

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 14 No. 9

Pietra Santa Winery Edition

In This Issue

PIETRA SANTA WINERY
Page 1

THIS MONTH'S WINES
Page 2

SPOTLIGHT PROFILES
Page 5

WINE WIZARD
Page 4

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Page 6

JUDGE-THE-WINES
Page 7

REORDERS
Page 8



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

www.goldmedalwine.com

ITALIAN ARTISANS WORKING MAGIC AT PIETRA SANTA WINERY

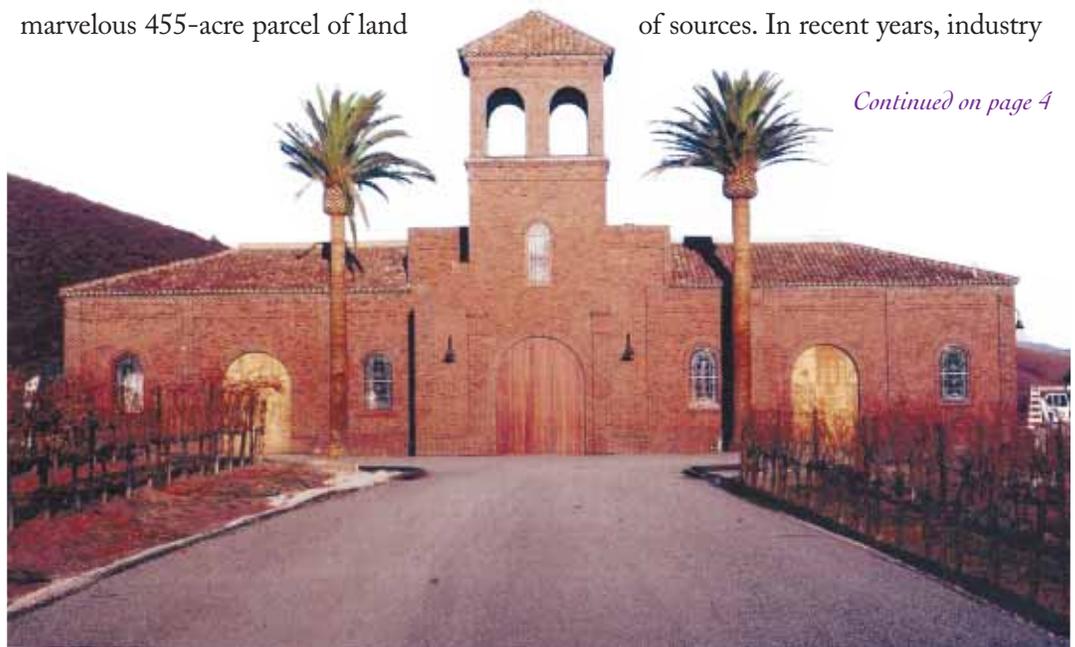
The incredibly modern Pietra Santa Winery is something of an anomaly as California wineries go. While its facilities are remarkably state of the art, Pietra Santa's broad range of wines are purposely steeped in the time honored traditions of wine-growing Europe and, in particular, those of Italy and France.

Pietra Santa Winery came into existence over fifteen years ago, when its founder Joseph Gimelli discovered a marvelous 455-acre parcel of land

neatly tucked away in a picturesque little valley known as the Cienega Valley. The area is more accurately referred to as the North Central Coast Region and has recently become California's primary growth area for winery development for the past decade.

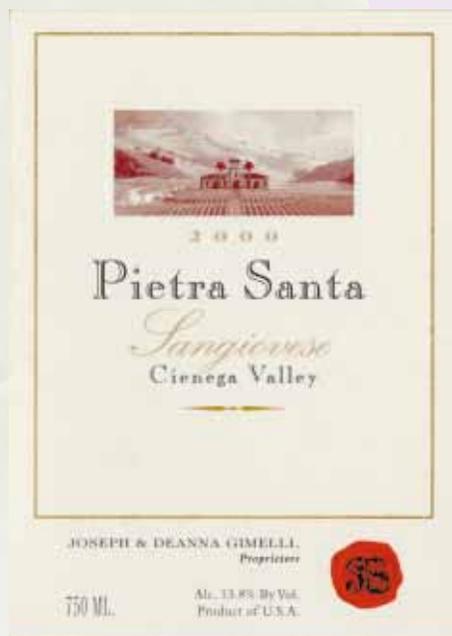
While the area might be relatively new to wine enthusiasts, it has been in use for over 150 years as a prime supplier of high quality vinifera grapes for a number of sources. In recent years, industry

Continued on page 4



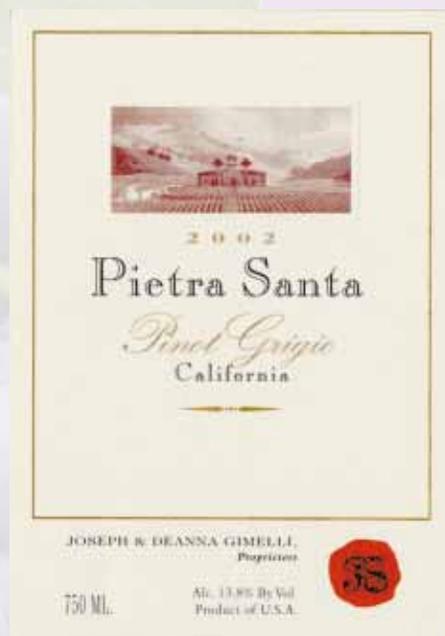
The beautiful Pietra Santa Winery in early morning, its stunning bell tower rises above the vines.

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.



2000 SANGIOVESE

Pietra Santa's 2000 Sangiovese hails from a small winery with a huge heart. The Beverage Testing Institute awarded the 2000 Sangiovese **87-Points**, calling it "**Highly Recommended.**" Typical of this varietal, the mature vineyards at Pietra Santa produce very rich fruit. Sangiovese is often described as a big and muscular wine with both depth and complexity and our offering this month is no exception. The 2000 Sangiovese is nicely balanced between soft earthiness and leathery aromas. The wine really comes alive with wonderful dark berry, flavors. Pietra Santa's 2000 Sangiovese proudly took the **Silver Medal** at the 2004 Pacific Rim International Wine Competition and claimed the **Silver Medal** at the Los Angeles County Fair as well as a **Silver Medal** at the California State Fair. Try pairing this Sangiovese with a classic Italian entrée such as spicy lasagne or ravioli.



2002 PINOT GRIGIO

Pietra Santa combined the best of new-world winemaking technology with the finest old-world lore when they released their 2002 Pinot Grigio. Alluring vibrant tropical fruit and citrus overtones gives this Pinot Grigio finesse. "Simply mouthwatering" is a typical characterization when describing this amazing wine. On the palate, the wine seems to explode revealing a wonderful crispness. It feels clean and refreshing and finishes pleasant and long. Pietra Santa attributes their rich wines to the limestone and granite soils found on their estate. This wine is a perfect example of both California elegance and old-world Italian tradition. Pietra Santa's 2002 Pinot Grigio is a wonderful alternative to Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc. This wine is an excellent choice to complement most seafood's and lighter dishes and is always deliciously refreshing on its own.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2000 VINTAGE: **87-Points** — The Beverage Testing Institute, **Silver Medal** — Pacific Rim International Wine Competition, **Silver Medal** — Los Angeles County Fair, **Silver Medal** — California State Fair

2002 VINTAGE: Due to the late release of Pietra Santa's 2002 Pinot Grigio, the winery was not able to enter the wine in the 2004 competitions.

Just the facts:

pH	3.53
Total Acid	.64 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.8%
Cases Produced	1,789
Drink Now or Up to Year	2010

Just the facts:

pH	3.35
Total Acid	7.1 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.8%
Cases Produced	2,006
Drink Now or Up to Year	2006

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Joseph Gimelli

Pietra Santa Winery founder and owner Joseph Gimelli, 45, brings a varied background to the pristine, yet old-world, ambiance of Pietra Santa.

The first-born American son of a large immigrant Italian family from the small town of Luano near Genoa, Gimelli was already a successful San Jose area businessman with a total of thirteen established entities when he first thought seriously of entering the wine industry.

“I guess it was my upbringing,” he recently admitted. “Like most Italian families, wine was always at our table. I really started thinking about wine around the age of 16, when my father John started explaining it to me. It helped me create a palate and made me search out better wines from that point on.”

Gimelli used his established business skills when it came to first finding a home for his dream venture. He spent several years looking at various locations in California and finally settled on an incredibly beautiful parcel of land in the Cienega Valley.

“I took many factors into consideration. I wanted soils that would produce the earthy, mineral style wines that I really enjoyed. When I saw that the Cienega Valley had exactly the same heat figures as Yountville in Napa, I made my decision.”

Frenchman Theophile Vache originally planted Gimelli’s new vineyards in 1850 and Gimelli has commemorated that fact with a new estate brand named after Vache that debuted in mid-2004. Gimelli feels fortunate that he was able to resurrect the vineyards that had been left years

awards in the Paris competition for his wines, the vines have always had a history for producing the highest quality.”

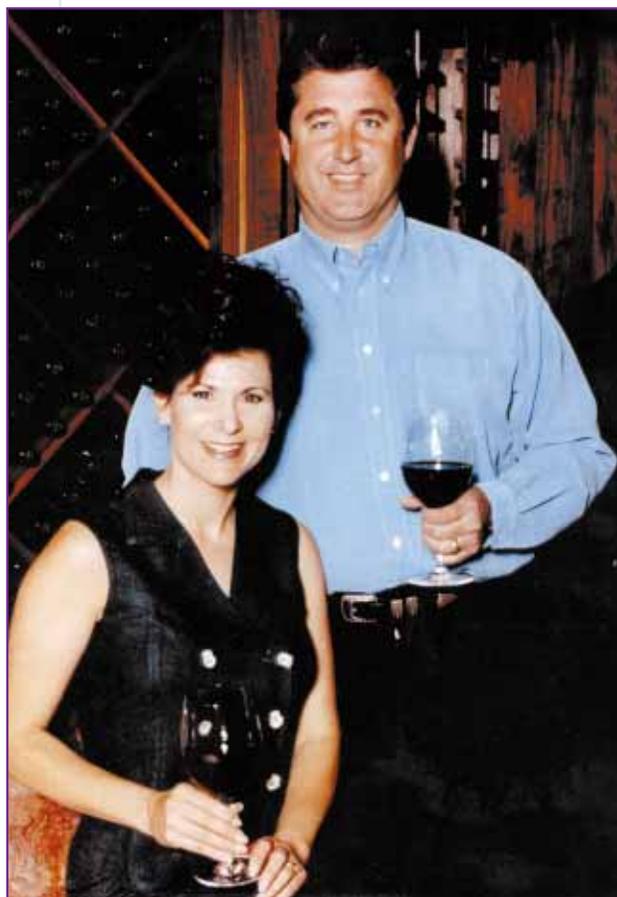
Another consideration for Gimelli was the fact that the Cienega Valley already contained its own appellation, one of the earliest sub appellations established in 1982. That fact allowed Pietra Santa Winery to market its wines at a level that would prove profitable.

When it came down to staffing the new winery, Gimelli drew heavily on his former business expertise.

“I saw from the beginning that the only way to make a winery profitable was to keep it lean and mean,” he smiled. “For a while we only had three employees, and that included Alessio and me. Even today we employ a really small staff of seven, a minute number by some people’s standards.”

Joseph Gimelli believes that the winery business is a lifestyle that requires all of one’s heart and soul and it is paramount that any successful winery makes the best wine it can make.

“There are simply too many wineries making mediocre wines today,” he continued, “a winery’s only real chance is creating a gem and



Joseph and Deanna Gimelli, proud owners of Pietra Santa Winery.

before by bigger producers that sought Monterey County’s higher tonnage production.

“The fact is this place is a marvelous microclimate for growing superior grapes,” Gimelli continued. “Back in the 1900s Vache won

Continued on page 6



**WINE
WIZARD**

- 1) So...Where did Champagne really come from?
- 2) How old are most grapevines? What's the oldest grapevine in the world?
- 3) When did winemakers first start using cork? What did they use before cork?

Continued from page 1

giants such as W. A. Taylor, Almaden and Heublein produced grapes on this property for a variety of their national brands with great success from Gimelli's newly acquired vines in the Cienega Valley.

Joseph Gimelli's dream parcel was anything but prime vineyard land when he first set eyes upon it back in 1989. While the property included a substantial amount of planted vineyards, the vines had been untended for many years and were completely overgrown. To make matters worse, the area was

overrun with wild boars that complicated matters to no end.

Gimelli salvaged what he could (including a beautiful one acre Zinfandel vineyard that dated back to 1906) and set about to replant the remainder of the property. His intention was to start his own winery and, in 1991, fate intervened on the side of Joseph Gimelli.

A fortuitous telephone conversation with Sonoma winemaker Alessio Carli resulted in Carli's visit to see the new plantings. A native Italian, Carli was struck by the property's 25-mile proximity to Monterey Bay and its cool ocean breezes, along with its substantial limestone and granite soil composition that reminded him of many areas within both Napa and Sonoma Valleys.

The two struck an immediate friendship and Carli became the fledgling winery's first and only winemaker.

Reaching back into his cherished Italian heritage, Gimelli named the new project Pietra Santa, or Sacred Rock. Three years later, in 1994, Pietra Santa was able to release its first 500 cases of its estate grown wines.

"My winemaking goal for Pietra Santa is simple," remarked Alessio Carli, "I always intend to bring out the best in the grapes. I always keep each vineyard lot separate, age the young wines in specific seasoned

barrels that limit the oak character and I create my final blends just prior to bottling. By respecting the complexity of the fruit and not burying it under too much technique, I enable the wines to showcase our unique winery character."

The ensuing decade has been good for Pietra Santa Winery, in terms of growth, acceptance and most importantly, in accolades from the industry's often stingy wine press. This year Pietra Santa will produce almost 60,000 cases of its main brands, including over 28,000 of Pietra Santa itself.

By 1998, ground was broken on Pietra Santa's new state-of-the-art production facility that ranks evenly with any winery complex built in California in the last twenty years. The 12,000 square foot structure carries out a mission theme that involves early Italian and Spanish Mission architecture that also includes a pair of striking bell towers. The bells are rung four times daily, at 8, 12, 6 and 12 and were made by England's Chapel Bell Company, the same company that produced America's legendary Liberty Bell several centuries earlier.

Pietra Santa is also home to one of California's finest estate olive oil producers. It has been ranked by at least one publication as California's top olive oil producer. In all, some 5,000 olive trees are planted on the Pietra Santa property that represents

a throwback to earlier times in California agricultural development when grapes and olives were often seen side by side.

Pietra Santa Winery is truly one of the real "happening" places along the Central Coast and no visit to the San Benito Valley, or more specifically, the Cienega Valley or surrounding areas would be complete without a stop here. 🍷



The beautiful rolling hills surrounding Pietra Santa Winery and Vineyards.

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) It is a common belief that Champagne was created in Champagne, France by Benedictine monk, Dom Pérignon. While it is true that Dom was paramount in the creation of the production process, he did not invent sparkling wine. The bottle fermentation process was known long before then. Christopher Merret gave a lecture to the Royal Society on the subject in 1662, and there is evidence that sparkling wine was made at the Abbey of Saint-Hilaire in Limoux, southern France, as far back as 1531. For Dom Pérignon and his colleagues, bubbles in wine was not the desired result, in fact, it was a sign of poor wine making. He spent a great deal of time trying to prevent the bubbles; however, he was never able to. He developed the art of blending different grapes and invented a method that allowed the pressing of black grapes that would yield white juice. Since the times of sixteenth century France, champagne has grown to be the wine of celebration and no other wine is so associated with joy and festivity. The variety of champagnes available has made it possible for everyone to sip a little bubbly on occasion. Today, more champagne is being enjoyed by more people than at any other time in history.

2) We often see the term "Old Vine" used in wine reviews or on labels, but what does it mean? What difference does it make how old the vines are that produced a particular wine? The answer is in the yield and quality of the fruit. Most wine experts will tell you vines that are six years or older will produce more stable fruit than younger ones. These older vines produce less fruit but at a higher quality. In turn these fruits are more concentrated and complex and produce richer and more intense wines. Still there is some debate between what older vines produce naturally and what leaf thinning and pruning can do for younger vines.

As far as age goes... some varieties, like Sauvignon Blanc are replanted every 20-25 years. Others, like Zinfandel, seemingly go on forever, and there are many blocks in California more than 100 years old. The oldest known vine in the world is over 400 years old, in the Republic of Slovenia. It is located next to the Drava River in the wine-growing region of Maribor.

3) Natural cork was first used to seal wine bottles in the late 17th century and, until very recently, the process of making corks had not changed much. Prior to this, winemakers used wooden stoppers wrapped in oil-soaked hemp cloth to ensure a better seal.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

LOBSTER SPAGHETTI

1 Lobster
Garlic
1 Ripe Tomato
Pietra Santa "Olivita" Olive Oil
1 small glass Pietra Santa Pinot Grigio California
Parsley
Tomato Sauce
Salt
Pepper
1/2 Pound Spaghetti.

Boil lobster for 5 minutes in salted water scented with 1 clove garlic and the tomato, which is scaled, peeled, and crushed. Meanwhile, brown 1 clove garlic in a pan with 1 tablespoon "Olivita" oil. Add the boiled lobster meat to the pan after cutting it into small pieces. Brown and mix, after wetting the meat with Pietra Santa Pinot Grigio. Add a small amount of chopped parsley, 2 teaspoons tomato sauce mixed with a little hot water, and as much salt and pepper as needed.

Brown the lobster 5 more minutes; throw the spaghetti into plenty of salted water and cook it until it is half done. Drain the spaghetti well, put it in the pan with the lobster meat, and finish cooking it.

Serves 4.

HERB CRUSTED LEG OF LAMB WITH TAPENADE

1 Whole Leg of Lamb (butterflied)
3 Sprigs Rosemary
2 tablespoons Cracked Black Pepper
1 tablespoon Chopped Garlic
1 tablespoon Chopped Thyme
Pepper
2 cups **Pietra Santa Sangiovese**.

6 Garlic Cloves (peeled and smashed)
1/2 Bunch Thyme
Pietra Santa "Primo" Olive Oil
1 tablespoon Chopped Rosemary
Kosher Salt
Tapenade

De-bone and trim the leg well, if not already done by your butcher. Smash the garlic cloves and mix with the herb sprigs and cracked pepper. Add 1/2 cup of Primo Olive Oil and rub all over the meat. Marinate, covered, in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 days.

Remove the herb sprigs and garlic cloves from the meat.

Preheat oven to 400° F. Mix the chopped garlic, rosemary, and thyme with enough olive oil to dampen into a paste-like consistency. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Season the lamb well with salt and pepper. Spread the interior liberally with tapenade. Roll up and tie with string. Heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of Primo Olive Oil and place lamb in the pan, fat-side down. Sear until golden and turn over so that all sides are seared. Place fat side up in the pan and use a large fork to hold the lamb while you drain off any excess fat.

*Pat the chopped herbed mixture all over the outside of the lamb. Add 2 cups of **Pietra Santa Sangiovese** to the pan and roast for 1 1/2 hours until a meat thermometer reads 125° F. Let the meat rest for 15 minutes before slicing. Slice thinly and serve with roasted potatoes. Serve extra tapenade and pan juices on the side*

TAPENADE

2 cups pitted Kalamata Olives
3 tablespoons Anchovy Fillets
1/3 cup Pietra Santa "Primo" Olive Oil

4 tablespoons Fresh Garlic Puree
1/3 cup fresh Italian Parsley

Place all ingredients in a food processor. Chop coarsely by pulsing the machine. The tapenade is best when made a day in advance so flavors have time to marry.

Cook time: 1 hour 40minutes. Serves 6 - 8



Alessio Carli (Pietra Santa's winemaker) and Joseph Gimelli sampling in the Barrel Room.

Continued from page 5

then being lucky enough to be noticed."

Gimelli proudly works alongside his wife of many years, Deanna, who is responsible for the winery's cozy tasting room in addition to the winery's office. Deanna runs a tight ship and that fact makes Joseph Gimelli happy. He feels as long as he keeps his staff small and efficient, his beloved

Pietra Santa Winery will ultimately survive the wine industry's difficult times.

When the idea of adding an olive oil production facility was first broached, Gimelli's business savvy conveyed a sense that the two entities would be a good fit.

"It was a big step for us, but it had been done quite nicely in the past. Today our olive oil has been rated by *Wine & Spirits Magazine*

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.

Michael-David 2002 7-Deadly Zins

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	6%	1%

Michael-David 2002 7-Heavenly Chards

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

Santerra 2001 Dolcetto

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	86%	10%	4%

Santerra 2000 Rosso

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	89%	6%	5%

Paraiso 2000 Pinot Noir

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	7%	2%

Paraiso 2000 Chardonnay

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

de Lorimier 2000 Merlot

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

de Lorimier 2002 Sauvignon Blanc

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	87%	7%	6%

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

as one of the best olive oils in the world. The best thing about this is that our wines are also rated extremely well by the experts. It proves the two can get along together and neither suffers.”

Pietra Santa Winery is the embodiment of its founder's grass roots personality. It is a no-nonsense business conducted in a way that is profitable and still fun. Joseph Gimelli is a truly lucky person in that he has his proverbial cake and is able to eat it, too.

It is refreshing to introduce someone like Joseph Gimelli to our club members. It seems there is a little Joseph Gimelli in each of us. Enjoy! 🍷



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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

As many of our long time members already know, September is the kick-off of our annual **California Champagne Special**. We're getting ready for the holiday season with incredible savings on a wonderful California champagne — the highly rated 2000 Laetitia Brut Coquard. Our **90-Point, Gold Medal** winning selection hails from the central coast of California in the beautiful Arroyo Grande Valley. **The 2000 Laetitia Brut Coquard is not available in stores and you won't find these savings anywhere else.** With pricing at 40% off winery-direct on full case orders (until October 15, 2004), we're sure you'll want to get in on these saving. Remember: order before October 15 for extra savings.

[The Michael-David 2002 7-Heavenly Chards is] "Super smooth Chardonnay with super flavor – simply heavenly."
—Peggy Kammen, Score 50

(The Santerra 2001 Dolcetto)
"So good we ordered a case."
—John O'Hara, Score 54

(The Paraiso 2000 Chardonnay)
"Best Chardonnay ever in the club, they just get better and better."
—Henry Gentry, Score 49

[The Santerra 2001 Dolcetto is the] "best wine I've ever tasted!"
—Dixie Atherton, Score 55

(Michael-David 2002 7-Deadly Zins)
"Definitely the best Zin I've ever had."
—Jean Wagner, Score 52

[Michael-David 2002 7-Heavenly Chards is] "Really quite heavenly!"
—Pam Wareham, Score 50

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

Pietra Santa's reputation as a maker of fine California wines with deep ties to Italian and French heritage is what makes their wines so special. Their reverence to time honored old-word traditions is evident in the ultra-premium wines they produce. Their unusual soils of limestone and granite also add to their consistently rich and complex vintages. Hurry before these wonderful wines (at ridiculously low prices) are gone. Remember, you can order by phone or directly from our website.

PIETRA SANTA WINERY	Retail Price		Club Price		Club Price	
	Winery-Direct		2-Bottle Members		4-Bottle Members	
2000 Sangiovese*	Half Case-6	\$144	\$98	(31% Off)	\$88	(38% Off)
	Estate Grown Full Case-12	\$288	\$178	(38% Off)	\$159	(44% Off)
2002 Pinot Grigio*	Half Case-6	\$84	\$67	(20% Off)	\$63	(25% Off)
	California Full Case-12	\$168	\$126	(25% Off)	\$118	(29% Off)

www.goldmedalwine.com/reorder

Reorder Hotline: 1-800-266-8888

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

*Availability is very limited.

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