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# The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS



## MARTIN'S JOURNAL

**You've heard the  
advice: Serve white  
wine chilled and red  
wine at room temp.**

While those guidelines are basically correct, it's a little more complicated than that. By assigning recommended serving temperatures, we can achieve a bit more precision, and enjoyment.

Rich, bold red wines are best enjoyed a bit cooler than today's room temperature, or at about 60 degrees. Lighter reds should be even cooler, around 55. Interestingly, 55-60 also is the suggested temperature range for full-bodied white wines, such as Chardonnay. Lighter whites, such as Sauvignon Blanc, show best at the upper level of that range.

What about sparkling wine? Well, there's a good reason for those ice buckets. Sparklers are best enjoyed at about 40 to 50 degrees.

As a point of comparison, how does all of this compare to, say, beer? Other than those with big flavors (such as Belgian ales), the optimum temperature is around 40 degrees.

In all cases, the goal is to be able to savor all of a wine's wonderful aromas and flavors. Cheers!

*Martin Stewart Jr.*



## The Color of Wine: Is Red Really Superior to White?

By Robert Johnson

***As you might imagine,  
I know a lot of  
people who drink wine.***

Yes, it would be fair to say that some of my best friends are wine drinkers. And among them, I'd say most believe that red wine is superior to white.

That, also, should not be surprising. After all, when you pick up a copy of *Wine Spectator* or read the reviews of Robert Parker, red wines collectively are rated higher than white wines. The big 90s and the rare 100-point scores

almost always go to red wines.

Hey, I love red wine, too. But do I prefer it over white wine? For me, that would be too big a generalization to make.

For me, the "best wines" are those — regardless of color — that are sublime companions to food. For me, the "best wines" are those — regardless of color — that I share with good friends.

And the best of the best are those — again, regardless of color — that pair beautifully with food *and* are savored with friends.

Great food. Great wine. Great friends. That's what life is all about.

Check out "Editor's Journal" every Monday on [VinesseTODAY.com](http://VinesseTODAY.com).



### OUR MISSION:

To uncover and bring you wine gems from around the world, which you're not likely to discover on your own, and which enhance your wine enjoyment.

### YOUR GRAPEVINE TEAM:

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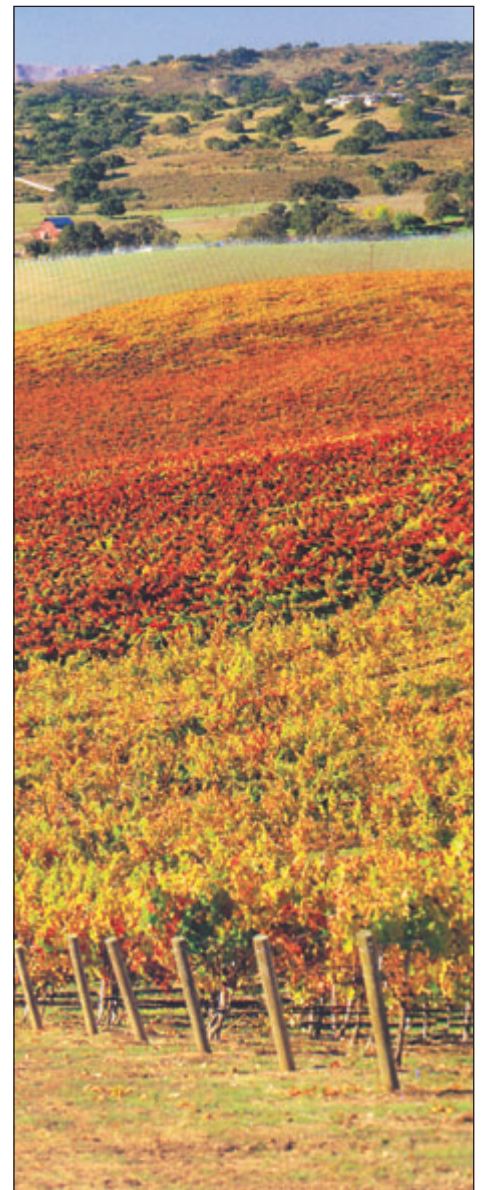


## CHARTER MEMBER BENEFITS:

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As I write this, the harvest season is about to begin in California Wine Country. That means it's time for me to emerge from the darkness and dampness of the cellar, and head out to the sun-drenched vineyards to check on the quality of the grapes around the state. It's a trip I take each year because it helps me and other members of the Vinesse tasting panel get our heads around the overall quality and potential of the vintage. (Full disclosure: The scenery isn't bad, either.)







## WINE A TO Z

**V**ioignier. Exotic white grape variety known for its honeysuckle aroma, musky fruit flavor and lanolin-like texture.

**W**einstube. A wine tavern in Germany, where people go to enjoy simple food and (in most cases) a locally grown and made bottle of wine.

**X**eres. French word for the wines made in Jerez. In English, those wines are known as Sherry.

**Y**ield. The measure of how much a vineyard, or a growing area, or even an entire country, produces. In America, it's measured in tons at harvest time and, ultimately, in gallons once the wine is bottled.

**Z**infandel. The most widely planted red grape variety in California until 10 years ago, when it was surpassed by Cabernet Sauvignon.

**A**ssyrτικο. A Greek grape variety known for its refreshing acidity. Grown primarily on the island of Santorini in the Aegean.

## APPELLATION SHOWCASE

### LIVERMORE VALLEY

*In the San Francisco Bay appellation, 30 miles east of San Francisco, the Livermore Valley appellation is within the larger Central Coast appellation.*

The Livermore Valley has an east-west orientation, making it unique among northern California winegrowing regions. It is 15 miles long (from east to west), 10 miles wide (from north to south), and surrounded by coastal range mountains and foothills.

The east-west orientation of the valley allows the coastal fog and

marine breezes to come in from the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay, and cool the valley's warm air, resulting in warm days and cool nights, ideal conditions for producing fully-ripened, balanced winegrapes.

The soil in the region is primarily gravel and has excellent drainage. It's a soil type that reduces the vines' vigor and increases flavor concentration in the grapes, and, ultimately, in the wines crafted from those grapes.

In recent years, urban sprawl has crept up on the vineyards and wineries of the Livermore Valley, but a number of vintners have taken legal steps to protect their land from becoming just another housing tract.



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**IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE.  
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Vinesse created the Elevant Society to meet members' demands for super-premium wines. While virtually all members of the original American Cellars Wine Club were very satisfied with their monthly selections, some wanted more, and they were willing to pay for it.

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**VINESSE STYLE**

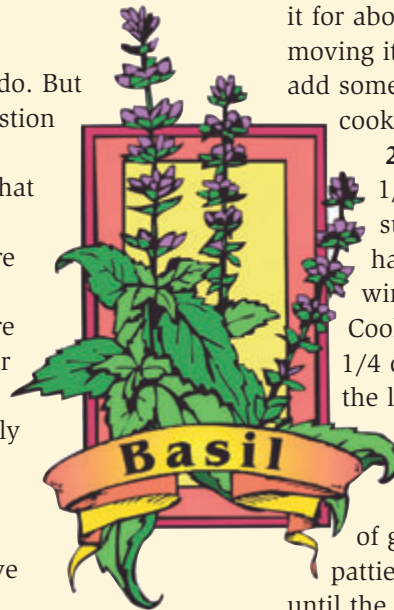
**BASIL**

*Remember when Simon and Garfunkel sang about “parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme”?*

Of course, you do. But we have one question regarding those famous lyrics: What about basil?

After all, is there any food “condiment” more simple to make or more enjoyable than pesto? Simply combine basil, Parmesan cheese and oil, and... presto!... you have pesto.

Basil is easily grown in most home gardens, and it's not at all out of place in a flower garden. There are many types of basil, but the most commonly used in cooking is Italian, a.k.a. Genovese.



For a fun summer meal, try Basil Burgers. Here's how to make them:

1. Heat 4 to 6 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil in a pan, and add 3 finely chopped cloves of garlic. Cook it for about 30 seconds, constantly moving it around the pan, and then add some cold water to stop the

cooking.

2. Reduce the heat and add 1/4 cup of finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes, which had been soaked in water, wine or olive oil overnight.

Cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Add 1/4 cup of chopped basil during the last minute of cooking, along with sea salt and pepper to taste.

3. Combine with 2 pounds of ground beef, and form into patties. Cook the patties on a grill until the desired doneness, and sprinkle some crumbled Pecorino Toscano on top during the last minute of cooking.

4. Serve the patties on buns with your favorite garnishes... and, of course, your favorite wine.

**BEING GREEN**

In a southern Oregon restaurant a few years back, a customer asked the waitress what kinds of wine she had. “Both kinds,” she replied. “Red and white.” These days, she might add green to the wine list. Growers are at the mercy of weather, soil conditions and pests to produce grapes that make good wine. But many Oregon growers are deciding that simpler is better, and are growing grapes without pesticides or chemical fertilizers. They're relying on cover crops and mechanical means to control weeds, and managing their vineyards as self-sustained units. Oregon has become a leader in a fast-growing interest in organic, sustainable and, yes, salmon-friendly viticulture. “Oregon has always been ahead of the rest of the country in terms of sustainability and the green movement,” said Steve Girard, co-owner of Benton-Lane Winery near Monroe, Ore., and chairman of the Oregon Wine Board. About 23 percent of the 15,600 acres of Oregon's vineyards have been certified as organic, sustainable, Salmon-Safe or Biodynamic, according to the Board. Each certification emphasizes different practices that may overlap. But in the end, all of the certifications are good for the environment.



## 10 Wines for Your Home Wine Rack

**M**any of us don't have room in our homes for big, temperature-controlled wine cabinets.

Particularly among apartment or condo dwellers — or families that are downsizing their homes as their kids go off to college or get married — space can be at a premium.

During the past year, we received countless emails and phone calls from members regarding what kind of wines they should have on hand when they don't have a great deal of space for storage.

So, the members of the Vinesse tasting panel put their heads together and came up with a list of 10 “go-to wines” — wines to fill the slots in that 10-bottle, tabletop wine holder. Here is their list of the 10 types of wine

every wine lover should have on hand — whether they're cramped for space or if space is unlimited.

**1. Chardonnay.** America's favorite white wine. The variety with which almost any guest would be familiar. The perfect wine to sip while catching up with friends.

**2. Sauvignon Blanc.** The wine to

serve with shrimp, crab cakes, scallops or other seafood specialties. Bright and refreshing.

**3. Chenin Blanc.** A flavorful and versatile food wine — great with fish, chicken or salads. Before Chardonnay took the crown, it was the white wine king of California.

**4. Gewurztraminer or Riesling.** If you enjoy Chinese or Thai take-out, either of these varieties will match beautifully. Also great with Tex-Mex. Serve well chilled to help counterbalance the spiciness of the food.

**5. Cabernet Sauvignon.** The king of red wines. Great for special occasion toasting, or to accompany a thick, juicy steak.

**6. Merlot.** The “mellow” red. Easy drinking and delicious.

**7. Pinot Noir.** Grilling salmon? Burgers? This is the wine to uncork.

**8. Zinfandel.** The perfect pizza wine. And we mean that in a good way.

**9. Champagne/Sparkling Wine.** Even people who think they don't like wine will drink a glass of bubbly on occasion.

**10. Dessert Wine.** For the guest with a sweet tooth, or for an after-dinner treat, have a sweet variety such as Muscat Canelli on hand.



### Four Seasons



#### WINES THAT MATCH THE SEASON.

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# Wining and Beachcombing in Southwest Michigan

**W***ine country adventures and trips to the beach normally are mutually exclusive recreational diversions.*

But they don't have to be in Southwest Michigan, which hugs the shore of Lake Michigan and is home to more than a dozen wineries. That means you can savor award-winning wines by day, soak in the scenery, and then enjoy a spectacular sunset (Mother Nature permitting, of course).

There is no better place to experience a Lake Michigan sunset than the South Cliff Inn Bed & Breakfast, which is perched on a lakeside hill just a few blocks from downtown St. Joseph, Mich. The inn features seven rooms, each individually decorated with imported fabrics and specially selected furnishings.

Each morning, innkeeper Bill Swisher prepares a sumptuous breakfast, which typically includes an egg-based casserole, various baked goodies, fresh fruit, cinnamon-scented coffee and more. Although not mentioned in any literature for the inn, there also was a late-afternoon wine-and-cheese reception each day during our stay.

Swisher is a former restaurant chef and cookbook author, so he knows his way around the kitchen. You'll find one of his recipes in this issue's "Cookbook" feature.

After breakfast, you'll be ready for a nap. But avoid the urge, and head out to the nearby wineries, which produce a wide array of bottlings —



## TOURING TIPS

from the vinifera wines we typically enjoy, to hybrid varieties developed for harsher climates, to sweet fruit wines.

Lemon Creek Fruit Farm has been growing some of Michigan's best grapes for decades, and in 1984, Robert and Helen Lemon teamed with their sons to found Lemon



Creek Winery. Today, the family farms about 140 acres of winegrapes and 60 acres of various other fruits, and makes a wide array of wines. The most unusual: a Cabernet Sauvignon ice wine.

Not far from Lemon Creek, in the town of Baroda, you'll find the Round Barn Winery, home to a 1911

Amish round barn. The old saying, "There's something for everyone," certainly would apply here, as Round Barn makes 35 different bottlings of wine, 20 Brandies and even a seasonal selection of microwbrews. The French-style eau-de-vies are a specialty, but if Chardonnay represents the limits of your adventurous nature, Round Barn makes one of the best in the region.

One of Michigan's better known wineries — Tabor Hill — also is nearby, and it's a good place to visit in the early afternoon, after you've had a chance to walk off that big breakfast. The winery's restaurant offers a menu that changes daily, and reservations are suggested. If you'd rather loaf than eat, the Grape Escape Lounge is a great place to sip a glass of wine while soaking in the vineyard scenery. Tabor Hill also hosts a number of special events throughout the year — from cooking classes to concerts — so call ahead when planning your visit.

A bit farther north in Coloma, Contessa Wine Cellars combines Old World charm with the best of modern amenities. The tasting room is reminiscent of an Italian villa, and the European-style terrace provides spectacular orchard vistas. Specialties of the house include a late harvest Riesling called Dolcezza d'Oro, a food-friendly Pinot

Grigio, a tasty red wine dubbed Rosa d'Amore, and a sparkling wine named Notte d'Amore. Yes, third-generation winemaker Tony Peterson puts a lot of love into every bottle.

If you'd like to stay near the beach, the Union Pier area is home to a number of satellite tasting rooms. Silver Beach, the region's



most famous, is part of a county park at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, and features numerous live music performances during the summer months. The beach even served as inspiration for one of Lemon Creek Winery's labels.



A walk along the shoreline in the early morning hours... a fabulous breakfast prepared by a noted chef... wines crafted by passionate



vintners... romantic beach sunsets. It doesn't get much better than a

"wine vacation" in Southwest Michigan.

## For Further Information

### South Cliff Inn

St. Joseph • 269-983-4881

### Lemon Creek Winery

Berrien Springs • 269-471-1321

### Round Barn Winery

Baroda • 800-716-WINE

### Tabor Hill Winery

Buchanan • 800-283-3363

### Contessa Wine Cellars

Coloma • 269-468-5534

### Silver Beach

St. Joseph • Michigan.org



## Between Sips of Wine, Enjoy a Game of Bocce

*When the pioneering families of Sonoma County winemaking wanted to unwind after a long day of pruning in the vineyards, many turned to bocce.*

These days, a number of wineries have constructed bocce courts for their customers to use. You'll find them all over the county, but none more clustered than the five in the north county community of Healdsburg.

Better still, these wineries take winemaking seriously. Bocce is the diversion; wine is the passion. (And if you've been a club member for a few years, you've probably enjoyed a bottle or two from a couple of these estates.)

Let's take a quick tour of these five esteemed Healdsburg wineries:

1. **Armida Winery.** Follow a

steep, winding driveway next to rows of hillside vines and you'll come to a geodesic dome-shaped tasting room, a parking lot and a bocce court with a breathtaking view of the valley below. Wines to try between games: Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

2. **Davis Family.** Bring your 'A' game because this winery's court is adjacent to the Russian River, which means passing canoes have a bird's eye view of your shotmaking. The court is shorter than regulation, about 60 feet in length, so that should help make up for any lack of skill. Wines to try: Old Vine Zinfandel Port and Pinot Noir.

3. **4791 Dry Creek Road.** Not a winery, per se, but rather a collection of five tasting rooms on a hill just north of downtown. The bocce court has a great view of the vineyards and adjacent cypress trees. Wines to try: With five wineries pouring, there are too many to mention.

4. **Pedroncelli.** The bocce court is surrounded by grapevines, olive trees and rosemary bushes. The setting is so pretty, it's enough to test your concentration on the game. Wines to try: Zinfandel Rosé and Sauvignon Blanc.

5. **Seghesio Family Vineyards.** No great view here, but the two courts fall within the official length of 75 to 90 feet. And the playing surface is perfect. Wines to try: Pinot Grigio and Sangiovese.





# Quotes Du Jour

■ *Sir Winston Churchill, on his first encounter with an American President:*

“Meeting Franklin Roosevelt was like opening your first bottle of Champagne; knowing him was like drinking it.”

■ *Richard Brinsley Sheridan, in an excerpt from School for Scandal:*

“I am never so successful as when I am a little merry: let me throw on a bottle of Champagne, and I never lose — at least I never feel my losses... and then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine?”

■ *A French proverb:*

“Wine poured out is not wine swallowed.”

■ *American novelist Herman Melville:*

“Wine opens the heart. Opens it! It thaws right out.”

■ *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, with some rhyming advice:*

“When you ask a friend to dine, give him your best wine. When you ask two, the second best will do!”

# Q AND A

**We enjoy being members of the wine club and so far we have enjoyed your choices. We also are officers in our local SLV Wine Club, which features wine tasting dinners four times per year for up to 112 participants. In our next event, we want to feature all wines from Washington state. We would appreciate suggestions for the various courses: 1. Onion soup; 2. Family-style salad tossed with balsamic vinaigrette, and rolls; 3. Alaskan king crab legs with drawn butter, served with Yukon gold potatoes with olive oil and garlic, and mixed vegetables; 4. Baked apple. Any help you might be able to give will be appreciated.**

— Merv & Faith Murdock

Sounds like a great meal. With the onion soup, we'd recommend a wine with a "neutral" flavor, and that generally would mean a sparkling wine such a Blanc de Blancs. Temperature also can

provide a nice contrast when pairing food and wine, and we like hot soup with a well-chilled sparkler.

The salad course is a bit tricky because of the vinaigrette, which provides a very assertive flavor that can be difficult to match with wine. Sauvignon Blanc would be a fairly safe choice, but Washington state also produces some very nice Semillon wines, and we'd probably go with one of those.

With the king crab, we'd normally recommend Chardonnay, but that variety isn't Washington's strong suit, as a general rule. Instead, opt for a full-bodied Chenin Blanc.

(You also mentioned in your letter that Filet Mignon would be substituted for the king crab for those who have shellfish allergies. With that dish, a Washington Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Syrah would work well.)

And to accompany the baked apple, look for a Washington Riesling with a bit of residual sugar.



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**IS THIS THE END OF THE GREAT CORK DEBATE?**

The August edition of *Decanter* magazine included an article titled, “50 Reasons to Love Screwcaps.” The feature proclaims that the screwcap is the best closure for the vast majority of wines — both whites and reds.

**NAPA WINERY TAKES STEPS TO FIGHT FROST**

In recent editions, we’ve been reporting on the spring frosts and their potential impact on the 2008 grape harvest in California. At Jarvis, one of Napa Valley’s premium wineries, a third of the crop was lost during an ill-timed May frost which saw the temperature hover around 22 degrees for four hours. To make sure similar

damage losses are not incurred in the future, Jarvis is taking the expensive step of installing an overhead sprinkler



system, which can protect vines when temperatures dip below freezing.

**THE BEST MONTHS TO VISIT SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN**

If our “Wine Touring Tips” feature motivated you to plan a wine excursion to Southwest Michigan, you may want to consider going when there’s a special event taking place.

Just reserve your lodging a little bit earlier. In November, there’s the Big Grape Tour. Packages include lodging, dinner, live music and dancing, in addition to a day-long bus excursion to local wineries for special wine and food pairings. Each August, the Wine Days of Summer event provides an opportunity to visit all the local wineries, with a souvenir wine glass in tow. And each July, Silver Beach hosts a special “Smooth Jazz at Sunset” concert. The 2008 edition featured guitar legend Peter White. For info on Pioneer Wine Trail special events, call 517-764-0679.

**WINING IN WASHINGTON? STAY AT THE FAT DUCK**

As recently as 1981, the state of Washington was home to 19 bonded wineries. Today, that number has skyrocketed to 530. No doubt about it: Washington now is “wine country.”

Walla Walla makes a fine home base for a Washington wine adventure, and if it’s luxury you seek, check out The Fat Duck Inn & Guest Homes. You’ll sleep like a baby — especially after consuming the sumptuous five-course dinner that is prepared for guests. To learn more about this unique place, log on to fatduckinn.com.

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### LE WINE BEOUF

This dish makes a fabulous centerpiece for a special meal. It was developed by Bill Swisher, innkeeper of the South Cliff Inn in St. Joseph, Mich. Try it with the wine you use in the recipe; Swisher recommends Pinot Noir.

#### Ingredients

- 3-4 lbs. thick chuck roast, cut into serving-size pieces (not bite-size)
- 1-lb. thick sliced bacon
- 2 T margarine or butter
- 1 large bay leaf
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt to taste
- 6-8 cups dry red wine
- 1-lb. whole mushrooms
- 8-10 medium onions, peeled

#### Preparation

1. Marinate meat in 6 cups of the wine overnight.
2. Cook half of the bacon in a heavy dutch oven until almost done, then remove the meat. Add the beef and

3. brown on all sides. Add seasonings.
3. Heat the marinade just to boiling. Add more wine if necessary. Pour over the meat to cover it.
4. Add 1/2-cup to 3/4-cup flour and stir.
5. Bake at 350 degrees in covered dutch oven for 1 hour.
6. While beef is cooking, cook the rest of the bacon, then add whole onions and brown them. Remove from heat and add mushrooms.
7. After the beef has cooked 1 hour, add the remainder of the ingredients and continue cooking, covered, for another 90 minutes.

### SHRIMP RISOTTO

Try this tasty recipe, courtesy of our friends at Pietra Santa Winery, with Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay or Pinot Noir.

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 1-lb. cleaned raw shrimp
- 4 cups chicken stock, boiling
- 1 small red onion, diced

- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 Meyer lemons (for juice and zest)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons truffle oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Grated Parmesan cheese

#### Preparation

1. In a large sauce pan over medium heat, cook onion until tender (about 2-3 minutes). Add rice and stir until lightly toasted (another 2-3 minutes).
2. Add wine and cook until it evaporates. Add lemon juice and zest, and stir. Add half of the boiling chicken stock and stir. Continue cooking over medium heat for 5-7 minutes, stirring as needed.
3. Add remaining chicken stock, and continue to cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. When rice is almost done, add shrimp. Stir shrimp in rice until cooked (about 5 minutes). Remove pan from heat and stir in truffle oil.
5. Top with grated Parmesan cheese just before serving.



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2007 Soaring Aces California Sauvignon Blanc .....	12.99
2006 Coyote Creek California Chardonnay .....	12.99
2005 Quinta da Romeira Prova Regia Bucelas, Portugal .....	17.99
2006 Forefathers Marlborough, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc .....	18.99
2007 Ile la Forge Vinde Pays d'Oc, France Viognier .....	19.99
2005 Barn Buster South East Australia Semillon-Verdelho .....	19.99
2006 Stark Damiano Vineyard Viognier .....	22.99

## RED WINES

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2005 Quail Hollow California Merlot .....	12.99
2005 Hunter Chaps Napa Merlot .....	16.99
2006 Tarrica Wine Cellars Monterey, California Pinot Noir .....	20.99
2006 Razors Edge McLaren Vale, Australia Cabernet Sauvignon .....	20.99
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 include a "comment card" in every shipment.  
 Fill it out and return it to us, or go online to:  
[www.vinesse.com/rateit](http://www.vinesse.com/rateit)*

***rate-it***

*Because your opinion counts.*



[www.vinesse.com/ask](http://www.vinesse.com/ask)



# WINE SALE!

While supplies last...

Please fill in your choices of wines so you'll have them handy when you call. Or send them to us via mail or fax.

QUANTITY	ITEM	PRICE

Member # _____				Date _____		<table border="1"> <tr><td>Subtotal</td><td>\$ _____</td></tr> <tr><td>Sales Tax</td><td>\$ _____</td></tr> <tr><td>Delivery</td><td>\$ _____</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Total</b></td><td><b>\$ _____</b></td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><b>Delivery Charges</b></td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">\$14.67 for each half case</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">\$21.60 for full case</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">Please allow</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">7-10 days for delivery</td></tr> </table>	Subtotal	\$ _____	Sales Tax	\$ _____	Delivery	\$ _____	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>Delivery Charges</b>		\$14.67 for each half case		\$21.60 for full case		Please allow		7-10 days for delivery	
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Name _____				Daytime Phone Number _____																				
Company (if office delivery) _____				Evening Phone Number _____																				
Delivery Address _____																								
City _____		State _____	Zip _____	E-Mail _____																				
Charge my: <input type="checkbox"/> American Express <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover <input type="checkbox"/> Card on File																								
Card Number _____				Exp. Date _____																				
Signature (Required) _____																								
<input type="checkbox"/> Check Enclosed, Payable to: Vinesse																								

### As a Member, You Can View Your Account Online

For full details about your account, including your personal shipment history, charge amounts, and more, please visit [www.Vinesse.com](http://www.Vinesse.com) and log on via the "Your Account" link at the top right.

### Vinesse

822 Hampshire Rd., Suite E, Westlake Village, CA 91361 • email [vinesse@vinesse.com](mailto:vinesse@vinesse.com)

**MAIL TODAY, FAX TO 805-496-4311,  
OR CALL TOLL-FREE: 800-823-5527.  
HOURS: MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM TO 5PM PST**