



Newsletter May 15, 2022

Zarpara at the Willcox Wine Festival!

Willcox Wine Country Spring Festival

May 21st & 22nd

Railroad Park, Willcox

We are returning to the Willcox Wine Country Spring Festival after a long hiatus due to, you know, Covid. Come out and look for us. We'll be somewhere there!

The festival features 16 of Arizona's best wineries along with over 30 non-winery vendors including fine arts, artisan foods, vintage vendors, and non-stop entertainment along with 2 food trucks.

We'll be pouring our 2021 vintage Viognier for the first time, and also Rhona's Rosado from that same vintage, our first rosé made from Tempranillo grapes. Maybe we'll even bring along our latest *red-wine* Tempranillo, too (that's from the 2019 harvest). Mmm-mm, now you have to go!

Pre-purchase tickets here.

Take advantage and stay the weekend. See our **website Visit page** for accommodations.

And if you prefer the serenity of the vineyard, come out to the tasting room where we will be pouring our **full line-up of wines**. The tasting room will be open during the festival weekend - Friday to Sunday 11am to 5pm.



Sierra Vista Farmers Market



Look for us at the **Sierra Vista Farmers Market** one last time on

Thursday, May 19, 10am-2pm

before we take our summer break to tend to the vineyard. Come to Veterans Memorial Park on Fry Blvd to pick up fresh fixings for a special meal and the Zarpara wine to pair

with it. And it's all local!

Kittens in the Dog House



Sunny left, Maus right

Recently, starting out on our early morning walk around the vineyard, we were only a few steps out the door when **Tilly** was anxiously sniffing around the back of the winery where her dog house is and a parked car and the old relic golf cart and a sundry clutter of objects that haven't quite made it to the metal bin at the refuse station.

A dark-matted animal launched out from under the golf cart and Tilly was after it in a cloud of dust. In that brief glimpse I recognized the feral cat that's

been hanging around these parts for a while now. A skittish thing, it keeps its distance, and who knows how it avoids becoming a late night meal for the coyotes.

Then in between Tilly's barks at the entrance to her dog house, Rhona heard mewling sounds from inside. We took a peek and counted 7 kittens. Then more mewling under the golf cart yielded another kitten and that was number 8, soon nestled in with the others.

We barricaded the dog house hoping mom would feel safe that way and kept an ear out for mews. The next morning, mom dashed out in a blur. The morning after that, there were clues mom hadn't come back, so we took a peek inside and saw the kittens who were originally in

a tight bunch were spread out like they were looking for mom. Two were dead.

Rhona researched homemade kitten formula recipes. Condensed milk, Karo syrup, egg yolks. Friends and neighbors helped out. Susan sent down formula components we didn't have on hand. Sandee and Vicki came over to cuddle and feed the little kitties. But it was too late for four of them. We were down to two.



It was a Saturday and some folks came in for wine tasting. Turns out one of them volunteers at a cat shelter in Safford. Makes you wonder sometimes how things happen the way they do. She quickly took charge and the two survivors were starting to look much better. Can I take them home with me? Yes! The next morning we got a text that Maus and Sunny had taken several feedings and both were active and seemed healthy. Scrappy little stinkers, she said.

Well, sadly, Maus lasted just a few more days, but the miracle kitten Sunny looks like he's going to make it. Thanks so much, Julie!

On the Wire



Future sparrows

What's on the wire? Birds, of course!

And they are sooo interested in the things happening out there in the vineyard. Several species show up well before bud break to wait for the vines to wake up. They are impatient, flitting around the vineyard every day as the spring growth starts to produce more and more shoots and leaves.

While the birds wait for the vines, they argue among themselves about the three

nest-worthy trees outside of the tasting room. **House finches** spar with **fly catchers** and **sparrows**, then the **thrashers** deafen the squabbles with their shrill calls. The **towhees** don't care about the vines or the trees. They are the ultimate non-confrontational, hang-

abouters, squeaking and chattering. They tried to build a nest in the BBQ. Nope!

It is something to behold when the vines decide to grow out. It happens fast. In just a few weeks, what was once a dead-looking, dried-up, gnarly piece of wood erupts with leaves and shoots. Suddenly, vines that were scanty and pitiful need drastic thinning to keep them light and airy. Discarded green shoots litter the ground. But then the vines just say thank you very much, and grow out even more. Leaves get bigger, shoots get longer.

When the canopy is thick and lush enough, the birds finally build their nests.



Sangiovese cluster in flower

We don't want to awaken fate, so we'll say this just once and very quietly: There might be a really big harvest out there in those verdant vines - in both birds and grapes.

Sssh!

Rhona and Mark