



SPRING MOUNTAIN
VINEYARD
ST. HELENA *Napa Valley* CALIFORNIA



NEWSLETTER

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WINTER-SPRING 2006

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At the Vineyard

Predictability and Promise

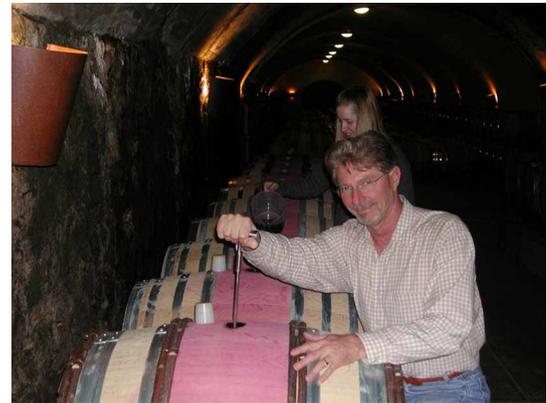
As if on cue, the winter rains have come to Napa Valley. December and January bring us the lion's share of our yearly rainfall, about 32 inches on average. Here on the mountain, aka Spring Mountain District, we claim the most rainfall in the entire Valley, with an average of 46-48 inches per year. So when it rains here, it rains with dramatic profusion. You may have heard about the recent Napa floods over the New Year's weekend when we received 9.25 inches of rain in just 13 hours! Sometimes more than raindrops fall. Outside my window I hear the drone of a chainsaw making firewood out of a 200 year-old fallen California Oak. And the charming streams that gurgled contentedly in the spring and fall are sweeping downhill with gusto.

For those of you who spend winter with snowballs and snowbanks, Spring Mountain weather will seem a bit tame. But weather is weather, and it serves a predictable purpose. The grapevines, dark and dormant in their nakedness, are absorbing the nourishment of the rain and the soil. Their rest will last until the wild mustard bursts into the vineyard and the pruning knife has prepared them for another vintage.

In the cellar, the wines are anything but dormant. They are young and bright and full of promise. January is the month when they receive their first racking and their first evaluation by the winemaking team. A racking means that the wines are taken out of the barrel they have been

occupying for the first few months since harvest and moved off the fermentation lees into clean barrels. During the barrel aging process in French oak, the wines will be racked about five times.

Two wines, the 2005 Sauvignon Blanc and 2005 Pinot Noir, are receiving quite a bit of TLC at this point. Lots of stirring the lees in each barrel will ensure a softer palate once they are bottled in the next 8-10 months.



Jac and Leigh stir lees and top off barrels

In December, we had a harvest of a different kind: Mission olives from the 120 year old trees that surround the winery. These olives, like those a century ago, yield a rich, late harvest oil that is labeled with the same art and the words 'Virgin Olive Oil' that were used by our founder, Tiburcio Parrott, back in 1885. (And yes, there IS a virgin on the label, and if you are in the Wine Club, you will see her on the complimentary bottle coming with your wines in March).

2005 Harvest Review

By Vineyard Manager Ron Rosenbrand

The 2005 harvest began on Sept. 20th – more than a month later than the previous year. The date for bud break in the spring was very similar in both years. A big difference between the two years was temperature and rainfall. Spring temperatures in 2004 were very warm

while 2005 Spring temperatures were unseasonably cool. Rainfall received during March, April and May 2005 was 17.75 inches compared to only 2.75 inches during the same months in 2004. This plentiful springtime rainfall and cool temperatures slowed vine growth and development, and bloom occurred nearly a month later than in 2004.



Harvest 2005 overlooking the Miravalle estate

This late trend carried through veraison, the point at which the red grape varieties begin to turn from green to purple. Summer temperatures were very warm in July, with several days over 100 degrees. The period between August through November 1st was cool to moderate with no heat spikes. This allowed for slow and even maturation with no dehydration. The last day of picking was on November 5th. When we tallied the total tonnage for 2005, it was 461 tons, nearly 20% more than the prior year. With respect to tonnage, the 2005 harvest bears a marked resemblance to the bountiful 1997 and the wines should be of similar stature and quality.

At the Table

If it's winter, it's crab season in California! What could be better than crab with a glass of Spring Mountain Vineyard's new release of 2004 Sauvignon Blanc?

Crab cakes have always been a personal favorite of mine. Their pan fried crunchiness and succulent richness please me every time. The fresher the crab, the better the crab cake. When picking fresh crab from the shell, try to keep large pieces intact so your crab cakes have generous bites of sweet crab inside.

Crab cakes are versatile and easy to make. Two small patties make an irresistible first course. Larger cakes make a substantial meal when served with a hearty homemade vegetable soup and a winter salad of citrus, endive, pistachios and greens.

We love our new 2004 Sauvignon Blanc so much we even used it to make the sauce.

Crab Cakes with Sauvignon Blanc Cream Sauce

Serves 8 as a first course

Preparation and cooking time: approximately 1 hour

Sauce

1 ¾ cups SMV Sauvignon Blanc

1/3 cup minced shallots

1 cup heavy whipping cream

Salt and pepper to taste

Crab Cakes

1 ½ pounds crabmeat, drained (about 4 cups)

2 ½ cups Panko (Japanese bread crumbs)

1 ¼ cups fresh breadcrumbs made from French bread

1 7.25-ounce jar roasted red peppers, drained and chopped

½ cup thinly sliced green onions

2 large eggs

2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon whole grain mustard

1 tablespoon low-fat mayonnaise

¼ cup vegetable oil for frying



Boil wine and shallots in heavy medium saucepan until mixture is reduced to ½ cup, about 10 minutes. Add cream and boil until liquid is reduced to sauce consistency, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Mix crabmeat, ½ cup of Panko, breadcrumbs and next 7 ingredients in large bowl until well blended. Using ¼ cupful crab mixture for each cake, form mixture into sixteen 2 ½-inch-diameter cakes. (Can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Cover sauce and crab cakes separately and refrigerate. Rewarm sauce over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, before serving). Place remaining Panko in a shallow dish. Press each cake into the Panko, turning to coat evenly.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add crab cakes to skillet and cook until golden brown and heated through, adding more oil as necessary, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer crab cakes to paper-towel-lined plate to drain.

Place 2 crab cakes on each plate; spoon sauce around crab cakes and then serve immediately.

You'll find the Sauvignon Blanc's richness a worthy mate to the crab and sauce. The wine's crisp acidity is the perfect way to set up your palate for another savory bite.

Bon Appétit!

New Release

2004 Sauvignon Blanc \$30

The 2004 vintage stands out as memorable, with fruit that bears the imprint of an early spring, and a slow and steady ripening period that ended several weeks ahead of traditional harvest timelines.



Rich floral and tropical fruit aromas hover in the nose of this vintage's gratifyingly balanced Sauvignon Blanc. Nuances of peach, melon and honey delight the palate, perhaps reminding one of swinging under an oak tree on a warm summer day. Hints of tea, mango and lemon meringue pie co-mingle on the palate, producing a creamy texture and long finish.

As with previous Sauvignon Blanc vintages, we use the sur lie barrel aging process, which gives its flavors and beautiful structure. A refreshing and elegant wine.

Other Recent Releases:

2002 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon \$50

2003 Syrah \$50

Read on for reviews of these wines!

A discount of 10% applies to orders of 6 or more bottles. Call 1-877-769-4637, email info@springmtn.com, or visit our web site to place an order. A 20% discount is extended to Wine Club Members.

People Are Talking

Spring Mountain Vineyard sparkled over the last few months!

Best of Napa Valley Tourism Award for 2005–2006 was awarded by the Global Network of Great Wine Capitals. The award recognizes Spring Mountain's incomparable

ambiance and the friendly, professional way we engage and educate our guests.



"The decision to open the vineyard two years ago was the culmination of many years of passion and effort," said owner Jacob E. Safra. "We are quite pleased to receive this international recognition for the individual brand of hospitality we extend to every guest of Spring Mountain Vineyard."

In case you are wondering where the Great Wine Capitals are, they are: Napa Valley, Bordeaux, Porto, Melbourne, Cape Town, Bilbao-Rioja, Florence and Mendoza. We met lots of enthusiastic international representatives at the awards dinner at the Culinary Institute in St. Helena on November 16, 2005. The exchange of friendship among these famous wine capitals is a unified way to promote the wonderful world of wine.

The Robb Report's November 2005 issue included the 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon and 2003 Syrah in its annual "Connoisseur's Collection of 100 brilliant wines to brighten the season." We couldn't agree more that the Syrah and Cabernet "will satisfy the most discerning guest and flatter the most demanding chef."

Tender Grapes

A connoisseur's collection
of 100 brilliant wines
to brighten the season.

BY BRETT ANDERSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CODDERO STUDIOS • STYLING BY ANDREA DAVIS

Speaking of kudos for the 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, the December 2005 Wine Enthusiast's Best of the Year Issue crowned it with 92 Points, while the 2003 Sauvignon Blanc earned 90 Points and the Editor's Choice Award.

Ultimate Wine and Ultimate Cars? Here's another way that fine wine makes friends. Check out the Robb Report's annual 'Car of the Year' issue in February for the results. Napa Valley and a few elite wine producers, including Spring Mountain Vineyard, provided the venues for the judging of the world's finest cars from Ferrari, Mercedes, BMW, Aston Martin, Rolls Royce, and the like.

Even more kudos for our Cab! In Wine International, Larry Walker selected Spring Mountain's 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon as one of his top wines of the 2002 vintage giving it 92 Points. His description? "A big, edgy wine with plenty of upfront and mid-palate fruit leading to a long, complex finish. In the mid-palate, the fruit is nicely balanced by minerality and softer tannins. Drink 2006-2020."

SMV Events

- Saturday, January 28: "Just Imagine Wine Auction," St. Helena, CA.
- Saturday & Sunday, January 28-29: "Boston Wine Expo," Seaport World Trade Center, Boston, MA.
- Sunday, January 29: "d'Vine Affair," Union League Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL.
- Saturday, March 4: "L'Amour du Vin" Knoxville Museum of Art auction & dinner, Knoxville, TN.
- Friday & Saturday, March 24-25: "Cincinnati International Wine Festival," Cynergy Convention Center, Cincinnati, OH.
- Wednesday, March 29: "Predators Foundation Spring Wine-Fest," Gaylord Entertainment Center, Nashville, TN.

We invite you to visit us and see why Spring Mountain Vineyard received the 'Best of Napa Valley Tourism' award. We offer daily tours and tasting by appointment. You may contact the winery toll free at 877-769-4637 or locally at 707-967-4188. You may also email us at office@springmtn.com or go online at www.springmountainvineyard.com to make your appointment.



December Olive Harvest

May your winter be warm and your cellar full,
- Valli Ferrell



2805 Spring Mountain Road
Saint Helena, California 94574

RETURN SERVICE REQUEST

