

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 16 No. 1

Lambert Bridge Winery Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

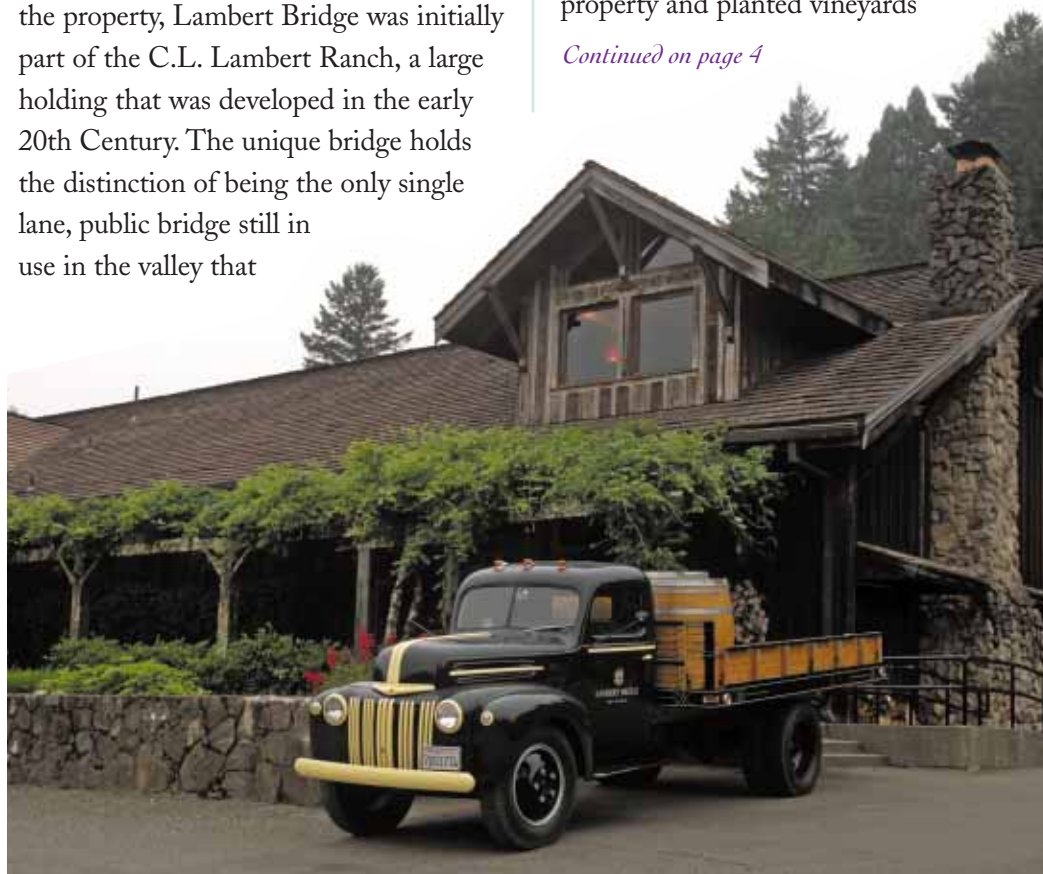
SONOMA'S LAMBERT BRIDGE— SOLID PRODUCER OF CLASSIC VARIETAL WINES.

One of the premiere wineries that seem to abound in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley is the historic Lambert Bridge Winery, located not far from the town of Healdsburg. Named after an old trestle bridge that still exists intact near the property, Lambert Bridge was initially part of the C.L. Lambert Ranch, a large holding that was developed in the early 20th Century. The unique bridge holds the distinction of being the only single lane, public bridge still in use in the valley that

still provides passage across the aptly named Dry Creek.

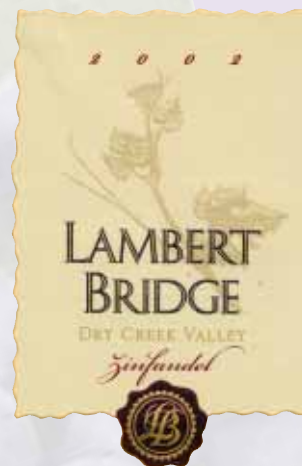
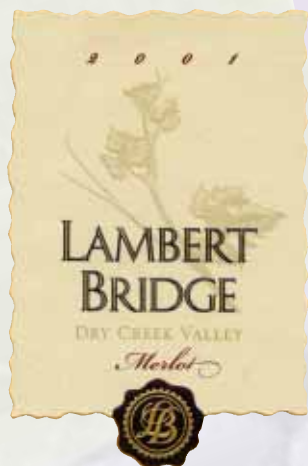
Lambert Bridge Winery evolved when Gerard Lambert, no relation to the original owner, purchased part of the property and planted vineyards

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For over 30 years, this vintage 1947 Ford flatbed has delivered wine to local merchants.

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.



2001 MERLOT

Steve and Elaine Wynn of Las Vegas fame chose the Lambert Bridge 2001 Merlot as one of their **top 10 selected wines** to be served in every restaurant at their Wynn Luxury Resort's grand opening. The *Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine* wrote, "With lots of oaky richness leading the way, this attractive wine also delivers plenty of ripe red cherry fruit in its outgoing aromas and repeats that fruit in caramel- and roasted vanilla bean-influenced flavors. A stratum of latter palate tannins will want a few years of bottle aging in order to fully smooth out—**89 points**." *The Sacramento Bee* recommended the Lambert Merlot as one of "**The All-Stars**—guaranteed to please even the most picky of wine enthusiasts. Well-balanced and refined, I'm biased toward pork with merlot, but this excellent wine can pair well with lamb, beef and duck." This is an excellent Sonoma County Merlot. Drink now or hold until 2010.

2002 ZINFANDEL

Created to be a casual and versatile wine without losing dimension or complexity, this Zinfandel won a **Gold Medal** at the California Zinfandel Competition. *Gourmet Magazine* included this outstanding wine on their **Recommended** list. The *Wine Report* rated it **88 points** stating, "Not a wine to trifle with, this dense, deep purple offering seems to have a sense of purpose, with complex aromas of ripe cherry, blackberry and anise. It demanded tasters' attention with well-focused flavors of black currant, cocoa, mint cherry and raspberry. Befitting its demeanor, it finished smooth and velvety with a suggestion of cherry and hint of tannins." This very pleasant Zinfandel also picked up a **Silver Medal** at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair. The winery tasting notes suggest aromas of black pepper mix with blackberry flavors and hints of toast and coffee." Drink now or up to 2010. 89% Zinfandel, 5% Syrah, 4% Petite Sirah, 2% Carignane.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2001 VINTAGE: 89 Points—*Connoisseurs' Guide* publication; **The All Stars** selection—*Sacramento Bee*; **Silver Medal**—*San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*; **Silver Medal**—*Sonoma County Harvest Fair*.

LEGACY: Merlot is the flagship varietal for Lambert Bridge. The 2001 vintage of the Merlot is the first year to include fruit from the estate vineyards.

Just the facts:

pH	3.63
Total Acid58 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.5%
Aged in Oak	15 months
Cases Produced	11,838
Drink Now or Up to Year	2010

2002 VINTAGE: Gold Medal—California Zinfandel Competition; **Silver Medal**—*Sonoma County Harvest Fair*; **Recommended**—*Gourmet Magazine*; **88 points**—*The Wine Report*.

LEGACY: Zinfandel is a relatively new offering at Lambert Bridge. But since introducing it in the late 1990s it has won numerous Golds and Silvers.

Just the facts:

pH	3.68
Total Acid65 g/100 mls
Alcohol	14.2%
Aged in Oak	10 months
Cases Produced	1,920
Drink Now or Up to Year	2010

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Julia Iantosca and Jill Davis, Winemakers

Perhaps the linchpin of Lambert Bridge Winery's operation is the formidable winemaking duo of Julia Iantosca and Jill Davis. Julia arrived at Lambert Bridge a dozen years ago from William Wheeler Winery while Jill arrived in 2005 from notable stints at Buena Vista and William Hill Wineries.

The selection of Julia Iantosca to be winemaker at Lambert Bridge has proven to be inspired. She has demonstrated both her remarkable knowledge of local vineyards and her extraordinary talent for creating memorable wines.

A native Californian who was active in 4-H as a child, Julia became fascinated with wine early. Her interest broadened while attending San Jose State University, when she began tasting fine wines with a friend who managed a wine shop.

Following her transfer to the University of California at Davis to study microbiology, a faculty advisor suggested she consider a major in fermentation sciences. She enjoyed the course work, but her decision to become a winemaker was cemented during a six-month internship at

Dry Creek Vineyards, in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley. "I appreciated that winery work followed the cycles of the seasons—always changing, yet ultimately familiar. The sense of community and easy camaraderie within the local winemaking community was also a revelation. I felt I'd found my destiny."



Lambert Bridge winemaker duo, Julia Iantosca and Jill Davis.


Julia graduated from U.C. Davis in 1979 and immediately went to work as winemaker for Stevenot Vineyards, in the Sierra foothills of Calaveras County. In 1982, she returned to Dry Creek to become winemaker at William Wheeler Winery, a position she would hold for the next 11 years. Working both with grapes grown on the Wheeler estate and grapes purchased from carefully selected local vineyards, she produced a series of award winning Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays.

Since being appointed winemaker at Lambert Bridge in 1993, Julia has personally supervised virtually every aspect of wine production, from vineyard care to bottling. She has cemented the foundation for fulfilling the mandate of Lambert Bridge's owners, to produce wines equal to the very best from Sonoma County.

After a period of time, the winemaking responsibilities will be handed off to industry veteran, Jill Davis. Jill is a native Californian, born and raised in the small, northern town of Eureka. At the age of twelve her family moved to the Sacramento area just a short distance away from the famous winemaking school of U.C. Davis.

At that point, the Davis family had no ties to the wine industry and certainly Jill had no inkling that wine would soon take a significant role in her life. That is until an acquaintance of her Dad's called to offer him some Zinfandel grapes that were left in his vineyard after harvest. After picking the grapes Jill and her Dad borrowed a How-To book, bought a garbage can, found some yeast in the kitchen and tried their hand at home winemaking. "I knew nothing about wine let alone winemaking and it really piqued my curiosity," Jill said remembering that watershed event in her life.

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WINE WIZARD

- 1) How much should you fill a glass when serving wine?
- 2) Where does the word “enology” come from?
- 3) Why are wood chips sometimes used in wine production?

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along West Dry Creek Road. Lambert constructed a modern winery in 1976 and released his first wines to excellent reviews. By the mid-1980’s, the winery had grown to over 20,000 cases and had earned a reputation as a cutting edge winery with incredibly rich and complex wines.

In 1993, the Chambers Family of Morristown, NJ became interested in Lambert Bridge and eventually purchased the property. The family already owned vineyard land in nearby Alexander Valley. Yearning to complete the cycle of grape-to-bottle, they had searched for several years for a winery to acquire. Lambert Bridge was a perfect match. The

winery was situated near the family vineyards and in the premier growing region of Dry Creek. It was appealingly small, beautifully designed and had a great reputation with which to gain instant access into the marketplace. “The acquisition of Lambert Bridge presented us with a fantastic opportunity to do everything right and expand the reputation of an already great winery,” says winery President, Patti Chambers.

“My husband had first interested me in wine,” offered Lambert Bridge’s owner Patti Chambers, “it was just so incredibly beautiful and so in tune with nature. We had been coming to the wine country for several years and Lambert Bridge was the nicest place we had visited. We loved its specific history, natural charm and the rustic nature of the winery.”

With the experience and local knowledge gained from owning the vineyard in Sonoma County, the new proprietors secured the best in the wine business to run the winery. Among them, winemaker Julia Iantosca, who established her reputation during 11 years at nearby William Wheeler Winery where she produced a series of award-winning Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays. The mandate was simple—produce wines comparable to the very best from Sonoma County.

“We were determined to produce wines that emphasized

quality, and that meant controlling our production,” Chambers explained further. “We gathered together a first class production team and then set a realistic level of production.”

That level currently hovers around 15,000 to 17,000 cases, and Patti Chambers even sees possible downsizing in the future.

“Our intention is to be able to grow all our grapes,” she added. “But we’re not there yet and we still buy a relatively small portion of our grapes.”

Lambert Bridge is currently the handiwork of managing partner and grape grower, Greg Wilcox and his son Andy who oversee the winery’s entire operation. Julia Iantosca and veteran Napa Valley winemaker, Jill Davis work in tandem to craft all of Lambert Bridge’s critically acclaimed wines. They combine old world craftsmanship with state-of-the-art winemaking equipment, utilizing low-yielding estate-grown fruit that is hand sorted. Specific challenges include combining grapes from different areas of Dry Creek Valley to produce her trademark Merlot and Bordeaux varietals blends.

“Different parts of our valley tend to provide unique characteristics to the grapes,” Iantosca explained. “Our northern fruit is juicy and provides excellent acidity to the wines. The southern fruit is from a cooler climate that gives it rich flavors and ripe tannins that

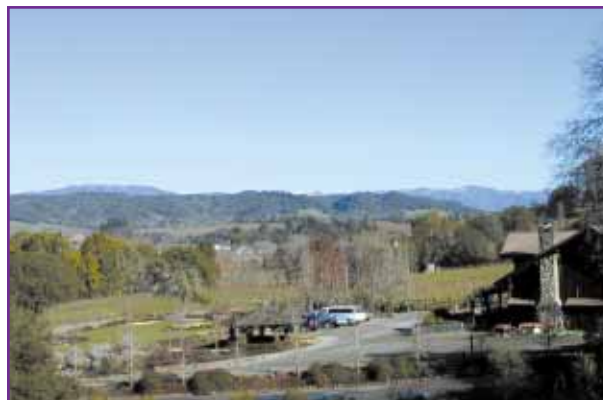
provide structure to the wine. I always try and put the two together to make a truly balanced and delicious wine. It seems to have worked thus far.”

This professional arrangement pleases Patti Chambers who calls her staff “truly wonderful” and people, “whose input we really depend upon to make the correct decision.” Patti concedes that she doesn’t consider herself a wine expert in any sense of the matter. She sees her relationship with her staff as a shared responsibility that

has provided Lambert Bridge Winery with some compelling results.

Such feelings are most refreshing in this world of sometimes-idealistic winery owners.

We’re quite sure that Patti Chambers and Lambert Bridge Winery will be around for the long haul, continuing to perfect their wines and garnering



Lambert Bridge’s picturesque setting in the heart of the Sonoma Wine Country.

praise from the wine-drinking public and wine industry media along the way. 🍷

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) To fully appreciate the wine you are serving, the answer to this question is not “to the brim!” The fill level of a wine glass should be below two-thirds full, and preferably less than half. There are a number of reasons to do this. Primarily, this fill level aids in full appreciation of the wine’s aroma. A low fill level allows the taster to swirl the wine without spilling it, releasing the wine’s aromatic compounds. Furthermore, the more space left in the bowl of the glass, the more space there is for the aroma to collect so the taster can appreciate it. A further advantage to a low fill level is that it can allow the taster to control the temperature of the wine. Most white wines and light reds are best at 60° F, which is also the optimal storage temperature. Wine in the glass will warm up above this temperature more quickly than in the bottle, so having a small amount in the glass helps keep the last few sips from being too warm. For medium and full-bodied reds, a warmer tasting temperature is better, and having a small serving enables the taster to warm the wine more quickly by holding the glass. So next time, instead of filling the glass all the way, have two small glasses, and savor your wine all the more!

2) Enology, or Oenology as it is sometimes spelled, is the study of winemaking. This definition has more recently expanded into many aspects of viticulture, which enologists have more recently recognized as central to the winemaking process. The word, as with many scientific disciplines, originates from the Greek term. In this case, the Greek word is oinos, which is naturally, Greek for wine.



3) This sometimes-criticized practice is essentially a less expensive alternative to using oak barrels. Wine that is matured in oak barrels takes on a number of properties that are preferred in many kinds of wine, as has been previously discussed in the Wine Wizard. However, oak barrels are very expensive, so a more affordable option for some wine producers is to put oak chips in a steel vessel. However, some producers put oak chips in oak barrels to supplement the effect of the barrel. Oak chips are not without their disadvantages, because they can release acids, which can reduce the potential of the wine to age. In the short term, however, the disadvantages are rarely noticeable. It should be noted that use of oak chips is distinct from oak extract. Oak extract as a wine additive is generally illegal in most wine-producing regions. This is an even less expensive substitute for oak barrels, which is strictly a flavor additive, with very destructive effects on bottle ageing potential.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

GRILLED PORK TENDERLOIN WITH PORTABELLA MUSHROOMS

4 pork tenderloins, trimmed
6 large portabella mushrooms, washed and trimmed

Marinade:

4 tablespoons stone ground mustard
1/2 cup Merlot
3 tablespoons fresh thyme, finely chopped
2 tablespoons rosemary, finely chopped
2 shallots, minced
1/2 cup olive oil
salt and pepper

Whisk together all marinade ingredients. Place the pork tenderloins and mushrooms into two separate Ziploc bags and evenly distribute marinade. Refrigerate for at least two hours and no more than eight.

Preheat grill to medium heat. Cook pork for about 8-10 minutes per side. Add mushrooms and cook about 4-5 minutes per side. Remove meat and let rest. Slice across the grain. Cut mushrooms in half and serve alongside the pork.

*Serve warm with polenta or pasta, and/or sautéed vegetables.
Serves 6.*

JIM MAY'S CHICKEN STUFFED WITH PROSCIUTTO

3 whole boneless chicken breasts, halved
2-3 garlic cloves, peeled
1 cup basil leaves
1/2 cup olive oil
1/2 cup pine nuts
1 cup asiago cheese, grated
1/2 teaspoon salt and fresh black pepper
6 thin slices prosciutto

Finely chop garlic in food processor. Add basil and gradually add oil, process until smooth. Add pine nuts and asiago cheese and mix in short pulses until just blended. Season with salt and pepper.

Lay chicken breast flat on cutting board and make a horizontal cut, creating a pocket without cutting all the way through. Place 1 slice prosciutto in each pocket. Spread 1/2 tablespoon of pesto mixture on top of prosciutto. Close pocket and spread 1/6th of remaining pesto under the skin of each breast. Place skin side up on a baking sheet and place in pre-heated 400° oven for 30 minutes until starting to brown.

*Serve warm with polenta or pasta, and/or sautéed vegetables.
Serves 6*



Julia checking the crusher / de-stemmer.

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After a few years her Dad handed the winemaking reins over to Jill who had already set her sights on the eonology program at U.C.Davis. Upon graduation Jill landed a job at Beringer as a Lab Technician until moving on to Buena Vista Winery. At Buena Vista she had the unique opportunity to tutor under wine-industry giant, Andre

Tchelisticheff for a dozen years. "That was an incredible experience and profoundly influenced my winemaking," recalls Jill.

In 1994 Jill was hired away to William Hill Winery for eight years before striking out on her own as a consultant. One of her consulting clients was Lambert Bridge whose owners twisted her arm to come on board full-time in 2005.

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.

2002 Inheritance Syrah

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	94%	4%	2%

2002 Inheritance Petite Syrah

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

Charles Creek 2002 Merlot

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	92%	4%	4%

Charles Creek 2002 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	6%	3%

Adler Fels 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon

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

Adler Fels 2003 Chardonnay

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

Graziano 2002 Zinfandel

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

Graziano 2002 Tocai Fruilano

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

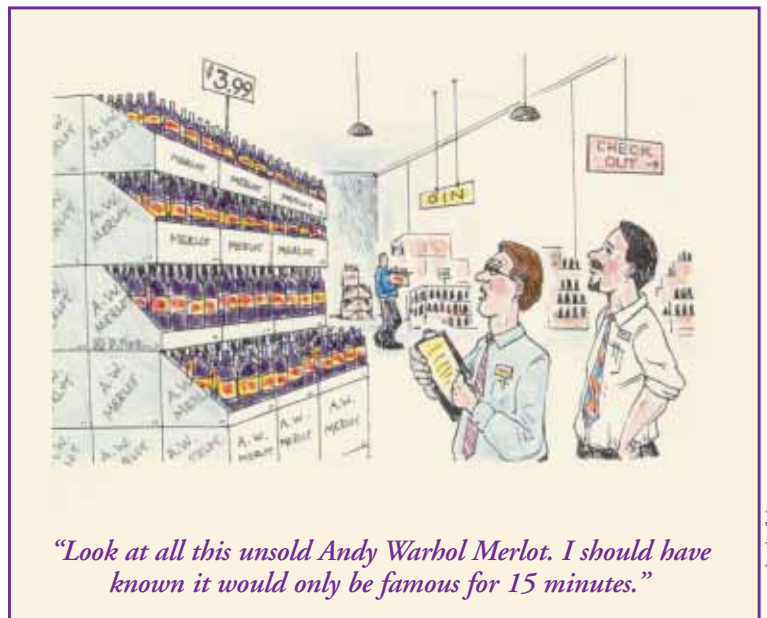
The above wines were recently featured. Due to space limitations, the entire list of available wines is not listed.

To see our entire inventory and reorder online, go to: www.goldmedalwine.com/member

■ Indicates wine is still available

Jill's immediate mandate at Lambert Bridge is to re-energize the brand while putting more focus on Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet blends. The winery's flagship, Merlot will always remain a significant part of their identity but eventually Cabernet will take its place at the helm.

With the brilliant quality of recent releases to build from and Jill's commitment to excellence, the future of Lambert Bridge looks very exciting. 🍷



"Look at all this unsold Andy Warhol Merlot. I should have known it would only be famous for 15 minutes."

©www.doubfulaccounts.com

THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

First and foremost, we want to thank each and every one of our loyal members and new gift recipients for making 2005 a memorable year. Among many milestones, we celebrated the first anniversary of the incredible luxury-premium *Diamond Series* club. We introduced the long-awaited *International Series*, featuring exclusive small production wines from around the world; as well as the intriguing *PLUS!* program, designed to bring you extra bottles of tiny-production wines worthy of your attention. And we survived the wild and always amazingly busy holiday season! In all of our Clubs, we are looking forward to bringing you more hard-to-find, limited-production wines to your doorstep in 2006.

It is our pleasure to announce **Tom Weyhrauch** of Gig Harbor, Washington as this month's *Grapevine* winner for sending in his Judge-the-Wine Scorecard rating the Blossom Hill, Inheritance wines. When we contacted Tom, he reconfirmed his admiration for the wines and wondered out loud "who blessed the vineyards and winery where these wines were produced?" Glad you liked them Tom, your half-case of Inheritance wines are on their way to you. Happy New Year to all of you!

Look in this section next month for our annual **Top Ten Wines of the Year!**

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

Lambert Bridge Winery has garnered a multitude of Gold Medals for their flagship Merlot over the years. The 2001 Merlot is an excellent example of Julia Iantosca's winemaking expertise. It is a smooth, round and radiant wine, very enjoyable to drink right now. The 2002 Zinfandel captures the essence of the Dry Creek Valley with a classic fruit-driven, briar and berry Zin. Both are terrific wines at prices well below what you can find anywhere else.

LAMBERT BRIDGE WINERY	Retail Price		Club Price		Club Price	
	Winery-Direct		2-Bottle Members		4-Bottle Members	
2001 Merlot* Sonoma County	Half Case-6	\$156	\$99	(37% Off)	\$92	(41% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$312	\$185	(41% Off)	\$169	(46% Off)
2002 Zinfandel* Dry Creek Valley	Half Case-6	\$144	\$99	(31% Off)	\$92	(36% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$288	\$185	(36% Off)	\$169	(41% 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.