

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 11 No. 5

Buffalo Ridge Winery Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

BUFFALO RIDGE WINES REFLECT RICH TRADITION OF FRENCH CAMP VINEYARD

Several years ago, one of the wine industry's leading periodicals contained a phrase that has become more meaningful in its everyday usage. The term was "escargociants", which basically referred to consulting winemakers who utilize today's modern technology and equipment to produce top-quality, top dollar wines, and mostly at a snail's pace.

What is different about these so-called *escargociants* is the simple fact that they utilize existing winery facilities

to produce their wines, thereby saving millions of dollars in crushing, aging and bottling facilities.

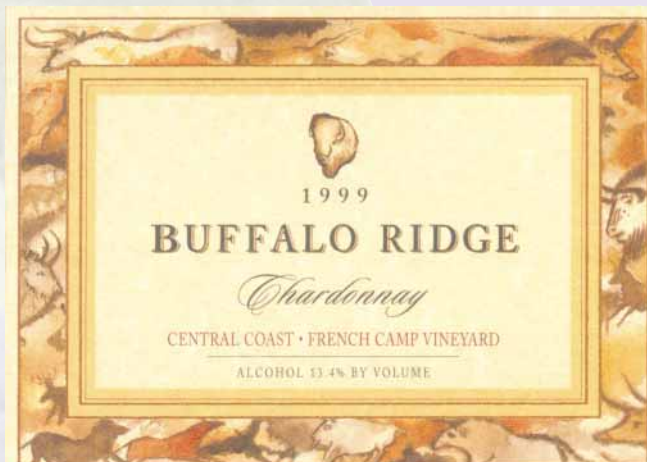
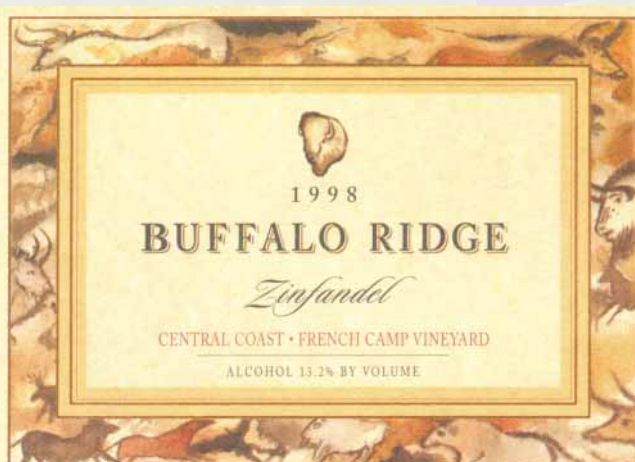
The *escargociants'* advantage comes in the fact that their wines are passed on to the consuming public at fantastic prices. It should also be pointed out that this type of winemaking is different from the *negociant* type of winemaking that generally utilizes lower caliber bulk wines to produce their product.

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A distant view of the Monterey County facility where Buffalo Ridge wines are produced.

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 ZINFANDEL

A Gold Medal winning Zinfandel from the well known, high quality French Camp Vineyard. This is a big, powerful wine, rich with blackberry pie, raisin and berry aromas, and sweetish, black fruit notes with cracked black pepper. Some spice and vanilla lingers on the mid palate. It has a clove-like silky finish, with a pleasant earthy quality reminiscent of Rhône Valley wines. With its robust flavors and tannins, this Zin is a *red* for the grill. French Camp is located just east of San Luis Obispo on California's Central Coast. Summer temperatures at the vineyard can range from 100 degrees, down to 50 degrees, thanks to chilly ocean breezes pulled into the vineyard by a natural wind tunnel. The big temperature swing means the grapes retain ideal natural acid levels that complement the ripeness of the grapes. 95% Zinfandel, 5% Syrah.

1999 CHARDONNAY

This 1999 Chardonnay from the French Camp Vineyard has wonderful lemon, apple and pear aromas; in the mouth the wine's creamy citrus flavors show nice weight and richness; the surprisingly zesty, lengthy finish is complemented by a kiss of oak from barrel aging. While it has richness from partial malolactic fermentation, the wine remains fresh, lively and brimming with fruit flavors. A handsome, tasty Chardonnay, it shows good continuity from front to back. Buffalo Ridge Chardonnays are produced in a full-bodied, rich style that makes them particularly good partners with seafood dishes: plenty of fresh fruit flavors and crisp acidity without overpowering oak woodiness. Try it with grilled seafood, shrimp or scallops over pasta with a rich cream sauce. 100% Chardonnay.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

1998 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal*—Riverside International Wine Competition; *Silver Medal*—Los Angeles County Fair Wine Competition; *Bronze Medal*—San Diego National Wine Competition.

LEGACY: French Camp Vineyard has been producing high quality Zinfandel since the 1970s.

1999 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal Special Selection*—Just released and currently entered into the 2001 summer wine competitions.

LEGACY: The 1999 Chardonnay is new to the Buffalo Ridge line up and takes advantage of the superior French Camp fruit.

Just the facts:

pH	3.69
Total Acid62 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.2%
Cases Produced	1,500
Aged in French & American Oak	12 Months
Drink Now or Up to Year	2006+

Just the facts:

pH	3.31
Total Acid61 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.4%
Cases Produced	2,000
Drink Now or Up to Year	2003+

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Rich Hanen

When Rich Hanen enrolled in Seattle's Community Chapel Bible College a number of years ago in pursuit of his Theology degree he was forced to work to put himself through school. Like many students, he found work in a restaurant and ultimately was given responsibility for wine lists, including the upscale Butcher Restaurants chain. Little did he realize at the time, but his increasing interest in wines, and the wine industry in particular, would ultimately shape his career and his entire life.

After gaining his degree (yes, in Theology) Rich took a job with a local wine distributor. His next ladder rung was Schiefflin & Co where he sold that firm's wines and spirits. Four years later he became associated with Cadbury Schwepps, a move that changed his entire career. At Cadbury he was introduced to a concept that employed marketing to sell products, rather than straight sales, and he realized he had found a home for his thoughts and ideas.

Rich next became involved with a company called Vintage New World where he served as President and majority owner for the next decade. It became apparent to people within the wine industry that Rich Hanen's rapid rise in the wine industry was propelled with good cause. He was soon labeled a

visionary as his company and its myriad portfolio of wines grew and prospered.

About three years ago, Rich Hanen came into contact with Tom Eddy, a most interesting person emanating from the production side of the wine business and a mutually respectful association was begun. Soon after, both men realized that as far as the wine industry's direction was concerned, each considered the other a visionary since their ideas were incredibly similar in nature. They both decided to do something about it and an agreement between the pair was soon struck.

At the time, Tom Eddy owned a fledgling company with two wine brands, Salmon Harbor that produced only white wines and Buffalo Ridge, which produced only reds. Rich Hanen bought the pair and immediately changed direction, making Buffalo Ridge the white producer, and Salmon harbor a producer of Washington State wines. He contracted with Tom Eddy for ongoing consulting services and began his bold plan for Buffalo Ridge.


"What Tom and I wanted was to develop a vineyard-designated Central Coast line of wines that could be offered to the public for a truly reasonable price," he

explained. "In the consumer's mind, the Central Coast growing region was hot and both Tom and I thought it would get even hotter. Tom was able to make long term contracts with the Millers for French Camp fruit and we felt that was the basis for Buffalo Ridge to have a really upscale long-term future. I love the quality and remoteness of the French Camp fruit and feel that is it absolutely perfect for our needs at Buffalo Ridge."

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Owner Rich Hanen at one of the winery's many wine tasting events.



WINE WIZARD

- 1) What is the purpose of the foils on top of wine bottles?
- 2) What does malolactic mean and how does it affect the finished wine?
- 3) Sauvignon Blanc was recently found to be a genetic parent of what red grape?

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Such a scenario involves this month's gold selection winery, Buffalo Ridge Winery. Buffalo Ridge utilizes the talents of well-respected winemaker Tom Eddy of Napa Valley fame and the facilities of Lockwood Winery in Monterey, where the wines were actually produced. Eddy is also the individual who coined the term *escogociants*. Tom Eddy is a nearly thirty-year veteran of the California wine industry that also produces his own ultra-premium line of Tom Eddy Napa Valley wines. He

consults for the likes of Kunde and Limerick lane in Sonoma Valley, Caldwell in Napa Valley and Arciero in Paso Robles as his clients. He was also the winemaker at Christian Brothers in Napa prior to departing it for the consulting business in 1989.

The key to Buffalo Ridge's wines is Tom Eddy's vineyard selection, the highly rated French Camp Vineyard about twenty-five miles east of San Luis Obispo. The vineyard is the Central Coast's largest single vineyard, encompassing some 1900 acres under vine. Its next door neighbor (and source for its Reserve Chardonnay) is the famous Bien Nacido Vineyard, long considered the area's top producing vineyard.

French Camp Vineyard is part of the dominant Santa Lucia foothills, and was developed around 1972 by Bob and Steve Miller and is considered a warmer growing environment than Bien Nacido. Its advantage comes from a windy kiss of cold air that adds up to a quality advantage over other vineyards planted in the Paso Robles appellation. While summer temperatures nearly always top the 100-degree mark at French

Camp making for lush, ripe flavors, the nighttime temperatures can drop 50-degrees thanks to the chilly ocean breezes pulled into the vineyard by a natural wind tunnel. This huge swing allows grapes to develop ideal natural acid levels that compliment the warmth-induced ripeness from the heat.

French camp itself is full of its own natural history. Local legends tell of the area's original French settlers who immigrated to the area during the 1849-50 gold rush era. French Camp can be traced specifically to a high class French couple, Monsieur and Madame Bartolo Baratie and also a Monsieur M.J. Borel who settled there in 1858 on a glen of the San Juan Ranch.

A party of bandits' rode into the camp and trouble developed. Borel was shot and killed and the Baraties were forced to hand over their possessions. Monsieur Baratie was

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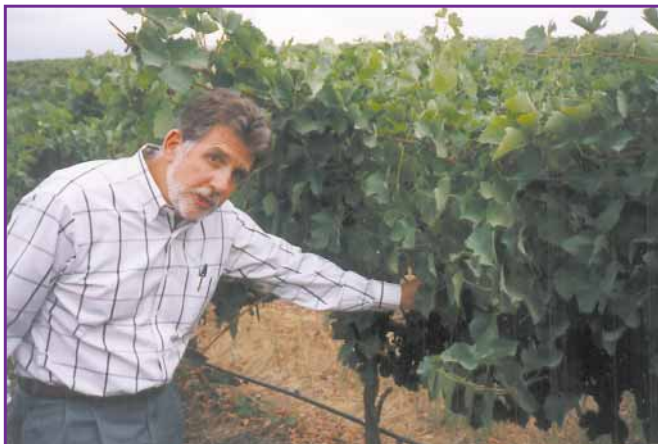
Tom Eddy(l) and Rich Hanen(r) walking the French Camp Vineyard.

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Rich Hanen believes he has something of an advantage in the development of Buffalo Ridge, whose annual production is around 12,000 cases. His company, artfully named Latitudes Wine Company, comes complete with a complete sales and marketing force and allows him the flexibility of selling his wines without the usual national marketing markup. This results in an unusually low consumer price and allows for future growth.

“We are only interested in growing Buffalo Ridge to around 20,000 cases,” Hanen added.

“We want to maintain its single vineyard ambiance and continue growing its quality. Both Tom and I believe that there is true micro micro-climate within the French



Winemaker Tom Eddy checking out clusters of Buffalo Ridge Zinfandel.

Camp Vineyard that will allow for truly wonderful, complex wines to be

developed in the future.”

Hanen is also betting that consumers will continue their gravitation toward quality, a move that supports his marketing premise at Buffalo Ridge. He continues to involve his key players in every important decision he makes for his pet winery.

“I’ll admit that quality turns me on,” he flatly admitted, “and I will do anything I can to ultimately achieve it.”

Rich Hanen’s passion for the wine industry is even immediately apparent to the casual

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ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) *The foil capsules on top of wine bottles serve primarily as decoration. They also keep the top of the cork and bottle clean. But even if the cork is moldy or wet underneath the capsule the wine may still be fine. On occasion, small droplets of wine may get deposited on top of the cork during the bottling process. However, not even the best capsule will prevent a defective cork from harming the wine. Sometimes if a cellar’s temperature fluctuates wildly and rapidly (heaven forbid), expanding wine can push up and around the cork and leak over the top. Sometimes the corks are even pushed partway out of the bottle. If this is happening, removing the capsule will not affect the wine and will allow you to assess the damage.*

2) *Apart from the primary fermentation of sugar into alcohol, wine undergoes a very important secondary fermentation, called malolactic, in which the malic acid from the grapes converts to lactic acid. Malic acid is that zingy taste in green apples. Lactic acid is the softer acid familiar to us from milk and other dairy products. One effect of this fermentation is to soften the acid balance in the wine. Another is a series of chemical by-products that mute the youthful fruit character in a wine and introduce other, more complex flavors. Almost all red wines and most white wines made by traditional techniques undergo malolactic fermentation naturally, but some winemakers like to prevent it to preserve the freshness of the acidity. Winemakers can also encourage this fermentation by warming up the wine, even by introducing malolactic bacteria.*

3) *Cabernet Sauvignon. Scientists recently discovered that Cabernet Sauvignon was the genetic offspring of Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc.*





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

GRILLED SALMON WITH GINGER-SOY SAUCE

Sauce:

- 4 T. unsalted butter
- 2 t. fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 T. soy sauce
- 1 t. honey

To make the sauce:

Melt the butter and add the ginger and garlic. When the garlic has begun to color, add the other ingredients. Mix well and heat thoroughly without bringing to a boil. Keep sauce warm for serving. Note: sauce may be prepared up to two days in advance and then heated for serving.

To cook the salmon:

Grill the salmon over hot coals (or broil in the oven) approximately 5 minutes per side, until just done.

To serve:

Place salmon fillets on individual plates or a platter, and drizzle with sauce.

Enjoy with a glass of Buffalo Ridge Chardonnay.

EGGPLANT AND FETA WITH FARFALLE

- 3 lb. eggplant
- 3 c. chopped white onion
- 8 t. extra virgin olive oil, separated
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 3 medium-large ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 2 T. tomato paste
- 4 T. balsamic vinegar
- 2 t. chopped fresh oregano
- 1 t. fresh thyme leaves
- 16 oil-cured olives
- 1 lb. farfalle (butterfly) pasta
- 1/4 t. salt

freshly ground black pepper to taste

3 T. chopped fresh parsley

6 T. feta cheese, broken into small chunks

Wash and trim the eggplant, without peeling it. Cut into 1/4-inch thick slices.

Place on a broiler pan. Lightly drizzle the top with 2 t. olive oil. Broil 2 to 5 inches from the heat until the tops are brown. Then turn, drizzle with oil and broil until the tops are brown. To cook both sides requires about 10 minutes.

Heat a large sauté pan, preferably non-stick, until it is hot. Reduce the heat to medium and add 6 t. olive oil. Sauté the onion until it becomes soft and starts to brown. Add garlic and sauté for about 1 minute. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, tomato paste and vinegar. Reduce heat to low. Add the oregano and thyme to the sauce as it cooks.

When the eggplant is done, cut it into small chunks and stir into the sauce. Pit the olives, chop and add to the sauce. Season with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, cook the farfalle. When the pasta is cooked, drain it and stir in the sauce. Stir in the parsley and cheese, and serve.

Pair it with the Buffalo Ridge Zinfandel.

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also killed and Madame Baratie kidnapped. She later managed to escape on a stagecoach and vigilantes, outraged by the murders, rounded up some of the bandits and hanged them in front of a large crowd in San Luis Obispo. It was necessary for U. S. Marshals to arrive by gunboat to finally restore law and order in the area and thus close another colorful chapter in

California's turbulent history. At the time, the incident at French Camp played an important part in the development of the entire area.

French Camp can be directly referred to as the *provenance* of Buffalo Ridge Winery. This term refers to the natural environmental conditions of any wine site and is the key to the quality and style of each

individual wine. Since French Camp Vineyard is a special place as described above, it is easy to understand why the wines of Buffalo Ridge can also be considered extraordinary. The Gold Medal Wine Club is delighted to share this month's Gold Selection with you. Each contains a little insight into California's storied past. We know you will enjoy each one to its peak. 🍷

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.

Curtis — 1997 Syrah

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

Curtis — 1997 Heritage Old Vines

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	5%	2%

Curtis — 1999 Heritage Blanc

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	8%	1%

Edgewood — 1997 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	6%	1%

Edgewood — 1996 Zinfandel

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	97%	3%	0%

Edgewood — 1996 Petite Verdot

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	95%	5%	0%

Michael Pozzan — 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon

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

Michael Pozzan — 1999 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	6%	1%

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

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observer. His determination to build Buffalo Ridge Winery slowly and stop at a reasonable production level seems the correct formula for its ultimate success.

Gold Medal Wine Club is happy to be able to present Buffalo Ridge to our Gold Members at such an early stage in its evolution. We know you will continue to follow its success along with us. We know you will enjoy this month's selection as well. 🍷



THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

We have another winner! Yes, it's time again to announce the lucky winner of our Quarterly Drawing for a half-case of free wine. The 1st quarter winner is **Robert Corless** of Lancaster, California. Robert has been a member since 1999 when he received a gift membership. He decided to continue receiving wines after the gift membership ran out. "I've enjoyed the wines very much," he told us. "Probably the best wine to date has been the Radanovich Chardonnay. It tasted like a white Burgundy." His free wine choice? The 1997 Armida Merlot. Congratulations Robert, your wine is own its way!

Quick note about shipping: With summer around the corner be sure to let us know well ahead of time if you are planning on moving or going on an extended vacation. We can hold your wines for you until you're settled or back from your holiday.

[The 1997 Curtis Syrah] Was my first Syrah, it was exquisite!

—Richard L. Watts, Score 42

[The 1996 Edgewood Zinfandel is] So smooth-very good. I had it with pasta marinara-it was an excellent accompaniment!

—Nanette Dorner, Score 51

[The 1997 Curtis Syrah is] A very smooth Syrah with a nice nose. I'm impressed!

—Scott Zieske, Score 51

[The 1997 Heritage Old Vines is] Light but so full of flavor and very smooth—a steal for the price!

—Steven Attard, Score 48

[The 1996 Edgewood Petite Verdot is] A new red for me... a very pleasant change!

—Kris Zabriskie, Score 47

[The 1997 Curtis Heritage Old Vines is] Robust yet smooth on the palate, magnificent finish!

—Randy Irvin, Score 54

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

French Camp Vineyard is located in a unique geographical area 25 miles east of San Luis Obispo. Eleven different grape varieties thrive in the vineyard and are purchased by top wine producers including Buffalo Ridge. They're not just great wines though, they're great values too.

BUFFALO RIDGE WINERY	Retail Price		Club Price		Club Price	
	Winery-Direct		2-Bottle Members		4-Bottle Members	
1998 Zinfandel* French Camp Vineyard	Half Case-6	\$84	\$66	(21% Off)	\$63	(25% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$168	\$125	(26% Off)	\$118	(30% Off)
1999 Chardonnay* French Camp Vineyard	Half Case-6	\$84	\$64	(24% Off)	\$60	(29% Off)
	Full Case-12	\$168	\$120	(29% Off)	\$110	(35% 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.