



NAPA VALLEY WINE LIBRARY **REPORT**

WINTER 2004 - 2005

Calendar of Events

Annual Meeting

Thursday, January 13, 2005
Copia, Napa

To Celebrate the Publication
of the 2nd edition of *Napa Wine: A History*

from Mission Days to Present

May, 2005

Details to be Announced

Annual Varietal Seminar

Saturday, August 13, 2005
Silverado Country Club, Napa

Annual Tasting

“All White Varieties”

Sunday, August 14, 2005
Silverado Country Club, Napa

Fall Field Seminar

Saturday, October 15, 2005
Details to be Announced

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President's Letter

One of the particular pleasures of the October 3 reception honoring *The Brady Book* (described in this issue) was our opportunity to relax and exchange notes with our counterparts in Sonoma County. Most of our routine contacts are within Napa County and particularly the wine country. This was a chance to celebrate with other people who have dedicated themselves to wine history and lore from throughout the state. I was privileged to know many of our association's founders, and believe that it was an occasion they would have relished, and that they would have treasured *The Brady Book* not only for its beauty, but also for the wit and wisdom of the inimitable Roy Brady. To obtain your own copy contact Nomis Press in Santa Rosa, (707) 546-1184 or nomis@ips.net.

We are excited that we have begun to place our small supply of magnums of "Barney's Backyard" Petite Syrah produced by Turley

Wine Cellars with local organizations raising money for education. We have been asked to let you know which "gala events" - the efforts of local families with wine industry connections result in very enjoyable occasions - will offer "Barney's Backyard" magnums. Look for an insert with your 2005 membership renewal notice for the dates of these fundraisers.



Allen Price displays the debut 'Barney's Backyard' magnum

We will soon name our Bob Lamborn Scholar for 2005. Our 2004 Scholar, Jennifer Rose, has been a great help to us all year and will continue as a valuable member of our behind-the-scenes team. The Bob Lamborn Scholars designated each year through 2008 will advise us in serving and attracting tour guides and tasting room employees.

The late spring will bring release of the second edition of "our" book, *Napa Wine - A History* by the renowned Charles L. Sullivan. Our association sponsored the book "In Memory of Jim Beard", one of our founders, and all of us involved have been delighted with its success since first published in 1994. Charles has now revised it and rewritten the last chapter to bring us up to date. Look for a date certain for the appearance of the new edition and an announcement of our plans to commemorate it.

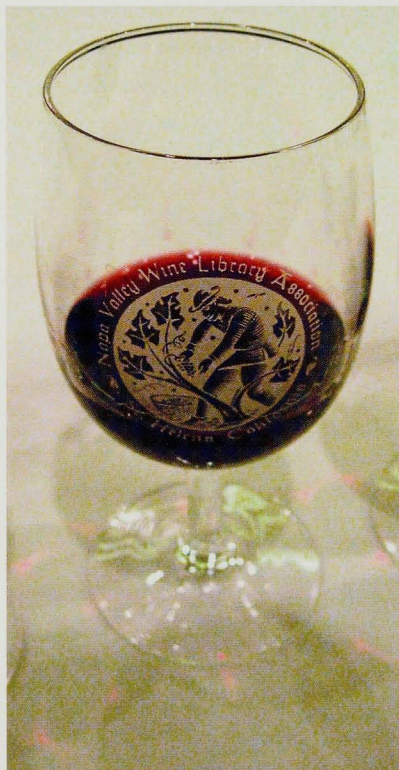
Julie Dickson, President

14th Annual Varietal Seminar, “All Hail the King - Cabernet Sauvignon”

Silverado Country Club, Napa, Saturday, August 7, 2004

Sixty association members and members of the press spent a full day at Silverado Country Club hailing Cabernet on the first Saturday of August. John Skupny again served as moderator for the seminar, during which numerous aspects of the varietal under scrutiny were revealed, questioned and discussed by various panelists. A show of hands among participants as to the wines preferred added a further dimension to the proceedings.

The first panel, “Mastering the Myths”, consisted of the Masters of Wine Peter Marks of Copia, Joel Butler of Beaulieu Vineyard and Mark de Vere of Robert Mondavi Winery. Peter Marks was glad to lead off because, he said, ‘one’s palate is believed to be freshest in the morning’. The myth Peter sought to master was Hillside vs. Valley, that hillside locus is always superior to Valley floor. Hillside, according to the myth, has better drainage and demands more struggle of its vines which creates more stress for vines as they grow, a surefire promoter of richer, deeper flavors. Hillside vineyards do, in truth, have cooler temperatures typically and less sunlight, free movement of air, and tend to produce berries with thinner skins than on the Valley floor.



To test the myth Peter had us taste Cabernet Sauvignon wines all from the same producer. He paired flat with hill and new with old and asked us to determine which were which. More participants preferred the wines made from fruit from the flat rather than hillside vineyard, and most preferred younger to older Cabernet. The wines Peter poured were all from Beaulieu Vineyard: 1990 Home Vineyard, 1990 Bancroft, 2000 Home Vineyard and 2000 Bancroft. BV Home Vineyard is on the Valley floor in Rutherford and Bancroft high on Howell Mountain in Angwin.

Where did the Hillside myth come from? From wine critics? Peter has observed that such preferences narrow with age. Initially, Bancroft with its particular slope and elevation, produces wines of a darker color, a deeper hue, and more intense flavor.

Joel Butler compared sites in Tuscany and Coonawarra to the Napa Valley. He noted our bench lands are on alluvial fans, so that BV’s Home Vineyard does, in fact, have hillside elements. In the 1960’s (and after Prohibition) hillsides were planted with the notion that aging equaled taming, that rough terrain



meant naturally rich wines because more stress made more tannins that you then dealt with in aging.

Mark de Vere underscored preferences. Dispelling myths is OK, but keep in mind one third of the room at the seminar liked hillside wines. Some people have less or more tolerance for tannin, for bitterness and flavor structure. It's a question of style. Flatter vineyards give wines which are velvety, supple. Mark declared the origin of the hillside myth to be Europe, where great sites are in the hills. Europe as a whole is cooler, with summer rains, good drainage. New Zealand has no summer rain. Burgundy gets half its rain in the summer. In Alsace, exposure is better in the hills which face south--nearly opposite the Napa Valley: a question of solar interception. Mark thought it wasn't really a question so much of transposing the paradigm, but rather what makes great wine.

Peter was asked to define tannin, which he said gives a drying sensation in the mouth--a green banana, over-brewed tea taste sensed in the back of the mouth (acid causes salivation). As to preferences, since we can discern differences Hillside isn't a myth, it is a reality. Mark agreed there were differences but not that Hillside was better, as the wine arena would have us believe.

In the second session, Joel Butler tackled the Filtration Myth, that unfiltered wines are more desirable. Double fining and double filtration have been standard procedure at wineries, including BV. Now a lot more have eschewed that idea. There are much more gentle filters than those in use prior to 1980 and in Bordeaux today. Greater stability in wines has come through removal of particulates--sugars, yeasts. Cabernet is stable (has a longer shelf-life) when it is fermented in wood, with malolactic, to all dry. So Cab in particular probably doesn't need filtration, especially ones with higher alcohol levels. Then, there are issues of clarity. If you filter carelessly you can remove flavor and aroma both now and down the line. Joel poured two Robert Mondavi Winery Cabernets, 2001 Napa Valley and 2002 Napa Valley. The 2001 was unfiltered, 2002 filtered. Basically participants were evenly divided as to preference. The wines were definitely a pair, the 2001 smoother, the 2002 rougher, clearer. Since filtration is now so much gentler it can be used to preserve quality. Joel poured a third Robert Mondavi Winery Cabernet. Most

thought it filtered and guessed it to be an older wine--'88, '90, '44? It was the 1976, filtered. Filtration can be mandatory with a certain scale of production.

Joel was asked to define filtering and fining. He called them two different methods to process wines. In filtration wine is pushed through a filter, as in making coffee. This removes cloudiness. Fining adds an aid which soaks and sinks through, taking out the undesirable bits you cannot filter, e.g. egg white for Cabs, which takes out excess tannins.

Mark de Vere applied himself to the Vintage Myth, that older is better. Mark feels strongly it is inappropriate to take a European paradigm and impose it on California growing conditions. Europe has much more variable seasons. Burgundy has four vintages every decade which are beautiful, four which are made with great difficulty and a couple in between. California has a longer growing season with more stable weather. The general quality of California is more consistently high. Are its vintages all the same? No. There



Panelists Randle Johnson, Michael Jordan and Andrew Schweiger



Panelists Randle Johnson, Michael Jordan, John Williams, Andrew Schweiger and Charles Thomas

is consistency in quality, but growing conditions differ, with different patterns of weather imparting the flavor. It's a matter of tannins, color.

Every vintage is different. The 1997 had rich ripe fruit, strong tannins. The 1998 and others were more elegant. In a recent vertical tasting of 90's wines the 1998 stood out with a silky, long finish (not its magazine rating at the time, however). Mark poured three wines from different vintages from the same winery, with the same winemaker, saying the wines had different personalities, and to pay atten-

tion to rich fresh black fruit, finesse, and flow through the mouth. He poured Beaulieu Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 1993, 1997 and 1998 Reserve Georges de laTour. Most preferred the 1997. The 1993 had maturity, integration, balance, the 1997 depth of fruit, taste and nose. 1998 was smooth, soft, easy to drink. Mark declared vintage quality to be one of personal preference. 1997 was a warm, early harvest (maybe like that of 2004?) which produced a generous type wine. Critics were harsh about the 1993 and 1998 then, yet 1993 is now harmonious, delicious. Peter counseled, 'Don't be afraid to question

authority, the wine writers. Trust your own palate!'

John Skupny next introduced, "Origins and Appellations of the Napa Valley". American Viticultural Area (AVA) history really began in the late '70's, was codified in 1979-1980 with the very first appellation Augusta, MO and the second Napa Valley, CA. Presently, there are 30 or 40 AVA's in US, of which 13 are in the Napa Valley (with as many again now being proposed for CA alone). The federal appellation process seeks to define a higher truth in labeling wine based on the concentric circle idea. In California and the Napa Valley in particular, if you appellate your wine, say, Rutherford, it must be subordinate to Napa Valley, a circle within the circle. Six appellation presentations followed:

Doug Fletcher,

Chimney Rock Winery, Stag's Leap District

Doug said while there were Cabernet vines planted years ago on the old Cole ranch, Stag's Leap doesn't have an old history. When Nate Fay was thinking of planting vines in the 1960's, he asked Bob Mondavi who said 'go'. Stag's Leap District is a small region on the Valley's east side, five miles from Trancas Street in Napa. It is three miles long, ending at Yountville Crossroad, and from a 400' elevation on the east side to the Napa River on the west. There are 1,100 to 1,200 acres, mostly in Bordeaux varietals, excepting Robert Mondavi (Sauvignon Blanc), mostly going to

red Bordeaux varietals with the focus on Cab. There is a lot of evidence that Stag's Leap is unique--at the Paris tasting by Jim Spurrier in 1976 when Warren Winiarski's Stag's Leap Wine Cellars won then and again in 1978, and when the tasting was repeated ten years later and Clos de Val came in first. Again a Cab from Stag's Leap District had won. In Berlin 8 or 9 years ago, Shafer Hillside Select was singled out. The Wine Spectator's 100 has 5 from Stag's Leap--5% of the list and 40% of Stag's Leap District's total membership!

What makes Stag's Leap District wines special is hard to define. In 1991, Ann Noble and Debbie Elliot-Fisk of UC Davis were commissioned to find if it was the land (test pits) or the wine (test lots). Their findings? Indefinable! Doug feels it's not soil-based, but more a micro climate effect. The geological formation holds the afternoon sun, reradiating that heat in the evening. The heat summation profile is more like that of Rutherford. Soil does affect vine vigor, but more how that particular vine grows in that particular area. At the end of growing season, with senescence of the leaves, the fruit should be ripe. In Stag's Leap in 1998 it was really cool (maybe too cool). Most years fruit ripens late, but fully. Sugar accumulation balances the maturation process in the leaves and fruit. Tannin structure is soft.

Charles Thomas,
Rudd Estate Winery, Oakville

With the Oakville appellation Charles thought he might reestablish myths or even start some new ones! The Oakville appellation is about half way up the Napa Valley. It is about five miles wide west to east and two miles long north to south, and up to 400' in elevation; roughly ten square miles and 3,000 or 4,000 vine acres. Most vines are at 120-200' elevation. Climatically, the beginning part is warmer, past the Yountville constriction from Stag's Leap to the Veterans Home outcropping at Domain Chandon. The dynamic of daily warming and cooling is consistently warmer on average than Stag's Leap and the hillside AVAs, and warm is good! It ripens grapes. Charles feels there is more benign flowering weather in Oakville in the springtime, when it is foggy.

East to west there are distinct areas. The western bench and hills from alluvial fan debris which are on a gentle slope--your legs and heart rate on a bike'll tell you where. You can coast from Far Niente to what was The Nest (formerly Pometta's) on Oakville Grade. Heading east, soils are of strong volcanic origin, with a 50' rise and red soil on the corner of the Silverado Trail and Oakville Crossroad. These soils are well-drained, rocky, with mechanics not unlike in the middle of Oakville and the western slopes, contributing weights, richness, ripeness. Excellence with Cab is abetted by well-drained soils on the

flat and gravel streaks (Groth) from the old Napa River.

John Williams,
Frog's Leap Winery, Rutherford

'Ah, Rutherford', sighed John, 'where no one has to worry (no longer from Lodi)'. Niebaum, Tchelisteheff, Daniel--wonderful traditions, and history, unique to Oakville and to Rutherford. Rutherford has 3,000 vine acres, the size of Medoc, and is the sister appellation to Oakville. It runs three miles from Oakville north to Zinfandel Lane, and from Skellinger Lane west to Lakoya Road, from 400' elevation on the hills down to the Napa River, at 121'. There are 111 vineyard owners. The area is dominated by alluvial fans from 5 million years of Napa Valley geological history and its fractured Franciscan sediments, from Conn Creek on the east to well-drained, gravely loams on the west--Cab loving, 80% of Rutherford is planted to red Sauvignon varieties--Cab, Merlot, and the others. Right along the Napa River it is in Sauvignon blanc, especially, where it is warmer.

John stressed Rutherford's unique character. The appellation was granted in 1991. In 1994 the Rutherford Dust Society was formed. At its first meeting, 'What is Rutherford?', everyone was asked. 'We were drinking from Oakville Grocery coffee cups! We started with a library of wines. At first it was like grange meetings. Now you can read

our oral interviews on the web site. Rutherford Dust Society came together to preserve and protect the heritage of Rutherford. Now we've got the 4H, the fire department, the river conservation group all working on it, too. Appellations are more than just the soil, the climate. They are about the histories, the traditions, the ways of always doing it. They help develop that sense of place.'

Randle Johnson,

The Hess Collection Winery, Mt. Veeder

The Mt. Veeder appellation, established in 1988, starts in the western hills, on the Napa/Sonoma County line, from Carneros above 400' elevation (Mt. Veeder at 2,670' is the Valley's second highest peak. Atlas Peak is 2,660' and Mt. St. Helena 5,000'+), just past Trinity Road on Oakville Grade. Of its 15,000 acres, 1,000 are planted to Bordeaux varieties. Pinot is rare. In the 1970's Chardonnay was planted. It had a Chablis-style steely, flinty quality which may be popular today, but not then. Malbec does very well. Mayacamas Vineyards is the oldest in the appellation. Sunset Magazine coined "boutique" for it while Randle was working there. Exposures run the full gamut because of all the nooks and crannies. Exposures change within a vineyard block. The climate is Region II near Carneros, III near Oakville, and III in high Western exposures. There are 20 different soils, generally the unlifted sedimentary clays of San Pablo Bay to 800-900'.

Mt Veeder was an active volcano, which blew out its eastern side. These Sonoma volcanics are very rocky red, with iron. Mountain wines have the reputation of being tannic--why Randle learned pigage, a French technique, in which the cap is gently punched down to reduce tannins.

Michael Jordan,

La Jota Vineyard Company, Howell Mountain

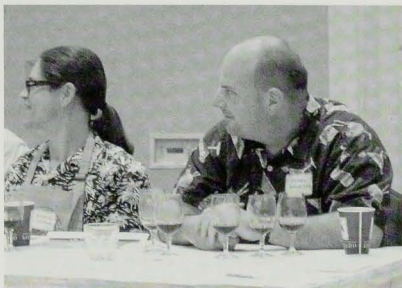
The Howell Mountain appellation is compact. It is 14,000 acres but not much is planted. 28 of these acres are at La Jota, which has typical soils for the appellation, especially volcanic ash; tufa or tuft--rhyolitic tuft; "dirt"--white dirt which is slightly redder underneath. Its rock can be quarried; it is

very soft. The soil generally has few big rocks; it is mostly fine. La Jota at 1,700' is rolling hills, with consistent soils throughout. Climate is cooler during the day, warmer at night. They are above the fog layer (1,400'). Michael doesn't know the acres under vines but he knows there is a three week difference in when you start to pick depending where you are in the appellation which is seven miles across. In 1994 Markham Winery bought La Jota. To amplify their flat landers' experience, they learned to taste. Every other year they have an AVA tasting and a common thread among the wines is very clear.

How much in a wine is site, how much is its winemaking? Michael says they are still struggling with this. Howell Mountain produces



Wines for the panel "Origins and Appellations of the Napa Valley"



wine which can be kept on the skins for a really long time, and still have beautiful structure. It can stay on much longer than fruit from the Valley, but it can't be on the seeds or it is crispy, mineraly, like the mountains.

Andrew Schweiger,

Schweiger Vineyards, Spring Mountain

Mountain folk have unique personalities. The Spring Mountain appellation is an amalgam of its soil, climate and people. It runs up from a 400' elevation up to the top of the ridge on the Sonoma County side, with a dog leg over to Stony Hill and Newton. All of it is on the Mayacamas Mountains. There are many soils--ash, rock. 18 years ago, in 1995 AVA approved the appellation (it had already taken a year just to decide where to meet about the appellation). Recently, everyone has begun to agree that there is more cohesion. However, because of soils, vine row arrangements, there have to be individual farming processes. When Schweiger developed Paloma

they tried a different row configuration, following the land, not sun. They are a slave to the soil. Soil dictates how the grapes turn out.

Andy feels you can always present wines to prove or disprove what you wish. In making wine you must love, caress, tame the tannin structure. Andy wouldn't know what to do with a Sangiovese, a Pinot Noir. He would probably over extract to lean-green any Valley fruit. But, you take 15 or 16 Spring Mountain winemakers and four different vintages and you'd be stunned by the cohesion, uniformity and intensity of flavors. The wines have a soft, velvety mouth-filling quality with distinct spice-- coriander, cumin--a great trend, a work in process. With Spring Mountain, at a typical winery the accountant sleeps with the winemaker: they're married, and they live on the property. Oh, that morning sun! Glorious, cool sunshine. The days start early, but don't get as hot during the day or as cool at night as down in the Valley. The air in the mountains warms at night, as the cool Carneros air pushes the warm air up.

The six vintners each poured a wine from his winery and its respective appellation:

Chimney Rock 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Stag's Leap District, Napa Valley

Doug mentioned the wine's dark cherry, mulberry flavors, blackberry rather than chocolate; and its smooth, silky tannins.

Rudd 2001 Oakville Estate Red

Charles said the Rudd was made from newly replanted vineyard, their 2nd release: smaller vines, more concentration. It was made from 93% Cab, 3% Cab Franc, 3% Malbec, 1% Petite Verdot. 2001 had a great growing season.

Frogs Leap 1999 Rutherford

Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc from 200 acres, from one or two year-old barrels kept on the western side. The fruit was organically grown, dry farmed (no water needed on Valley floor farms). Rutherford Dust, John characterized, 'is like rubbing a hand on velvet against the nap'.



Lunch speaker John Thoren

Hess Collection Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2000

Randle said you can do ripeness by the numbers, but maturity is less definable—the flavors, tannins in the skin, in the fruit. Irrigation? “In rocky, fast-draining soil you need to give ‘em a drink, keep the basal leaves green, making sugar. Two gallons a week. You want shoot tips to stop at maturity. Black fruit going here. Got tannin but integrated and round enough. Want the wine to be around in ten years.”

La Jota Vineyard 2001 Howell Mountain Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

This wine marks the 20th Anniversary of Bill Smith's first commercial release at La Jota and the first Markham harvest. It is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, the flagship wine. Its loosely held clusters can handle the rain. With mature seeds Michael said the challenge is how to extract so the wine will last a long time. They do a post fermentation maceration of 30-35 days; have pressed off the skins, trusting their selves more than the science--of phenolics, etc.

Schweiger Vineyards 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District Napa Valley

Andy agrees that the green side goes up when you are planting a vine. But he thinks that's about all vintners do agree on. At Schweiger they cold soak a day or two. The pea-sized, internally small fruit starts rapidly, with an 85°-90° extraction, hot pressing, 6 to 7 Brix,



free run. They barrel age three years to have tannin polymerize in the oak. Aeration is the catalyst. Free run is mixed back. Spring Mountain has springs all over. Schweiger vineyards are soggy or dry. They have extensive French drains; in their five vineyard blocks they have 30 irrigation blocks. Terroir is viticulture and viniculture. Andy thinks terroir may be an abbreviation of ‘je ne sais quoi’. But, if terroir doesn't mean anything, then we're wasting a whole lot of time and money. Vintners have a deep connection with soil, place, climate, history, tradition. These are active processes. We are involved with our hearts, passions and at least seventeen mortgages. Critical reviews are driving super-ripe, super-extracted wines, but the wines which give pleasure are those most connected to the place they come from. The Schweiger Vineyards 2000 Cabernet was estate bottled.

Someone asked about the ‘red dirt’ factor. Randle answered that we don't really know, that it is more empirical thinking. Great Zin,

for example, comes from the Bacchus Vineyard at Rudd, a red dirt vineyard. The iron (which reddens soil) factor interfaces with flavor development in fruit. The genetics differ, yet red dirt intensifies varietal character in both Cab and Zin.

During lunch on the terrace, John Thoreen, a wine tutor for thirty years, likened the soil map of the Napa Valley to its cerebral cortex. The 56 soil types swirl around, giving rise to various cultures, over time, of wine making. In the old days there were no cold soaks for 2 or 5 days. They got out just as much color and tannin as they possibly could. Semillon, Sauvignon blanc. A Sauvignon blanc block at Sterling Ric Forman put in barrels because he only had barrels to put it in, yet 1970 was one of the best, a white Graves sort of thing—made out of necessity. Now it's tannin management. It was fining. A set of changes: later ripeness influencing sugar, acidity, pH balancing.

What John sees may have a little something to do with his having taken more people to more Napa Valley wineries than anyone else. On the learning curve of the CA or New World wine industry, he thinks we're still down in a fun, healthy spot. Some may already be moving away from cold soaks, extended maceration or micro-oxygenation, in the pro-active driver's seat situation. Only now the young winemakers, sons (not a lot of generational stuff), "kids", want to have a group.

John considers UC Davis a godsend to progress in the Valley which he thinks began technologically backwards. Today it is screaming ahead and up the learning curve. We still need to sort out some marketing and grape supply issues, according to John, but the styling of the wines has been taken to almost an art. There is an undeniable artistic element at work. It's judgment by the seat of our pants backed up by technology. John is looking forward to the next decade of winemaking. After all, Napa Valley vintners were winning prizes in Paris in 1889. Today (August 8) vineyard blocks are ripening at about 1 1/4 Brix a week and it's not too soon to get the bins ready.

At the start of the afternoon session Julie Dickson introduced Bob Lamborn Scholar Jennifer Rose. Jennifer works at Copia in special events. Julie assured us Jennifer was chosen for her enthusiasm and energy (not for any affiliation). John then introduced the two panelists for "Consulting the Consultants".

Both are consultants who make wine for themselves and other people. John asked them to speak to their vision, their heart and soul and how they do that for someone else.

Consultants Joe Cafaro and Charles Hendricks

Joe Cafaro took his first class in winemaking at Fresno State. His first job was at Krug and he fell in love with St. Helena. He next worked at Chapellet, helped start Keenan and in 1985 began to consult. He has worked with Rob Sinsky, with Acacia before it joined the Chalone Wine Group, with Yeager Merlot (now gone), Della Valle and Oakville Ranch. Emilio's Terrace became a client in 1991. Joe started his Cafaro Cellars in 1986. In consulting, defining goals leads to the right techniques. You must tailor the consulting to what your clients want to accomplish and then use approaches and methods gained over the years. You see different things, learn different

techniques as you go.

Charles Hendricks has been in the Napa Valley for 22 years. He says consulting has a kind of snowball effect. He has worked for Barnett, Viader, Paoletti, Kuleto and Bacci de Vino all at the same time. He helps make a vision manifest in what is really a partnership—some have lasted eleven years, shoveling, pumping, dragging hoses, meeting, bottling.

Charles said you could generalize about clients, that there were definite types: the one with big dreams but no money, which is tough in a capital intensive business, so it can take years of carefully plotting the money to realize the dream. Another is like a dust devil, a whirling dervish coming in all of a sudden, all the time, with a whole new idea. There is the autocrat, a totalitarian: 'You're going to do as I say', and you think, 'Where's my knowledge in this?' because you can't force vines in a



direction they can't take. Then there's the absentee owner who gives you the full run of the place.

To consult, you have to be a self-starter in order to make the client's vision manifest. It may not work for you unless you can be there, because wines talk. You have to be able to listen. Give it what it needs. The ideal client has a realistic vision and sufficient means to achieve it. It's a balance of money, reputation and ego. Do the grape sources live up to expectations in a new project, in a new neighborhood? Will there be enough money to pay the bills? What about reputation? It's just 14 barrels, but, heck, it's interesting. You become part of the family; it's intimate. You see what the land's doing to you. You know when to end the relationship, when the scope of the project becomes too much even though consulting absorbs more time than you ever imagined. If the venture stays small, the consultant continues. Most wineries generally evolve to a full-time winemaker. Sometimes it's a next generation thing, but there are common courtesies and you know when it's time to go.

Cafaro Cellars 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon and Emilio's Terrace 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon

The wines Joe poured are both estate produced from a 4 1/2 acre parcel in Oakville planted in 1989. Fruit for the Cafaro was Cab 91%, Cab Franc 4%, Merlot 3%, and Petite Verdot 2% which Joe thinks makes lots of flavors for the wine, which is good because a winemaker is like a chef. Cafaro Cabernet is

a big, but not a monstrous wine that goes good with food. Cafaro was made with 60% new barrels. Emilio's Terrace has a bigger, riper style with more oak, tannin, and richness. It was made with 85% new barrels. Charles talked about wild yeast infections in a barrel or tank, that cut lid of a tomato can taste, like a wet horse barn. *Brettanomyces*, a yeast. You can smell it early on and you have to control it: boost the sulphur, rack, filter, boost the sulphur. You might just need to splash it. Malos don't finish by November in a 60 degree cave, so you rack; it's still not done. And then by April it's popping! You have to find the natural rhythm, a matter of timing and application. Joe agreed getting into that rhythm is essential. He does his vineyard sampling himself, to get the feel of the grape, look of the plant and sense of what's happening. He tastes every ten days to two weeks during the 20 months the wine stays in barrels. The wines are like your children--you know them, have a feel for them.

In answer to corks versus caps: red wine is more forgiving than white; light wine shows effect of its closure. Natural cork allows bloom as others don't, but a one to eight percent loss may be bad. Synthetic closure is pretty good for a one and a half year shelf life. Screw cap is next best after natural, with wine in a semi-suspended state of animation absent of natural oxidation life. Then there's the urethane issue, that ethyl carbonyl thing. Alcohol, SO₂, acidity--all are great solvents.

Hope & Grace 2001 Paoletti Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon and a Regusci 2001 Stag's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley.
The Hope and Grace was 100% Cabernet for which Charles said you get just one shot every year, not the five times a year overturn like retail. The Paoletti vineyard is in Calistoga. Charles likes the toasty spice in Hope & Grace. Wines are aged in American oak which right now gives a dominant coconut pie, which is OK--the greatest amount of extraction, but lactone, vanilla, creamy tannins frame the fruit. The Regusci has brighter chewy fruit flavor and is from Stag's Leap District.

Joe has found since he began making Cafaro Cellars he now spends 75% of his Cafaro Cellars time selling and 25 % of his time making. Pricing? It is always whatever the market will bear when it's comparable.

John closed the seminar with his "Top Ten Reasons Why We Love the Napa Valley". While John gave the reasons, the color slides he chose of glass lantern slides in our Wine Library collections made his merry reasons manifest. Really, where else could so carefully crafted a day, its wines and its setting be better presented or enjoyed?

Annual Tasting

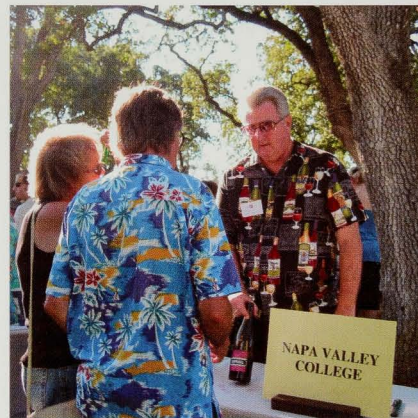
This was the 42nd year of the Annual Tasting. The tasting was again held on the front nine of the South Course of Silverado Country Club, in the Oak Grove. Nearly all 114 wineries which had accepted an invitation to pour were on hand for the estimated 1,100 to 1,200 Wine Library members attending the event. Cabernet Sauvignon was poured at nearly every table. Meritage, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, reds of young and old releases, were ready to be tasted as well. And a few whites for contrast.

On this warm day it was substantially cooler under the oaks and the smell of crushed grass and the light from a low-angled sun added to the pleasantness of the setting. We heard many French conversations among the membership as it moved from table to table and winery to winery. There were flowers fresh from their gardens on the tables for Aetna Springs and Spottswode; candlelight was unique to Andretti. Board member Chris Howell said he particularly enjoyed seeing the sisters Heidi Barrett and Holly Barrett Mondavi pouring at the table for La Sirena.

H. Vincent Mueller, a wine historian from San Rafael, has been collecting labels for 30 years. He was invited to exhibit some of these at the tasting. He brought his 17 volumes of Napa Valley labels--one is all Beringer--and their index. Vince's collection is world-wide in

origin, but, he says, like Burgundy, is focused and well-organized. The labels from California are catalogued by appellation. Now that he's retired, Vince spends four to six hours a day on his collection, adding, correcting and enjoying the information he includes with the labels. To date he has 400 books (and counting).

Crystal Geyser again generously donated spring water for the tasting. Raymond & Co provided cheeses of all kinds, sizes and shapes and Genova Delicatessen offered cold cuts, cheeses, and breads and assorted platters of small edibles.



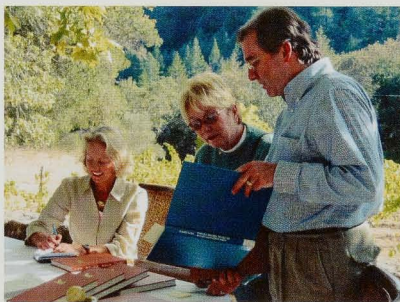
A Reception Celebrating the Publication of *The Brady Book: Selections from Roy Brady's Unpublished Writings on Wine*

Sunday, October 3, NVWL members and those of the Sonoma Wine Library, the Wine Librarians Association and those directly involved with the making of *The Brady Book* had the good fortune to gather at Stony Hill Vineyard on a flawless fall afternoon. A group of almost fifty drew together beneath the shade of twin plane trees on a handsome stone terrace to celebrate the publication of a remarkable work. There were wines, hors d'oeuvres, and views of far-off St. Helena to the left and ten year old Chardonnay giving way to 50 year-old White Riesling vineyards up to the right. Once the crowd quieted, Julie Dickson introduced Bo Simons, director of the Sonoma County Wine Library and president of the Wine Librarians Association. Bo has been involved with the Wine Librarians Association since its inception over five years ago. This organization for wine librarians and collectors of wine books, dedicated to preserving the history of wine, is the beneficiary of proceeds from sales of *The Brady Book*.

Bo introduced publisher, Gail Unzelman, who said she jumped on the Brady book project the moment she had the chance. Gail is editor and publisher of the wine readers' quarterly, *Wayward Tendrils*. In 1990 she started Nomis

Press to publish bibliographies of wine and gastronomy [Nomis is Simon (think André) spelled backwards]. Gail later took on various wine history projects, with Ernest Peninou of Sonoma Valley Historical Society, and the California Wine Association. She has been a collector of books on wine for many years; her husband Ron is a collector of wine. Gail noted that while the wine is eventually drunk, she still has her first book.

According to Gail, Roy Brady often visited Stony Hill, making it a felicitous site for this occasion. Roy's collection of 2,000 books (and 1,500 other publications), which had completely overrun his house by the 1960's, was acquired by UC Fresno in 1968; his meticulous indexed collection of 50,000 wine labels and wine lists went to the UC Davis

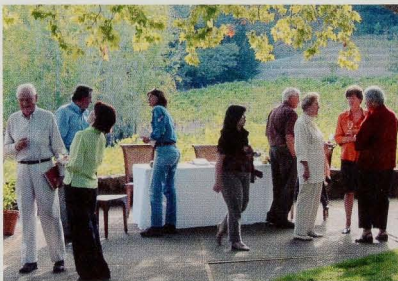


Shields Library after Roy's death in 1998. It was the sprawling mass of papers beyond these collections that compelled further attention. Manuscripts, letters, densely written loose-leaf notebooks of wine notes eventually were wrestled into a typescript three inches thick by Tom Pinney. Gail, Tom and others finally reduced this stack to a manageable size. Sixty selections from the 1950's to the 1990's, international, but especially California, were finally chosen for *The Brady Book*. The actual printing was done by Ed Ferris in Covelo (Ed was taught by Jim Robertson of Yolla Bolly Press). The limited edition of 250 hand-numbered copies is printed in a two color format with two dozen illustrations, fourteen of them carefully added full-color reproductions of wine labels. As Julie Dickson says of the book, '...the look and typeface say "Jim Beard" to me.'

Gail introduced the underwriter of the *The Brady Book* edition, Darrell Corti of Corti Brothers [Markets], Inc., Sacramento. Darrell has been a mentor to Gail and Ron for years, a walking encyclopedia of wine and food since 1947, according to Gail, who thinks he merits "sainthood". Darrell first visited Stony Hill with Fred and Eleanor McCrea, and then

again with Eleanor, so he was especially glad to be there with Peter and Willinda for *The Brady Book*.

Darrell first met Roy Brady at a tasting at an LA County Fair. While they were seated, Roy began doodling. He didn't think Darrell would be much interested; the doodles were mathematical equations (Roy worked in the aerospace industry and also taught mathematics). Darrell wasn't interested so they talked wine instead and became fast friends. Darrell found Roy to be taciturn--an observer who listened and didn't say much although he had many interests--but Darrell admired his integrity and came to enjoy Roy's asperity. Roy was an absorber of things; he enjoyed eating well; drinking well. He had had polio earlier in his life which meant no stairs later on. Travel had become fatiguing for him, but he had been a great traveler, going from Southern California to Northern California just to find out something out about wine in 1951 when 'Who was here then?' Darrell asked. 'Martini, Tchelistcheff, Stewart? In 1962 in the Napa Valley there were 12 wineries. You knew it was a quarter of six because the train ran that way with the box cars'. And Roy was in Cucamonga in the 1950's, an important part of California wine history (Ficklin Port may have the only label derived from the tag on a grapevine). Roy was very specific about what he liked. Darrell said he liked flavorful wines, honest ones. Tannin was not especially important to Roy; he never liked wood to overshadow the wine. Darrell



says there are lots more papers and he hopes any next project will have even more rather than less 'Roy'.

Gail then introduced Thomas Pinney, editor and professor emeritus of English at Pomona College, and author of *A History of Wine in America, from the beginnings to Prohibition*. Tom was familiar with Roy as a writer, but had little knowledge of him personally. Roy wrote for many publications, not particularly prominent ones at the time--local newspapers in the San Fernando Valley, *Architectural Digest*, *Gourmet*, *Wine News* which he edited. Roy was modest; he didn't legislate in his writings. He stands out for Tom because of the completeness of the wine-related activities he involved himself in. As a student of wine, as Roy always called himself, Tom finds him unmatched in the variety, on his own terms, as an enthusiast of wine (never a professional). Roy collected labels, lists, books and wines, wrote, judged, drank; dug his own wine cellar and went through 25,000 bottles of his own and tasted at least 20,000 more in his lifetime. He did

say he'd never drunk a magnum on his own. Roy always kept a loose-leaf notebook in which he wrote in ink with a clear hand about every wine he tasted. He thought old wines were usually overrated. He loathed experts, thought they were sure to be fraudulent. 'If you have nothing intelligent to say after tasting a wine, don't say anything,' he advised.

Julie then asked Eliot Mackey of the Wine Appreciation Guild to bring everyone up to date on *Napa Wine, A History from Mission Days to Present* sponsored by the Napa Valley Wine Library. It has been ten years since the book first came out. Copies, except in Australia, are difficult to find. Its author, Charles Sullivan, has just rewritten the final chapter of the first edition and, because of subsequent events, is now compiling a brand new final chapter for the second edition. Charles expects to be finished with the writing in December. Eliot forecasts two to three months of editing and fact-checking (usually not a problem with Charles), with publication in May.

Eliot had been able to unearth one copy of the limited leather-bound edition of *Napa Wine*. This was presented to Peter McCrea by Julie as a thank you for Willinda and Peter's fine hospitality. Peter was very glad to get such a grand replacement for his clothbound edition which he lent out and hasn't seen since. Sweet meats, the remaining Stony Hill wines and those selected from NVWL's own wine library, amassed over its years of tastings and seminars, amiably concluded the day.

Fall Field Seminar

Reg Oliver and Allen Price put together an extraordinary day in Oakville for the sold out harvest seminar. 40 members gathered in a light rain in Rutherford to carpool to the first stop, the Harry E. Jacob Research Facility and UC Davis Experimental Vineyard on Oakville Grade Road, Oakville. Allen and Reg ushered everyone into the Julio R. Gallo Conference Room where Allen introduced Mike Anderson, Viticulture Research Associate, Department of Viticulture and Enology, UC Davis.

Mike gave a swift historical overview of the site and summarized recent work of UC Davis on its two 20 acre vineyards, Old Federal and South Station. South Station is behind Far Niente and is currently the site for

Chardonnay trials as well Malbec, Semillon and Syrah. In 1991 on the Old Federal vineyard along Oakville Grade recent Cabernet trials, now concluded, took place with 22 rootstocks in order to test the full gamut of effects of rootstock on vine vigor, from debilitating to invigorating. Old Federal is also the site for a Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard. No trial block in either vineyard is larger than 2 acres. Remaining acreage is in Cabernet Sauvignon.

It is most uncommon to have research property on prime land. UC Davis is very fortunate to be able to conduct research in the heart of the Valley. Mike pointed out that they are doubly fortunate, since the facility and vineyards must support themselves, which they do through the sale of fruit from the vineyards and various donations.

Mike reviewed the role of American rootstocks in combatting that American pest, phylloxera, both in Europe and the US, where the rootstocks are American, *vitis rupestris*, and the fruit stocks European, *vinifera*. In addition to combatting phylloxera, US rootstocks have other advantages. They can influence vine vigor, minimize nematode damage and provide drought tolerance.

The Experimental Vineyards bearing blocks are planted 95% to Clone 8 Cabernet Sauvignon with the vines trained all the same way. The remaining 5% is planted to Merlot and Malbec clones. Because it takes four years of growth before you can get three years of bearing data, seven years is really too slow for timely clonal data and its spectrum of information, too narrow. More clonal material is being brought into the Valley all the time. Selections are not stable; they're subject to fashion, they get "hot". In a USDA-UC joint venture, the Foundation Plant Service, or FPS, plant material was evaluated for virus (all kinds) and virus-free plants true to variety were developed. FPS plants were made available to nurserymen and growers. However, there continues to be competition with illegal wood, like X-75 Cabernet Sauvignon (It's illegal to bring it in, but grand once it's here). Another popular clone, 337, brought leaf roll in from France, which spreads. Virus-free FPS plants are thought to be better and there was a successful campaign to replant vines infected with leaf roll. Mike watched vine foliage in the Valley change over from red in the fall to





In the Heritage Vineyard at Oakville Station

yellow. But now he sees it going back to red as illegal, “hot”, non-FPS budwood is brought in and cultivated.

Oakville Station works to preserve old vineyards, to archive them. It has grown and tested Syrah, Petite Sirah (which is probably Durif, a cross of Pelousin and Syrah from France) and Semillon from all over the state. Ampelographers, versed in growth habits of grape vines, the shape, texture and veining of their leaves, could spot 18 varieties in 20 minutes. The Station has helped develop Cab

clones from Niebaum Coppola--Clone 29, from Disney (See), Mondavi and Martha's Vineyard. Other varieties which have been collected and planted include a rare Sauvignon gris and the old-time Zin vineyard on redwood stakes (its drip hose is buried) which is called a Heritage Vineyard. This is a repository of old Zins from all over the state. Allen helped locate its ones from Napa County. Primitivo selections from Italy which are Zin, but from different clones, were also planted. The Heritage Vineyard is on certified virus-free St. George rootstock, which makes

for loose clusters and a low yield.

The Station conducts irrigation trials, dry farming with different vine and row spacing. In consideration of its soil variations, all trials are replicated five or six times, randomly throughout a block. A vineyard planted in 1992 is mature in 2002, with data collected from 1995 onward. The Old Federal Vineyard has been on a perpetual lease to UC Davis from the US Government since 1954. Mike envisions a future project on sustainable farming which could become a resource for legislation on organics.

At our second stop, Don Weaver, Director of Harlan Estate, greeted us saying he wasn't accustomed to welcoming visitors, much less a group (there's parking for only ten cars at the winery), but harvest has been over 10 days and now is when the true work begins! At the front door of the winery, sheltered by deep eaves and 500' above the Valley floor, we had a misty view of Harlan Estate, stretching from the Mays' Martha's Vineyard directly below to the first ridge of the Mayacamas above at 1,225'. The site was cleared in 1984, after a ten year negotiation with its former owner, and planted in 1985 and 1986. There are just 38 vine acres on the 240 acre estate.

Owner Bill Harlan is from Southern California. He went to UC Berkeley in 1957 when the Valley had, 'what', Don wondered, 'about 20 bonded wineries?' Bill started coming to the Valley on weekends. He was at the



View from winery front door at Harlan Estate

opening of Robert Mondavi Winery in 1966. He had formed the romantic notion that he'd have a winery of his own one day. And, as his business, Pacific Union Realty, got underway in the 70's and Bill began to travel, he started asking questions in the wine countries; as he got into asset management in the 80's, he realized wine was all about the land. Bill wanted to create a "First Growth" for California, emulating the wines of Bordeaux. He saw that French vineyards had relatively poor soils (this was clear to him in Burgundy); that the grand cru vineyard elevations of mid-Burgundy weren't so marked; and that Cab definitely doesn't like to have its feet wet. Today, at Harlan, the vineyard at 350' to 550' elevation

is considered the Tenderloin of the property because of site, geology. Bill thinks viticulturally this Tenderloin is the best in the Valley.

Vineyards and winery form a cleared crescent of land. The winery was completed in 2001. Six acres were originally on AxRI, half of which came out in 1998, half in 1999.

Vineyards are planted 70% Cab, 20% Merlot, and 8% Cab Franc, with the percentage in Petite Verdot going up. The first release was in January 1996—a 12 year feat during which time Bill had formed Merryvale and hired Don to turn the former Sunnyside Winery around. They contracted fruit from Winery Lake, Spottswoode, John Arns. Bill studied

number of wines and price points. When Bob Levy left Rombauer to come on full-time as winemaker, Don went to the marketplace side of things (He says his 20 year association with Bill is rare in the business). Bill sold his Merryvale interest in 1995. His Harlan Estate vineyard had been under its wings early on, while Don, Bob and Bill were exploring Cabernets for Harlan.

Harlan makes 1,700 to 1,800 cases in a good year. It has exploited the best vineyard sites in terms of scale and intimacy and can potentially double production. Tonnage presently averages 1.8 to 2.5 tons an acre. The ambition is for wines of a place which bespeak the character of the land. Harlan practices a non-interventionist style of winemaking, 90% of which happens in the vineyard. However, there is vigorous selection throughout the winemaking process and only about half the wine gets into the bottle.

Fruit is picked by flavor. Multiple passes are made in the blocks using shallow 30 lb. bins. Picking is done before breakfast. Fruit goes to the destemmer; whole berries travel up a 12' "giraffe" conveyor belt to the top of stainless open-topped fermenting tanks which are filled 1/2 to 2/3 full. Berries can also be crushed with rollers as they fall into the tanks. A cold 7 day presoak precedes fermentation (Harlan feels maceration which is earlier is better). During an 8 to 10 day active fermentation (based on phenolic profile) they punch down, progressing from 3 times to just once a day.

After 30 to 60 days, wine goes into casks. Vineyard block pickings are kept separate, with 6 or 7 barrels constituting a large lot. There is co-fermentation of the lots when they are of like profiles. The fermentation room works just 3 months out of the year. A gravity fed aging cellar is directly below it, the casks in stacks of two. Harlan is meticulous in its methods, the winery scrupulously clean.

The small casks are all new French cooperage. Malolactic happens in the barrel. Harlan Estate Cabernet spends 25 months in the barrel. Wines culled after 10 months are destined for The Maiden. However, every grape aspires to get into the Harlan program. There are 700-800 cases of The Maiden made and about 2,000 of Harlan. It is all free run, with

no fining or filtering. The big difference in the two programs is in the quality of the tannins. The wine is really clean going into the barrel. Don thinks it is dense, concentrated, profound. Supple, with lots of pleasure. 30% to 40% of the wine is sold to the trade in 35 countries, the rest by mailing list. Since 1988, Michel Roland has consulted each year, now once a year on the vines and once on the wines.

The members then walked through to the tasting room with its welcoming fire in the fireplace. A wraparound deck frames the lofty room, large windows giving vaporous views that day of vineyards, oaks and nearby native shrubs. The Maiden 2002 and Harlan Estate 2002 had been decanted from the barrel (to be bottled in January) for us to taste. Don

thought the word 'harmonious' said the most about the property. Bill's concept for the winery was and is multigenerational, tied to the land. It takes 10 years and \$10 million into it before you realize what you do have, Don summarized. Harlan Estate is really about the next three hundred years.

Our third stop was at Nickel & Nickel, where we were welcomed by Jeff Weiss and a taste of Chardonnay John's Creek 2001 Napa Valley inside an old red barn built in 1770 for hay and horses in New Hampshire. A Vermont barn company had dismantled it and the winery had had it shipped out and rebuilt as wine lab, kitchen, conference and tasting room.

Gil Nickel, founding partner of Far Niente and Nickel & Nickel, was originally in the plant nursery business in Oklahoma. He later moved to San Francisco, to a house with wine equipment in the basement. Gil made a Chardonnay. It won a ribbon and he thought, 'How hard could this be?' In 1979 he and his partners bought Far Niente, to make the best Burgundian-style Chardonnay and the best Bordeaux-style Cabernet they could.

In 1995, Far Niente Merlot fruit from Soscol Ranch in Jameson Canyon was too spectacular to blend, although making a single vineyard wine was quite an innovation at the time. Gil and his partners formed Nickel & Nickel to make single varietals from single vineyards. Their first vintage was in 1997. In 1998 they



Fermentation room at Harlan Estate



"Cult Cabs" at Nickel & Nickel

bought the 42 acre Sullinger ranch as a sister winery to Far Niente. Every one of its wines would be from a single vineyard. There would be no blending--as terroir as you could get.

Nickel & Nickel makes 8 Cabernets, 3 Chardonnays, 1 Zinfandel, 3 Merlots and 2 Syrahs. Case production is at 18,000, with a 35,000 case goal. Nickel & Nickel owns 30% of their vineyards, the rest is under contract. Darise Spinelli is winemaker. The original Sullinger Cabernet vines were kept, new drain tiles were installed and 30 acres replanted with budwood from the Sullinger vines. Various pruning styles have been instituted and the vines are smaller, more stressed.

The tank room for fermentation with a crew of four is in a new white dairy-style barn. Pump and electrical stations are plentiful and no hose is longer than 25'. For Gil, who died in 2003, winery work was all about safety

and ease. An adjacent low building of dressed stone sits atop 30,000 sq. ft. of underground barrel storage. On exhibit are soils from the Cabernet vineyards: Branding Iron, Rock Cairn, Stelling, Sullinger, and Tench in Oakville, Vogt on Howell Mountain, Dragonfly in St. Helena and Carpenter in Napa Valley. The site has lots of water, even hot springs (Oakville has a high water table). The cellar's concrete walls are one foot thick to control seepage (less than 1% of the wine is lost from evaporation). It is also climate controlled, with numerous work stations and no hose longer than 25'. Barrels are 100% French oak in two tiers and are used twice.

With an 18,000 case production, Nickel & Nickel uses a mobile bottling line. At full production, and with second fermentation barn, they will do the bottling themselves. Back in the tank room we tasted two wines: Sullinger Vineyard 2001 Cabernet from the home property, grafted from its original Cab, and 2001 Cabernet from Rock Cairn Vineyard, planted in 1984. The wines are aged in barrels with a medium toast, so you can taste the fruit. They are approachable now and in 10 to 15 years. The winery suggests laying them down for 5 to 7 years.

A catered lunch was served in the red barn. Nickel & Nickel poured Stelling 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon, made from 16 rows of vines leased from Far Niente. The wines the members tasted at lunch were:

- **Dalla Valle Vineyards** 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley
- **Harlan Estate Winery** 2000 Napa Valley
- **Heitz Cellar** Martha's Vineyard 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley
- **Joseph Phelps Vineyards** Backus 2001 Napa Valley Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon
- **Kelham Vineyards** Oakville Napa Valley 1999
- **Nickel & Nickel** Stelling Vineyard 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Napa Valley
- **Opus One** 1999 Napa Valley Red Wine
- **PlumpJack Winery** 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Napa Valley
- **Rudd Winery** 2001 Oakville Estate Napa Valley Red Wine
- **Screaming Eagle** 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Napa Valley
- **Venge Family Reserve** 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Napa Valley

All these wines were most generously donated by their vintners and provided a superb summation to a day devoted to "Cult Cabs" on and off the field in Oakville.

Book Reports

*Book reports by Bob Foster,
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The Winemaker's Dance--Exploring Terroir in the Napa Valley

*Jonathan Swinshall and David G. Howell,
University of California Press, Berkeley,
California 2004*

The title of this book, at first glance, seems a mixed metaphor of continually unrelated factors. How can one dance with geography or soil or weather? Yet the authors, quite properly, do not view terroir in a narrow context. Their sense of context covers the complete ecosystem for each and every vine. A vine and the wine it yields are impacted not only by the traditional components of terroir--geography, soil, and water--but also by scores of other variables such as rootstock, rainfall, fog, drainage, erosion, trellising, the orientation and shape of the vineyard, disease, and the winemaker's techniques. The authors conclude that how the winemaker deals with (or, as they phrase it, dances with) all of these factors in great measure determines the quality of the wine.

The book begins with a section on the formation of the Napa Valley. In great detail topics such as "Franciscan Formation", volcanic activity, and the San Andreas Fault are

covered, with a discussion of plate tectonics along the way, as the authors review the geological history of the Napa Valley, which began 145 million years ago. This is not a quick read, and is probably too technical for some, but it does lead to an understanding of the vastly different soils and bedrock found in the Napa Valley. Abundant use of color photographs (many are aerial shots) made it even more understandable for me (a poli sci, not a geology major, decades ago in college).

The authors then take each of the factors with which the winemaker must dance and analyze them at length. I particularly liked the section on fog, because it's the first discussion I've seen in modern literature, and the section on yields, because of the opportunity for intrigue. Winemakers are caught in a squeeze play. On the one side, "the Gods of Wine, Parker in particular" have stated repeatedly and forcefully that great red wine cannot come from a vineyard with yields of more than two to three tons per acre. These authors deem this an unproved assertion. Instead they suggest that high quality comes not from low yields but from vines that are balanced in their growing conditions. The authors cite the experiences of Doug Fletcher at Chimney Rock, who discovered that he could get top quality fruit by taking out every other vine on his valley floor vines while leaving his hillside vines closely spaced. The hillside vines were on 2.5 feet of residual sediment over bedrock while the valley floor vines were on twelve feet of residual sediment. The valley floor grapes grew larger, were more stressed and

began, in one vintage, to give fruit of the same high quality as the hillside. The key was not the yield, but the soil, the location, the pruning and the trellising. Thus the authors show the equation for quality is far more complex than a flat tons per acre decree from on high.

A special highlight of the book is its two driving tours of the Napa Valley. The authors give detailed directions on how to drive through different parts of the Napa Valley and observe all the geographic and other features they have described in the book. It's fascinating stuff.

In the last portion of the book the authors give short profiles on various producers in the Napa Valley and talk about how all of the factors they have discussed earlier in the book come into play in each particular vineyard or winery. I really liked this book. While some of it is highly technical, it gives a fascinating overview of the myriad of technical and human factors that inevitably are involved in making great wine.

Very Highly Recommended

North America Pinot Noir

John Wintrop Haeger

University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004

There is no question but that wines' styles change over the years. Perhaps more than any other wine grape Pinot Noir has seen the largest change. When I got into wine in 1970, great Pinot Noir was hard to come by. Most of the wines were thin, insipid and often downright unpleasant. Today there is an abundance of rich, balanced, well-made Pinot Noir which can delight the wine drinker.

How did this happen? What caused the changes? In this topnotch work the author, a former columnist for *Wine and Spirits Magazine*, takes a thoughtful look at Pinot Noir. He covers where Pinot has been, where it is now, and where it is going. In Haeger's discussion of the mediocre era of Pinot Noir in California, he notes that the low points came after the first massive wave of technology hit the wine industry and a common belief took hold that an intense intervention with new techniques could and would make all wines better. But Pinot Noir was different. Its basic chemical structure is unlike that of other reds. Its anthocyanins are not linked to its glucose units, as they are in most other reds. Pinot Noir cannot be treated as roughly as, say, Cabernet Sauvignon without damage. Winemakers have finally come to realize this about the grape, and have adjusted their wine making accordingly. Thus, their Pinots have gotten better, much better.

The author first presents an overview of the grape, with sections on such topics as the vine's origins and history, the most recent DNA studies of its make up and its descendants, and how the wine has been received by critics over the years.

Haeger next discusses the influence of Burgundy on the American scene. Then he follows with an overview of the rise of Pinot Noir in California, beginning with the first great California Pinots. Haeger also includes a section on "Power wine making and Pinot Noir". This is capped off with a lengthy section on the modern renaissance of Pinot Noir and the concern that winemakers are making wines to get high numbers from Robert Parker or the *Wine Spectator* rather than trying to maximize the vines' unique varietal potential.

It's clear that a major topic of discussion for winemakers these days is Pinot Noir clones. Want an in depth lesson on each of the clones and its attributes and problems? This is your book. In his writing about clones the author raises a red flag for the future. As winery after winery plants vines in France which produce spectacular wines there, a new problem is created. While the vines do well in Burgundy, where they ripen early with less sunlight, in California most vineyard sites get far more sunlight. Higher levels of sunlight may cause sharply different qualities in fruit from the same clones, resulting in overripe, unbalanced wines in California. Clearly, there is still much to learn about Pinot Noir.

In the back of the book the author presents profiles of more than seventy producers of quality Pinot Noir from around the world. There are subsections on the history of each winery, clones planted in the vineyards, wine making techniques, and a section of tasting notes on the wines. The only problem is that most, if not all of the tasting notes, were made unblind. The reliability of any such note from any source is questionable. Another problem is that at the end of each subsection there is very limited contact information for each winery--just a single telephone number: no postal address, no web site, no e-mail address, only a phone number. Regardless, this book is a "must have" for all Pinot Noir fans. This is the definitive work on Pinot Noir for our generation.

Very Highly Recommended

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We extend an invitation to you to join the Napa Valley Wine Library Association. Your membership dues help support the collections of the Library. You also receive issues of the Wine Library Report, information about our courses and seminars, and admission to our ever-popular Annual Tasting, limited to members only. Each individual membership is \$40.00 per year; a lifetime membership is \$500.00.

To join please complete this form and mail it with your check payable to: Napa Valley Wine Library Association
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The Wine Library is located in the
St. Helena Public Library
1492 Library Lane, St. Helena, CA.

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