BARKING DOG 2007 MERLOT
NAPA VALLEY

Produced from the Barking Dog Vineyard in the heralded Coombsville region of Napa Valley, the Barking Dog 2007 Merlot is everything one would be looking for in a Napa Valley Merlot with silky, soft tannins, rich, bright fruit flavors, and balanced oak to give the wine a full body and touch of complexity. Brick red in color, the 2007 Merlot shows aromas of cherry, black currant, blackberry, and vanilla with a velvety, full body and a warming, complex body of cherry, wild strawberry, currants and baking spice flavors. The finish lingers with soft oak flavors and medium flavors. We recommend pairing the Barking Dog 2007 Merlot with Sea Scallops Tapas (see Recipe page) or any red grilled meats. Aged in oak. 100% Merlot. Enjoy now until 2017.

91 POINTS + GOLD MEDAL
- Beverage Testing Institute's World Wine Championships

CHATEAU CHEVALIER 2010 SAUVVIGNON BLANC
SPRING MOUNTAIN DISTRICT - NAPA VALLEY

The Chateau Chevalier 2010 Sauvignon Blanc is crafted along the lines of fine white Bordeaux, finding a balance between the fruit’s characteristic bright fruit flavors and the rich, creamy elements provided by extended aging and barrel contact. Signature Spring Mountain District acidity gives the Chateau Chevalier 2010 Sauvignon Blanc a lovely structure and excellent balance. The 2010 Sauvignon Blanc is a very aromatic wine with notes of tropical fruit, Asian pear, jasmine flowers, and vanilla bean. Flavors of kiwi, passion fruit, pineapple, and mango dance on the palate, all wrapped in a creamy, rich texture and followed by a long finish with ruby grapefruit and lush fruit. Pair the 2010 Sauvignon Blanc with seafood, chicken, or pasta with cream-based sauces. Enjoy now until 2016.

GOLD MEDAL SPECIAL SELECTION
BARKING DOG VINEYARD

It all started more than forty years ago when Larry and Beverly Thompson met as students at the University of California Los Angeles, better known as UCLA. She was an art major and Larry was a Pre-Med student. The pair later married and Larry sought out a position in his field of Pathology. Only two openings were available, a position in downtown Los Angeles and one in Napa Valley.

“I must confess that Napa was the last place I wanted to locate,” confided Beverly Thompson during a recent interview. “At the time, it was really quite rural. There was no shopping to speak of and practically nothing to do with your time.”

But Larry had always been interested in farming and the couple finally found a small, ten-acre parcel in the Coombsville growing area. “We just wanted an acre or two,” explained Beverly Thompson, “but the Agricultural Preserve of 1968 set standards on how land could be subdivided. We were fortunate to find the parcel we did and then we just trusted we would do the right thing with it.”

Then came the disastrous Atlas Peak fire of the early 1980’s and the Thompson’s were faced with

Continued on Page 4

CHATEAU CHEVALIER WINERY

Few California wineries have a rich and traditional history as the likes of Chateau Chevalier.

Tracing back to 1815, the birth of Fortune Chevalier was recorded in Belle Isle, France. The young Frenchman came to San Francisco in 1850 with the idea of establishing a window construction and repair business along with some French associates. When his friends deserted him for the California gold fields of the Sierra foothills, Chevalier ended up in Sacramento and began trading in the wine and spirits industry. Eying the scores of thirsty miners in the area, he established F. Chevalier and Company to meet those needs.

He moved the business to San Francisco in 1872. By 1880, a scarcity of wines (due to the phylloxera epidemic in Europe) caused a wine boom in the Napa Valley. In 1881, Fortune Chevalier decided to build an imposing barn and Chateau that would rival Napa’s finest structures. It was

Chateau Chevalier’s exquisite winery structure was recently renovated to help preserve the original Chateau that was built in the late 1800’s.

Continued on Page 5
a dilemma. “I told my husband we needed to plant grapes as a firebreak and that’s how we first got into the grape growing business,” Beverly Thompson confided.

The Thompsons were among the first to plant the Bordeaux varietal Merlot on their land. The plants flourished and the Thompsons were able to sell their fruit to several high quality wineries including Vichon Winery, Markham Vineyards and Merryvale Vineyards. Along the way, they began making a few cases of wine, “mostly to give to friends and to drink ourselves.”

Then, they caught a lucky break. Their son was a friend of the son of legendary Napa winemaker Jerry Luper (Freemark Abbey Winery and Rutherford Hill Winery). Luper visited the property and agreed it was perfect for Merlot and that the quality of the grapes was exceptional.

When winemaker Art Finklestein (see Winemaker Profile) entered the picture, the idea of a working winery became a reality. He was more than a winemaker to the Thompsons; he was a close personal friend.

The winery was conceived and named Barking Dog Vineyard after a neighbor of the Thompson’s from Los Angeles indicated she wasn’t used to the barking of dogs in the early morning hours. The Thompsons had had a series of standard poodles (who liked to bark) and the name Barking Dog Vineyard became a reality. The couple’s third standard poodle, Chianti, adorns their label as proof of their devotion to animals.

The first release of some 1,100 cases occurred in 2003. The winery received excellent reviews and soon developed a strong following. Production of wines slowly increased until it reached a high level of around 2,000 cases in 2010.

In 2010, Dr. Larry Thompson suffered a heart attack two weeks after winemaker Art Finklestein passed away. Dr. Thompson was forced to cut back on his time in the vineyards. The Thompsons have since stopped crafting wines and exclusively focus on growing grapes.
was surrounded by 40 acres with about 25 of them being under vine. Roads were lines with olive trees and extensive gardens featured complex paths along terraces, swimming pools and numerous stone stairways.

Fortune died in April, 1889, but his son George continued to operate the business. He sold it and the venerable place changed hands several times until Berkeley oilman H.H. Hart purchased it in 1918 and renamed it Harthaven. The original structure burned to the ground in a fire in 1936, but the vineyards continued to be tended and the grapes sold to local wineries.

In 1970, the Bissonette Family bought the land and replanted the vineyards and released the first Chateau Chevalier wines since Prohibition. John and Gil Nickel (of Far Niente Winery fame) acquired the property in the early 1980's and further renovated the Chateau.

In 1993, famed Napa Valley winery Spring Mountain Vineyard and its Swiss owner Jacqui Safra bought the winery and property and remains the owner today. A major renovation to the old Chateau was also begun that required all of the exterior wood and trim to be replaced. The formidable twin towers were completely rebuilt and the residence in the interior of the towers was completely removed. The winery's striking interior, made from pristine redwood, was returned to a state much as it existed more than a century ago.

Chateau Chevalier is an amazing throwback to an era in Napa Valley that preceded Napa Valley's ascension to international wine fame.
Scallops Tapas

Pair with the Barking Dog 2007 Merlot

- 18 large sea scallops
- 1 Tbs. lemon juice
- 5 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 finely chopped medium onion
- 1 finely chopped clove of garlic
- 1/2 cup chopped prosciutto
- 1/2 cup Merlot
- 1 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika
- Pinch of cinnamon
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup finely chopped Italian parsley
- 1/2 cup Panko crumbs

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Divide scallops among 6 oven-proof dishes (tapas dishes or shells). Put lemon juice on the scallops. Heat oil in a skillet and sauté onion, and garlic and prosciutto until onion and garlic are soft and prosciutto is crisp. Add wine and simmer for 5 minutes. Add paprika, cinnamon, cayenne, and parsley. Top the scallops with the sauce and Panko.

Heat in the oven for 15 minutes until bubbling. Serve with Italian country bread and Barking Dog Merlot. Enjoy! Recipe provided by Barking Dog Vineyard.

Ahi Tuna Stacks with Ginger-Lime Dressing

Pair with the Chateau Chevalier 2010 Sauvignon Blanc

For the Dressing:
- 1 1/2 tsp. minced fresh ginger
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 2 tsp. low sodium soy sauce
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 2 Tbs. water
- 8 oz. sushi-grade ahi tuna, cut into small dices
- 1 cup peeled and diced cucumber
- 1 cup diced mango
- 1 cup diced avocado
- 1 cup diced red onion
- 1 Tbs. toasted white sesame seeds

In a small bowl, whisk together all of the dressing ingredients. Set aside.

Assemble the tuna stacks. You will need a 3-inch circular ring mold for this. Place the ring mold on the plate on which you’re going to serve the tuna stack and then layer one fourth of the diced cucumber, mango, avocado, tuna, and red onion inside the bold, pressing the ingredients firmly on top of one another.

To remove the bold, press down on the top layer while slowly lifting to reveal the tuna stack. Repeat the layering process with the remaining ingredients to form three more tuna stacks.

Drizzle each stack with a portion of the ginger-lime dressing, sprinkle with the toasted sesame seeds, and serve immediately with a cool glass of Chateau Chevalier 2010 Sauvignon Blanc. Recipe provided by Chateau Chevalier Winery.
WINE WIZARD: TEST YOUR WINE IQ!

1. Why is Pinot Noir considered a finicky grape?

2. What is the difference between ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ tasting?

3. What does the term ‘ullage’ refer to?

(Answers on backside of newsletter)

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT: BEVERLY THOMPSON

Although she has now passed the tender young age of 70, Barking Dog Vineyard owner Beverly Thompson doesn’t seem to have slowed down one bit. The New York State-born Thompson came with her family to California as a youth and has been there since that time.

“I was an art major and Larry was in pre-med at UCLA when we met. We fell in love and the rest is history,” she recalled.

Beverly became interested in wine when she studied in Sienna, Italy in 1964. “I fell in love with the area and its wines, and Chianti in particular. I never guessed at the time that I would one day be involved in a winery. But it has been a fun ride, and we have a great deal to be thankful for.”

Beverly Thompson also points out that her husband Larry has always had a fondness for gardening and growing, and that he has been instrumental in developing their 10-acre vineyard.

“We took a trip to Bordeaux and while we were there we visited the famous Chateau Petrus,” she recounted.

“We took note that the soils and ground there were extremely rocky and quite similar to our own property. When we found out that Chateau Petrus is almost entirely planted to Merlot, we felt we were on the right track with our vineyard. If the most famous wine in the world is made from Merlot, why not make our wines from the same grape?”

At that time, Napa Valley was comparably small with only forty or fifty wineries. “We knew all the families and everyone helped everyone else out. If someone needed something, you’d just call and ask and it would be done.”

Today’s modern Napa Valley isn’t quite the same to Beverly Thompson. “It’s positively overwhelming, the number of wineries that exist today. Everything is so commercialized; you just don’t have any idea where to start. We belong to the Coombsville Vintners & Growers Association and there are more than 50 winery members. I know it’s all progress and the fact that Coombsville has its own AVA is wonderful, but I really miss the fact that in the old days, everyone knew everyone else. It’s sort of sad, really, but not in a really bad way.”

Today’s Barking Dog Vineyard wines were produced at the Judd’s Hill Winery of Judd Finklestein. His father, Art Finklestein, was Beverly and Larry Thompson’s close personal friend and winemaker.

“We miss Art a great deal,” Beverly Thompson continued. “He was a true renaissance man and could do just about anything. He was a great winemaker, but he was an even better friend to Larry and me. We are just thankful that his son Judd is just as talented as his father and has carried on in his dad’s marvelous tradition. Our wines are still as well-received as they were when his father made them for us.”

Barking Dog wines have since stopped production, and Beverly and Larry have chosen to focus exclusively on grape growing at their Coombsville vineyard. The Barking Dog wines are now extremely hard to find outside of avenues like the Gold Medal Wine Club. Cheers!
IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Beverly Thompson

For a great many years, the Coombsville Region of Napa Valley was home to numerous small growers who sold their fruit to well-established wineries for use in their various wine programs. The land around Coombsville was initially inexpensive and many of the farmers actually worked their own land. Located directly east and south of the town of Napa, the area is rugged and filled with volcanic soil from the western side of the Vaca Range. Also distinct is its singular geologic feature: the half-moon-shaped caldera that defines the area, which lies in the lee of the Vaca Mountains. The Napa River borders the region that has suddenly gained an incredible reputation for fruit quality as well as its own AVA designation in 2011. It now boasts more than 50 wineries and even more growers.

Certain varietals thrive in the Coombsville AVA, most notably Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Its proximity to chilly San Pablo Bay mitigates the daytime temperatures during the all-important growing season. Daytime highs are never as hot as up valley or as cold as the frosty mornings along Highway 29 that can threaten the development of the late ripening Cabernet Sauvignon.

Most of the Coombsville soils are well-drained and fall into the rolling benchlands category. This accounts for modest yields that result in smaller grapes with intense flavors. Nearly 11,000 acres comprise the Coombsville AVA, or about the same size as its northern neighbor, the Atlas Peak AVA.

WINE REGION:
Coombsville, Napa Valley

Celebrated Napa Valley winemaker Art Finklestein made this month’s featured, award-winning Barking Dog wines. Finklestein was a Chicago native and University of Southern California graduate in architecture. He began his career as a winemaker by making successful home wines even before the term ‘garage wines’ was termed. In 1971, a trip to Napa Valley brought about the purchase of a piece of land that eventually became the well-respected Whitehall Lane Winery. In 1988, he downsized to a smaller facility named Judd’s Hill, named after his son. Finklestein rose to the very pinnacle of the winemaking profession and was considered one of Napa Valley’s premier professionals. During his career, he mentored numerous winemakers and was a founder of the California Cabernet Society.

Finklestein had a penchant for making great wines and considered the fruit from Barking Dog Vineyard as the finest Merlot grown in the entire Napa Valley. He was particularly impressed with the vineyard’s rocky terrain, and often compared it to some of Bordeaux’s finest vineyards.

Finklestein died of a rare form of cancer in 2010. His cancer was diagnosed by Barking Dog owner Dr. Larry Thompson, who works as a pathologist in Napa Valley. These Barking Dog Vineyard selections are among the last wines produced by Art Finklestein.
IN THE SPOTLIGHT: JACQUI SAFRA

As a member of one of Europe’s richest and most private families, Swiss banker Jacqui Safra is the newest owner of the Spring Mountain Vineyard - Chateau Chevalier saga. Safra is the nephew of legendary banker Edmond Safra, and of Lebanese-Swiss Jewish descent. Their family has been touted as the richest banking family in the world since the great-grandfather of family icon Jacob Safra began it all as a banker and gold trader during the Ottoman Empire. By the way, the name Safra means ‘gold’ in Arabic for anyone interested.

Jacqui Safra does himself proud with his extensive portfolio of investments. In addition to the Spring Mountain Vineyard - Chateau Chevalier investment in Northern California, he is also currently listed as the owner of Encyclopedia Britannica, Merriam-Webster, the renowned Parknasilla Hotel in County Kerry, Ireland and various other endeavors. He also owns Garnish Island in Kenmare Bay, Glengariff, Ireland.

He has also dabbled in Hollywood and, in particular, the works of noted filmmaker Woody Allen. Safra personally financed eight of Allen’s movies until a dispute with Allen ended his involvement and the two wound up in court. Safra had bid parts in three of the movies.

Jacqui Safra does things in a big way, and always in the best of taste. For the Spring Mountain Vineyard project, Safra cobbled together four separate but contiguous properties to create an 850-acre hillside property with 230 acres of vines, most of which are newly planted, often with expensive close spacing of the vines to increase density. The vineyards are today considered among Napa Valley’s truly elite growing areas.

He also spent a great deal of his money to make the property one of Napa Valley’s finest. For the ten-year construction project, the very private Mr. Safra did not allow wine trade members or the public to visit the renovations.

Recently, Safra and his long-time companion (and former Woody Allen producer) Jean Doumanian, quietly placed their 50-foot wide limestone mansion on 75th Street for sale for a tidy $50 million dollars. If sold, it would be the costliest sale of its type in Manhattan.

For the record, Jacqui Safra does not give interviews, nor do many members of his family. The family has accumulated its wealth by staying out of the limelight and will continue to do so in the future.

The value of Jacqui Safra’s contributions to the wine industry and to Napa Valley must be seen to be believed. If consummate good taste and a desire for perfection are the benchmarks, then it would seem that Spring Mountain Vineyard and Chateau Chevalier will be talked about for many decades to come.
Spring Mountain District is one of sixteen AVA’s (American Viticultural Area) within the confines of Napa Valley, having been awarded that distinction in 1993. It was the seventh AVA and was created in that year along with Oakville and Rutherford AVA’s.

The jagged, rugged hillside AVA of Spring Mountain is perched on the west side of the Napa Valley and more specifically, the Mayacamas Range. It was one of the first vineyard areas to be planted by the early settlers in the 1800s. Spring Valley was named for its many natural springs, and is endowed with forests and meadows of great natural beauty amid charming reminders of the historic past. The mountain landscape presents numerous challenges for today’s viticulturist.

Chateau Chevalier’s vineyards are located just north of the town of St. Helena, just off winding Spring Mountain Road (between St. Helena and Santa Rosa) and somewhat behind the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone campus. They rest at an elevation of 1,000 feet, just below the Beringer Brothers original vineyard that was planted in 1882. Its grapes are highly prized and produce fruit with great natural intensity and excellent acidic balance.

**SUSAN DOYLE,**
**CHATEAU CHEVALIER’S WINEMAKER**

Winemaker Susan Doyle was born in the Australian Island State of Tasmania, where she grew up on an apple and cattle farm, thereby developing a real appreciation and love of the land. She studied environmental science at the University of Tasmania and later experienced postgraduate studies in enology and viticulture at Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand. She then worked in various capacities in wineries in both Tasmania and Victoria. In 1990, she took a six-month California internship at Kendall-Jackson’s Hartford Court Family Winery and fell in love with Sonoma’s Russian River Valley. After returning to Tasmania and Australia, Susan came back to California for good in 2003. She became winemaker for Gallo’s MacMurray Ranch (formerly owned by the late film actor Fred McMurray) in the Russian River Valley and stayed there for the next seven years. Then, a position as director of winemaking for industry giant Diageo Chateau and Estates opened up and Susan jumped at the opportunity.

The fact that she must now work with the 135 different blocks of vineyards in Spring Mountain Vineyards (and Chateau Chevalier) estates seems a somewhat daunting job for the blonde winemaker. “Our goal is to achieve balance in each of the 135 blocks,” she added. “Finding harmony in the grape itself will give us the opportunity to capture terroir in the wine with minimal intervention on my part.” Susan also has the expert help of two consulting French winemakers, Patrick Leon (Chateau Mouton Rothschild and Opus One) and Bernard Hervet (Burgundy’s Domaine Faiveley) in her multiple projects.
WINE WIZARD: TEST YOUR WINE IQ!
( The Answers)

1. Pinot Noir is different from many other varietals in that it is especially difficult to grow, it's sensitive to soil types, weather, moisture, and sun, and it bruises easily, which often requires hand harvesting. The thin skin of Pinot makes it fragile and tricky for winemakers to handle and work with, which explains its “high maintenance” reputation. What this translates to for the consumer is that it is difficult to make good quality Pinot Noir, and it is even more challenging to make good quality Pinot Noir that is also affordable.

2. In a vertical tasting, different vintages of the same wine from the same winery are tasted (it emphasizes the differences between various vintages). In a horizontal tasting, the wines are all from the same vintage, but are from different wineries. Keeping the wine variety and region the same helps emphasize differences in winery styles.

3. ‘Ullage’ is the empty space in wine bottles, barrels, or casks that develops as wine evaporates. The space in the bottle expands as wine evaporates over time, so older bottles typically have a larger space than younger bottles.

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