

GOLD MEDAL WINE CLUB'S *Pinot Noir Press*



v09i20



*F*IDDLEHEAD CELLARS

A pioneer among women winemakers, Kathy Joseph makes a name for herself on the Central Coast with her renowned Fiddlestix Vineyard and an array of small-lot, award-winning wines.



A small, artisan winery nestled in the Sta. Rita Hills of California's Central Coast, Fiddlehead Cellars was established in 1989 with a primary focus on Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc - two varietals that were, at the time, fairly under the radar. Owner and winemaker Kathy Joseph made it her mission to not only grow her small and focused brand, but also to build the recognition of this *then* barely known viticultural area. Her early ambition has made her a pioneer among women winemakers and a leader in the Sta. Rita Hills region.

Starting at the beginning, Kathy Joseph is originally from Evanston, Illinois, and chose to enter pre-med while attending the University of Wisconsin. She found microbiology and chemistry to be fascinating studies and excelled in their seriousness and content. When it came time for med school, however, Kathy realized it wasn't a perfect fit. So, in the early 1980's, she took a leap of faith by moving to California with the hopes of redirecting her degrees towards research in the wine industry. She had been familiar with wine and was more than a casual drinker of the glorified grape, so she applied to UC Davis for graduate school and began interviewing with possible wineries.

At Simi Winery, Kathy had the good fortune to interview with Zelma Long, an iconic female winemaker and leading figure in bringing female winemakers to

the fore in the wine industry. Kathy was offered a job with Simi and her career in the wine industry had begun.

After years at Simi and a stint at Robert Pecota Winery, Kathy wrote the business plan for her own winery, Fiddlehead Cellars, which first saw the light of day in 1988.

Kathy decided to focus on Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc, two varietals that had been undeveloped to their potential in her mind. She realized it would be a great challenge, but she was up for it and pushed onward. Kathy chose the Sta. Rita Hills area for her vineyards, the district that is now the darling of the lower coast growing area. There she planted her Fiddlestix Vineyard, where she now resides in a small house on the property along with the winery.

The name 'Fiddlehead,' by the way, wasn't decided until the project was almost two years old. One day, Kathy was gardening in her fern bed and recalled the simple, melodic and memorable botanical term that describes the coiled frond of an emerging fern leaf...a fiddlehead! Well, Fiddlehead led to Fiddlestix and Kathy considers herself 'Head Fiddle.' It somehow all seemed to make great sense.

Today's Fiddlehead Cellars is now considered a formidable player in the boutique category of California wineries and we are happy to feature their wine with our *Pinot Noir Series* members.

ABOUT THE WINEMAKER



Winemaker Kathy Joseph is a shining star on California's Central Coast as she passionately and enthusiastically creates stylistic Sauvignon Blanc and silky, textured Pinot Noir. At Fiddlehead Cellars, she annually produces around 5,000 cases of wine, with personal interest in each grape cluster, each barrel of wine, and every bottle that finds its way to your table. The wines are made at "Fiddle-Headquarters," her winery in the Lompoc "Wine Ghetto," a wine tasting destination in Santa Barbara County (with most winemakers from the acclaimed Sta. Rita Hills appellation). All of Kathy's wines are driven by the importance of texture, elegance and expression of place - which in the case of this month's featured wine, is her Fiddlestix Vineyard (a renowned property now highly sought after by many of the region's top winemakers).

FIDDLEHEAD 2011 'SEVEN TWENTY EIGHT' PINOT NOIR

Produced from the esteemed Fiddlestix Vineyard, located in the heart of the Sta. Rita Hills on Santa Rosa Road at mile marker 7.28, this 2011 Pinot Noir is a beautiful reflection of both the vineyard and the vintage. From the classic Fiddlestix cola spice to the abundance of black cherry and blackberry fruit, this is quintessential Pinot Noir. With a silky strut brought alive through natural acidity and mouthwatering creaminess, there is a brightness and a vivacity that simply screams through your glass.

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91 POINTS

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Fiddlehead 2011 Pinot Noir

Seven-Twenty-Eight, Fiddlestix Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills

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