Dear Friends,

It’s here. The moment we’ve been anticipating for what feels like eons: the first release of the epic 2012 vintage.

First, we’ve got some welcoming to do: this release marks the debut of four (yes, FOUR) new Turley wines. There’s Bedrock Vineyard, the iconic Sonoma Valley site planted in 1888; Kirschenmann, owned by our winemaker Tegan Passalacqua, and planted on its own roots in Lodi in 1915; and two new wines from Amador County. The Cobb Vineyard is a homage to Buck Cobb, who founded the Karly winery we now own in Amador; and Sadie Upton Vineyard, named for the plucky gal who planted it in 1922 (for those of you keeping track at home: yes, that’s smack-dab in the middle of Prohibition). If that ain’t the very definition of moxie, I don’t know what is. (For a complete list of the wines we make, as well as vineyard history, winery and visiting information and some pretty photos, you can always check out our site at www.turleywinecellars.com.)

Speaking of the rest of the wines, well, wait’ll you get a load of this: 2012 was an ideal harvest. The vines really outdid themselves, producing pure, clean, absurdly pretty fruit. Compared to the 2011 as a whole, the ’12 wines are more inviting, apt to greet you with an expansive embrace. There’s more of them too, which means finally we’ve got some wine to play with. So go ahead and request additional wines to your heart’s content but keep in mind: these are old vines we’re talking about, naturally much lower-yielding than their youthful counterparts. Which is to say: we know the heart wants what the heart wants. Just a word to the wise: said heart is exponentially more likely to get what it wants if it hops to it. No lollygagging, heart. There’s work to be done and, more importantly, wine to be drunk.

Old Vines young love,

Turley Wine Cellars
2012 Turley “White Coat,” California
One of the freshest—and most fun!—White Coats we’ve made to date. As in vintages past, the 2012 White Coat comprises rich, textured Roussanne from our Rattlesnake Ridge vineyard at the top of Howell Mountain moderated by the acidity and structure of Grenache Blanc from the mineral-laden soils in the Pesenti Vineyard. New this year, however, is the addition of some Amador County fruit from the granite-filled Cobb Vineyard: a savory, saline kick from Vermentino, as well as a little extra Grenache Blanc. The result is a unique, dynamic white wine with minerals, stone fruit and white flowers on the nose and great viscosity tempered by lean acidity on the palate. It’s the perfectly prepared middle-weight contender in the zone, the Renaissance man, the woman who somehow, magically, has it all.

2012 Turley “Bedrock Vineyard” Zinfandel, Sonoma Valley
Hailing from 1888 and owned by Joel & Morgan Peterson of Ravenswood and Bedrock Wine Co., respectively, the Bedrock Vineyard is truly an iconic site. Right in the heart of Sonoma Valley, these ancient vines are planted amidst volcanic rocks that have sloughed down from Monte Rosso. This Los Robles cobbly loam soil is evident first on the nose, along with blue fruits and savory, dried sage aromatics. The palate is expansive and chock full of a medley of fruits as well, owing perhaps to the small amounts of Petite Syrah and Alicante Bouschet that are also found in our organically-farmed block of Bedrock. Graphite and earth check the fruit on the finish, making for an inimitable wine worthy of its noble origins.

2012 Turley “Cobb Vineyard” Zinfandel, Amador County
Planted at 1500 feet on the volcanic, granitic hillside near our new property in Amador, the Cobb Vineyard Zinfandel is an homage to Buck Cobb, owner of the vineyard and from whom we purchased the Karly property. The rocky conditions and more extreme weather (including snow!) make for a structured, savory wine. Though fruits run the full gamut from red to blue to black, the wine favors secondary and tertiary flavors: graphite, game and bacon fat, almost reminiscent of Syrah. The tannins are more granular and less fine-grained, not unlike our other mountain vineyards such as Rattlesnake Ridge. Pair it with a hearty spring lamb dish and you’re off to the races.
2012 Turley “Dragon Vineyard” Zinfandel, Howell Mountain

Dragon Vineyard is an estate-owned and certified organic vineyard. Planted at 2400 feet at one of the highest points on Howell Mountain, the vineyard sits well above the fog line and faces east. These important features, along with the rocky, red volcanic soil, make for a very unique, full-bodied and powerful Zinfandel that is always Larry’s favorite, since it goes with what he likes to cook: bold, flavorful, spice-driven meats on an open fire. In the 2012, we get a truly beautiful wine evocative of Howell Mountain; still strong on spice and structure, but more perfumed, rich, and smooth, with sweet, well-integrated tannins. As with all our mountain wines, we recommend a quick decant if you want to enjoy it in the near future!

2012 Turley “Duarte” Zinfandel, Contra Costa County

This wine is an homage to Joe Duarte, a prominent grape grower in Contra Costa who first introduced Turley to the incredible vineyards of the area. The wine is comprised of fruit from the turn-of-the-century Evanghelo, Mori, and Salvador vineyards, planted between 1890 and 1930. As a result of the sandy soils and impressive age of the vines, the wine has some of the softest, silkiest tannins we’ve ever seen in a Zinfandel. In our 2012, the dark, ripe, blackberry and boysenberry richness imprint of the Mori Vineyard shines through, broadening the scope and tempering the vibrant acidity, further ensuring the open, ready-to-rumble nature of this wine.

2012 Turley “Dusi Vineyard” Zinfandel, Paso Robles

The Dusi vineyard was planted by Dante Dusi in 1945, and it is farmed by his family to this day. The vines are head-trained and dry-farmed, planted in soil that is mostly alluvial with some very large rocks. Like our other vineyards in the area, Dusi is on the west side of Paso Robles. In 2012, as in years past, we see dark fruit, berries, loam, and crushed rocks on the nose. The richness of the fruit on the palate is balanced by well-integrated gravelly tannins. Smooth, round, with a nice kick of spice.

2012 Turley “Juvenile” Zinfandel, California

Though the vast majority of our wines are single vineyard designates, Juvenile is actually composed of a variety of young vines that have been replanted in several of our old vine sites. We tag the vine when we replant it so as not to mix the brand new vine with its much older neighbors, then pick these young vines separately and make a distinct wine. The vines that make up Juvenile range in age from about 6-25 years, and we pull from 18 of our best vineyards across California, including Hayne, Ueberroth, Pesenti, Salvador, Vineyard 101, Fredericks, and Kirschenmann. The 2012 is exemplary, exhibiting the fantastic year across the board: open and expressive, juicy red and blue fruits, and succulent spices like white pepper, proving itself once again as a classic California Zinfandel.
2012 Turley “Kirschenmann Vineyard” Zinfandel, Lodi
New to the Turley family this year, and particularly close to our hearts, as our winemaker, Tegan Passalacqua, owns and farms this vineyard. The ungrafted vines were planted in 1915 in the silica-rich sandy soils of the east side of the Mokelumne River AVA. Thanks to the river’s cool waters and delta breezes, these head-trained, dry-farmed vines are constantly protected from the heat. As a result, the Kirschenmann is a gorgeously perfumed wine, reminiscent of purple flowers like lilac or wisteria on the nose, as well as savory game and pepper. Light to middle-weight on the palate, bolstered by plenty of acid and extremely well-integrated, fine-grained tannins. Slightly sweet fruit on the finish is assuaged by the granitic tannins, resulting in a true vin de terroir.

2012 Turley “Mead Ranch” Zinfandel, Atlas Peak
Mead Ranch is planted at about 1600 feet on Atlas Peak, on the south eastern side of Napa Valley. The vineyard was originally planted in the 1880s, though our block is primarily from the 1970s. This vineyard is head-trained, planted in red volcanic soil. On a clear day you can see San Francisco; though those are few and far between, and thus this vineyard sees plenty of fog from the bay. In 2012, black pepper leads the spice brigade on this wine, coupled with sweet berry fruit. Bright, buoyant acidity is ameliorated by a smooth, almost creamy mouthfeel and well-integrated tannins.

2012 Turley “Rattlesnake Ridge” Zinfandel, Howell Mountain
Rattlesnake Ridge is an estate-owned and certified organic vineyard. Located at the top of Howell Mountain at about 2600 feet, the vines see more sun here then they would on the valley floor; however, it is much colder due to the elevation, and can even snow in the winter. All combined, these factors make for a truly unique wine: bold, strong tannins and an acid backbone that can only come from Howell Mountain. 2012 is no exception to the rule; if anything, it’s the most expressive wine of the site to date. Strong spice, alpine underbrush and rustic, exposed-rock tannin dominate this wine; blue and black fruits are present, yes, but play second fiddle to the wine’s structure and tannin. With a strong decant and a well-seasoned piece of meat, you’re in business.

2012 Turley “Sadie Upton Vineyard” Zinfandel, Amador County
We are honored to be working with this jewel of a vineyard in Amador County, whose story is almost as compelling as the wine itself. In 1922, smack-dab in the middle of Prohibition and while her husband was away working for the railroad, a then 21-year-old Sadie Upton decided she was going to plant herself a vineyard near their home at 1500 feet near Plymouth, CA. Now, 92 years later, the vines are still kicking, in the gumption-riddled tradition of their creator. Ruby to blood-orange in color, with rose petal, bright red cherry, and graphite on the nose. The palette is all warm & cozy, light to middle weight with a bright, uplifting acidity. Chunks of granite, quartz, and silica litter the vineyard, and make themselves most evident in the fine-grained, well-integrated tannins on the finish. The wine was made exclusively by Karly for the past 30 years, and we are beyond excited to be able to share Sadie’s moxie with you today.
2012 Turley “Estate” Zinfandel, Napa Valley
This vineyard is special to all of us here at the winery; right in our backyard, it’s what we see every day at work (and from the family home!)  In 2006 we planted 6 acres of head-trained dry-farmed Zinfandel that compliments the original planting from ten years prior, all of which are certified organic. The head-trained vines lend the wine its lifted aromatics, black and red fruits like fig and plum, along with the usual garrigue and high tone, gamey notes. More density on the palate than the nose belies, generally due to the trellised vines. The tannins glide softly but broadly across the palate, providing a juicy, resounding finish.

2012 Turley “Vineyard 101” Zinfandel, Alexander Valley
Located in Sonoma, this certified organic vineyard was planted in the 1920s. At only 2 ½ acres, it is the smallest site we make into a vineyard designate, which is a shame, since the wines are consistently a staff favorite. The wines are aromatic and light, with lots of fruit and great acidity. 2012 shows red Bing to black cherries on the nose, lifted by upbeat acidity. Sweet red fruit on the palate sails through the well-integrated, soft tannins on the finish.

2012 Turley “Rattlesnake Ridge” Petite Syrah, Howell Mountain
Above St. Helena on the north eastern ridge of Napa Valley, the Petite Syrah from Rattlesnake Ridge Vineyard is another fantastic expression of Howell Mountain. Dark, powerful, inky, funky; this sun-drenched but cool & windy site brings out the best characteristics of Petite Syrah. The 2012 Petite shows this rocky mountain site (2600 feet) in all its glory: bacon fat, smoked meats, and dark fruit all present; imagine being in a blackberry bush near a pig roast on a windy, exposed-rock mountain top and you’ll get the idea. Classic dry, savory, grippy Howell Mountain tannins abound, and thus we recommend decanting, to further unveil its many pleasures.

2012 Turley “Estate” Petite Syrah, Napa Valley
Planted adjacent to the Estate Zinfandel, this Petite Syrah is also certified organic. The area used to be Wappo Indian grounds, and obsidian arrowheads are commonplace in the rocky volcanic soils. The wines are classic Napa Valley Petite Syrah: dark & brooding on the nose, bright and vibrant on the palate. In 2012, the nose is reminiscent of the Rhône—earth, black olive, anise, charcoal—almost like a fire dying down. Fruit is more present on the palate, with cherry and dark plums, mitigated by great tannic structure and integrity. Throw it in a decanter to best bring out all the wine has to offer.