

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY

COMING EVENTS

Friday, Jan. 7, 2011
First Fridays Art Walk
 A Taste of Monterey
 Old Town Salinas
 5:00pm-8:00pm
 Stop by A Taste of Monterey in Old Town Salinas on your journey through the First Fridays Art Walk. Enjoy art from a featured local artist, while we stay open later!

Friday, Jan. 28, 2011
Last Fridays Wine Bar
 A Taste of Monterey
 Cannery Row
 6:00pm-9:00pm
 Join us on the last Friday of every month from 6pm to 9pm. A Taste of Monterey, Cannery Row is keeping its doors open later and offering special wine by the glass prices. Start your weekend off with a relaxing view and a glass of Monterey's finest.

From Turkeys to Sycamores: THE STORY OF A FAMILY WINERY IN MONTEREY COUNTY



Are there sycamores in Monterey County? With the delightful introduction of The Sycamore Cellars winery, there undoubtedly are now! Nestled at the base of the Santa Lucia Mountains in the unique appellation of Arroyo Seco, Sycamore Cellars winery is an extraordinary new member of Monterey County's wine industry.

Not only does Sycamore Cellars symbolize an exciting and dynamic addition to the County's ever-improving entourage of world-class wineries, a trend all of us enlightened individuals know very well, but the winery and its newly-opened tasting room also highlight the burgeoning potential of Arroyo Seco itself.

The appellation of Arroyo Seco has long been considered a sub-region of the County offering diverse terroir, but it's also widely regarded as an area ripe with the potential for expansion, be it in the form of planted acreage or tasting rooms. Representing both, A Taste of Monterey is pleased to present Sycamore Cellars winery in its January wine club selection.



The story of Sycamore Cellars begins, curiously enough, with a turkey farm. In the 1950's, Harry Kuchta purchased a 200-acre ranch in the upper Arroyo Seco area, which was originally a turkey farm, with the intent of making it a home and working ranch for his family. Harry worked in Gonzales in the dairy business and decided to establish his own dairy venture on his newly-acquired ranch in Arroyo Seco. Turkeys, thus, were replaced with cows.

Harry eventually opted to switch his ranch's agricultural production from dairy to dry crops. Alfalfa, oat hay, and various other fruits and vegetables replaced the land milking cows used to tread upon. Cows, thus, were replaced with dry crops.

As the decades passed, Monterey County's wine industry began to blossom, and Arroyo Seco became increasingly enticing to wine growers. Harry was aware of the sprouting trend surrounding him in the county, but didn't sculpt his agricultural production towards growing grapes until the arrival of his son-in-law, Rob Madsen, who brought the knowledge and skills required for the transition.

Rob solidified a partnership with his new brother-in-law, Dennis, and another addition to the team arrived later when Marvin Tavernetti joined the family. Rob's role in the family operation has been augmented through the contributions of his team members, but his Monterey County viticulture resume is unsurpassed.



Rob entered into the wine business at the tender age of 14 (we'll not ask whether or not he was ever allowed to taste the wines) when he began an apprenticeship of sorts at Paul Masson, a winery some of you may recognize. For those who don't, we'll just state that Paul Masson winery is regarded as one of the pioneers of Monterey County's wine industry. Rob later was involved in the development of the Monterey Farming Corporation, later to become known as Scheid Vineyards.

Continued Inside

JANUARY REFERRAL BOTTLE



2006 Cobblestone Chardonnay \$29 Value

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

LINE SHACK WINERY - 2009 *Roussanne*



In 2003, Line Shack Winery founders and winemakers, Bob and Daphne Balentine, set out to produce an affordable world class Roussanne from the San Antonio Valley AVA in Southern Monterey County. The San Antonio Valley is the sight of California's second mission, Mission San Antonio, where some of the first wine grapes in California originated. Their vineyards are located in a high mountain valley within the Southern portion of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range adjacent to the West Side of Paso Robles. Warm days followed by cool nights enable the fruit to achieve extended hang time maximizing their true varietal characteristic tropical aromas of apricot, white peaches with floral and citrus notes and a hint of honey. Slightly dry with crisp acidity and minerality, silky on the palate. Floral finish is embellished by floral notes. Excellent with rich shellfish (lobster and crab); sea bass, salmon, also pairs nicely with mildly spicy foods (curries or gumbo) stir-fries in garlic and olive oil, a light pasta, roasted chicken or turkey and salads.

80% Roussanne, 10% Marssanne and 10% Viognier

14.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2012

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

SYCAMORE CELLARS - 2008 *Cabernet Sauvignon*



Crafted by long-time residents of the Sycamore Flats, Rob Madsen and Dennis Kuchta, this robust red captures the uniqueness of the Arroyo Seco AVA. The canyon maintains warm temperatures which help develop high sugar levels in the grapes between 23-25 brix. The cool coastal breeze from the Pacific contributes to its depth and balance. This cabernet sauvignon is full bodied and carries a velvety texture. Its subtle flavors of chocolate and black cherry lead well into a smooth tannin finish. This elegant red would be well paired with a juicy barbecued rib eye or tri tip, as well as a tender broiled prime rib.

100% Cabernet Sauvignon

13.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

SYCAMORE CELLARS - 2008 *Chardonnay* (Club Blanc)



This vibrant white embodies the unique climate found in the Arroyo Seco appellation. The warm spring and summer weather provides a perfect temperature for the véraison phase of the grapes. During the fall, as harvest time approaches, the cooler climate helps create a crisp character. This chardonnay enters silky and is refreshing on the palate. Its fruity body, with hints of apple and pear, transitions smoothly into a clean finish. This crisp white would pair nicely with grilled fresh halibut or a chicken piccata with a lemon caper sauce.

100% Chardonnay

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2012

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

LINE SHACK WINERY - 2008 *Syrah* (Club Red)



The vineyard team performed their standard meticulous practices of early season suckering and basil leaf removal. Fruit on weak shoots was removed. Leaves were removed to maintain ambient light through the canopy. Both a green harvest in June and an early August veraison thinning were performed. Finally, a pre-harvest touch up pass insured evenly ripened fruit. This vineyard produces less than 4 tons per acre. Deep, dark purple in color with black cherry, plum and violet aromas. Full-bodied, fruit forward, hearty and rich with big, ripe, jammy fruit. Slightly oaky flavors with nicely integrated tannins in a long smooth finish. Made with fruit from the new San Antonio Valley AVA in Southern Monterey County.

100% Syrah

14.7% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2014

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



Added to Rob's urging to convert the family farm into a vineyard, in came interest from Kendall Jackson (another winery some may recognize) and, in 1997, the ultimate decision to plant grapes came to be a reality. Dry crops, thus, were replaced with grapes. Twenty-five acres of grapes were first planted at the ranch, which was later increased to sixty acres. These sixty acres were divided into ten blocks, with a majority being planted with Cabernet Sauvignon at twenty-five acres, followed closely by Pinot Noir with eighteen acres, five acres a piece dedicated to plantings of Syrah and Petite Sirah, two and a half acres each of Grenache Noir and Cinsault, and with the last remaining half acre being planted with Sangiovese fruit.

The estate vineyard is 100% sustainably farmed, employing techniques such as minimal tilling, crop coverage, and the usage of organic fertilizers. Sycamore Cellars envisions being Sustainability in Practice (SIP) certified in the near future.

Just as sycamore trees are reputed to have the potential to grow to massive proportions, Sycamore Cellars is already flourishing. Sycamore Cellars currently has vintages of Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Syrah bottled. With the diversity of its planted estate acreage, one can only salivate in anticipation of future vintages. Recently, Rob hinted at a future Rhone-style blend, a Cabernet-Syrah blend, and a single varietal Sangiovese. He's also interested in expanding the ranch's planted acreage to include an array of white Rhone varieties. Quite a change from the days when turkeys had the run of the ranch!

We hope you enjoy your introduction to Sycamore Cellars as much as we have. Just earlier this year, the winery celebrated the inaugural opening of its picturesque tasting room on Arroyo Seco Road and we encourage all our members to visit it soon. We'll gladly sit back and enjoy the fantastic wines already in production through Sycamore Cellars, while looking forward to what new trunks may grow off of this sprouting gem of a family-owned and operated winery.

-Bryce Ternet

Bryce Ternet is a contributing author for A Taste of Monterey and is the author of three books. See www.mbryceternet.com for more.

RECIPE

SALINAS VALLEY FISH HOUSE

Mussels Sautéed with Sweet Sake & Sriracha



Ingredients:

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 8 | green lip mussels |
| 1/2 tsp | chopped garlic |
| 1 tsp | sriracha hot sauce |
| 1 oz | sweet sake |
| 8 oz | marinara sauce |
| 7 oz | fish stock or clam juice |
| 1 tsp | butter |



No Corkage Fee program participant!

Method:

Coat frying pan with oil and heat until it is smoking hot. Add mussels and garlic then saute until they start to open. Then add sriracha and sake and saute for a minute or so. Add marinara, fish stock and butter then cook until mussels are open and serve over pasta or with bread.

FEATURED PRODUCTS



SUPER BOWL PARTY PACK



Turn the Super Bowl into a Super Wine Tasting Party!

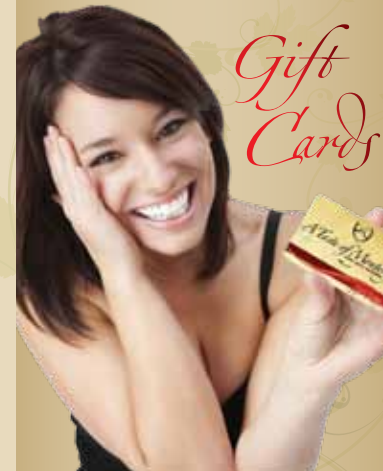


Why settle for beer, when you can bring smiles to your friend's faces by sharing this fabulous selection of wines from Monterey County! Red blends to go with something off the grill. Refreshing whites for your famous Chili. Or try some Pinot Noir or Chardonnay for the perfect pairing with chips, guacamole and a little medium-hot salsa. It is all here included in this great pack of wines, just add friends, food and the game.

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\$124.95 Wine Club Price

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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In order to better serve our members, we need to receive any new info and changes regarding your status (i.e., change of address, new credit card number, etc.) by the 20th of each month.

PLEASE NOTIFY US BY CALLING
(888) 646-5446.

Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

A Taste of Monterey
Attn: Elaine Hewett
127 Main Street
Salinas, CA 93901
(888) 646-5446 Ext. 13
club@tastemonterey.com

CLUB SAVINGS

Remember, as a Club Member, you receive a 15% discount on all purchases (20% for Quattro and Cellar members) and a weekly complimentary tasting.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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JANUARY SELECTIONS		REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
	Line Shack Winery 2009 Roussanne	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
	Sycamore Cellars 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$24.00	\$18.00	\$19.20
	Sycamore Cellars 2008 Chardonnay	\$26.00	\$19.50	\$20.80
	Line Shack Winery 2008 Syrah	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
DECEMBER SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 02/28/2011		
	Morgan Winery 2009 Sauvignon Blanc	\$15.00	\$11.25	\$12.00
	Pacific Valley Vineyards 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
	Sofia 2009 Blanc de Blancs	\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
	Pot Belly Winery Port	\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80
NOVEMBER SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 01/31/2011		
	Ludwig Winery 2009 Dry Gewürztraminer	\$17.00	\$12.75	\$13.60
	Ventana Vineyards 2008 Rubystone	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
	Chesebro Winery 2009 Vermentino	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
	Otter Cove 2008 Pinot Noir	\$28.00	\$21.00	\$22.40
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB		PRICES EXPIRE 02/28/2011		
	Tudor Wines 2006 Sarmento Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$60.00	\$45.00	\$48.00
	Michaud Vineyards 2004 Syrah	\$38.00	\$28.50	\$30.40
	Pot Belly Winery NV Port	\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80

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*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.