

Diamond Series



Chappellet Winery

Donn Chappellet was aching to get out of the city and away from the hassles of running a big company. His vending machine business in Los Angeles had grown from an entrepreneurial two-man operation to become one of the largest food service companies in America in just a dozen years. But by 1965 it wasn't a challenge anymore, and perhaps more importantly, it was not enjoyable.

At first he thought he'd buy a ranch and raise cattle. He had a taste of that life as a young boy when he used to hang out at his parents' cattle ranch near Tehachapi, California. His second thought was to start a winery. Wine was already a big hobby of his and the more he looked at vineyard land, the more intrigued he became. Not only did the lifestyle look like it would suit him and his family, he figured there was a great opportunity that lay ahead in the wine business.

It took two full years of research before zeroing in on Pritchard Hill above Lake Hennessey, high off the floor of Napa Valley.

"I remember well my conversations back then with André Tchelistcheff (the dean of California wine-making), Donn recalls. "He was convinced that

the hillsides were the best locations to grow grapes. Most of the Napa vintners at that point in time did not grow on the hillsides because it was far more expensive than farming on the level valley floor."

In 1967 the Chappellets purchased 320 acres of Pritchard Hill property to establish only the second new winery in Napa Valley since Prohibition. Located on the eastern slopes of Lake Hennessey 1,400 feet above the valley floor, it was also one of the first wineries to practice hillside farming.

Pritchard Hill had been the site of various vineyard plantings dating back to the 1870s. The property now though, was a mix of hayfields and newly planted vines of Cabernet Sauvignon, Gamay, Riesling and Chenin Blanc. The volcanic soil ranges from extremely rocky to sandy silt to heavy clay. Together with the high altitude, the land has proven to be a stressful environment in which to grow grapes. But this added stress on the vines results in small yet intensely flavored grapes that produce a more powerful, long-lived wine than those from the valley floor.

The Chappellets wasted no time in building a winery facility. Completed in 1969, the dramatic and impressive geometric structure is a section from a tetrahedron, which forms a pyramid shape. Its shape, as seen from an overhead view, serves as the Chappellet Vineyard logo.

Chappellet's first wines were 500 cases of 1968 Chenin Blanc and 200 cases of 1968 Cabernet Sauvignon, both of which were quickly swallowed up by anxious consumers. In the late 1960s it was not particularly hard for a new Napa winery to be noticed. There were still not many wineries in existence,

so there was a strong intrigue-factor that allowed a number of new wineries to get off to a fast start.

The next two

Chappellet Cabernet vintages, 1969 and 1970 were stellar, setting the tone for the years ahead. Chappellet Vineyards has remained steadfast and has continued to be a top producer of Cabernet Sauvignon throughout its thirty-eight year history. The late, well-known national wine columnist, Jerry Mead, wrote "Cabernet Sauvignon is what Chappellet is best known for and with good cause. Its Cabernet is definitely world class." Former Los Angeles Times wine writer and now at-large wine critic Dan Berger, places Chappellet Vineyards on his short list of all-time great California wineries.

CHAPPELLET

pritchard hill estate vineyard

cabernet sauvignon 86% ~ petit verdot 9% ~ merlot 5%



NAPA VALLEY • 2001

ALC. 14.5% BY VOL.



Diamond Series

Continued on page 2



Donn Chappellet

Chappellet's legacy of producing consistently, high quality, age-worthy wines is an achievement to marvel.

For close to forty years Donn, his wife Molly and the rest of the Chappellet family have created a lasting legacy of excellence — from the modern pyramid shaped winery they designed and built, to the care and conservation of the vineyard land to the high quality wines they produce each year. In the words of Robert Mondavi, who wrote this note to the Chappellets on the 25th anniversary of their winery: "What a great addition you and your family have been to the wine community. From the very beginning, starting with the special location, the creativity of a unique winery, and the distinctive style of wine, you established a special niche which is much appreciated by all."

Accolades and Tasting Notes

WINE OF THE YEAR: 97 Points & "Three Puffs" (out of three), *Connoisseurs' Guide* "Chappellet Pritchard Hill Estate Vineyard 2001 is the highest pointed wine we have reviewed (in 2004), is one of the best aging wines we have reviewed and has already established a fine track record in past vintages. Why worry about Screaming Eagle, which one can neither get nor afford, when wines like this are available? Absolutely riveting aromas of currants, cocoa, very rich oak and layers of minerals and loamy earth set this serious wine apart from the rest of the field from the very first sniff, and its opulent, fully stuffed flavors make good on the promise. It is as deep and as rich as any of the Cabernets under current review, and its stands among the very best of the vintage when it comes to structure, balance and wine-making polish as well. A convincingly ageworthy wine that will grow for a decade or more, it is nothing short of a tour de force effort and confirms Chappellet's pre-eminent place as a maker of superb Cabernet Sauvignon."

95-Points, *The Wine News magazine* "Inky hue with a garnet rim. Heady menthol aromas with blueberry and milk chocolate notes. Layers of supple cherry and mint flavors. Lasting and creamy with a cherry-chocolate finish. A perfectly balanced wine with charm and muscle."

94-Points, *Wine Enthusiast magazine* "Your first impression is how concentrated in cassis fruit this wine is. It's immense as well in flashy new oak. Then there are the tannins. Gentle and sweet, yet subtle as a tapestry, they offer structure to the decadent flavors. This is a real achievement, and as soft as it is, the wine seems balanced enough to evolve nicely over the next 10 years. Cellar Selection."

Reorder

The *Connoisseurs' Guide* put it very aptly, "Why worry about Screaming Eagle, which one can neither get nor afford, when wines like this are available?" The 2001 Pritchard Hill Cabernet Sauvignon is the new benchmark for all California Cabernet Sauvignons that follow — it is an incredible palatial (pun intended) experience. Chappellet's Pritchard Hill Estate Cabs are always sold out upon release so the *Diamond Series* was very fortunate indeed to secure a small amount of this blockbuster wine. In fact, due to the very limited quantity on hand we must allocate reorders to a maximum of three bottles per membership.

Winery Direct: 110.00 / bottle (when it was available)

Diamond Series Price:

3 bottles-\$98.00 / bottle

(This is a Charter member net price.

No further discounts are available.)

(Plus shipping)

Call: 1-800-266-8888 • Fax: 1-800-266-8889

Reorder Web Site: www.goldmedalwine.com/member

E-mail: orders@goldmedalwine.com

800.266.8888



www.goldmedalwine.com/member