

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 15 No. 12

Dawson Creek Winery Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

EUROPEAN ACCEPTANCE BRINGS OUT DAWSON CREEK'S RESERVES

The very fact that Dawson Creek Winery exists is a remarkable story that bears repeating. The two principals who own Dawson Creek are decidedly dissimilar individuals who have forged a lasting friendship over a number of years and have finally decided to cast the dice on a new venture.

The two friends are Shahin Shahabi, 43, and Dennis Patton, 58, who have

worked together in one capacity or another for over fifteen years.

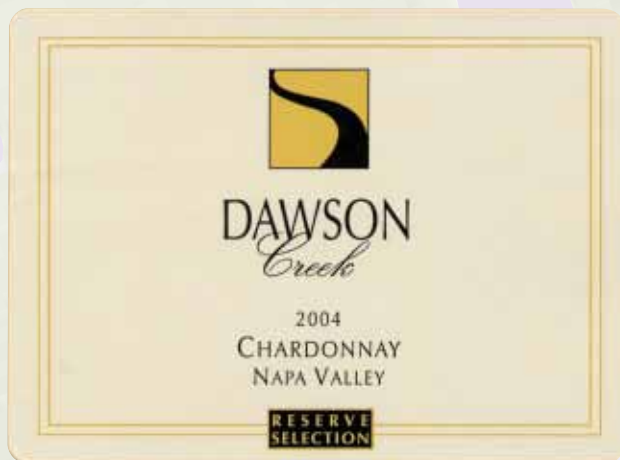
Shahabi is a native of Iran (more specifically, the storied city of Shiraz, the ancient capital of the Persian Empire) who has been wildly successful in the wine business and is the owner of the much-heralded Stonehedge Winery in Napa Valley. His family came to the US

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Shahin Shahabi strolls along side the vineyards pleased with the plentiful 2005 harvest.

Gold Medal Wine Club features two wines each month from only the best small 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 1,200 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



2004 CHARDONNAY

The 2004 Dawson Creek Chardonnay Napa Valley Reserve Selection leads with ripe, outgoing, succulent aromas of pineapple, pears, and Fuji apples broadened by a rich layer of creamy oak. This is a lush, well-ripened Chardonnay showing good breadth in its richly oaked, apple-like flavors. The oak as an attractive accent to its themes of ripe apples. A very full and plump wine on the palate it is notably firmer at the finish than at the start. It is never the least bit heavy, and its clean, wonderfully persistent finish finds a welcome note of acidity and, for all of its present appeal, it has the structure to commend cellaring and should improve for several years. Try pairing with grilled salmon, smoked chicken or roasted duck. 100% Napa Valley Chardonnay.



2001 CABERNET FRANC

The 2001 Dawson Creek Cabernet Franc Reserve Selection is a lovely example of just how good this wine can (and should) be when bottled as a single varietal. This is a superior bottle of wine that delivers the true flavors and complexity of this rarely bottled varietal. It boasts a beautiful deep plum color with a hint of garnet and an attractive aroma of ripe fruit, licorice and violets. Smooth and supple, with ripe plum, cherry and berry flavors that are rich and impressively complex, followed by layers of currant, and spice notes that are neatly woven together. Smooth tannins with a pleasant finish, this is a very seductive wine that is delicious right now. Enjoy with pork loin roast or rack of lamb. 100% Sonoma Valley Cabernet Franc.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2004 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal Special Selection*—Like its Cabernet Franc counterpart, the Dawson Creek Reserve Chardonnay has enjoyed years of success in the European market. Now for the first time, Dawson Creek wines are available in the U.S. through the Gold Medal Wine Club and the winery's Napa tasting room.

LEGACY: Dawson Creek Reserve wines are produced exclusively for the U.S. market while the non-Reserve bottlings have been available in the European market since 2001.

Just the facts:

pH	3.75
Total Acid63g/100 ml
Alcohol	13.5%
Cases Produced	1,400
Drink Now or Up to Year	2009

2001 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal Special Selection*—After four years of exclusive distribution in the European market Dawson Creek wines are now available in the U.S. in time for the holiday season. The majority of the initial 5,000-case U.S. distribution is through the Gold Medal Wine Club and the winery's Napa tasting room.

LEGACY: Dawson Creek Reserve wines are produced exclusively for the U.S. market while the non-Reserve bottlings have been available in the European market since 2001.

Just the facts:

pH	3.70
Total Acid60g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.5%
Aged in Oak	1 year
Cases Produced	1,800
Drink Now or Up to Year	2012

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Dennis Patton

Dennis Patton has been productively involved in the California wine business for the better part of three and a half decades, and stands among the most respected figures of the Mendocino Region of Northern California.

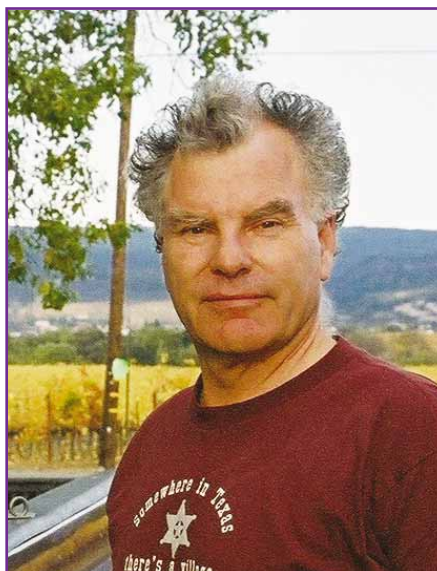
Patton traces his roots back to early California, pre gold rush to be exact. His fraternal great grandfather was actually the recipient of an original land grant for property above the present Santa Clara Valley, today the site of numerous wine growing operations.

Dennis Patton attended nearby San Jose State and graduated with a psychology major in the mid-sixties. A chance meeting prompted Patton and two of his buddies to begin working for bay area wine distributors at a time when the international wine business was beginning to take hold in California.

“Here we were,” Patton recently recalled, “twenty-one years old and all of a sudden we were exposed to the greatest wines in the world. Before long we were bringing home wines like Chateau Mouton, Chateau Petrus and Domaine de la Romanee Conti. This was before the huge price increases on these great wines; in some cases they were actually cheap. The experience certainly taught me a great deal about wine, but it also spoiled me for the future.”

By the middle part of the 1970s Patton was busy homemaking wine, at one point somewhere around 3,000 gallons. This was mostly for his friends and acquaintances, but it was clear the wine bug had taken a bite into Patton’s dream.

He had earlier purchased some 50 acres of sheep and cattle land in Mendocino County where he



At 21, Dennis was introduced to some of the greatest wines in the world... 37 years later his own wines are winning top honors at prestigious wine competitions

eventually grew fruits and vegetables that were direct marketed throughout California. But Dennis Patton knew in his heart that he was in Mendocino for a more specific reason.

“If you delve into the history of grape growing in Mendocino, you will see that it rivals both Napa and Sonoma for the past 130 years,”

Patton explained. “But the other valleys’ proximity to San Francisco and transportation issues always forced Mendocino to take a back seat. And, for decade after decade, a few giant growers controlled the destiny of the valley.


When I first came up here, I saw there were an unusually high number of old vines in practically every location. Today, that fact is still true. Mendocino County has over 3,500 acres of vines that are over 50 years old. That’s why so many great wines are being made up here.”

In 1981, Dennis Patton decided to do it right and founded Hidden Cellars Winery just outside Ukiah. His first release was around 1800 cases and his wines met with instant critical acclaim. Hidden Cellars became one of the stalwarts of the blossoming Mendocino County wine environment and grew its production steadily for the next seventeen years.

In 1998, Patton sold out to the much larger Parducci wine conglomerate and became a consulting winemaker for a number of national and regional wineries including Fetzer, Smith Anderson and Stonehedge of Napa Valley.

During this time Dennis Patton became known as a cutting edge innovator within the wine industry and pioneered such processes as reverse osmosis and the spinning

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**WINE
WIZARD**

- 1) Where do the bubbles in champagne come from?
- 2) Is the “bubbliness” of sparkling wine measured in any way?
- 3) What is the difference between Brut and Sec?

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more than three decades ago and began a wine import business in Southern California.

After Stonehedge’s ascent to the elite level of Napa wineries, Shahabi took the unusual step of enrolling in Napa College where he received a winemaking degree.

“I felt I needed to know more about the business of making wine and not just selling it,” Shahabi explained. “Many of my friends, including Dennis Patton, encouraged me to attend. It was a truly uplifting experience.”

Shahabi’s relationship with Patton dated back to around 1989 when Patton began serving as

consulting winemaker to several of Shahabi’s earlier wine ventures. That working relationship slowly developed into a strong friendship and the pair has engineered a number of successful wine programs through the ensuing years.

“When we first started working together, Dennis brought some much needed expertise into my operation, and our arrangement proved to be quite profitable for us both. But slowly, our friendship evolved in much the same way a fine wine evolves in the barrel and bottle,” Shahabi added. “It was simply a matter of time and circumstances. Even today we don’t always agree on everything, but our mutual esteem for each other allows us to respectfully disagree.”

The actual development of Dawson Creek Winery actually began some four years ago, when the wine was first produced for a wine distributor in Scandinavia who also sold it to several European markets. Its name was chosen from the popular television series of the same name that was a much-admired show in Scandinavia and seemed to suggest a distinctive American appeal to the wines.

The success of Dawson Creek Winery abroad started Shahabi and Patton thinking that the product might also be attractive to the American market. The two had wanted to get together for some time on a joint venture and Dawson Creek seemed to fit the bill to the proverbial “T.”

“Both Dennis and I were really interested in producing a terroir-oriented wine that was decidedly non-commercial,” Shahabi remarked. “We wanted to make a wine that was never diluted or overdone in any respect. It was our intention to produce wines that accurately reflected the area in which they were grown. Dennis’ wonderful expertise with growers throughout Northern California made all that possible.”

The initial release of Dawson Creek Winery is around 5,000 cases and the future will be based on the buying public’s appraisal of the wine. Both partners genuinely believe they will be able to reflect the “true spirit” of the areas from which their wines are grown.

“Fortunately neither of us has a big ego,” Shahabi reflected. “And neither of us really needs the other. We actually want to work with each other and that’s what drives us to accomplish our goals. Believe it or not, it’s not for the purpose of only making money.”

Shahabi also pointed out that



Dawson Creek partner Shahin Shahabi shows off a near perfect cluster of Cabernet Franc.

his joint venture with Dennis Patton was a “full democracy between us,” another enviable statement in any business environment.

It will be interesting to follow the development of Dawson Creek Winery and its unique ownership. Any venture of this sort seems destined to cross any number of perilous challenges, but Dawson Creek seems miles ahead of the power curve.

After all, Dawson Creeks’ wines are already successful in other parts of the world and its ownership is decidedly world class in its own right.

We invite you to enjoy this month’s Gold Selections from Dawson Creek Winery; after all, world opinion is already on its side. 🍷



Dawson Creek Cabernet Franc bottles ready for foil capsules and labels.

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) The bubbles in sparkling wine are, as in beer and soda, carbon dioxide gas that had been dissolved in the liquid under pressure. Unlike soda, the carbon dioxide is not injected into the wine, except in the lowest quality sparkling wines. In fine sparkling wines, these bubbles are the result of the winemaking process. The most famous method, and the one adopted by many California sparkling wine producers, is methode champenoise, named after the Champagne region of France, where it was perfected. This is a complicated, meticulous process, but the key element that gives the wine its bubbles is a second fermentation in the bottle after an initial, more conventional fermentation. The yeasts produce alcohol, as well as carbon dioxide gases, which builds up in the strong champagne bottles, creating pressure that keeps the carbon dioxide dissolved. In the early days of champagne production, bottles frequently burst from this pressure. This is why champagne bottles tend to be considerably heavier than other wine bottles.

2) Yes. The technical term for the “bubblyness” of sparkling wine is, believe it or not, fizziness. This is measured in the amount of pressure is sustained in the bottle. Most champagne and other full sparkling wines have a fizziness equivalent to the pressure of five or six times normal atmospheric pressure. This is the force that pops out the champagne cork. All of this pressure comes from carbon dioxide, which builds up in the bottle during the second fermentation of the wine. In Europe, law dictates that a sparkling wine must have a fizziness of over three atmospheres. Wines with fizziness between one and three atmospheres are classified as semi-sparkling.

3) Brut and Sec are French words, frequently used to describe how dry a sparkling wine is on the label. However, the classification can be applied to still wines as well, and there is a whole spectrum of terms describing the range from absolutely dry to sweet. Brut refers to an absolutely dry wine, with almost no residual sugar. Sec refers to a dry wine, with slight residual sugar, between five and ten grams of sugar per liter. The sweetest wines are Moelleux and Liqueureux. Sweet wines had obtained a bad reputation among some wine enthusiasts, due to the popularity of some cloying sweet wines. However, even the sweetest wines can be excellent if the sweetness is balanced by appropriate acidity. Of course, these fine sweet wines, like all fine wines, are harder to find.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ROASTED BEEF TENDERLOIN SERVED OVER MUSHROOM RISOTTO

Serves 4

TENDERLOIN MARINADE

1 1/2 - 2 pounds Beef Tenderloin, cleaned and trimmed of silverskin and excess fat
 1/2 cup Olive Oil
 1 tablespoon Garlic, chopped
 1 tablespoon Chile Powder
 2 tablespoons Black Pepper
 1 tablespoon Fresh Rosemary, chopped

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Coat Tenderloin and marinate for 2 - 4 hours

To Cook the Tenderloin:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place meat on a sheet pan and cook 10-15 minutes until brown. Turn the oven down to 350 degrees and finish cooking for 15-20 minutes more until desired doneness. Remove from oven and let it rest for 5 - 10 minutes before cutting.

MUSHROOM RISOTTO

1 tablespoon Olive Oil
 1 cup Arborio Rice
 3-4 cups Chicken broth or Vegetable Stock
 1 cup Fresh Mushrooms,
 sliced and sautéed for 3-5 minutes in the butter until al dente.
 3 tablespoons Grated Parmesan Cheese
 2 tablespoons Fresh Herbs (such as oregano and chives), chopped
 1 tablespoon Butter
 To Taste— Salt & Pepper

Preparation: In a 2-5 quart sauce pan heat the oil. Add the onion and cook 2 minutes at medium heat. Add rice and stir while you sauté for 2 minutes until the rice begins to color slightly. Add White wine and cook 1-2 minutes until evaporated. Slowly begin adding stock — 1 cup at a time, stirring often. Continue slowly adding the stock until you have used 2 cups. This should take 15-18 minutes. Add the mushrooms and any liquid from cooking the mushrooms. Add the remaining stock stirring constantly. When the Risotto is done it should be soft and creamy on the outside and firm on the inside. When ready, add the parmesan cheese, butter and herbs. Season to taste and serve immediately.

For Presentation: Spoon Risotto in the center of plate, slice tenderloin 1/2" thick and place 2-3 slices on top of the risotto. Garnish with sprigs herbs. Serve with grilled vegetables.

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cone technique, both considered progressive procedures for today's premier winemakers.

During his stint at Stonehedge, Patton became friendly with its owner Shahin Shahabi.

Shahin was just the guy to make things happen."



Dennis, like any master artist takes his time perfecting his craft.

"To me Shahin was a selling machine," related Patton. "I was just an old hippie that brought some expertise to his operation. I loved the idea of being able to work on some really high end projects and

Patton feels that his nearly ten years of wine consultation and his more than thirty years of dealing with grape growers will serve the new Dawson Creek Winery project well. He puts it simply. "If I don't know where the best grapes are grown and who the best growers after all this time are, I probably shouldn't be in the wine business. I think the prospect of making terroir-friendly wines is quite exciting, and Dawson Creek is an excellent vehicle."

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.

Charles Creek 2002 Merlot

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

Charles Creek 2002 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	3%	4%

Adler Fels 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon

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

Adler Fels 2003 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	7%	3%

Graziano 2002 Zinfandel

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	4%	3%

Graziano 2002 Tocai Friulano

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	88%	6%	6%

Trentadue 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	6%	4%

Trentadue 2004 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	7%	3%

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: www.goldmedalwine.com/member

■ Indicates wine is still available

Dennis Patton is also genuinely excited about the latest aspect of his personal life. He and his new wife of eighteen months, Andrea, are expecting their first child early next year, an exciting experience for the 58-year-old.

“It is all quite wonderful,” Patton concluded. “Andrea and the baby bring new meaning to my life. I feel quite awed by the entire experience.” 🍷



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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

Cheers and welcome to all new members and new gift recipients! Each holiday season traditionally brings in a new tide of wine enthusiasts to Gold Medal Wine Club. We hope you enjoy the selections from Dawson Creek and if you are fortunate enough to be able to continue receiving wine beyond this month, you will discover more wonderful wines produced by some of the great small wine producers of California. These wineries are located off the beaten path and handcraft wines in such small quantities that most do not reach store shelves. Since 1992 we've been connecting wine enthusiasts like you to these entrepreneurial winemakers. So now that you're here, enjoy the journey!

Jill Deen, according to husband Mark, enjoyed her commute a little more the evening we called. "Wow, this is great, I can't wait to call Jill, we really enjoy the club and this will make her drive home tonight." We appreciate your monthly participation in the Judge the Wines program. Your 1/2 case of wine is on the way!

*[The Adler Fels 2005 Chardonnay is]
"Delightful, pleasant and refreshing on
a hot and humid day!"
—Sandra Foster, Score 54*

*"My guests and I loved [the Adler Fels
2005 Chardonnay]."
—John W. Miller, Score 55*

*[Trentadue 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon]
"A delightful wine to share with friends
and family."
—Gary Deboer, Score 50*

Maximum score is 55. Members who send in their wine ratings on the provided Scoresheets are eligible to receive a bonus half-case of any Gold Medal Series wine that is in stock if your name is drawn. Drawings are held each month. (Maximum of one Scoresheet per wine per membership)...GMWC

R E O R D E R

Like many wine enthusiasts, chances are good you have never tried a Cabernet Franc wine, or at least one worthy of praise. The Dawson Creek Reserve Cabernet Franc is one of the finest on the market today and certainly one of the best values we've seen in a long, long time. Their Reserve Chardonnay is a terrific value too—all the richness you'd expect from a Napa Valley Chardonnay without the lofty price.

DAWSON CREEK WINERY	Retail Price		Club Price		Club Price	
	Winery-Direct		2-Bottle Members		4-Bottle Members	
2004 Chardonnay * Napa Valley	Half Case-6	\$102	\$75	(26% Off)	\$69	(32% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$204	\$139	(32% Off)	\$129	(37% Off)
2001 Cabernet Franc* Sonoma Valley	Half Case-6	\$114	\$82	(28% Off)	\$78	(32% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$228	\$152	(33% Off)	\$144	(37% Off)

Reorder Hotline: 1-800-266-8888

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

www.goldmedalwine.com/member

**Availability is limited*

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