



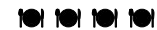
**PLUMPJACK**  
WINES

PlumpJack Wine Club

## July 2008

Wine producers, like chefs, walk a difficult path in their efforts to create something that will ultimately send us into a state of organoleptic bliss. Both winemakers and chefs have a variety of tools and techniques they can draw upon to achieve this goal, but probably the single most important component is the quality of the ingredients they use. Our two producers this month share the same philosophy when it comes to the selection of fruit they use to make their wines. They go to extraordinary efforts to obtain the highest quality fruit, and the result is readily apparent in the quality of their wines. These two wines are extremely limited both in production and availability, so try them now and stock your closet with some extra bottles. You'll be happy you did!

*2006 Opine Cellars  
Côtes du Coast  
Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne  
Santa Maria, California*



*2005 Hesketh  
"The Protagonist"  
Barossa Valley Shiraz  
St. Geroges, South Australia*



In the U.S., appellations are formally called American Viticultural Areas or AVAs. Established by Congress in 1978, it assures consumers that the wine they are drinking originates from a specific growing area. The AVA system requires that 85% of the grapes used come from within that specified AVA. The AVA system does not limit the regions in the types of grapes grown, or regulate growing or winemaking practices. California's Central Coast is a huge coastal appellation to receive AVA status from the BATF. This appellation spans from the San Francisco Bay to Santa Barbara County, and has an estimated 100,000 acres under vine, cooled by the marine effect off the Pacific Ocean. Wineries in this appellation grow a diversity of grape varieties and range from small, boutique wineries to large-scale producers. The Central Coast appellation includes numerous smaller AVAs within its boundaries. Initially planted in the Mission period, the area was revitalized after prohibition by individual entrepreneurs, large and small, seeking new land, as Napa and Sonoma land prices rose and available vineyard land was less available. Initially, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir made up the dominant varieties, but today Rhône varieties have gained a strong foothold, and are now a prominent portion of annual production. Appellations included in this large region are: Arroyo Grande Valley, San Antonio Valley, Arroyo Seco, San Benito, San Bernabe, Carmel Valley, San Francisco Bay, Chalone, San Lucas, Cienega Valley, San Luis Obispo County, Contra Costa County, San Ysidro District, Edna Valley, Santa Barbara County, Hames Valley, Santa Clara County, Lime Kiln, Santa Clara Valley, Livermore Valley, Santa Cruz County, Monterey, Santa Lucia Highlands, Monterey County, Santa Maria Valley, Pacheco Pass, Santa Ynez Valley, Paicines, Santa Rita Hills, Paso Robles and York Mountain. Curt Schalchlin, owner and winemaker of Opine Cellars, makes Rhône-style blends sourced from named Central Coast vineyards. Opine means to state an opinion. Curt says, "I believe winemaking is ultimately the representation of the opinion of the winemaker and the grape grower. Decisions have to be made every year in the vineyard and the cellar that will affect the outcome of the finished product, the wine in the bottle. I really want to show off what Rhônes can do on the central coast, from Paso down to Santa Ynez. I believe this area is perfect for Rhônes, and I am excited to see the wines that are produced in my lifetime. I feel we are only beginning to tap the potential of Rhônes on the

Central Coast.” Curt took an inspiring trip to the Rhône Valley in France, and traveled from Condrieu down to Chateauneuf. Experiencing all the history and tradition of the Rhône Valley really opened his eyes to what Rhône varietals could do. Curt has worked hard to find great sites and vineyard managers that he believes deliver the most expressive fruit that represents each area and microclimate the vineyards are in. Curt says, “The vines I have contracted yield between two and three and a half tons an acre, which is very low. The high side of this scale would be nine tons an acre which ends up in wines like Charles Shaw or other big brands.” The 2006 The Côtes du Coast is a blend of 38% Viognier, 32% Marsanne and 30% Roussanne. The three varietals are from three extremely different areas on the Central Coast: Santa Barbara Highlands vineyard (Cuyama Valley): Viognier harvested 9/02/06, Westerly Vineyard, McGinley (Solvang): Roussanne harvested 10/29/06, Derby Live Oak Vineyard (Westside Paso Robles): Viognier harvested 9/14/06, Marsanne harvested 10/17/06, Roussanne harvested 10/24/06. All fruit was hand-picked, pressed, and pumped into barrel. The wine went through 100% barrel fermentation and was left on the lees until 10 days before bottling. All wines were made individually and blended into a tank 10 days before bottling. Only the best barrels were chosen -- 15 of a possible 18 barrels made the cut. According to Curt, “Each vineyard site and varietal really added to the blend and I love drinking this wine and picking out the different characteristics that each added. I really enjoy the way the blend walks the fine line between having weight and length.” The wine exhibits flavors of peaches, apricot, jasmine, and anise. It delivers a beautiful balance of richness and acidity. It is a truly unique wine that holds up to foods and is enjoyable on its own. Only 300 cases were produced. Try this wine with scallops in mustard-olive sauce. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Heat olive oil in medium skillet. Add garlic and scallops and cook on medium heat for 5 minutes. Add chopped olives, capers, mustard, cream and butter. Cook over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes or until reduced by half, stirring occasionally. Spoon scallops into scallop shells or onto small ovenproof dish. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and bake until top is nicely browned, about 2 to 3 minutes, watching carefully to prevent burning.

**The 2006 Opine Cellars Côtes du Coast is \$19.99/bottle, \$215.90/case.**



The Hesketh Wine Company is a small, family-owned, South Australian-based producer of high quality wines, which represent the best wine styles from the best growing regions. The family has worked and/or lived in growing regions all over the world -- in Burgundy, Champagne, the South of France, the UK, North America and throughout Australia and New Zealand. In 2005, the Hesketh Wine Company decided to produce wines under the family name for the first time. Each wine is vineyard-specific, made with fastidious attention to detail, in a style that they believe reflects what each region excels at. The Hesketh winemaking philosophy is best described in three parts: “1.) Our first goal is to produce wines that taste of where they come from. This comes from making the wines in the vineyard with minimal winemaker intervention. 2.) Our second goal is to produce wines with what we like to describe as 'drinkability'. This is more traditionally known as balance. Power in wine is great, but not at the expense of balance. Wine should be a social lubricant that can be enjoyed with food, friends and healthy conversation. 3.) Finally, we limit our wines to those made from the most celebrated grape varieties, from only the most acclaimed regions for producing those varieties, wherever they may be, anywhere in the world.” Shiraz, and Barossa Valley Shiraz in particular, has been the principal leader of the Australian wine industry internationally. The Barossa Valley is a 45-minute drive north west of Adelaide, has long, dry summers, and is just far enough inland to be away from the moderating effect of the sea. It is a climate suitable for grape ripening, and produces wines emphasizing fruit and flavor. The 2005 “Protagonist” is made from 100% Barossa Valley Shiraz. Fruit for this wine is sourced from mature, low-yielding vineyards located on the northern (Kalimna & Ebenezer) and western (Seppeltsfield) sub regions of the Barossa Valley. Fruit was picked at optimum ripeness, with individual parcels matched to a selection of American oak, where it matured for two years prior to bottling. The wine was bottled with minimal filtration to maintain intensity of color, structure and flavor. The 2005 “Protagonist” offers aromas of dark berry fruits, mocha, cedar, dark chocolate and plums. In the mouth, it is rich and ripe, with sweet blackberries combined with chocolate and licorice. Powerful fruit is balanced neatly with natural acidity to provide an element of restraint and elegance to the finish. I had this wine with a grilled hamburger and corn on the cob, and it was a summertime delight!

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