

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 16 No. 2

Contrada Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

THE OAKVILLE CONTRADA— NAPA VALLEY WINES

INSPIRED BY CULINARY TRADITIONS AND CELEBRATIONS OF ITALY!

"The Contrada name and label was inspired by a trip I took to my Italian homeland," reveals winery owner, Michael Pozzan. "My wife and I are always so impressed with the local wines that are rustic, yet flavorful and uncomplicated," he continued. "These are wines you don't have to over-analyze, just sit down and enjoy them with your favorite food."

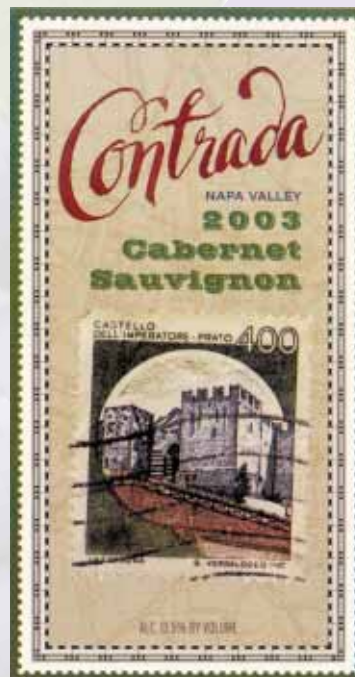
Contradas are actually districts or neighborhoods within the city of Siena, Italy. The city is divided into 17 Contradas, each having their own government as well as social and cultural activities focusing on local games and festivals. The Palio, patron saint's days and other festivities are celebrated with banquets

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Michael and Mary Ann find their roots in Italian traditions outside of Asti, 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 1,200 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



2004 SAUVIGNON BLANC

2003 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The Contrada 2004 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc shows ripe pineapple aromas with a hint of dried provincial herbs also evident. The wine is fresh, acidic and assertive with plenty of fruit to please the palate. Flavors are pleasantly rich throughout and the finish is crisp, clean and refreshing. This is a wine meant to be enjoyed young, although it will age well and gain some complexity over time. Drink it tonight or cellar until 2008. A very versatile food wine that can complement everything from shellfish and Caesar salad to fried chicken and aged Jarlsberg cheese. 100% Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc.

The award-winning Contrada 2003 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is one of those rare bottles of wine priced significantly lower than its quality would dictate. A luscious red hue color with a touch of discernable lavender; aromas of Bing cherries, vanilla and thyme fill the glass with a bit of toasted oak layered beneath it all. Nicely concentrated flavors of black cherry, plum and currant; balanced, moderately full-bodied; medium tannins; good depth and complexity; finishes with a taste of ripe currants and a hint of mint. Drink now or cellar until 2010. 100% Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2004 VINTAGE: Bronze Medal—San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. The San Francisco competition is the first such event of the year and the largest of its kind in the U.S. Additional medals are forthcoming in the competitions ahead.

LEGACY: Michael Pozzan is a talented producer of high-quality, big-value wines, including this most recent 2004 Sauvignon Blanc.

Just the facts:

pH	3.35
Total Acid	.608 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.5%
Cases Produced	1,009
Drink Now or Up to Year	2008

2003 VINTAGE: Silver Medal—San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. The San Francisco competition is the first such event of the year and the largest of its kind in the U.S. Additional medals are forthcoming in the competitions ahead.

LEGACY: The Pozzan Winery has been producing Cabernet Sauvignon since 1995; winemaker John McKay has been doing the same for over 35 years.

Just the facts:

pH	3.69
Total Acid	.569 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.5%
Cases Produced	1,989
Drink Now or Up to Year	2010

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

John McKay, Winemaker

John McKay came to the Napa Valley in 1968 after having graduated from the University of Oregon in the biological sciences. While working as a chemical research assistant at Sonoma State Hospital he met the renowned winemaker Brad Webb of Hanzell Vineyards. Brad's enthusiasm for the industry sparked an interest that resulted in John's joining the production staff of Charles Krug Winery in 1972. There, under the tutelage of Peter Mondavi he spent eight years learning the craft of fine winemaking, eventually becoming the production manager and winemaker.

In 1980 John left Krug to become the winemaker for the newly organized Vichon Winery. Over the next five years the staff of Vichon implemented many new winemaking techniques that were heretofore unknown in California. They pioneered the now common practice of sur lie aging of barrel fermented white wines. They were the first to use Semillon as a blending component with Sauvignon Blanc to make wines of more complexity and distinction. In red

wine production, they instituted the use of extended maceration during fermentation for more suppleness and depth of character, notably in Cabernet Sauvignon.

In 1985 upon the sale of Vichon Winery to Robert Mondavi



John McKay, a resident and winemaker in Napa for over 30 years, keeps perfecting his craft.


Enterprises, John and George Vierra, the ex-managing general partner of Vichon started Merlion Winery. There, along with the duties of winemaker for Merlion, John also began consulting for the other wineries to help them achieve their goals.

Among those clients were Swanson Vineyards and Pahlmeyer Winery.

Beginning with the 1993 harvest John joined the staff of Monticello Cellars as winemaker. As a producer of Estate Bottled wines, Monticello provided the opportunity to achieve a long sought after goal of being able to control the winemaking process from the field to the consumer. Monticello also provided winemaking services for several crush clients.

The year 1998 marked another change as John moved to the Napa Wine Company, a large facility that focused on entirely on custom crushing. As the winemaker for the facility it provided the opportunity to work with some of California's most influential consulting winemakers. Helen Turley, Heidi Peterson Barrett, Paul Hobbs, and Merry Edwards are among those that were in daily contact. In 2001 he was made Director of

Winemaking to focus more on special project and strategic planning. Along with those duties he also took charge of the winemaking responsibility for the Marilyn Merlot, Volker Eisele Estates, and Michael Pozzan labels, plus all clients of the Napa Wine Company. 🍇



WINE WIZARD

- 1) What is *Biodynamic Viticulture*?
- 2) What is the difference between *aroma* and *bouquet*?
- 3) What does *table wine* refer to specifically?

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and parades, traditional costumes and decorative lanterns and Contrada colors.

Festivities for the Palio are elaborate, from the rehearsal dinner the night before the race to the victory banquet; the Palio is a celebration of what it means to be a “Contradaio” (Contrada member). Nothing means more to a “Contradaio” than to win the Palio. The Palio horse race is run twice a year, on July 2nd and August 16th, but there is much preparation leading up to the big day. This unique event combines the best of Tuscan wines and food.

Thus, Contrada becomes the latest addition to the expanding

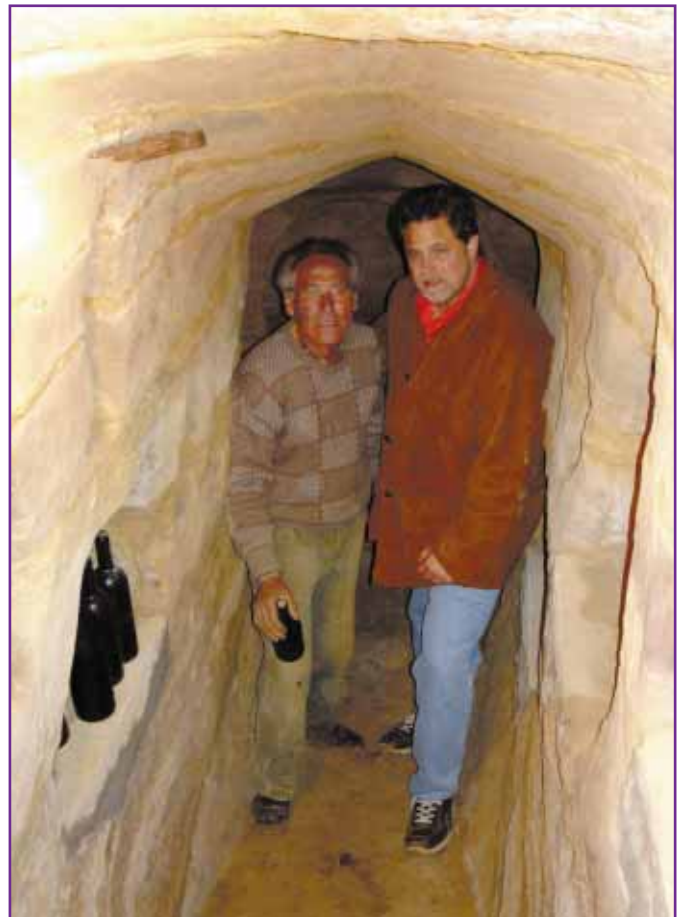
portfolio of wines produced by Michael Pozzan. The first Michael Pozzan wines actually reached the general public in mid-1995, when owner Michael Pozzan, 48, and his wife Mary Ann, 45, released their first wines. Michael Pozzan Winery initially produced a thousand cases each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, made mostly from grapes sourced in both Napa and Sonoma counties in Northern California.

The winery had actually had its beginnings almost three years earlier when Pozzan began his business as a negociant under the Deer Springs label. The business progressed slowly until it reached around 3,000 cases and Pozzan decided on a slightly different direction for his fledgling enterprise.

Pozzan related that when he first began, he sold his first wines by hand out of his car to restaurants and small wine stores that he had known from

his days as a winery representative for a Santa Clara winery. That particular form of selling was very laborious and Pozzan feels he was extremely lucky to have even survived.

“Some very nice people in the restaurant world took to our wines and a few wine stores gave me the chance to stay in business,” he explained. “At that time I did business mostly in the East Bay, in smaller places that I knew well. At that point, there were no reviews, and practically no one who really knew about my wines.”



Michael and cousin Renzo visiting grandfather Pozzan's wine cavern, built in 1905 in Asti, Italy.

After three years, a decision was made to produce the wines under the Michael Pozzan label and a strategic alliance was made with the successful Girard Winery of Napa Valley. Girard would house and also produce the new Michael Pozzan brand. The elevated volume of cases also allowed the winery to send its wines for review, a fact that netted Michael Pozzan wines a great deal of critical acclaim. Bolstered by this added momentum, the small winery was able to secure a strategic foothold among Napa Valley's many prestigious wineries.

Michael Pozzan Winery is proud of the fact that it buys grapes

from a number of sources. In the exact words of Michael Pozzan, "I am prepared to buy my grapes from anyone who continually grows excellent, ripened fruit."

Several years passed and the winery continued to grow and prosper. Pozzan's operations were next moved to Rutherford's St. Supery Winery and finally to one of Napa's premier winemaking facilities, a place that could easily handle the winery's continued growth. Michael Pozzan Winery's new home was within Oakville's Napa Wine Company, which now serves as the production facility for Michael Pozzan Winery. The fresh

association delights Pozzan who also credits his winemaker, John McKay, a multi-year Napa veteran of such wineries as Vichon and others, with the sustained improvement of quality within his winery.

Current production levels for all wines have reached upwards of 50,000 cases, but Pozzan sees another 10 - 15% growth ahead as still plausible. "As long as I can source from growers who grow really good grapes and we can continue to produce top level wines, I can see some additional growth," he related. "But we are getting close to our limits."

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ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) Biodynamic viticulture, or biodynamie is roughly similar to organic viticulture, except more extreme. This method of grape-growing has its roots in the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, who advocated a combination of spirituality and farming, and believed that a farm should be considered as a complete, living system. Normal fertilizers are forbidden in this method. Instead, specific preparations of vegetable extracts are used to supplement the soil. What is especially unusual about this method is the fact that the timing of all farming practices is based on astronomical phenomena. That is, positions of the planets and phases of the moon. Thus, biodynamic viticulture has a commonality with Astrology. Evidence of improved results from biodynamic viticulture is largely anecdotal, however a few French domaines converted entirely to the practice in the 1990s, when they experienced a surge of popularity.

2) "Aroma" and "Bouquet" seemed to be used interchangeably when describing the scent of the wine, yet technically they refer to different and separate characteristics. Originally the word aroma comes from the Greek term meaning "spice."

The definition of aroma has evolved in today's English to mean a pleasant smell (as opposed to odors which may be unpleasant). Wine tasting professionals tend to use the term aroma to distinguish the smells associated with the grape, fermenting must, or young wine. Bouquet on the other hand is used to describe the more complex flavors of wine that result from oak aging and extended bottle aging. When you think bouquet, think of the smells from a bouquet of assorted flowers verse the smell of just one single bud.

3) The term table wine has two different meanings depending on where you are in the world. In America and most of the new world, table wine refers simply to non-fortified wines that rely solely on natural fermentation for their alcoholic strength (which will average between 9 and 15 percent).

In Europe, table wine is a lesser quality wine that is fortified with additional alcohol and usually will have more than 15% percent alcohol by volume.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

ROAST CHICKEN WITH PORCINI MUSHROOMS

1 large roasting chicken rinsed and dried (around 5 pounds)
2 cloves of garlic, smashed
1/2 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh sage, chopped
1/2 cup Contrada Sauvignon Blanc
1 ounces dry porcini mushrooms, rinsed and soaked
in 1/2 cup of hot water for 20 minutes.
1 tablespoon butter, room temperature
Salt & pepper taste
Rosemary & sage sprigs for garnish, optional

Heat Dutch oven over medium heat. Add garlic cloves and brown for 3 minutes. Season chicken inside and out with salt & pepper. Remove garlic and place chicken, breast side up in pot. Brown bird on all sides, around 10 minutes. Be careful not to let chicken stick to pan. Remove chicken and drain off fat. Add white wine and deglaze pan. Add mushrooms and half of soaking liquid. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to simmer. Return chicken to pot and cover. Sprinkle fresh herbs over chicken. Cook until juices run clear, around 1 hour. Baste bird during cooking process. Remove chicken, turn heat up and add butter. Reduce to sauce consistency and pour over chicken. Serve with roasted root vegetables.

ITALIAN POACHED PEARS

1 bottle of Contrada Cabernet Sauvignon
3 Bosc pears, not too ripe, peeled and cored,
sliced in half inch wedges
1 stick of cinnamon
2 whole cloves
1/2 cup of sugar
1 teaspoon Balsamic vinegar
Mint sprigs for garnish

Pour wine into a heavy sauce pan large enough to accommodate all the pears. Add the cinnamon stick, cloves, and sugar. Boil wine mixture until reduced by half and sugar has dissolved. Reduce heat to simmer and remove cloves and cinnamon stick. Add vinegar and pears. Cook for 10 minutes until pears are well coated, but still firm. Cooking time may vary. Serve with Italian Gorgonzola cheese.



It's a hands-on affair inspecting every cluster destined for Contrada wines.

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All this has been accomplished with but three full time employees. The Pozzans' sons, Danny, 21, and Matthew, 19, work part time and summers and have both indicated an interest in working for the winery on a permanent basis. Danny is already enrolled in Cal Poly's Business/Agriculture program while Matthew is attending St. Mary's college in Moraga.

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.

2001 Dawson Creek Cabernet Franc

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

2002 Inheritance Syrah

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

Charles Creek 2002 Merlot

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

Adler Fels 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon

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

2004 Dawson Creek Chardonnay

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

2002 Inheritance Petite Syrah

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

Charles Creek 2002 Chardonnay

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

Adler Fels 2003 Chardonnay

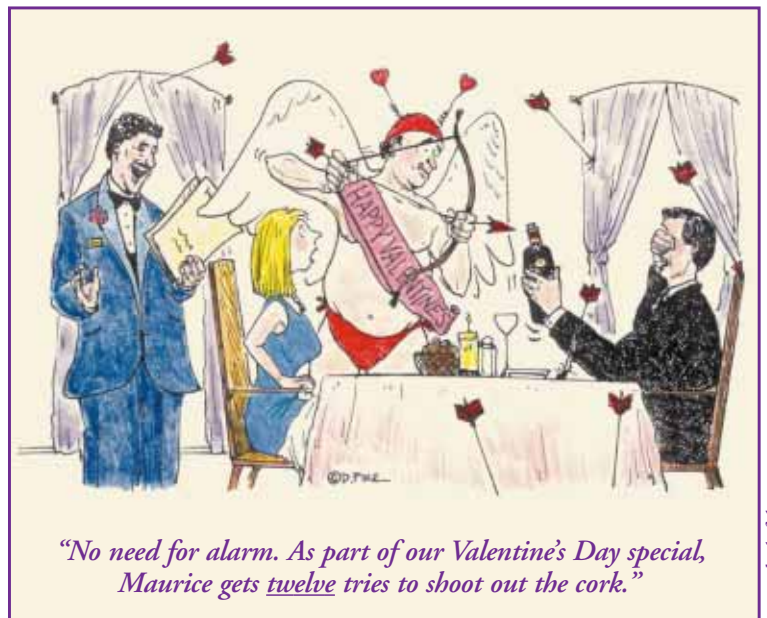
MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	89%	6%	5%

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

Michael Pozzan Winery has exceeded its founder's wildest expectations and could easily serve as the perfect role model for both the small business entrepreneur and the most dedicated wine enthusiast. The business shows what a few dedicated individuals with limited resources can do with a directed business plan and a keen sense of practicality. 🍷



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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

As is tradition for this publication, we devote this month's Grapevine to the **Top Ten Wines of the Year!** The year 2005 brought a fabulous collection of ultra-premium wines to Gold Medal Wine Club recipients. Each and every wine a high-quality, low-production selection from a small California winery with very limited distribution. Here is how they finished in terms of popularity as decided by your Scorecards and reorder activity . . .

#10) Charles Creek 2002 Merlot; #9) Dawson Creek 2002 Cabernet Franc; #8) Inheritance 2002 Petite Syrah; #7) Inheritance 2002 Syrah; #6) Adler Fels 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon; #5) Clos Fontaine 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon; #4) Calera 2000 Pinot Noir; #3) Van Ruiten 2000 Cab-Shiraz; #2) Graziano 2002 Zinfandel; and the Number One Wine of 2005 . . . EOS 2001 Petite Sirah!

Is it just us or are California wines getting better with each successive vintage? Even in so-called "bad vintages" there are always many hidden gems to discover—you have to know where to look. Fortunately the new millennium has blessed us with unprecedented quantity and quality. Stay with us in 2006 for more outstanding selections!

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

A pair of small-production, food-friendly, Napa Valley wines that simply ooze with quality and value. Both wines could easily sell elsewhere at much higher prices but we have aggressively priced them to encourage buying by the case. These wines are available in very few markets outside of Northern California.

	Retail Price Winery-Direct		Club Price 2-Bottle Members		Club Price 4-Bottle Members	
CONTRADA						
2004 Sauvignon Blanc*	Half Case-6	\$90	\$60	(33% Off)	\$55	(39% Off)
Napa Valley	Full Case-12	\$180	\$112	(38% Off)	\$99	(45% Off)
2003 Cabernet Sauvignon*	Half Case-6	\$114	\$75	(34% Off)	\$68	(40% Off)
Napa Valley	Full Case-12	\$228	\$139	(39% Off)	\$125	(45% 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.