

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 11 No. 9

Special Double Edition

ANOTHER HOME RUN FOR SMALL TEMECULA WINERY

This year's champagne feature takes us to one of our all-time favorites, Thornton Winery. This small winery is simply the best, undiscovered champagne producer in the country. It is amazing to us that Thornton has not yet been elevated to *high-profile* status by those who control such things in the wine media. Perhaps it's because American champagne (sparkling wine) is not embraced nearly as much in this country as say Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Chardonnay. Perhaps it's because small wineries tend to get lost among the 1,000 or so located within California. Or maybe it's because Thornton Winery is located in the *southern*

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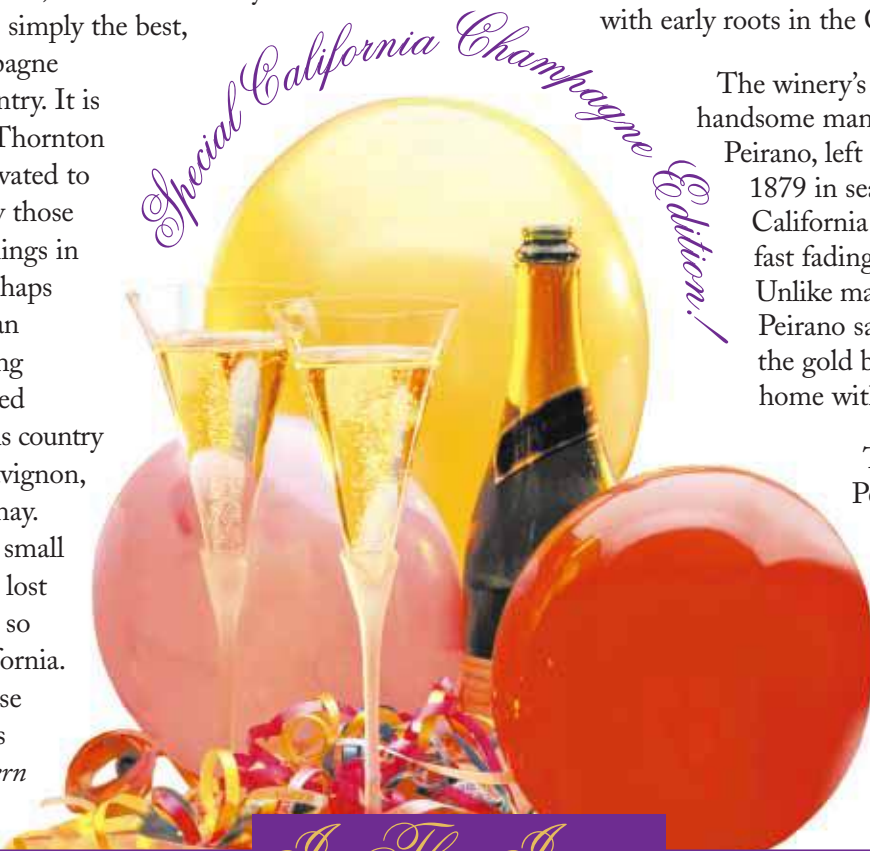
PEIRANO ESTATES CELEBRATES 104 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

The historical aspect of Peirano Estate Vineyards is not too dissimilar from a number of California wineries with early roots in the Golden State.

The winery's founder, an incredibly handsome man named Giacomo Peirano, left his native Genoa in 1879 in search of riches from the California mother lode that was fast fading in statue and payout. Unlike many early western settlers, Peirano saw the eventualities of the gold business and returned home with a plan in mind.

Two years later, Peirano returned to California and to the town of Lodi, a location between the Sacramento-San Joaquin river deltas that nestles snugly up to the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. Peirano

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www.goldmedalwine.com

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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 1,000 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



1995 BRUT RESERVE

A whopping **91 Points** awarded by *Wine Enthusiast* magazine. This amazing sparkler received the highest rating for an American champagne and even surpassed French Champagne classics such as Moët & Chandon (\$295/btl.) and Ruinart Brut (\$48/btl.). “Champagne is the model for this ultra-classy wine. The aromas explode with toast, lees, and the most delicately fragrant citrus and raspberry notes. It turns rich and subtle in the mouth. There’s a suggestion of fruit, but it’s really quite dry. The quality difference is in the harmony, elegance and balance. This is seriously good sparkling wine,” says the *Wine Enthusiast*. **88 Points:** Toasty, bottle-aged aromas show smoky yeast quality. Rounded and weighty with a full-bodied palate and a generous, fat finish. This is a rich, weighty style with plenty of flavor,” says *Tastings* magazine. The traditional French process, *méthode champenoise*, was used in crafting the 1995 Brut Reserve.

1998 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Winner of **three Gold Medals** in this year’s wine competitions, the 1998 Peirano Cabernet Sauvignon is emerging as one of the year’s best—particularly considering the incredible price (see the back page). Estate produced, the exceptional Cabernet fruit comes from 26-year-old vines grown on a labor intensive trellis system that divides the canopy of fruit both horizontally and vertically which exposes the fruit to increased sunlight and enhances the fruit components. This wonderful Cabernet brings together both a bit of oaky richness and a spry sense of youthful, nicely concentrated fruit in its aromas and flavors. It’s an eminently approachable wine packed with straight forward wildberry and deep black cherry fruit characteristics. It is medium-full in body and underpinned by soft, graceful tannins leading to a well-balanced finish. This will pair beautifully with a wide variety of summertime foods including pork ribs, gourmet hamburgers and even meat lasagna. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

1995 VINTAGE: *91 Points*—Wine Enthusiast magazine; *88 Points*—Tastings magazine; *Silver Medal*—Atlanta Wine Summit; *Bronze Medal*—six different Wine Competitions.
LEGACY: Also known as the *Millennium Cuvée*. One of the best Thornton champagnes in a long line of Gold Medal winners.

1998 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal*—California State Fair Wine Competition; *Gold Medal*—Los Angeles County Fair Wine Competition; *Gold Medal*—New World International Wine Competition; *Silver Medal*—International Eastern Wine Competition.

LEGACY: Always an outstanding wine at a phenomenal value.

Just the facts:

pH	3.20
Total Acid	.85 g/100 mls
Alcohol	12.3%
Aged en tirage	3 1/2 years
Cases Produced	5,000
Drink Now or Up to Year	2003+

Just the facts:

pH	3.61
Total Acid	.58 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.8%
Cases Produced	3,500
Aged in Five Different Oaks	9 Months
Drink Now or Up to Year	2006+

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

John & Sally Thornton

John and Sally Thornton thought a winery would be an interesting investment and a fun diversion. "The opportunity came to us and we thought it was a good idea," states John. But what started as a more or less passive investment turned into a passion. The wine business does that to people. "We kept putting more and more money into the winery until we found ourselves owning 98% of it," continues John. "It was a situation that evolved and happened gradually," says Sally Thornton. "It progressively needed more time and attention."



Winery owners John and Sally Thornton have built a remarkable following for their world-class California champagne.

But don't let their modest remarks about how Thornton Winery came about fool you. Thornton Winery didn't just happen. Their involvement and ultimate success in the winery is a reflection of a strong *can-do* attitude the Thorntons both share. "If you're going to do something, why not do it the right way?" says Sally Thornton rhetorically. And the Thorntons are no strangers to success and

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Lance Randolph

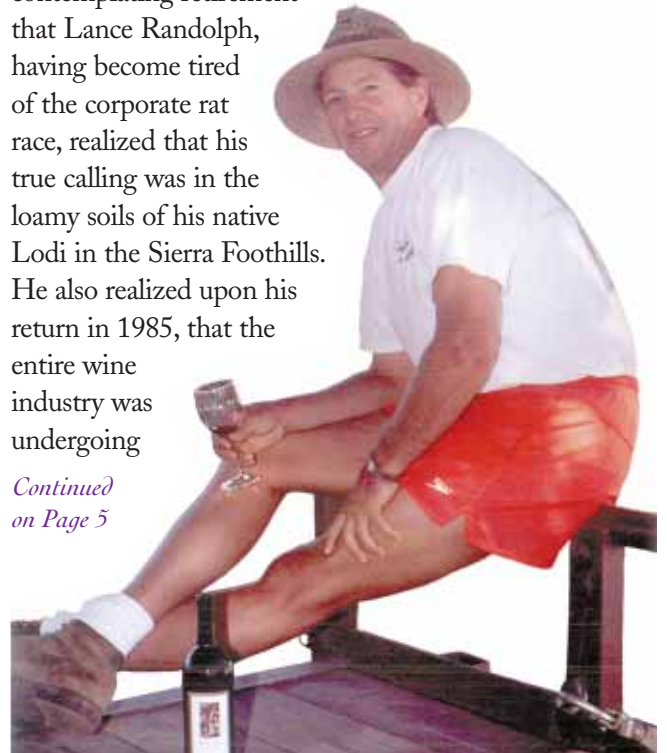
At first glance of his name, one might believe that Lance Randolph was a movie star or something closely akin. In reality however, the owner, grower & winemaker for Peirano Estate Vineyards is a hard working, doggedly determined individual on a specific mission.

Randolph's mission, undertaken some fifteen or more years ago when he became physically involved in the wine industry, is to see that the wines of his beloved Lodi Region are taken seriously by the wine world.

Being a fourth generation successor to his family's winegrowing business didn't necessarily mean that Lance Randolph would begin his career in the wine business. Quite to the contrary, Randolph got his early introduction to commerce through the financial establishment and in real estate. He even returned to California from Canada and eventually received a Masters in Business Administration from Sacramento State.

It wasn't until his father indicated he was contemplating retirement that Lance Randolph, having become tired of the corporate rat race, realized that his true calling was in the loamy soils of his native Lodi in the Sierra Foothills. He also realized upon his return in 1985, that the entire wine industry was undergoing

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on Page 5*



Fourth generation winegrower Lance Randolph of Peirano Estates Winery.

John & Sally—Continued from Page 3

achievement. Over the last thirty-five years they have been intimately involved with over two dozen successful business ventures as well as numerous civic organizations and community projects.

John Thornton was born and raised in Long Beach, California. He attended Pomona College where he earned a degree in Economics. Out of school he entered the Navy, attaining the rank of lieutenant. After the Navy he went back to school, this time earning an MBA from Harvard Business School.

His business career began in 1957 when he went to work at Rohr Corporation, a southern California company that made parts for aircraft engines. For eight years he worked in a variety of positions including sales, contract management and handling their computer systems. In 1965 John left Rohr Corp. to help a friend run what was then a small electronic instrument company, called Wavetek. For the next twenty years as president of Wavetek, he orchestrated their growth from under a half-million in sales to over eighty-five million. During that period he invested in and helped direct a handful of other companies too. One of those companies was called Micom Systems, in which the Thorntons became majority stockholders in 1976. As Chairman of the Board he guided Micom over the next dozen years from \$400,000 in sales to \$240,000,000.

Sally Thornton has been an active participant in these extraordinary achievements too. She served on the board of Micom

Systems as well as other companies in which the Thorntons have invested. She is currently serving on the board of both Mitek Systems (another Thornton investment) and Thornton Winery.

Sally's leadership and involvement in the San Diego community over the years has been nothing short of astounding. She has spearheaded numerous charitable fund raisers, advisory boards, committees etc., for a myriad of causes such as hospitals, museums, public broadcasting, and various organizations that are fighting diseases like Arthritis, Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy.

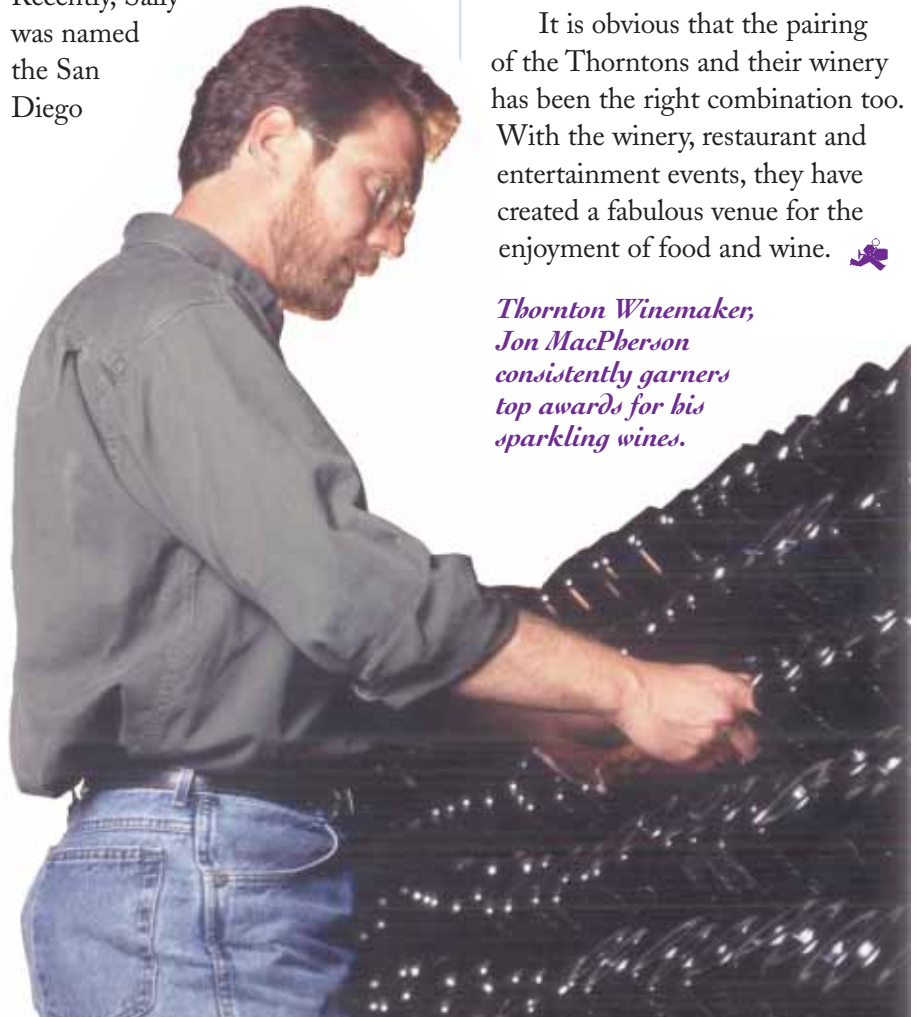
Recently, Sally was named the San Diego

Leukemia Society's *Woman of the Year*. The list of achievements and contribution of time and effort is literally too voluminous to print.

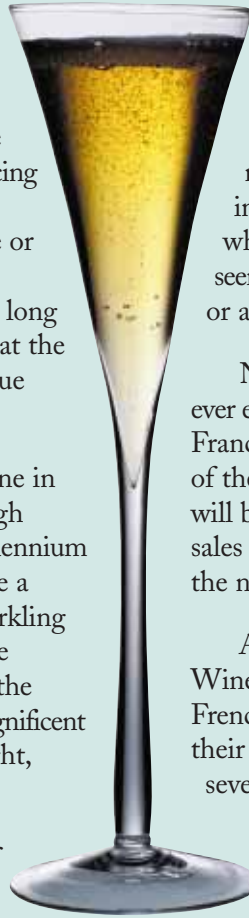
Growing up in San Diego both of Sally's parents were also overachievers. Her dad was a nationally known oral surgeon and her mom was an amateur golf champion. Both were very involved in the community and were also food and wine enthusiasts. "At a very early age I was exposed to an incredibly wide variety of foods," recalls Sally. "It fueled a lifelong enjoyment of mine, that of pairing food and wine," she continues.

It is obvious that the pairing of the Thorntons and their winery has been the right combination too. With the winery, restaurant and entertainment events, they have created a fabulous venue for the enjoyment of food and wine. 🍷

Thornton Winemaker, Jon MacPherson consistently garners top awards for his sparkling wines.



MORE CHAMPAGNE ANYONE?



America's approach to Champagne has always tended to be somewhat plebeian, at least in the eyes of the French who invented the stuff, and also to most of the so-called civilized world that has made Champagne its drink of choice for most significant events.

To the French, their storied national bubbly is a pre-requisite for just about anything worth celebrating, and that covers just about anything that occurs on a daily basis, including waking up in the morning. Champagne seemingly celebrates the spirit of France and its status in French culture is not taken lightly. Every important French meal begins with a Champagne toast and if sufficient reason can be found, the delicious beverage will also find its way into the heart of the repast.

For years, French Champagne makers have insisted that others producing Dom Perignon's favorite swill call it sparkling wine or something similar, but in reality really don't care as long as you buy enough of what the producers consider the true French national drink.

In California, everyone in the wine business had high hopes that our recent millennium celebration would provide a huge springboard for sparkling wines in general and were sufficiently pleased with the quantities sold for that magnificent occasion. On a single night, millions of bottles were consumed and a healthy number were products of California, Washington

and New York vineyards. Trouble is that our per capita numbers here in America paled in comparison to other countries where everyone who celebrated seemed to celebrate with Champagne or a similar substitute.

No one knows if Americans will ever embrace the pride of Northeastern France like the French do, or the rest of the world for that matter, but it will be interesting to see if sparkling sales continue to grow in America in the near future.

As far as we at Gold Medal Wine Club are concerned, the French are right on target with their Champagne principles for several reasons.

First of all, the French have actually provided us

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Lance Randolph — Continued from Page 5

rapid changes, particularly in Lodi where a brand new generation of wineries and winemakers were beginning to make their presence felt.

Randolph was also very tired of the fact that Lodi was not recognized for the quality of its wines and decided to do something about it. He became an active board member and enthusiastic supporter of the Lodi-Woodbridge Grape Growers Association, a self-assessing assembly of 650 growers that banded together to do something about their area's fortunes, or lack thereof.

The LWGGA provided funding for special research projects that

benefited its membership and more importantly, provided a marketing vehicle for Lodi Region grapes.

In a case of being in the right place at the right time, Randolph made an incredible decision to begin marketing of an estate Zinfandel using his family's 100-year old vines and a bit of its founding history. Old vine Zin was just in its inception stage and Lance's first release quickly sold out. Suddenly, out-of-state wine shops, distributors and consumers were calling to buy his product.

From such fundamental beginnings, Peirano Estate wines have grown to over 40,000 cases annually and Lance Randolph is credited as

being the innovator for the area's continuing success. He is the conduit between generations of Lodi growers and wineries and gives credit for Lodi's success to the new attitudes of his associates.

He continues to wear trademark red pants and a straw hat from April 1 through November, and recalls with candor an event that occurred during the first week of October 1997. "I had worn the red shorts for four successive vintages," he began, "and we had enjoyed perfect weather during that time. My shorts were so unusual in the vineyards that everyone joked about them and sort of associated me with the good weather."

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WINE WIZARD

- 1) According to the legend, the méthode champenoise was discovered when and by whom?
- 2) True or False. Using exceptionally clean glasses to drink champagne is important?
- 3) True or False. Most méthode champenoise sparkling wines are best if drunk within 2-3 years after they are released?

Thornton Winery—Continued from Page 1

California wine country instead up north where the better known wineries tend to reside. And it could be because most of the winery's distribution stays in California. Surely it's all of those reasons. But once you've discovered this interesting winery for yourself, we think you'll agree it's one worth remembering.

Thornton Winery sparkling wines have won more awards and medals than any other American producer. With that kind of statement you'd think the winery would be selling tons of wine. Not so. Owner John Thornton keeps the production level small and

manageable yet offers almost two dozen different wines. So each wine produced is truly a very limited bottling. "We're at a size that we can make small batches of many different wines and still make a little money at it," says owner John Thornton. "Running out of wine is frustrating at times but it's still more fun than making a huge amount of just three or four wines," he adds.

If you ever visit the Thornton Winery in the southern California wine country of Temecula, you will quickly see that having "fun" is an important objective. John Thornton and his wife Sally have created a unique destination-winery that attracts visitors from all over California. The centerpiece on their 20-acre property is the winery production facilities where talented winemaker, Jon McPherson crafts all of the Thornton wines. Naturally, tours and tastings are offered every day, throughout the day. They also run a contemporary-style, first-class restaurant called Café Champagne. The eatery has earned numerous restaurant industry awards and provides a venue for fabulous winemaker dinners. Another compelling reason to visit is to attend one of the winery's year-round special events. During the summer the winery puts on a popular jazz concert series featuring major artists such as David Sanborn, Rick Braun and Hiroshima. Events in other seasons include dances, grape stomping parties and various theme dinners. Add to that a gift shop, champagne

tasting lounge, banquet and wedding facilities, and you have a place that's *fun!*

Despite all the peripheral fun and festivities, Thornton Winery has made serious inroads with their still and sparkling wines.

The winery's roots began in the late 1970s as a hobby of businessman John Culbertson. Culbertson owned a Houston-based company called Martech International that specialized in supplying diving and exploration services to the oil industry. Over a number of years Culbertson fine-tuned his winemaking hobby to the point where the wine community finally began to

take notice of his nicely crafted
sparklers. He approached his friends
and fellow wine enthusiasts

John and Sally
Thornton

of
San
Diego,
with a
plan to
expand the
operation by
building a new
showcase winery,
restaurant and
entertainment area.
The Thorntons liked the

concept and became major investors
in Culbertson's new endeavor in 1987.

By the end of 1988 the new
facilities were nearing completion,
but the project was taking much
more capital than originally expected.
The Thorntons believed fully in the
project though and continued to
finance the expansion. By 1991 the
new operation had still not begun to
gel financially and required even
more infusions of cash. Ultimately,
the Thorntons acquired 100%
interest in the winery and finished
the transformation.

Throughout this period of
expansion and uncertainty, the
winery continued to build on their
reputation for making outstanding
wines. Jon McPherson took over the
winemaking duties in 1987 and year
after year was demonstrating his
exceptional talents. His expertise

broadened in scope when in 1992
Thornton Winery acquired Brindiamo
Winery which provided an avenue
for producing still wines to accompany
the sparkling wines. Over the next
few years the label name phased
from Culbertson over to Thornton.
"The still wines have complimented
our champagne," says John Thornton.
"The majority of champagne sales
happen during the last few months
of the year. So not only do we have
a more balanced revenue stream
throughout the year, we also have
a wider variety of offerings."

Today the winery produces six
different styles of sparkling wine,
ranging from Brut and Blanc de
Noir, to Blanc de Blanc and Brut
Reserve. Thornton also produces ten
to twelve non-sparkling, specialty
wines each year. Special, because
they are not mass-produced

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ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) *"The wine with stars" was purported to be discovered by the monk, Dom Perignon. From 1668 to 1715 Dom Perignon was the cellarmaster at the Benedictine Abbey in Hautvilliers, a town in France's Champagne District, where he was famous for his innovations in winemaking and his blending skills. As the discovery goes, one spring Dom Perignon was following the good winemaking practice of tasting the wines that had been fermented and bottled from the preceding fall's harvest. During this tasting, he is reported to have discovered some bottles of wine with lots of bubbles and to have called out to his brothers, "Come quickly, I'm drinking stars!" The fact that many sparkling wine and champagne labels are decorated with stars is no coincidence.*

2) *True. Glasses for sparkling wine must be scrupulously cleaned and free of detergent residue that can cause excess foaming and strip the wine of its bubbles. Therefore, wash your glasses by hand and rinse them thoroughly. The sparkling wine should be served in a flute shaped glass so its bubbles will be displayed properly, and, unlike table wine, the glasses should be filled nearly all the way to the brim.*

3) *True. The méthode champenoise sparkling wines have already been aged and are ready to drink upon release by the winery, so holding on to them will not improve the quality. But some vintage and reserve sparkling wines can be enjoyed many years after release.*



Lance Randolph—Continued from Page 5

“On this particular day in 1997, we were finishing the vintage and had only the Cabernet Sauvignon left to complete the harvest. The weather reports were optimistic and the temperature a bit chilly so I decided to go back to my jeans. Within three hours, dark black clouds gathered from the west and before long it started raining. We got two inches and I got over 150 phone calls from all my neighbors. I put my red shorts back on and we enjoyed

perfect weather for the rest of the harvest. I guess I learned my lesson.”

Lance Randolph has remained dedicated to the prospect that Lodi area wines can compete favorably in any wine arena and has helped many emerging wineries find their particular niche. He is charmingly unassuming and states flatly that no one person can do it all and that everyone must band together if anything is to be accomplished.

But Lance Randolph possesses keen insight and the ability to see that his insight is acted upon. He feels that his wines and the wines of his area benefited from the fact that the wine industry was already seeking other appellations and wines that were unique and interesting.

Unique and interesting. Buzz words that describe Lance Randolph and Peirano Estate Vineyards to a tee. 🍷

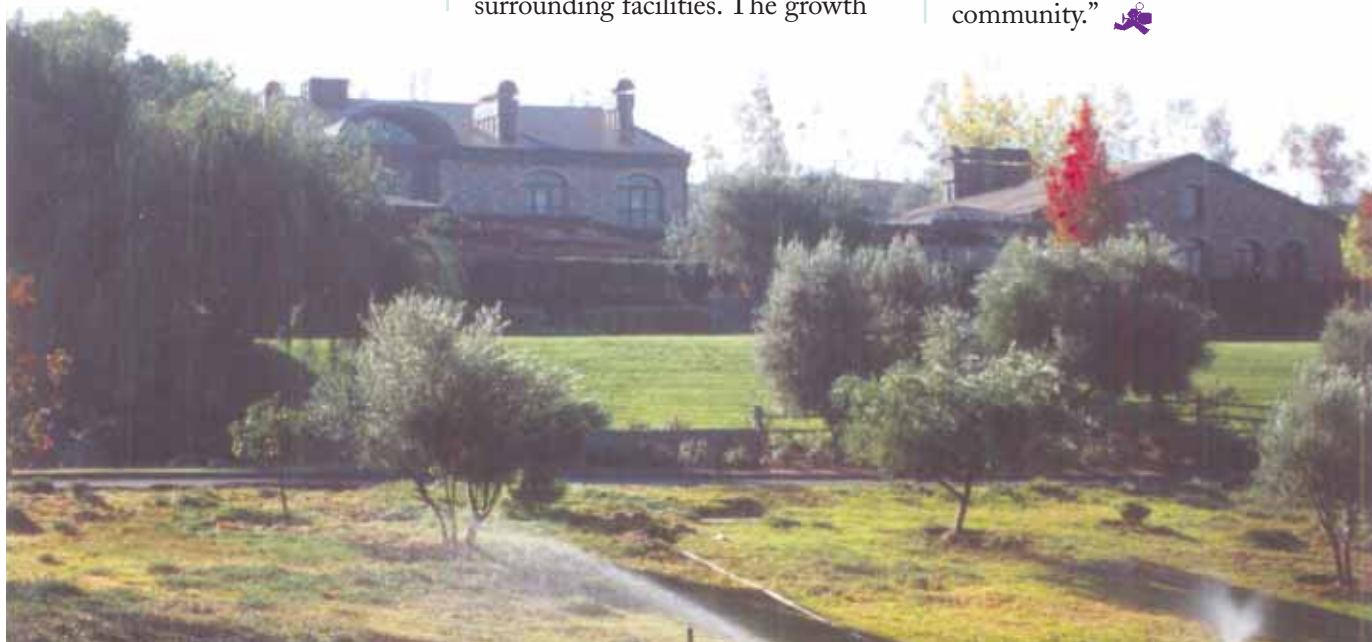
Thornton Winery —Continued from Page 7

mainstream wines. Thornton wines take a decided lean toward Rhone and Italian varietals that emphasize the Temecula Valley’s Mediterranean-style climate. Wines such as Côte Red (a Rhone style blend), Pinot Blanc, Viognier, Muscato, and Carignane, are just a few examples of their award-winning premium varietal wines.

Most of the grapes are purchased from other growers throughout California. “Buying grapes gives us a lot of flexibility in deciding the wines we want to produce,” says John. “It’s a big reason we can afford to make a myriad of specialty wines in small quantities,” he reveals.

A large percentage of the winery’s total production is sold right there at the winery and its surrounding facilities. The growth

rate ahead figures to be about 5%-10% per year. “We don’t want to be as big as a Gallo or Mondavi,” says John. “Our goal is to make the highest quality wines we can and make the business support itself,” he continues. “We want to provide as delightful an experience as possible when people come to visit,” adds Sally Thornton. “Attracting people to the winery helps the other wineries in the area as well as the community.” 🍷



Thornton Winery brings in thousands of visitors each year to the Temecula wine country.

Peirano Estates — Continued from Page 1

recognized certain similarities to his native Italian vineyards and became one of the earliest planters in the entire area. He realized the Lodi location was truly blessed by nature. There was an abundance of water on hand; a climate that reminded him of his Mediterranean beginnings and some excellent rich soils that he felt would prove beneficial to grapevines. Finally, he knew that cool delta breezes would ensure a controlled maturation process, so necessary for the production of truly quality-oriented wines.

Peirano brought with him a hefty number of Zinfandel cuttings; a fact that gives added credibility to the argument that Zinfandel is actually a native Italian varietal. Peirano's original plantings covered about 80 acres, and are still in production as "old vine" zinfandel. These plants produce an average of only two tons per acre, but remain as a tribute to



The quaint tasting room and gardens of Peirano Estate are a source of great music and fabulous wines.

Giacomo Peirano and his foresight at the end of the 19th century.

The Peirano Estate story now skips forward some three generations, to its present day ownership and development. Today's owner, grower, winemaker is Lance Randolph, whose mother was Charlotte Peirano. In 1985, Lance took over the vineyard from his mother and father Randy, and immediately

faced a number of important business decisions.

One important decision involved the old zinfandel vines and their low yields. New vines would produce three to four times more grapes per acre and seemed an attractive alternative. Keep in mind that this was pre- "old vine Zin" era, and that Randolph was dealing

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More Champagne — Continued from Page 5

with an excellent product to replicate. California has a natural penchant for producing superior products, considering its weather advantages and particularly when allowing for the American palate's definite penchant for fruit and softness. It is generally agreed that many California sparkling wines equate with and even surpass their French counterparts. And, when the price issue comes into play, there's no real comparison as to quality/value relationship.

Secondly, we live in a world where celebrating is downright fun, and where an argument can easily be made that we Americans simply don't celebrate enough. A French

family will celebrate a child's good report card with a Champagne toast, not to mention more important events. In America, something REALLY IMPORTANT has to occur to get out a bottle of the good effervescent stuff.

Gold Medal has always embraced the philosophy of enjoying our Champagnes and sparkling wines on their own merits, as a most remarkable beverages that tend to improve one's quality of life and therefore any occasion the wines happens to accompany.

Maybe more people will begin to realize the importance of the drink in their everyday lives. This action will certainly make the

sparkling wine producers happy since their category has not shared the upward mobility of most wine categories over the past twenty years.

This seems to us a downright shame since Champagne was, is and always will be a most extraordinary delight to our palates, whenever and wherever we are fortunate enough to be able to enjoy it.

We cast our vote for Champagne (somehow we can't use the words sparkling wine in this context) usage for just about everything, including a toast for finishing this article!

Cheers! We know you will enjoy your toast to its fullest. 🍷



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Try these recipes suggested by
Café Champagne Executive Chef,
Steve Pickell . . .

CHAMPAGNE VINAIGRETTE

1 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1/2 cup champagne
3 Tbsp. champagne vinegar
1 1/2 cups Extra Virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp. each of garlic, sugar, oregano,
thyme, tarragon, marjoram & basil
1 Tbsp. parsley
1 Tbsp. dill
salt & pepper to taste

Combine ingredients and process until completely blended.

TOASTED ORZO, BAY SHRIMP SALAD

4 cups Orzo pasta
1 1/2 cups finely diced celery, carrots &
onions
6 cups chicken stock
1 Tbsp. butter
8-10 oz. Cooked Bay shrimp
1/2 tsp. each of garlic & shallots
1 tsp. thyme
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1 tbsp. fresh Italian parsley

Toast Orzo on a sheet pan in a 350 degree oven until golden brown-about 5 minutes. Remove and let cool. Melt butter in a soup pot. Add carrots, onion, celery, garlic and shallots. Sauté over medium heat about 5 minutes until vegetables are soft and translucent. Add the Orzo pasta, pepper, thyme and chicken stock. Bring to a boil then reduce heat. Simmer for 10 minutes until pasta is soft but not overcooked. Drain excess liquid and cool pasta. Toss pasta with vinaigrette and top with shrimp and garnish with Italian parsley.

From the folks at Peirano Winery . . .

FLANK STEAK WITH GRILLED SUMMER VEGGIES

3 lbs. Flank steak
3 zucchini
2 bell peppers (red & green)
1 eggplant
2-3 Portabella mushrooms
1 red onion
1/2 cup Gorgonzola Cheese

MARINADE:

1 cup teriyaki sauce
1/4 cup Peirano Estate 1998 Cabernet
Sauvignon

2 tbsp. virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. Peca Pepper sauce
2 tbsp. cherry balsamic vinegar
2 cloves garlic (minced)

Slice flank steak and vegetables length-wise. In a large mixing bowl combine marinade ingredients and mix well. Add steak and vegetables to mixture and allow to marinate in the refrigerator for at least two hours or longer. Prepare BBQ and grill away. Top finished dish with crumbled Gorgonzola cheese. Serve with side of herbed rice. Serves 4.

Peirano Estates—Continued from Page 9

with a grower-only attitude that had prevailed within his family's business for many years.

Randolph stuck to his guns and decided to keep the old vines intact and to begin producing an estate bottling of old zinfandel. Aided by the fact that Lodi was granted appellation status in 1986, a fact that greatly increased the region's wine prowess along with the emergence of the "old vine Zin" movement, wines bearing the Peirano Estate label were quickly accepted as among the best of the area.

Today's Peirano estate is officially located in the tiny town of Acampo, with actual plantings numbering just over 300 acres, producing Chardonnay, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Shiraz, Primitivo and an outstanding Cabernet Sauvignon. The Cabernet vines were planted in the mid-1970's and benefit from a double curtain trellis system that divides the fruit canopy both horizontally and vertically. By dividing the fruit thusly, sunlight exposure is increased and fruit components are enhanced. The system is labor intensive but an integral part of Peirano Estate Vineyards master plan. As a sidebar,

Peirano Estate Vineyards believed that such trellising also helps rid the fruit of its typical vegetative character, a negative for quality wines produced in the Lodi area.

The first release of a mere 520 cases of Peirano Estate wines occurred in 1992. Lance Randolph recalls that he made that number of cases because, "I didn't want to make more than I could drink." Public confidence and a host of medals and awards later, their annual production has reached in excess of 40,000 cases.

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.

Wildhurst—1997 Cabernet Franc

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	96%	3%	1%

Monte Volpe—1997 Sangiovese

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

Buffalo Ridge—1998 Zinfandel

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	94%	5%	1%

Curtis—1997 Syrah

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

Wildhurst—1999 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	97%	3%	0%

Monte Volpe—1998 Tocai Friulano

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

Buffalo Ridge—1999 Chardonnay

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

Curtis—1999 Heritage Blanc

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	9%	1%

Due to space limitations all available wines are not listed above—please call to inquire.

■ Indicates wine is still available

Peirano's nearest neighbor is the gigantic Woodbridge by Mondavi winery operation, but Lance Randolph is not intimidated. In fact, the relationship between the two is incredibly benign and Lance Randolph credits his huge neighbor with helping many fledgling wineries develop in the Lodi area.

Peirano Estate Vineyards is content to remain at its present 40,000 case capacity and will endeavor to continue increasing both quality and standards of its wines. This is all done with a careful and respectful eye to the past, in accordance with the traditional values instilled by founder Giacomo Peirano over 120 years ago. 🍷



THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

IT'S CHAMPAGNE TIME!! Here it is again, Gold Medal Wine Club's exciting, once-a-year, champagne blowout special! This is your chance to stock up on the bubbly for the holidays (or any other occasion) at ridiculous prices. Prices are barely above cost, so now's the time to buy before it disappears (the champagne selection is always a quick sell-out). **THOSE OF YOU WHO DID NOT RECEIVE CHAMPAGNE . . .** either you have requested to receive **red-wine-only** or your account indicates specifically not to send the champagne. However, if you wish to receive the champagne selection, **IT'S NOT TOO LATE.** Simply give us a call and we'll either include a bottle in your next shipment or send it out to you immediately (2 bottle minimum for separate shipments please).

[The 1999 Wildburst Chardonnay was] Outstanding! A taste of heaven!
—Charlene Roloff, Score 51

[The 1997 Wildburst Cabernet Franc] Thanks for a great summer of wine!
—Stanley Lynn, Score 42

[The 1999 Wildburst Chardonnay was the] Most enjoyable Chardonnay I've had in quite some time!
—Lisa Wells, Score 52

I love [the 1997 Wildburst] Cabernet Franc—thanks for finding such a great one!
—Cindie Hubiak, Score 58

[The 1997 Wildburst Cabernet Franc] This is one Cab [Franc] we'd love to share with all our friends! Wonderful!
—Debra Lewandowski, Score 48

[The 1997 Monte Volpe Sangiovese was an] Excellent wine!
—Julie A. Archer, Score 47

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 4 times a year at the end of each quarter. (Maximum of one Scoresheet per wine per membership)...GMWC

R E O R D E R

Our special champagne feature is once again an incredible wine offered at an unbelievable value. And speaking of values, the Peirano Cabernet Sauvignon at *under \$10/btl.* may just be the bargain of the year. The quality/price ratio is way off the charts on both of these.

	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members
1995 Brut Reserve* Thornton Winery	Special 3-Pack \$72 Half Case-6 \$144 Full Case-12 \$288	\$50 (31% Off) \$93 (35% Off) \$172 (40% Off)	\$47 (35% Off) \$86 (40% Off) \$159 (45% Off)
1998 Cabernet Sauvignon* Peirano Estates	Half Case-6 \$60 Full Case-12 \$120	\$49 (18% Off) \$94 (22% Off)	\$47 (22% Off) \$90 (25% Off)

Reorder Hotline: 1-800-266-8888

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

www.goldmedalwine.com

Note: shipping & tax (if applicable) are not included in the above prices. Call for details. Due to weight, shipping cost for sparkling wine orders is \$1.00 higher.

**Availability is extremely limited.*