

CHEHALEM

FALL 2003



ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF IVAN DENISOVICH

A Fiction, With Apologies to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

By Harry Peterson-Nedry

THE TRACTOR BANGED REVELLE hauling bins up the washboard road past the Home Block to reach upper vineyards at five o'clock as always. Time to get up. The first of the vineyard crew is there before light, since bins must be laid out before picking can begin. This Harvest is not new anymore. Picking began three weeks ago, long enough for working crush in a foreign land to lose its thrill, enough to make the damp and chill of early morning seep unwelcome into a body already afflicted by a bone-weariness.

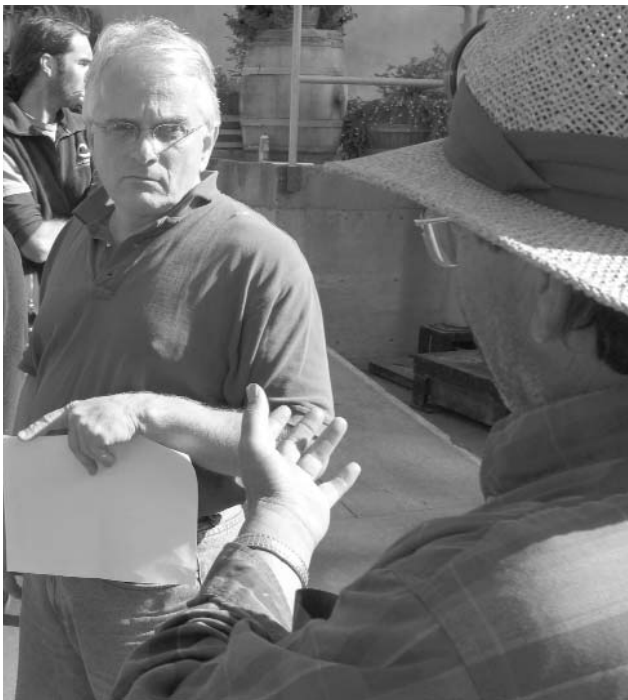
Ivan never overslept. But today he felt he could not put feet to the cold fir floor, much less force legs into jeans made rigid by days of sweet, sticky juice and frigid from their resting place against the concrete walls of the Chehalem House which now never have a chance to warm in the shortening days of late October. He had not that long ago tossed them there, on top of his Bluntstones soaked by washing this, then washing that and in the process making each shoe a weight. He had not been back from midnight punch-downs long enough to permit clothes to dry. His feet were still raw and cold, prickling as if from nettles and throbbing to the sounds of the waking day.

The year had been hot and dry to a point. Then much cooler days came, and with them a few days of rain. Oddly, the permanent winemaking staff welcomed the rain. Said it helped move nitrogen compounds, stop desiccation, correct pH and fruit chemistries. But enough is enough, and the extra days of rain have brought frowns. Splitting of berries had allowed botrytis a foothold that now required fruit be sorted closely. The sorting tables were slowed to a crawl while Ivan and three others, including Beryl Newsome in his cowboy hat and bandana, rolled clusters over to see all sides as they inched up to the destemmer. They now were throwing out much more than earlier in the week. And certain lots of fruit were worse than others. Clusters were rejected if fuzzy botrytis growth showed at (CONTINUES NEXT PAGE)

Grizzled and Beaten, the 2003 Gulag Harvest Gang 104, (Left to Right) Michael (Since 1999), Hilary, Marieta, Elizabeth, Greg (Since 2002), Steve, Mike (Since 2001), and Malcolm.

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT) all or if flaccid silver or tan berries indicated a younger stage of the fungus. Or tossed if grapes were underripe, evidenced by purple rather than dusty black saturated color, a recent state borne of tough decisions forcing earlier picking before things get worse.

The winery that had begun organized and governed by the confidence of smiling faces had slipped into a grimness. Set jaws now ask for longer hours and scrounged vessels in which fruit could be fermented, picked into bins raced from winery to field to be filled twice and possibly more in a day. Lunches had lost the casual, warm weather dinner feel outside at the house, with impromptu wine tastings from wine regions proudly presented by interns like Ivan. Lunches have become pizza on an idling forklift. Banter and song at the sorting table moved to sighs and the shifting of weight from fatigue, a grinding admission almost palpable that there is no end in sight. A sag, a slump. Relief only comes when you add sulfur to the tank or change the bone bin, an anthropomorphic name given to containers that catch stems as they fly from the precision German machine sitting atop the tank, stainless and imperious. Or, relief as an occasional beer break is called to celebrate a fiery sunset, not as the end of the workday, but as admission that half of the day still remained. A truck, illegal to drive on state roads, would arrive late limping under a groaning load of fruit from Ridgecrest, the far vineyard on Ribbon Ridge. So far that Ivan had not been there, even to sample fruit.



The Hardened, Callused Gang Boss, *a pustule of a man, unwilling even to give a handout.*

Ivan Denisovich would soon capitulate and begin the day. But on something of his own terms, he would put on clean clothes and would take the half-hour required to dry his shoes with a hair dryer. He would walk the short drive from the house to the winery, a pink pasteling the rim of hills in the eastern sky, picking crew cars zip-ping past him to join the tractor brigade. Ivan's warm and swollen feeling, reminiscent of all-niters, would not retreat until coffee coursed his veins, heavily roasted, black and better smelling than tasting. Before he did anything he had to compose himself, understand how today might be different from yesterday. Michael would review the long list of picking yet to be done, when it would reach them, how the emailed early morning weather forecast of strong fronts streaming from the Alaskan Gulf, added to the week's rain, might cause him to flail the faithful horse for more speed, and with little mercy. With even less hope for anything different, yet with caffeine and a routine as guide, Ivan would push himself from the chair, to open the fermentation hall doors and turn on fans to expel the night's carbon dioxide.

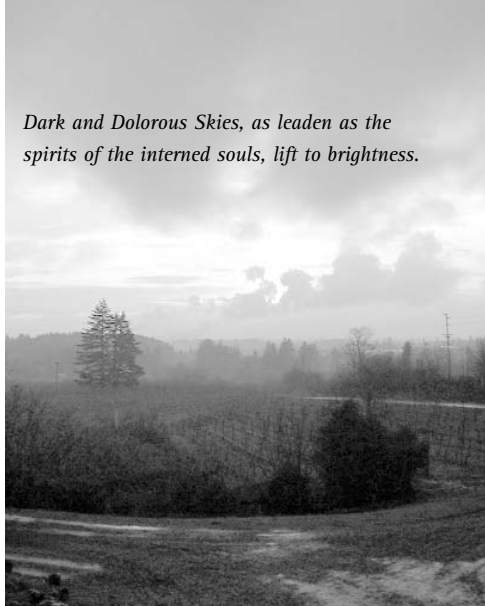
The laboratory trailer contained the warroom, as well as burettes, reagents and spectrometers. To Ivan it seemed apropos to the campaign they waged on many fronts. The beleaguered harvest crew collected there, standing around looking at walls papered with fermentation chemistries and temperatures and logistical strategies to keep battles from stalling. Foggy brains try to remember times before the war's acceleration, try to imagine a time when fewer bodies might

be needed, not more. Twenty-four fermentations of varied sizes were represented by cryptic medical charts plotting their health and by specimen beakers arranged neatly on the lab bench, in purple and garnet hues only subtly differing, a gradient of transformation from simple fruit to noble elixir. Ivan could not help but think the nobility was pulled from him in processing. But still he stayed and helped move the war forward, pointing a stained index finger at a lot that had developed telltale faint aromas of ethyl acetate and needed vigorous punchdowns and heat to kickoff fermentation.

And by mid-morning Ivan Denisovich had recovered an energy, if not the naïve passion of newcomers. He would not startle observers, but he would survive. He felt pleased with life as he punched down the eight tonners

with long, thunking thrusts of the mechanical tool. The aromas were of hot blackberry preserves, chocolate and raspberry, cola complete with carbonation. Ivan noted a giddiness. Later this week the last of the vineyard blocks would be picked and, given time, the size of the battlefield would begin to shrink. One-by-one there would be fewer tanks to take care of, as tanks are pressed-off and, at last, no more added. And much like the just-picked vineyard block changes overnight from green to yellow, Ivan Denisovich's year will end. Just one vintage of his 40 lifetime harvests, from bell to bell. The extra harvests he worked abroad like this his attempt to take life back, on something of his own terms. 🍷

Dark and Dolorous Skies, as leaden as the spirits of the interned souls, lift to brightness.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

FREE SHIPPING!

Cool weather brings another cool deal! We will once again pick up the tab for case orders shipped FedEx ground anywhere in the US, for all orders placed by October 31, 2003. East coast customers, please let us know if you receive this after the deadline and we'll honor the offer accordingly.



FedEx and UPS duke it out for Chehalem's business, especially during our Free Shipping promotion.

INOX JOINS CHEHALEM PRODUCT LINE

In anticipation of the hate mail we'd receive if we stopped making of our INOX Chardonnay, the Chehalem team has decided to integrate it into our product line. We love it, the media loves it, and judging by the rapidity at which it went out the winery's front door, our customers love it too. Look for the 2003 release next summer.

HARVEST 2003—ONLINE

As in year's past, Harry will be submitting ongoing reports of Oregon's vintage 2003 to be posted online at www.chehalemwines.com. Check it out and send us an email when you do.

SALUD WINE AUCTION

Now considered one of the country's premiere wine auctions, *Salud, Oregon's Pinot Noir Auction* benefits seasonal vineyard worker's healthcare. Highlights of the event are a Saturday preview tasting at Domaine Drouhin winery November 8th, followed by dinner and auction Sunday November 9th at the Governor Hotel in Portland. \$275 per person includes both days' events. Call 503-681-1850 for additional details.

THANKSGIVING OPEN HOUSE

November 28-30, 2003. New releases include 2002 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Blanc, 2002 Pinot Gris Reserve, 2001 Ian's Reserve Chardonnay, and 2001 Rion Reserve Pinot Noir. 15% case discount Thanksgiving weekend only for new releases. Also this year we welcome our good friend and Chehalem fan, Stephen Hannemann, for his own special release: his new novel, *Death of a Warrior*. Stephen will be signing and selling his novel on Friday and Saturday. Chehalem's weekend hours are Friday and Saturday 10 a.m.-5p.m. and Sunday 10 am -3p.m.

BOSTON WINE EXPO

January 31-February 1, 2004. World Trade Center Boston and the Seaport Hotel. Grand tastings, seminars, chef demonstrations. Call for tickets, 1-877-946-3976 or visit www.wine-expos.com.

CLASSIC WINES AUCTION

March 4-6, 2004, Portland, Oregon. Dinner and auction benefits Metropolitan Family Services. Chehalem wine dinner prior to the event. Call 503-232-0007, ext. 106 for details. 🍷



NEW RELEASES

By Dan Beekley, National Marketing Manager

DEFINING WHAT IS BEST

Three of our four Reserve wines are released this month. It prompts the question, *What do you mean by Reserve?*

Harry says...

Chehalem generally defines Reserve as "best of class." With Rion and Ian's Reserves it connotes selected barrels, the former exclusively from our oldest pinot noir vineyard, Ridgecrest, and the latter from Dijon clones from our newest vineyard, Stoller. Pinot Gris Reserve implies "best" by using a special treatment that gives the most complex wine through neutral barrel fermentation, lees stirring, partial ML and multiple yeasts. Regulations are being considered in the US to define Reserve and other names, so the consumer gets a consistent message; stay tuned.

2002 STOLLER VINEYARDS PINOT BLANC

This is the final release of the crisp, refreshing 2002 stainless steel fermented whites which preserve freshness and magnify ripe, pure flavors. We learn more and more each year about pinot blanc and this offering is easily our best effort so far. Drink this wine with impunity during the holiday meal. Only 320 cases produced.

2001 IAN'S RESERVE CHARDONNAY

In recent years our chardonnays have gone from strength to strength. Dijon clones give us the tropical lushness we look for yet guard the precious acidity that GREAT chardonnay requires. If you like rich chardonnay fruit with a backbone of freshness and brightness then you must try this wine. 1544 six-bottle cases produced.

2002 PINOT GRIS RESERVE

Unlike our tank-fermented pinot gris, this wine has been raised in neutral oak barrels and is allowed to finish its malolactic fermentation. The resulting wine is more "texturally enhanced." Assiduous stirring of the lees gives the wine it's emollient, almost honeyed, mouthfeel. This bottle screams for a fresh piece of salmon, unaccompanied, and barely cooked. Try THAT on your Thanksgiving table. 794 cases produced.

2001 RION RESERVE PINOT NOIR

As it should be, this is our premier wine of the 2001 vintage. Our reserve pinot noir always is the true reflection of site and vintage. In '01 our Ridgecrest Vineyard yielded grapes of unbelievable quality. This reserve pinot is chosen from selected barrels from Ridgecrest that reflect the ultimate of grace, elegance, pedigree, and balance. It is a complete pinot noir that features dark berry fruit, hints of Christmas spices, and a whiff of chocolate. Don't miss out on this beautiful wine. 1586 six-bottle cases produced. 🍷

Each vintage of the Ian's Reserve includes a poem by Ian on the back label. Here is the 2001 choice.

I See Definite Changes, In Weather

Trumpet jazz and sweeping of the snare,
Festive sultry simmering of cinnamon.
Smell the anxious wood burner,
Long-sleeved in mid-afternoon.
He is dancing with callused
Yard tools, to the clattering of
Vacant limbs, and the sweet picking
Of swallows on bright orange squash.

Low hanging sun and buried bulbs
Seafoam rose is concentrating on roots
As I meditate on the fresh cold sitting
Morning air, mingling mulch pile,
And the bruised yellow pears.
Thinking of spring's new sprouts
While toiling and disconnecting
hoses, storing buckets and raking
rituals.

My neighbor and I both love wool
blankets and basement dry wood.
But only I love chamomile tea.

Ian Peterson-Nedry 10/15/94



WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Novus Vinum, September 2003, Randal Caparoso,
"Hip and Apropos—Riesling Rediscovered."

...In his most recent newsletter, Harry Peterson-Nedry of Oregon's Chehalem Vineyards goes absolutely primat in his description of the grape: "Riesling is a dancer, a Mia Hamm, a lithely elegant Audrey Hepburn or firmly aristocratic Katherine Hepburn," says Peterson-Nedry. "Like the world of grace, manners, reserve and contemplation, Riesling has been neglected, deferred to a competition of wines made in macho proportions, wines on steroids like oak and alcohol and extract." Give 'em hell, Harry. If anything, the finest Rieslings are the direct opposite of "steroid" pumped Chardonnays and Cabernets. The best are light, delicate, wickedly sleek, often cuttingly dry and just as often meltingly sweet, yet almost always brightly acidic, even nervy...Riesling easily matches many of the globally styled foods we enjoy today that were once perceived as "impossible" wine matches: hot curries, chile laced sauces, sweet/sour barbecues, salty soy sauce dips, herby vinaigrettes, and umami intense vegetables... In other words, Riesling is as much a wine for all times and all tastes as for all kinds of foods.

The Oregonian, Portland, OR, September 7, 2003, Matt Kramer,
"Amid pricey Oregon wines, some delectable gems await."

2002 Reserve Dry Riesling...If you haven't had a good Oregon riesling, believe me, you're really missing something. This new 2002 vintage shows just how profound a low-yielding...dry Oregon riesling can be. As in Alsace, the model for this thickly textured, crisp intense wine will do nothing but improve for upward of a decade longer. This wine has an apricot note found in so many fine rieslings. Allied to a stony crispness...well worth its \$19.95 price.

Robb Report, August 2003, Anthony Dias Blue,
"A Thirsty Passion-What (and Why) Collectors Collect."

Collectible Vintages of the Past 25 Years: Oregon, Top Recent Vintage: 1999. Our Recommendation: Chehalem 1999 Pinot Noir, Rion Reserve, Willamette Valley.

Food & Wine, August 2003, Lettie Teague,
"Wine Matters-Pinot Noir: The World's Sexiest Grape."

I'm not one for making predictions... but when I was recently asked what grape I thought might take over the world, I answered: "Pinot Noir." Though even its fans describe it in such unflattering terms as temperamental, time-consuming and expensive—the proverbial date from hell—this famed red grape of France's Burgundy region is being planted by more and more wine producers all over the world...

The Baltimore Sun, September 3, 2003, Michael Dresser,
"A Tasty Alternative to Chardonnay."

2002 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris...This is a superlative effort, with exceptional complexity and lively charm. Stylistically it leans more towards Alsace than Italy—with bold flavors of nuts, melon, honey and minerals. It begs to be served with Pacific salmon.

The Oregonian, Portland, OR, September 7, 2003, Matt Kramer,
"Austere whites more up to the task than reds when pairing wine and cheese."

2002 INOX Chardonnay...This brand new release from Chehalem Winery...shows just how good these new Dijon clones can be. This is a lovely Oregon chardonnay made, as the name suggests, without any use of oak whatever or...malolactic fermentation or lees stirring. This is chardonnay in all its purity. And it performs beautifully. If you've doubted the quality of Oregon chardonnay, this is a wine capable of changing your mind. It's well worth the \$14.95 price.

San Francisco Chronicle, July 3, 2003, Patrick Comiskey,
"The Wines of Summer. To find the most thirst-quenching whites, follow the Tartness Trail."

...Thankfully there is a decisive backlash [to overoaked chardonnay] and you'll find more and more "unoaked" chardonnays...most notably in Oregon's Willamette Valley—for example the 2002 [INOX] from Chehalem...

The Seattle Times, August 13, 2003, Paul Gregutt,
"Cutting down confusion over "unwooded" chardonnay."

...when chardonnay is fermented in stainless steel...the grape's natural tartness and green apple fruit flavors are emphasized. Acids remain crisp...and details relating to soils and clone may sometimes be picked up in the scents and accents that would normally be masked by oak...Here are some wines to get you started...2002 INOX Chardonnay... 🍷



