charlie Piazza, Katie (formerly Piazza) and Austin Lesley & Ava .

Here are the details on this box of deliciousness! By the way, the total tab for this shipment is **\$140.80**, before any applicable tax & shipping.

2014 *Wild Thing*[®] Chardonnay

This is truly a "Wild Card" of a Chardonnay from its non-traditional bottle shape (it is in a Sauvignon blanc bottle!) and blending with small bits of other varieties to give it some interesting layers of juicy-floral fruit. Only 30% was barrel fermented to get richer texture without the big oaky flavors that can drown out fresh tropical fruit elements. The absence of malo-lactic fermentation gives it a crisp, clean finish. Try it with Thai food, or maybe the recipe for Mango Chicken Tacos on the back cover of this newsletter!

Organically Grown & Wild Yeast Fermented—

Case Production: 2,365 cases

Aging Potential: 3-5 years

Composition: 75% from Mendocino County— 76% Chardonnay, 10% Viognier, 6% Old Vine White Field Blend, 6% Sauvignon Blanc

Price: \$18 **Gold Medal!**

Carol's Tasting Notes

A beautiful nose of pineapple, white peach, pear, papaya, banana—A tropical fruit salad! Our Chardonnay has a palate of exotic fruit, soft creamy vanilla ice cream punctuated by a sliver of bright acidity.



2013 *Wild Thing*[®] Old Vine Zinfandel



A reprise of our 2013 Wild Thing Zin, this was released to you in the February shipment. This is consistently our best-selling favorite in the tasting room and at events, and in retail and restaurants. The wild yeast ferment makes it super creamy and boost the wonderful berry fruit from our Mendocino grower, and the blend with Carignane and Petite Sirah fills in any "holes" in the flavor profile.

Organically Grown & Wild Yeast Fermented—

Case Production: 11,475 cases—It was SO popular last year we had to make twice the amount!

Aging Potential: 5-7 years

Composition: 75% Mendocino County—80% old vine Zinfandel, 14% old vine Carignane, 5% Petite Sirah, 1% Alicante Bouschet

Price: \$19 **3 Gold Medals!**

Carol's Tasting Notes

Aromas of black cherry, plum and raspberry fruit combine with a beautiful hint of vanilla-oak loveliness, smoothly textured in mouth, very creamy and round, the finish is long and has lush jammy fruit — this wine is dangerously good! Remember – you are what you drink

2012 *Pizazz* Zin

Be sure to check out our interview with grower Charlie Piazza on pages 2-3! This is Lodi Zin in a vastly different style, a bit lighter on its feet, with more, shall we say... "PIAZZZ?!" No sweet, high alcohol, over-oaked and baked fruit style here, just classy cherry fruit with a nice dab of chocolatey oak. Of course "Pizazz" is also close to an acronym for the Piazza vineyard name, and so fun to say!

Case Production: 339 cases

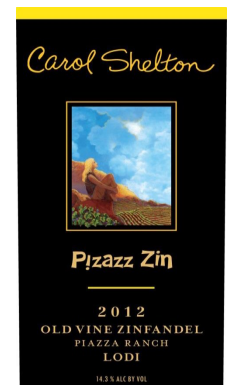
Aging Potential: 5-7 years

Composition: 96% Lodi Zinfandel, 4% Rockpile Petite Sirah

Price: \$19 **Gold Medal & Best of Class!**

Carol's Tasting Notes

Zippy Bing cherry pie in a graham cracker crust, creamy Hershey's milk chocolate and a bit of toasted marshmallow—not sweet but soft and round balanced by juicy acidity, with creamy caramelized oak and a long cherry finish. S'mores with cherry jam?



2012 KarmaZin

Good Karma comes into our lives in many forms, whether from good luck or good choices, or maybe some of both. When great grapes fall into our laps serendipitously, it is our joy to make a delicious wine from them and share the Good Karma with you! This wine still comes from the quasi-field blend at Bastoni Vineyard in the newly-created Fountaingrove District AVA in the hills NE of Santa Rosa. 2012 was a wonderful vintage with big flavors and a powerful mouthfeel. I'd try this one with a juicy grilled steak or ribs off the 'Q now that it's getting warm enough to cook outdoors!

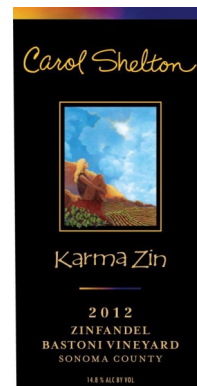
Case Production: 341 cases

Ageing Potential: 15+ years

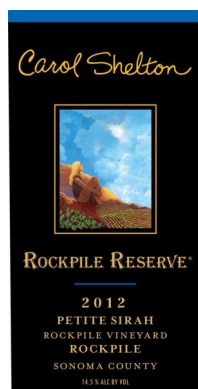
Composition: 80% Zinfandel blended with 14% Alicante Bouschet, 6% Petite Sirah & 100% Bastoni Vineyard, Fountain Grove District AVA

Price: \$30 **New Release!**

Carol's Tasting Notes
Very complexly layered spice and black fruits, lively! Dark chocolate, creamy oak, a bit of vanilla cola, brown spices-nutmeg/cinnamon. Rich in mouth, good structure for aging, a bit chewy in its youth.



2012 ROCKPILE RESERVE Petite Sirah



Growing in a bit of a shady swale in Rod & Cathy Parks' Rockpile Vineyard, these Petite Sirah vines sometimes struggle to get fully ripe...but that was not a problem in 2012! Full-bodied and peppery, with lush blueberry fruit flavors, it is a natural complement to Chef Roger's Green Peppercorn sauce on a pan-seared Beef Filet—see the recipe on Page 7!

Sustainably Grown—

Case Production: 229 cases

Ageing Potential: 15+ years

Composition: 100% Petite Sirah, 100% from Rockpile Vineyard

Price: \$40 **Gold Medal & Best of Show!**

Carol's Tasting Notes
Passionate purple in color, lively black peppery spice on perfumy blue-blackberry fruit along with Cedar oak spice, dusty cocoa, warm vanilla crème at finish, structured tannins for aging.

2012 ROCKPILE RESERVE Cabernet Sauvignon

The first vineyard planted in the Rockpile AVA in 1988, the Parks' Rockpile Vineyard is 100% solar-powered and sustainably farmed. The Cabernet vines are grown on a sunny ridge at 2000 -ft elevation, so they have no trouble developing deep berry flavors and powerful tannic structure to age gracefully for many years to come. Chef Roger's recipe (page 7) for Seared Filets with Cabernet-Tarragon-Butter sauce would be an amazing partner for a glass of this baby!

Sustainably Grown—

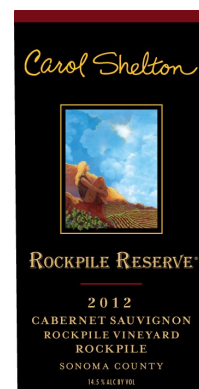
Case Production: 193 cases

Ageing Potential: 15+ years

Composition: 96% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petite Sirah & 100% from Rockpile Vineyard

Price: \$50 **New Release!**

Carol's Tasting Notes
Dark red in color. Black cherry-cola and cassis fruit, long and deep on nose and palate. Cedary oak spice and warm pipe tobacco aromas, dark chocolate, vanilla at finish, smoothly structured tannins.



We are running out of room!



Thanks to your enthusiastic support, we have grown a lot in the last couple of years. Now we are having a hard time fitting everything into our current building. This means we don't have room to store your wine.

For those of you who enjoy picking up your club shipment, we've implemented a new policy of a maximum 6 months of storage time.

We'll give you a call to remind you that your wine is here. If, after a year, you keep forgetting your wines, we will ship them to you at your expense.

We are really sorry if this inconveniences you, but we are just out of space!

Call us with any questions or concerns:
(707) 575-3441

La Gare: An Icon of French Cuisine in Santa Rosa

La Gare French Restaurant is located in the heart of Santa Rosa's historic Railroad Square. The restaurant opened in July 1979 and has been family owned and operated ever since. The decor and ambiance reflect an elegant old world charm. Chef Roger and his sister Jacqueline continue a tradition begun by their parents, Swiss-born Marco and Gladys Praplan.

Since its founding, brick by brick, and outlasting the trends in food fashions and the most fickle of palates, La Gare has maintained the intimacy of a Swiss chalet and the pleasures of classic country French cooking.

Chef Roger Praplan served an apprenticeship at the respected Hotel Beau Rivage in Geneva, and was awarded credentials in Annency, France. He also worked at the Bonbonerie Pastry Shop in Crans Montata, Switzerland. In addition, Roger created memorable meals at Hotel Meridian in New York and at the Saint Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco.

His education has been ongoing, with numerous classes in chocolate technique at Cocoa Barry and Valrhona Chocolate, and pastry courses at the French Pastry School in Chicago. Roger teaches courses in French cuisine, soups, stocks and classical sauces at Santa Rosa Junior College, and is a member of the Gastronomy Club of San Francisco.

Many of the ingredients in La Gare cuisine come from small farms and producers. "I like supporting local, family-run businesses," Chef Roger says. Roger is also committed to organic and sustainable practices in his kitchen.

We wanted to include a partner restaurant in the newsletter to see if their talented Chef could come up with a great pairing and recipe for Carol's Bunch. Well, La Gare has had Wild Thing Zinfandel on its wine list for years and also has a great Chef—Roger Praplan. As an avid hunter up in Rockpile, Chef Roger was excited to use both Rockpile Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Sirah to pair with two of his classic French sauces over a beef filet. We loved

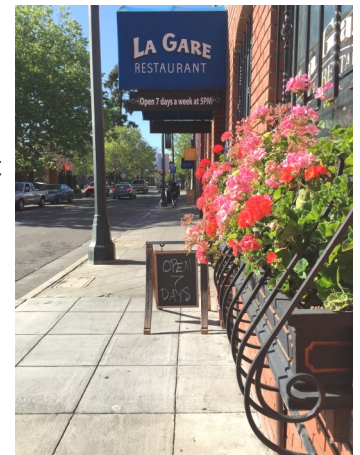
both pairings so much we included both sauces!

Both of Chef Roger's Recipes on the next page require seared Beef Filets, but the SAUCE for both is distinctly different and the key component to pairing the wines. Steps 1 through 4 will tell you how to properly cook your steaks before the recipe splits and you can choose one of the two sauces. Both are exceptional and pair perfectly with the wines Chef selected.



**208 Wilson Street
Santa Rosa, CA
95401**

**For Reservations:
(707) 528-4355**



Chef Roger Praplan

How to Cook Perfect Steaks for Two People

You will need two 6 oz. steaks, 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil, and Salt & Pepper.

1. Preheat oven to 475°F.
2. Salt & pepper the beef filets on both sides.
3. Heat the 1 Tbsp of oil in a pan with the burner set to medium hot until it is hot enough to sear the beef. The pan will smoke a bit. Place the beef filets in the pan and sear them, about 1 minute on each side. Then roast them in your pre-heated oven for 5-8 minutes for medium. Try 2-3 minutes less for rare steaks.
4. Remove the filets from the oven and move them from the pan onto a serving platter. Save the pan for the sauce!

Now you have to choose which sauce and which Rockpile wine you want with your steak!



Red Wine & Tarragon Sauce paired with *2012 Rockpile Cabernet Sauvignon*

Ingredients:

¼ tsp minced shallots
½ cup of demi-glace
¼ tsp chopped parsley for garnish
½ tsp. fresh tarragon
¼ cup dry red wine—a good Cabernet would be ideal!
1 tsp. butter or tarragon butter

5. Drain the oil from your steak pan but don't clean it. Set the pan on the stove on medium. Then add the tarragon, shallots & red wine. Let it reduce a little more than half-way, and add the demi-glace.
6. Pour the sauce & a dab of butter over the filets and sprinkle the chopped parsley on top for garnish.
7. Serve with a glass of 2012 Rockpile Cabernet Sauvignon & enjoy. This pairing of fresh herbs and rich buttery sauce is superb with our classic Rockpile Cab!

Green Peppercorn Cream Sauce paired with *2012 Rockpile Petite Sirah*

Ingredients:

½ tsp chopped garlic
½ tsp chopped shallots
1 Tbsp hot Dijon mustard
4 Tbsp Red Wine Vinegar
4 Tbsp Brandy or Cognac
1 Tbsp green peppercorns* (important!)
1 ½ cups heavy cream

5. Drain the oil from your steak pan but don't clean it. Turn your burner down to medium heat. Add the shallots, garlic, mustard and green peppercorns to the pan. Instantly add the red wine vinegar and stir, but be careful not to burn. Scrape or de-glaze the pan with the vinegar and let it reduce halfway.
6. Take the pan off the burner, add the brandy & flambée (use a match if necessary). Let this also reduce halfway.
7. Add the cream and let it reduce a bit until it is smooth and thick. You can strain out the peppercorns if you wish.
8. Pour the sauce over your steaks and serve with a glass of 2012 Rockpile Petite Sirah. The peppery Petite is a great spice match, and the cream helps tame the wine's tannins a bit!

* Green peppercorns are black peppercorns that are marinated & soft. They have great flavor but aren't really hard like black peppercorns. If you can't find green peppercorns, use black ones sparingly & definitely strain them out before serving!

Your Recipe Goes Here.

Send us your recipes! We've seen your posts and tags on Facebook and Instagram and we just KNOW you have some killer recipes to pair with Carol's wines. If you tag us, **#CarolSheltonWines** or **@CarolSheltonWines**, we'll not only repost them on our page, we'll download the best two and print them in the next newsletter. Tell us which wine you chose and why it's so good, so we can spread the word! You can also e-mail us your recipe and wine pairing at **wines@carolshelton.com** if you aren't on Facebook or Instagram.



Mango Chicken Tacos

From **Devon W** in Napa, California:

I like to pair the Wild Thing Chardonnay with some Mango Chicken Tacos! The tropical mango and chicken go perfectly with the Chardonnay. The recipe only takes about a half hour, so it's quick and easy.

INGREDIENTS

12 ounces skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
3 Tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil (I prefer sunflower)
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¾ cup chopped peeled ripe mango
½ cup chopped tomato
3 Tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
2 Tablespoons of chopped red onion
8 (6-inch) corn tortillas
3 Tablespoons Sour Cream



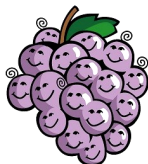
1. Place the chicken in a skillet, and cover with water; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Boil for about 1 minute. Remove pan from heat; cover and let stand 15 minutes or until chicken is done. Remove chicken from pan; cool slightly to touch. Tear chicken into strips. Combine 2 tablespoons of lime juice, oil, and ¼ teaspoon salt in a bowl. Add to chicken; toss to coat.

2. Combine mango, tomato, cilantro, and onion in a small bowl. Stir in remaining 1 tablespoon lime juice and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt.

3. Heat tortillas over medium-high heat directly on the eye of a burner or in a skillet for about 15 seconds on each side or until lightly charred. Top tortillas evenly with chicken mixture and mango mixture. Top each taco with about 1 teaspoon of sour cream and they are ready to enjoy with a sip of Chardonnay!



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