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*"With Gold Medal Wine Club,
The Road to Great Wine
Begins at Your Door."*

www.goldmedalwine.com

CLOS FONTAINE CONTENT TO KEEP SMALL PRODUCTION WINERY LOW PROFILE

When it began its productive life back in 1992, the regally named Clos Fontaine du Mont Winery was intended to provide an insight into Napa Valley's top pair of grape varietals, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Clos Fontaine, as everyone involved knows it, was designed to be a small production label that would be made available to certain big city markets throughout the country. When one of

its first releases garnered a 92 from the revered Wine Spectator, Clos Fontaine was on its way to exceeding its initial expectations.

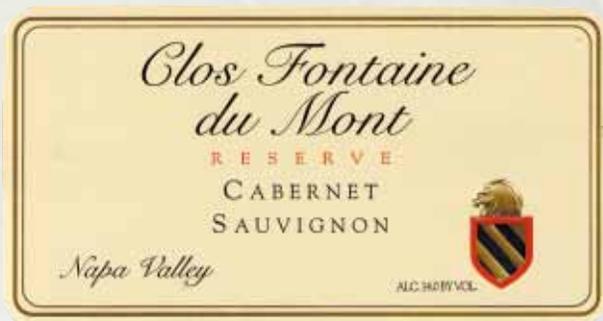
Cleverly named for a gigantic well that sits adjacent to a seismic fault line on part of founder Bill Hill's Napa Valley property between Soda Canyon and the area called Broken Rock, Clos Fontaine almost turned out to be a label affixed to a

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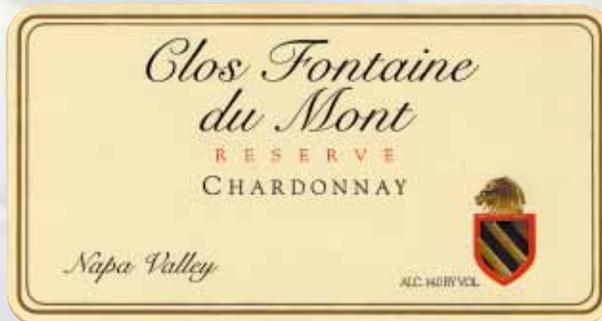
A picturesque view of a Silverado Cabernet vineyard where Clos Fontaine wines are produced.

Gold Medal Wine Club features two wines each month from only the best wineries of California. Featured wines include those which have earned medals in the top wine-industry competitions or have been highly rated by a respected national wine publication. On occasion we feature a wine which is of high medal-quality, but due to its very limited availability or by preference of the wine producer, may not be submitted to these venues for review. Each and every selection is a superb wine made in small quantities and with limited distribution. There are over 1,500 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



2002 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The Clos Fontaine 2002 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon is a very attractive wine with richness and depth you would expect from a Cabernet at twice the price. Elements of black plums, cherries, and creamy oak are evident in the aroma. On the palate, this is a deep, well-stuffed, fruity wine with a core of cassis and black cherries framed with just the right amount of oak. Medium-full in body and well-balanced with a moderate tannic finish. This is a sturdy wine that can be enjoyed right now and promises to be even better with a bit of age. 100% Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.



2003 CHARDONNAY

Clean, bright aromas suggesting roasted grains, toast and honeyed fruit give this wine an intriguing and promising start. The mouthfeel has a mineral-like touch of terroir and is slightly fleshy. Its well-formed flavors deliver an abundant amount of tangy fruit with background elements of roasted lemons and toasted grain. While full and slightly viscous to start, it firms as the acidity appears on the latter palate. The finish is crisp, well-focused and insistently fruity that is touched with hints of oak and spice. Try pairing this wine with a big bowl of fresh oysters and clams. 100% Napa Chardonnay.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2002 VINTAGE: The 2002 Reserve Cabernet was recently bottled and will be appearing in three major wine competitions this spring and summer. We will pass on the awards earned as they come in.

LEGACY: In its very first release in 1992, the Clos Fontaine Cabernet was a highly-rated, critical success.

2003 VINTAGE: Like its counterpart Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2003 Chardonnay was recently bottled also and is submitted in just a few upcoming wine competitions.

LEGACY: Chardonnay & Cabernet Sauvignon are the only two varietals produced by Clos Fontaine and are found in just a few markets in the U.S.

Just the facts:

pH	3.70
Total Acid	.66 g/100 mls
Alcohol	14.7%
Cases Produced	3,500
Drink Now or Up to Year	2010+

Just the facts:

pH	3.49
Total Acid	0.65 g/100 mls
Alcohol	15.1%
Cases Produced	2,500
Drink Now or Up to Year	2007+

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Don Baker

It can easily be said that Clos Fontaine and Bighorn winemaker Don Baker has taken a most circuitous route to become the winemaker at this stylish Napa Valley winery.

Baker, now 62, is a Philadelphia native (he was duly upset with this year's Super Bowl outcome) who took Horace Greeley at his word in the mid 19th Century and indeed went west as a young man.

Baker became interested in nature and first enrolled at Colorado State University. He then transferred to the University of Montana and received a degree in Forestry. He joined the US Forestry service, fought fires, became a smoke jumper and battled infernos as far away as Alaska. During the Vietnam War, Baker enlisted in the US Marines and served as a forward observer for the 5th Marines ending his service with the rank of Captain.

He had met and later married his college sweetheart, Lynne, and the Bakers set about the task of raising their family. Don also became an avid home winemaker to the delight of his family and friends. For a birthday gift in 1968, Lynne gave Don a new copy of Hugh Johnson's World Atlas of Wine and the proverbial grape seed was planted.

"I was completely enthralled with the book," Baker recalled. "I'm not sure if it was the pictures or just the way all the vineyards were presented, but it made an incredibly lasting impression on me."

Sometime in 1978, Lynne's family moved to Sacramento, California, and Lynne prompted Don to follow suit. He listened to

He assisted in making the William Hill Winery operational and remained with Hill until 1992. Four years later, Hill bought the old Parducci Winery in Ukiah and Don Baker was sent to put it in working order.

Bill Hill's Napa operation suddenly encountered problems that affected Don Baker.



Winemaker Don Baker checks a barrel sample of Reserve Cabernet.

"When things got a bit tumultuous around Napa, I had to put things on hold," Baker added. "When events settled back down I joined Bill Hill again and helped him launch his Chilean project in 1998."

Don's Chilean adventure lasted the better part of 2 1/2 years, during which he was partially separated from his family. He returned to Napa Valley in June of 2000 where he assumed several

her sage advice and moved the family later that year.

Don Baker found Sacramento's proximity to nearby UC Davis too good to believe and enrolled in the school's wine program. He received his Oenology degree in 1980 and promptly went to work for Joseph Phelps in Napa.

From there he spent various time with a number of wine entities around Napa and hooked up with Napa wine icon Bill Hill in 1988.

different duties that included winemaker and development director for Clos Fontaine du Mont.

He considered Clos Fontaine his opportunity to "completely express myself through the grapes."

He used an old analogy to make his point.

"Let's say you had a really nice pot of soup," He explained further. "It was just sitting there on the stove, ready to serve."

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**WINE
WIZARD**

- 1) Can you name 3 of the 5 most planted wine grapes in the world? (Kudos if you can get this one right)
- 2) What are the top three wine grape varieties crushed by California wineries during the 2004 harvest?
- 3) The whiteness in the soils of Sonoma's Chalk Hill appellation does not come from chalk as was initially thought, but rather from:
 - a) Soap Deposits,
 - b) High Salt Content, or
 - c) Volcanic Ash.

Continued from page 1

private water product. When Hill realized that his new well produced over 700 gallons a minute, he first thought that he might enter the expanding artesian water business. Hill eventually thought better of the idea and soon Clos Fontaine du Mont became a working entity within Hill's small portfolio of wineries.

It had all started more than thirty years before when Bill Hill first ventured to Northern California from his native Oklahoma. While studying for his advanced degree from Stanford in the early 1970s, Hill succumbed to the compelling hills and valleys of Sonoma and Napa Valleys. Opportune enough to have traveled to a number of France and Germany's top wine producing regions, Bill Hill soon began to explore the possibility of venturing into the wine business after college.

Soon after completing his masters work in 1974, he was again fortunate to be able to ride the incredible wave that engulfed the California wine business during both the decades of the '70s and '80s.

Hill was able to scrape together enough money from friends and investors to open the initial William Hill Winery, and in 1978 was able to release first wines to the general public. His company maintained a rather steady growth for the next decade and eventually settled on a wonderful location in Napa Valley that was adjacent to the historic and picturesque Silverado Country Club in lower Napa.

But persistent financial problems and uncooperative partners finally forced Bill Hill to sell his company to a European concern in the early 1990s. Out of the transaction, Hill kept three important parcels that contained either vineyards or a potential future home site for his family. More importantly, he also

kept the fledgling brand that he had begun to develop in 1992 called Clos Fontaine du Mont.

In its embryonic stage, a little more than 1100 cases of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon had been produced, and as alluded to above, the original release had been greeted by top-caliber accolades.

When Bill Hill returned to the wine business in 1994 and opened his adventuresome and wildly successful Bighorn Cellars, it was quite natural that Clos Fontaine was accorded a prominent spot in the planning.

"I was convinced that Napa's future lay ahead of it," stated Bill Hill, "and I wanted to be able to produce wines that were significant in their own right. By utilizing Clos Fontaine in certain specific situations, I was able to achieve a degree of flexibility that was truly important to my company's development."

Clos Fontaine will produce a little over 5,000 cases in 2005, and doesn't expect to exceed that number in the foreseeable future. Its wines are still available in certain markets, (California, Chicago and New York for example), markets that appreciate its sophisticated, well-balanced style of wine.

"As far as growth is concerned," said Barry Marshall, Clos Fontaine's national sales manager, "we are in a posture where we never say never as

to Clos Fontaine's growth. We will certainly let the market dictate that aspect of our business. We are delighted with what we have achieved so far and are in no hurry to expand our operation."

The reason for Clos Fontaine's producing Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon exclusively rests with founder Bill Hill. It seems that those two varietals were the only ones Bill Hill truly liked



Stainless steel tanks surround the crew at Clos Fontaine's shared facility in Napa.

personally. For many years Hill lobbied, somewhat unsuccessfully, for other Napa Valley wineries to

concentrate on only producing his two favorite premier grape types.

We are convinced Bill Hill was definitely on the right track. From the quality that he has achieved with Clos Fontaine, we at Gold Medal Wine Club are delighted that he was able

to stick to his convictions.

Enjoy! 

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) Most wine enthusiasts can usually guess at least one of the top five varietals, Merlot (400,000+ acres). Merlot is #5 just ahead of Cabernet Sauvignon (#6). Break out the champagne if you can name at least two more in the top five. In order they are: #1) Airen (white), #2) Grenache (red), #3) Carignane (red), #4) Trebbiano (white), #5) Merlot (red).

Airen, is a grape variety grown in Spain where over 1 million acres are planted. It is primarily used to make Brandy but occasionally is blended with other still wines. And in case you're wondering, Chardonnay is #11 on the list. Pinot Noir is #18 and Sauvignon Blanc is #19.

2) The top three varieties crushed in California during the 2004 harvest are as follows: #1) Chardonnay #2) Cabernet Sauvignon #3) Zinfandel. Surprised that Merlot is not in the top three? Merlot finished at the #4 spot. The total crush ended up at 3.6 million tons, up 7 percent from the 2003 crush. Red wine varieties accounted for the largest share coming in at 1.6 million tons, virtually unchanged from 2003. The white wine variety crush totaled 1.1 million tons, down 7% from 2003. Tons crushed of raisin-type varieties totaled .7 million tons, up a whopping 72% from 2003, while tons crushed of table varieties totaled .1 million, up 35% from 2003.

3) C. Volcanic Ash. While grapevines can survive in just about any type of soil, they prefer an open soil such as gravel, rock, limestone or ash. These soils are quick to warm up and are open and free draining. Whereas a soil with a high clay content is dense, damp and cool, promoting root rot.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Recipes from Uva Trattoria

ARANCINI

1/4 cup onions (small diced)
 2 cups fresh chicken stock (homemade is always best)
 2 tablespoons Clos Fontaine du Mont Chardonnay
 1 tsp salt 1 bay leaf
 1 cup Arborio rice 1/4 stick butter
 Pinch black pepper 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese (grated)
 1/4 cup chopped parsley 1 cup bread crumbs (fine)
 1/4 cup basil pesto Teleme cheese
 Olive oil 2 eggs

In a large saucepan, beat 2 tablespoons of olive oil, sweat onions with bay leaf, and add risotto. Stir 2 mins., add white wine and reduce heat. Stir and add 1/4 cup of chicken stock in 1/4 cup portions until rice is done (about 20 mins.). Look for a creamy consistency. Turn off heat. Add butter, Parmesan. Stir until all is melted. Add basil pesto. Immediately spread out onto a sheet pan and let cool overnight.

With a large soup spoon scoop out risotto and shape into a ball. Form a small well in the ball with your finger, add a small piece of Teleme cheese, pinch the well opening closed. Shape into a ball once again.

Beat eggs. Coat balls with egg mixture then bread crumbs, let set overnight since they sautÉ better when firm.

In a large sautÉ or sauce pan add olive oil until about three inches deep, bring to 350 F, gently add balls, a few at a time into oil for 6-7 minutes or until golden brown.

A nice dipping sauce is marinara.

CONIGLIO AL VINO ROSSO

2 whole rabbits 1 teaspoon minced garlic
 2 tablespoons pancetta 1 cup rabbit stock*
 1/4 stick butter 1/4 cup sliced garlic
 1 cup Rosemary 2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 bottles Clos Fontaine du Mont Cabernet Sauvignon

Ask your butcher to break down each rabbit into six pieces, but save everything for the stock. Marinate the twelve pieces in the red wine, sliced garlic and rosemary overnight.

Heat olive oil in large pan until it begins to smoke. Using tongs, place the rabbit in the pan. A very hot sear is essential to this dish. After two minutes turn each piece over, cook for another two minutes. Place pan into an oven preheated to 450 F. Cook for ten minutes.

Remove from oven, add more oil if needed. Remove the rabbit and set aside. In the same pan, toast pancetta, garlic and deglaze with the rabbit stock. Add more rabbit stock if you want more sauce. Place rabbit into pan once again and reduce liquid, turning the rabbit until a glaze forms around it. Add butter, stir vigorously. Salt and pepper to taste.

*RABBIT STOCK:

Rabbit bones 1 cup chopped carrots
 1 cup chopped onions 1 cup chopped celery
 1/4 cup olive oil 4 cups Red wine
 12 cups water (using chicken stock is preferred)

Bake rabbit bones until brown (approx. 1 hour at 450° F). Set aside. Heat oil in large pan and caramelize vegetables. Add red wine to deglaze the pan. In a large saucepan, add bones, veggie mixture and water. Bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer. Let simmer for four hours.

*Buon Appetito,
 Giovanni Guerra, Co-Owner/Chef
 Sean Pramuk, Co-Owner/Maitre/ de*



Barrels are stacked high awaiting the next release of Clos Fontaine reserve wines.

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“Then someone came up and put a handful of salt into the pot, completely ruining the soup. It wouldn’t make much sense to me.”

Don Baker feels it is most important to let the fruit express itself in his wines, much as the soup in the pot. It can be slightly enhanced by oak and malolactic fermentation, but never to the detriment of the fruit.

“I don’t use too much of anything,” he said flatly. “I try to bring out the essences that are complimentary to each particular grape.”

Baker is also content that Clos Fontaine du Mont’s small production is an ideal fit for his winemaking philosophy. A larger operation would not allow him the ability to control his wines in the manner that such a small winery provides.

JUDGE-THE-WINES RESULTS

In this section we publish the cumulative, on-going tallies of the Judge-the-Wines Scoresheets which are provided in each delivery of wine and mailed back in by Club members. We believe it is fun as well as educational to think about and record the different characteristics of the wines you sample. No matter how acute you think your palate is, the person next to you will probably have a different thought or opinion about a certain characteristic of the wine you are sampling. It can also prove beneficial to record your impressions of the wine for reference at a later date.

Below are the most recent tallies of the Scoresheets returned. Gold Medal Wine Club specializes in featuring small-sized wineries and small-production wines. Depending on availability from the winery, all members may not receive every wine that is listed below. The Scoresheet results which are printed in green indicate the wine selections that as of press time are still available for reorder.

2000 Calera Pinot Noir

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	94%	3%	3%

San Simeon 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	95%	4%	1%

Kit Fox 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	4%	5%

1999 Rutz Pinot Noir

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	6%	3%

2000 Calera Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	95%	3%	2%

San Simeon 2003 Pinot Grigio

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	5%	4%

Kit Fox 2001 Syrah

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	92%	5%	3%

2000 Rutz Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	92%	6%	2%

The above wines were recently featured. Due to space limitations, the entire list of available wines is not listed.

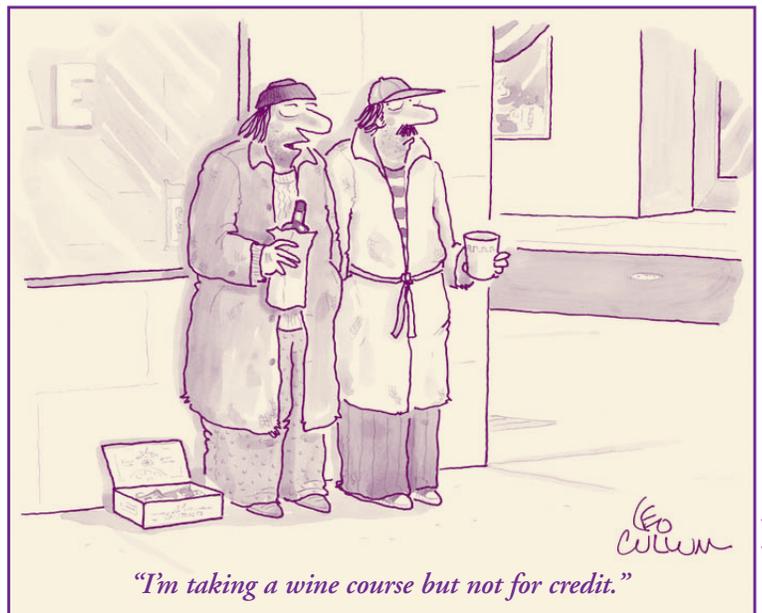
To see our entire inventory and reorder online, go to: <http://www.goldmedalwine.com/member>

■ Indicates wine is still available

"I am delighted to have the chance to make some wines in my own style," Baker added. "Not all winemakers can say that, due to the pressures their individual wineries place on them. At Clos Fontaine, I guess it's mostly up to me."

Don Baker has traveled a long and winding road since his firefighting and Marine Corps days and continues to exude a strong sense of pride and accomplishment in his work.

It seems entirely fitting that he is at the helm of this emerging winery, much to the continuing delight of his friends and family. 



"I'm taking a wine course but not for credit."

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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

If you weren't in on our inaugural *Diamond Series* shipment, you missed two absolute beauties. Cosentino Winery produced a miniscule 350 cases of 2001 M.Co. that was rated **95-points** by the *Wine Enthusiast* magazine and captured two other **93-point** ratings as well as a **Best of Show** and **Double Gold medal**. Lail Vineyards had never sold their highly-allocated wines to a wine club before being showcased in the *Diamond Series*. Winery founder Robin Lail traces her roots to Gustave Niebaum who founded Inglenook Winery back in 1879. Her 2001 J. Daniel Cuvee garnered a rare **93-point** rating from wine guru, Robert Parker, plus two more **92-point** ratings from *Wine Spectator* and *Wine Enthusiast*.

Don't miss out on the next incredible pair of *Diamond Series* wines. Call us at 800-266-8888 or visit our website: www.goldmedalwine.com/diamond.

[The San Simeon 2005 Pinot Grigio is] "One of the nicest Pinot Grigios I ever had!"

—Kenneth Szekretar, Score 47

[The Kit Fox 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon has] "Classic characteristics; absence of bitterness; a true success!"

—Tom Teti, Score 51

[The Ballentine 2000 Zinfandel is] "A rich Zinfandel, great with many flavors of food—we love hot food and think it's perfect for that!"

—David & Gail Anderson, Score 49

[The Calera 2000 Pinot Noir is] "One of the best Pinots for the money I've ever tasted!"

—Herbert J. Heimerle III, Score 42

[[The Calera 2000 Pinot Noir is the] "Best Pinot I've had the pleasure to taste at this price point!"

—Warren Mack, Score 50

[The Ballentine 2000 Merlot is] "Very pleasing, pleasant and refreshing flavor."

—Thomas L. Perkins, Score 55

Maximum score is 55. Include your email address when you send back your Scoresheet to receive an exclusive 30-day special offer. Available only to current members who send back a completed Scoresheet. Every month you send back your Scoresheet you are eligible for that particular month's special offer. You will be notified by email concerning the details of the offer and the exact 30-day window to take advantage of it.

R E O R D E R

Clos Fontaine operates as a sister winery to Bighorn Cellars, owned and operated by William Hill. He was recently honored in the *Wine Spectator* as a "wine producer who innovated, perfected, promoted and led the international campaign for higher-quality wine." Here are two classic Napa Valley selections at incredible values. They are aggressively priced to help you purchase by the case. Time to restock the wine rack!

CLOS FONTAINE WINERY	Retail Price		Club Price		Club Price	
	Winery-Direct		2-Bottle Members		4-Bottle Members	
2002 Cabernet Sauvignon * Napa Valley	Half Case-6	\$114	\$75	(34% Off)	\$68	(40% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$228	\$136	(40% Off)	\$124	(46% Off)
2003 Chardonnay* Napa Valley	Half Case-6	\$90	\$65	(28% Off)	\$59	(34% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$180	\$120	(33% Off)	\$108	(40% Off)

Reorder Hotline: 1-800-266-8888

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

Reorder Website: www.goldmedalwine.com/member

*Availability is limited.

Note: Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included in the above prices. Call for details.