

The Story of O'Blivion

When we were building Obscurity Cellars winery, we planted the surrounding hillsides with Alicante Bouschet, Charbono, Petite Sirah, and Malbec vines. At the first harvest in 2005, the yield from three of the four acres was only 400-600 pounds, not enough to make even one barrel of varietal wine. Even though we had pledged to create only 100% varietal, single-vineyard wines, we created a "blend of necessity" of three of the wines (the fourth, Malbec, seemed unusually dark and heavy, and was made into a single barrel of "Malbec Ultra").

Because our newsletter is named *Between Obscurity and Oblivion*, we thought it would be fun to name the wine "Oblivion." We mentioned this plan to Mike O'Brien, whose vineyard was the source of a notorious Obscurity wine called (You Bet) Shiraz, and he suggested including some of his Syrah in the blend and adding an apostrophe to the name to signify the inclusion. Instantly, "O'Blivion" was born.

The wine was released in 2007 to the delight of Obscurity's followers, and was awarded a Gold Medal and judged the best Red Table Wine from the Sierra Foothills at the California State Fair. The following year, a successor blend was launched, called "Son of O'Blivion." The two blends were slightly different, reflecting the difference in growing years and vine development, but the successor was also voted best Red Table Wine from the Sierra Foothills at the next year's California State Fair. Then followed the "Grandson of O'Blivion," once again declared best Red Table Wine from the Sierra Foothills, but the lineage was interrupted in May of 2009 when our first grandchild, Scarlet, was born, so the fourth edition was adorned with her picture and named "O'Blivion's Red-headed Granddaughter." Like all the earlier wines, it too was named best Red Table Wine from the Sierra Foothills.

The fifth in the series, "O'Blivion's Reincarnation," thus has a substantial heritage to live up to. It will be released in May of 2011, with entry into competitions to follow shortly.

John Smith, February, 2011