

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 10 No. 11

Blue Oak Winery Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

ITALIAN WINEMAKING TRADITION EXEMPLIFIED IN BLUE OAK WINES.

Blue Oak Winery is actually a winery within a winery. The idea for the Blue Oak Reserve portfolio of fine wines was born when one of Arciero Winery's Directors, Chris Vix, traveled to Italy recently to sample first hand the country's renowned fine Chiantis and Super Tuscans. He chose not to search out wines from the big wineries, but rather the small countryside Italian wineries that represent the true heritage of Italian wines. He learned first hand about their wines and in particular was able to sample many of the noted Sangiovese/Cabernet

blends. He was so enamored with this combination of varietals that when he returned, he approached Arciero's Winemaker, Steve Felton, with the idea of creating a special blend of these same grapes. Arciero Estate vineyards already produce award-winning Cabernet and Sangiovese, so this new style of wine seemed a natural one with which to experiment.

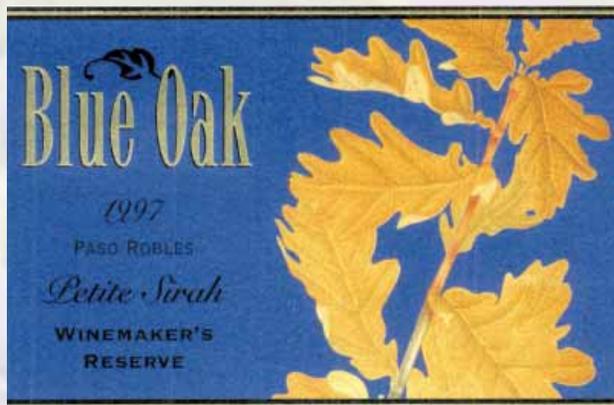
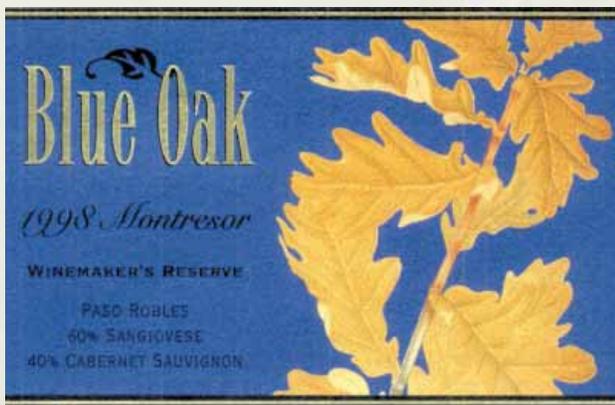
The exciting Blue Oak Montresor red wine that was created from this special blend of varietals is distinctively different

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The beautiful Blue Oak winery is modeled after a former Monastery in southern Italy.

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.



1998 MONTRESOR

A Gold Medal Wine Club exclusive offering!
 Montresor is an Italian style wine, made in the classic tradition of the high quality *Vino da Tavola* wines of Italy. A beautifully melded blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Attractive, blossomy aromas of ripe cherry, raspberries and violets mingle with spicy overtones of cedar, anise and mint. Full-bodied and superbly structured, round and viscous on the palate, this wine has a lengthy finish of fruit and complexing spice. Blue Oak Montresor will shine with savory, braised lamb or peppery beef dishes. 60% Sangiovese, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon.

1997 PETITE SIRAH

If you have never tried Petite Sirah, you're in for a real treat. No, not Syrah, nor is it Petite Syrah. Petite Sirah is a different grape variety all together. And the Blue Oak 1998 Petite Sirah is among the best we've encountered. Color of deep reddish-purple; intense aromas of blackberry, raspberry with spicy, peppery notes. Rich, full-bodied flavors of cinnamon spice and blackberry combine in a startling flavor-fest, moving to a lingering finish that is rich and powerful. A moderate tannin finish reminds you this is a wine with solid structure but showing plenty of finesse. Marinated barbecued meats, especially beef or pork, pair very well with Petite Sirah.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

1998 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal Special Selection*—an exclusive offering for Gold Medal Wine Club members; *Silver Medal*—Long Beach Grand Cru Wine Competition.
LEGACY: 1st vintage of this wine produced and bottled under the Blue Oak label.

1997 VINTAGE: *Best of Class, Gold Medal, 94 Points*—California State Fair Wine Competition.
LEGACY: 1st vintage vintage of Petite Sirah bottled under the Blue Oak label.

Just the facts:

pH	3.69
Total Acid58 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.5%
Cases Produced	800
Aged in American & French Oak . . .	15 Months
Drink Now or Up to Year	2006+

Just the facts:

pH	3.68
Total Acid71 g/100 mls
Alcohol	15.6%
Cases Produced	1,100
Aged in American & French Oak . . .	14 Months
Drink Now or Up to Year	2005+

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

The Arciero Brothers

The story of Arciero and Blue Oak Winery is an American classic with an Italian accent. It is the tale of a poor immigrant who came to America with nothing, and how his family would one day own one of the premier wineries on California's Central Coast. The man that started the legacy, Giovanni Arciero, came to the U.S. in 1914 from the farming region of Santa Elia Fiumrapido south of Rome. After securing a job as an assembly line worker in Detroit's Plymouth Automobile plant, Giovanni migrated between continents and worked for years to put aside enough money to bring over the rest of his family. In 1937, he brought over his eldest son Mike and then two years later, just before the outbreak of WWII, he secured passage for his middle sons Frank and Phil. (The youngest son Anthony, and Giovanni's wife Cristina, did not make it over until 1948.) After a few years in Detroit, Frank decided to head west in search of new challenges, while Phil learned the tool and die trade at the Henry Ford Trade School. In 1948, Phil joined Frank in California and the brothers began working together in the construction industry. Capitalizing on their hard work and determination,

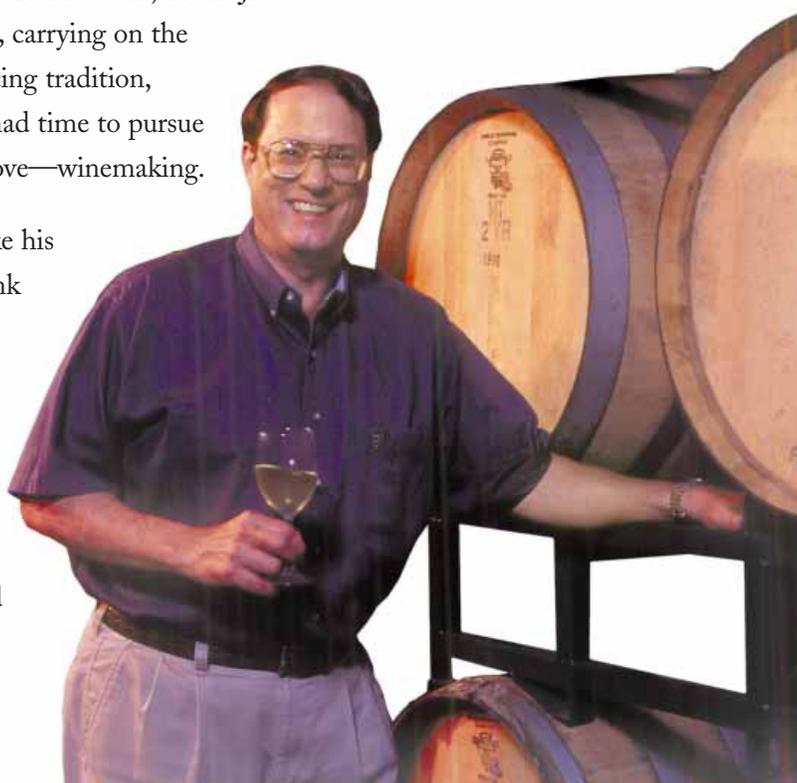
they went from ditch diggers and day laborers, to owners of "Arciero Brothers," a highly successful cement business.

Using that success as a springboard, they soon built an impressive construction, real estate and farming empire. With money no longer an issue, Frank had time to indulge his favorite hobby—car racing. In 1957, Frank entered his Ferrari in professional races. While his track record was good, Frank's insurance agent advised him to turn over the wheel to a talented younger driver. That driver's name was Dan Gurney. With Gurney's tremendous success and Frank's sons, Frank Jr. and Albert, carrying on the Arciero racing tradition, Frank Sr. had time to pursue his other love—winemaking.

Just like his father, Frank Sr. had always enjoyed making wine for his friends and family. In the early 1980s, he decided it

was time to make winemaking more than a hobby. During his trips through the oak-covered hills of the Central California Coast to visit his son and watch races at Laguna Seca racetrack, Frank found that the area around Paso Robles reminded him of his birthplace near Rome. In 1983, using the financial resources from the cement and construction business, Frank and Phil purchased 160 acres and began planting grapes. Their instant success prompted them to build a magnificent winery modeled after Monte Cassino, a former Benedictine monastery built centuries ago near the Arcieros' hometown.

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General Manager, Kerry Vix has brought twenty-two years of wine industry experience to Blue Oak.



WINE WIZARD

- 1) True or False. Syrah, Petite Sirah and Petite Syrah are all different grapes?
- 2) What is the purpose of decanting a wine?
- 3) What causes certain wines to become more complex over time?

Continued from page 1

in style and quality than any other wine produced at the Arciero Winery. The principals at Arciero have chosen the Gold Medal Wine Club to debut this Super Tuscan blend to the world. This selection, together with Blue Oak Petite Sirah and Blue Oak Chardonnay, represents the start of an ongoing and important program for the winery.

Surrounded by 700 acres of rolling hills, vineyards and wide-open blue skies is a majestic winery inspired by an ancient Benedictine monastery. Above the heavy wooden entrance doors the name Arciero is carved into stone. To the casual

observer, it feels as if this might be a scene right out of the Italian countryside. To the knowledgeable wine enthusiast, it could only be the Arciero Winery, one of the finest small wineries on California's Central Coast.



A recent addition to the underground Barrel Room added 25,000 square feet.

It is no coincidence that, when it comes to the Arciero Winery, the feel of Italy is everywhere. Owners Frank and Phil Arciero spent their early childhoods growing up near the fields and vineyards south of Rome. When they followed their father to America in the late 1930s they carried with them a love of the land and a drive to succeed. After starting with virtually nothing and building several successful businesses, Frank Arciero found himself drawn back to the land by his hobby of winemaking in the early 1980s. While driving from Southern California through the Central Coast on his way to visit his son who was serving in the Army at Fort Ord, Frank found that the oak-studded hills surrounding Paso Robles reminded him of his Italian birthplace. "I knew this would be a good place to grow grapes," Frank remembers.

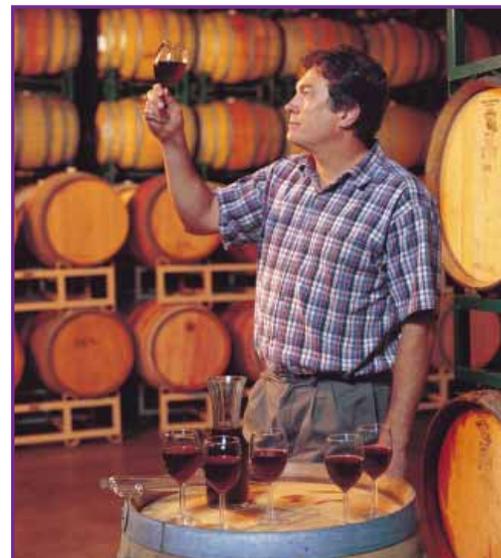
In 1981, Frank and Phil bought 160 acres and by 1983 they began

planting vines for the first of the Arcieros' 15+ varietals. A year later, using a makeshift winery housed in a temporary metal building, the Arcieros produced 1,000 cases of Chardonnay with grapes purchased from other vineyards along the Central Coast. This first vintage earned a Gold Medal from the Seattle World Expo and started them on the fast track to success. In 1985, they completed the first crush in their newly built permanent facility. In 1986, Arciero Winery opened its doors to the public. "My family always made wine... and I'm following the tradition here in California," says Frank. Unlike the first wine that was produced from purchased grapes, today the winery produces 50,000 cases annually under the Arciero label with all the fruit coming from the 700 acre Arciero Estate Vineyards. A large export program and additional branded business accounts for another 100,000 cases.

The warm days and cool evenings, as well as the ideal soil conditions (well drained calcareous soil) found on the Central Coast, allow them to grow a wide selection of varieties. From their flagship Chardonnays and Cabernets to the more limited production Italian varieties, Arciero winemaker Steve Felten has produced high quality, award winning wines for over twenty years. Teamed with winery Partner & General Manager Kerry Vix, and other key players such as Butch Arciero and Christopher Vix, the

winery is running at full throttle, generating demand for their wines in both domestic and international markets.

In their effort to meet this growing demand for their wine, and to stay ahead of the pack, the Arcieros have continued to lead the field in innovations. They have their own root stock nursery for clone selection, and have planted a number of acres



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Award-winning winemaker Steve Felten has over twenty years of winemaking experience.

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) *The wine world has admittedly sent confusing signals about these three wines. Petite Sirah is almost certainly an invented name for a black grape variety unrelated to the true Syrah. Some French growers distinguish Syrah from a small-berried subvariety they call Petite Syrah. To confuse matters even more, some American growers spell their Petite Sirah wine as Petite Syrah!*

Petite Sirah has been important since the early 1880s, mostly in California and South America, but its popularity has declined recently as Syrah has entered the spotlight. During the 1980s, Petite Sirah was thought to be identical to the Duriff grape, a nearly extinct French variety. But DNA testing finally proved that theory wrong. It has also been suggested that in the early 20th century and subsequently the name Petite Sirah was applied to a mixture, sometimes in the same vineyard, of grape varieties producing long-lived, deep colored red wines. In other words, the wine world still hasn't figured it all out.

2) *Decanting is usually done to separate the wine from its own sediment. Certain wines, mostly reds, that have aged over a period of time in the bottle will produce or "throw" a natural sediment. This happens as color pigments and tannins bond together and fall out of solution. The resulting sediment is not harmful but may be a bit distracting if it shows up in your guest's wine glass. If you choose to decant a wine, let it rest upright for a day or two, to let the sediment settle to the bottom. After opening and as you are pouring the wine into a decanter, watch the neck of the bottle to be careful not to let the sediment pour out. You can also use a very fine strainer to catch the sediment as it pours out.*

3) *Simply put, over time the hundreds of aroma, flavor and textural elements in wine undergo small chemical reactions that change the characteristics of a wine. In the bottle, the cork stopper seals off the wine from air so there isn't enough oxygen to cause much of a reaction. So the chemical changes that occur in a bottle of wine are almost all reductive (reactions occurring in the absence of oxygen). Therefore, changes occur slowly over time. Incidentally, over time some of these chemical changes can produce a sort of stinky smell. Decanting the wine, and therefore exposing it to oxygen, helps to open up the wine and rid it of unpleasant odors. The flavor of the wine will often change in the wine glass as it is exposed to the oxygen in the air.*





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ARTICHOKE LASAGNA

- 2 14 1/2-ounce cans diced tomatoes with garlic an onion, undrained
- 1 7 1/2-ounce can caponata
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 16-ounce container low fat cottage cheese
- 2 6-ounce jars marinated artichoke hearts, drained
- 1 cup fresh Parmesan cheese
- 1 8-ounce package no boil lasagna noodles

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Lightly oil 8 x 11 baking dish. In food processor, combine tomatoes, caponata and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Pulse until coarsely chopped. Season with pepper and set aside. Wash and dry processor bowl. Add cottage cheese, process until smooth. Add artichokes, 1/4 cup Parmesan and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt. Pulse to coarsely chop artichokes. Spread 1/3 of the tomato mixture over the bottom of the prepared dish. Cover with 3 lasagna noodles. Spread half of the cottage cheese mixture over noodles. Cover with 3 noodles. Spoon on half of the remaining tomato mixture and sprinkle with 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese. Cover with 4 noodles and remaining cottage cheese mixture. Top with 4 noodles and then the remaining tomato mixture. Cover dish with foil and bake for 25 minutes or until bubbling. Remove foil and sprinkle remaining 1/2 cup Parmesan. Bake, uncovered until cheese has melted. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

TRI TIP WITH RED WINE

- 1 Tri Tip Roast (2 to 3 pounds)
- 1 cup red wine
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 cup water

For Gravy:

- 2 tablespoons Margarine
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onions
- 1/2 cup finely chopped mushrooms

Pan Juices:

- 1 tablespoon Cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons Water

Place rack in roasting pan. Put trip tip in fat side up. Sprinkle generously with garlic salt and fresh ground pepper. Set oven temperature to 425 degrees. Pour wine, soy sauce and water in bottom of pan. Roast in oven for one hour or until done to medium temperature. Check liquid in bottom of pan. Add more water or wine or both. You want to keep at least 1/2 inch of liquid in the bottom of the pan.

In saucepan, combine the margarine, onions and mushrooms. Sauté until golden. When roast is done, remove from oven. Add the pan juices to the mushrooms and onions. Add to juices in pan. Boil until thickened. This usually makes 1 1/2 cups to 2 cups gravy. Slice tri tip and serve with gravy.

Continued from page 3

Today the vineyard and winery are still a family run business. Frank Sr. oversees the vineyards and selection of varietals, brother Phil provides the financial expertise and Frank Jr. (Butch) plays a key role in sales and marketing. With big plans for the winery in the future, the latest chapter in the Arciero family legacy looks destined for continuous visits to victory lane. 🍷



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.

Jefferson Cellars – 1989 Brut Reserve

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	86%	8%	6%

Stevenot – 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	5%	5%

Bargetto – 1999 Dolcetto

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	96%	4%	0%

Bargetto – 1999 Pinot Grigio

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

Alterra – 1997 Cabernet Sauvignon

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

Moss Creek – 1996 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	88%	8%	4%

Monterey Peninsula – 1997 Pinot Noir

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	5%	5%

Monterey Peninsula – 1997 Res. Chardonnay

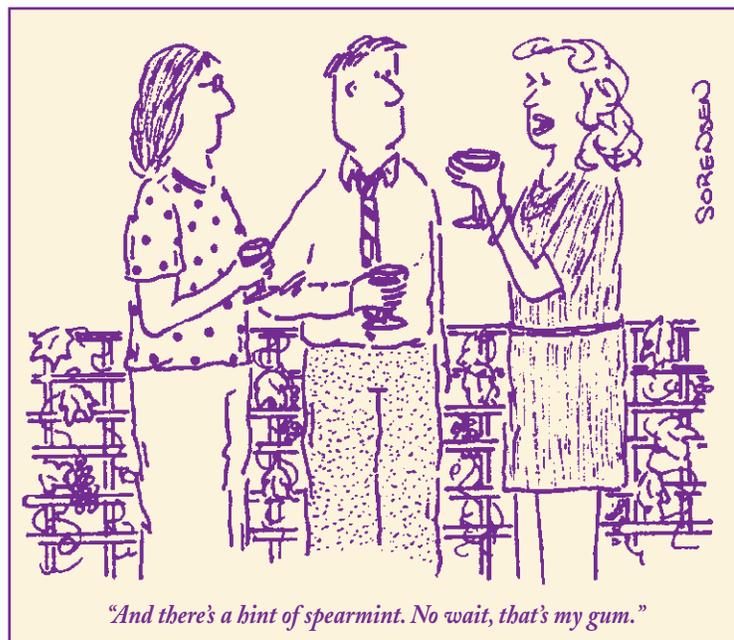
MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	92%	6%	2%

The above wines were recently featured. Due to space limitations the entire list of available wines is not listed—please call to inquire about other previous favorites.

■ Indicates wine is still available

Continued from page 5

using a unique high-density pattern of 870 vines to the acre which produces fruit with more intense flavor and aroma. “We like to experiment, and our ability to grow many varieties keeps things interesting,” says Frank Sr. With success in hand, the winery’s goal is to one day bottle 300,000 cases and be a household name worldwide. Given their history of hard work and dedication to quality, it should be a goal well within their grasp. 🍷



“And there’s a hint of spearmint. No wait, that’s my gum.”

THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

There are few things we enjoy more than to call up a Gold Medal Wine Club member and announce that he or she has won a half-case of wine. We pulled another Scoresheet out of the hat recently to find the name of our 3rd quarter winner, **Clyde Beimfohr** from Illinois. "Wonderful!" was Clyde's first response. "We've really enjoyed the wines, it's worked well for us," he said. Over the two years that the Beimfohrs have been members one of their favorite wines was the Baywood 1997 Merlot-which is the wine Clyde picked for his freebie. You could be the next winner! Just send in your completed Scoresheets and wait for your name to be drawn.

[The 1998 Indian Springs Chardonnay was] Wonderful! WOW!
—Phyllis Beatty, Score 55

We had [the 1989 Jefferson Cellars Brut Reserve] with Brown & Harley Truffles and Belgian Cremes—no special occasion, just because. What a great adventure! They were made for each other!
—Philip Travers, Score 55

I loved [the 1999 Bargetto Pinot Grigio]. The color was so appealing and the flavor was superb!
—Jobna Cline, Score 55

[The 1996 Stevenot Cabernet Sauvignon was] A stunning, gorgeous wine that was a thrill from appetizer through dessert. I highly recommend!
—T. Knitter, Score 55+

I can see now why all the awards— [the 1999 Bargetto Pinot Grigio] was wonderful!
—Dee Wittig, Score 55

I worked at a small winery in the Loire Valley, France, an area which specializes in Cab Franc. [The 1997 Indian Springs Cabernet Franc is the best I've tasted in the U.S.]
—Lisa D. Kadmas, Score 55

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

The fabulous Blue Oak wines are Reserve, specialty selections hand-crafted in tiny quantities. We predict a quicker than usual sell out of these wines. Be sure you have enough on hand for Thanksgiving!

BLUE OAK WINERY	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members
1998 Montresor* Winemaker's Reserve	Half Case-6 \$108 Full Case-12 \$216	\$78 (28% Off) \$144 (33% Off)	\$72 (33% Off) \$132 (39% Off)
1997 Petite Sirah* Winemaker's Reserve	Half Case-6 \$102 Full Case-12 \$204	\$75 (26% Off) \$140 (31% Off)	\$70 (31% Off) \$130 (36% Off)

Reorder Hotline: 1-800-266-8888

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

www.goldmedalwine.com

**Availability is extremely limited.*

Note: Tax & shipping are not included in the above prices. Call for details.