

ROCKIN RED BLOG

A Song in Every Glass

MICHELLE WILLIAMS

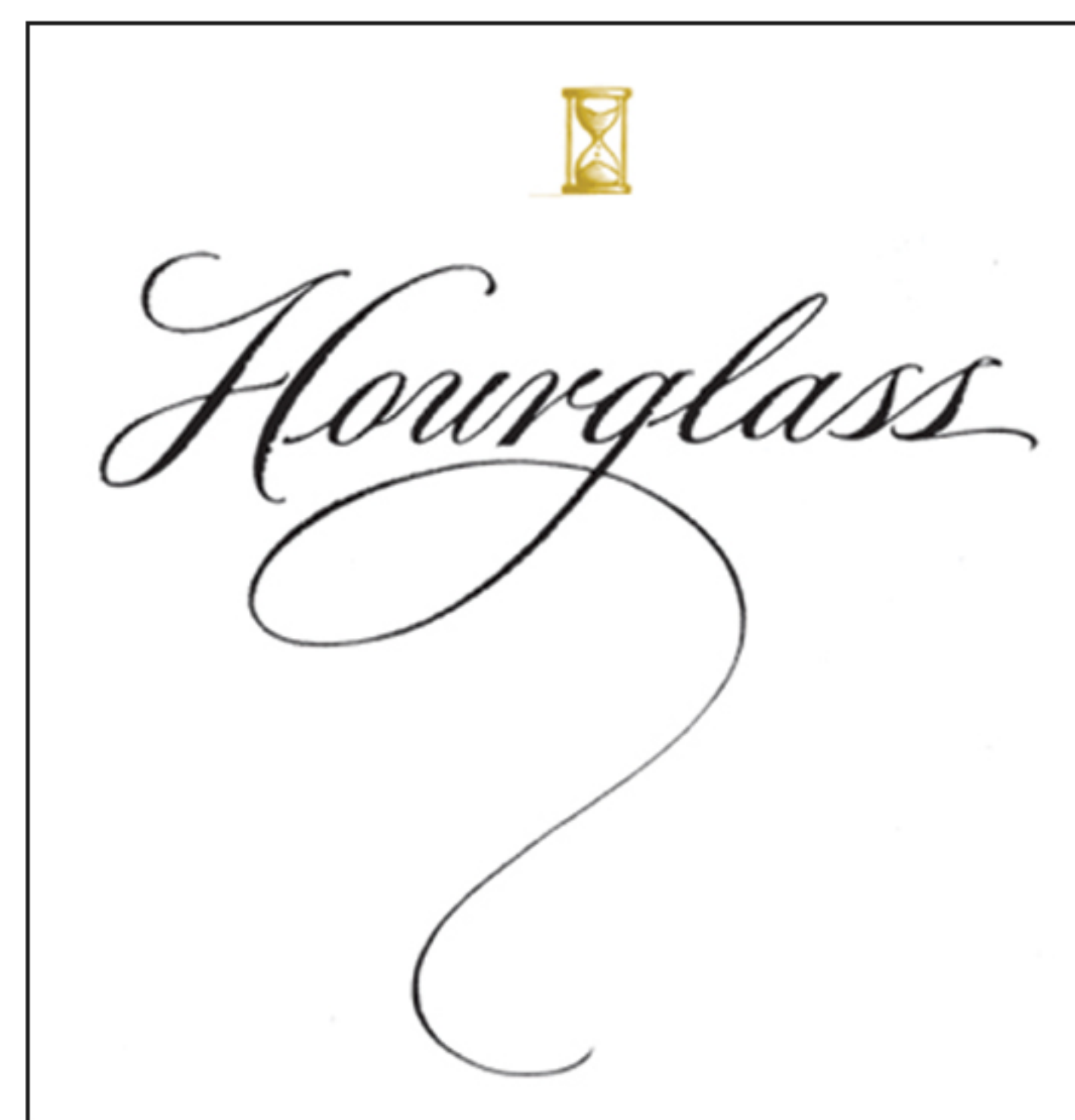
June 1, 2016

The Counterbalance of Hourglass Winery

What does the image of an hourglass conjure in your mind? The passing of time? Perhaps the time that remains OR the time that is gone? Rush, hurry or slow down? For Hourglass Winery it represents the perfect location because their winery and vineyards are located in the middle of the Napa Valley hourglass. After participating in two Hourglass Winery tastings (winter 2015 and last week), I am turning the hourglass on its side with the sand evenly distributed and time stopped because to me Hourglass Winery represents balance.

Hourglass Winery has a wonderful history. And it is a history worth knowing. But since I shared it in detail in my article from December 2015, *"Hourglass Wines: An Endless Moment of Destiny,"* I am going to refer you back to that article for the background on the winery. However, I did not say much about Hourglass's winemaker Tony Biagi in my last article. Now after having experienced two of his vintages I am learning his beastly skills. Tony came to Hourglass for harvest 2012. He had an impressive pedigree from Plumpjack, and one of my favorites, Cade. He is responsible for the production of Hourglass's first ever white wine in 2013, Sauvignon Blanc. Tony and I share one thing in common, a love of acid (in wine, of course!). In fact, Tony and Jeff (proprietor and vintner) share the same philosophy on winemaking, paying homage to the "innovative tastemakers of the 90's," Helen Turley, John Kongsgaard, and Heidi Barrett.

Hourglass sees contradiction as their defining aesthetic. It was this that brought Jeff and Tony together. They agree that dramatic fruit alone can create a powerful wine, but brilliance can only occur with a counterbalancing sense of energy harnessed in the vineyard. Even the name, Hourglass, is intrinsically linked to that duality, temporal yet eternal as it relates to the passage of time. And, I would add, the balance and sophistication in Hourglass wines.



CHARLES COMMUNICATIONS
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The following quote depicts what I tasted in the four wines we enjoyed during the virtual tasting event hosted by Charles Communications:

Throughout the decades, the Smith family has learned a lot from studying the winemaking pendulum of Napa as it continues to swing back and forth across the stylistic scale. Recent vintages continue to prove that Hourglass has found its ideal place on that spectrum, and with a renewed focus on terroir-driven energy, tension and precision, the winery continues to lead the way in Napa's evolution.



Hourglass 2015 Estate Sauvignon Blanc:

This 100% Sauvignon Blanc poured a soft gold into the glass; the bouquet was led by crushed stone with pleasing notes of orchard fruit, tropical fruit, a touch of lime zest and grassy notes; on the palate the minerality was pronounced with a sweet and sour contradiction across the palate, spice notes envelop the tongue then quickly dissipate into penetrating acidity, it was very crisp, balanced and elegant with layers of flavors that continued to evolve; fermented in 50% stainless steel tanks, 25% seasoned oak barrels, and 25% new French oak barrels then blended to create this complex wine; SRP \$40



Hourglass 2014 Blueline Estate Merlot:

This wine was crafted of 81% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Malbec, and 5% Petit Verdot; it poured a brooding, inky scarlet into the glass; aromas of blackberry, blueberry, and plum were met with deep earthy notes and umami characteristics of Asian spice and black tea; a crushed velvet mouth-feel was textural, layered and opulent, round acidity with dusty tannins for a beautifully long finish; rich and perfectly balanced of earth and fruit that goes on for days; aged 18 months in 66% new French oak; this wine was drinking great but will hit its stride in 3-5 years from vintage and age for many years after; SRP \$75

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Hourglass 2014 Blueline Estate Malbec:

This wine was crafted of 80% Malbec and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon; another wine that delivers a great balance of fruit and umami on the nose and palate; blackberries, red cherries, red and black raspberries intermingle with Asian spice, damp tobacco leaves, and black tea, all on a foundation of minerality; crazy good Malbec that was viscous and vibrant, almost primal; rich and round on the palate with great structure, balanced acidity with dusty, pleasing tannins that coat the mouth and leave a long, seductive finish; this is a staff favorite at Hourglass, only 100 cases produced, mostly as a special for wine club members; aged 18 months in 40% new French oak; SRP \$75



Hourglass 2014 HGIII:

This wine was crafted of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Petite Sirah; it poured a rich, dark ruby into the glass; aromas of blackberries, cherries, cranberries, spice notes, coffee, chocolate and vanilla dazzle the nose; this was an elegant wine, great structure that was sleek and seductive with restraint; balanced acidity and tannins that allow this wine to be consumed upon purchase; aged 20 months in new and seasoned French oak; SRP \$50



These wines were truly outstanding. I was thankful to taste some of the 2013 vintages and now the 2014 vintages to begin to understand what I am coming to believe is a truly extraordinary team in Jeff and Tony. Not to mention they are hysterical in the tastings! I highly recommend you take the time to visit Hourglass Winery's web site to learn more about the winery, view their entire portfolio of wines, and order these wines for yourself!

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My Song Selection: Jeff and Tony said the only fight they have ever had was Dokken vs Slayer. Tony likes Dokken and Jeff likes Slayer. When music comes into a wine conversation I always make note of it for my possible song pairing. When I was much younger I really liked Dokken; but I am not a metal head so Slayer has always been a bit much for me. However, these four Hourglass wines truly rock so I tried and tried to choose a song from one of these two bands. Sorry guys I could not do it. Slayer is too blood and death for these wines, and well Dokken...what was I thinking: cheesy! Instead I have chosen a song by one of my favorite bands. It's layered and textured with depth and balance and much more sophisticated than Slayer and Dokken. With a voice as great as Chris Cornell and a guitarist as great as Tom Morello what more could one ask for?!



Get your own bottles of Hourglass wines and let me know what song you pair with them. Cheers!