

# WINE

# PRESS

Donati Family Vineyard & Pianetta Winery

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 20 No. 3B

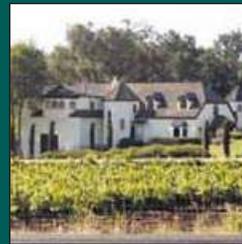


## ONATI FAMILY VINEYARD & PIANETTA WINERY

Two standout Italian-American families follow generations of tradition and premium grape growing on California's Central Coast.



*Pianetta Winery focuses heavily on Syrah and Cabernet varietals, and has become known for their wine's intense flavor and bold tastes.*



*Donati Family Vineyards, planted in the Paicines appellation of San Benito County, is an exciting wine brand in one of the Central Coast's most undiscovered regions.*

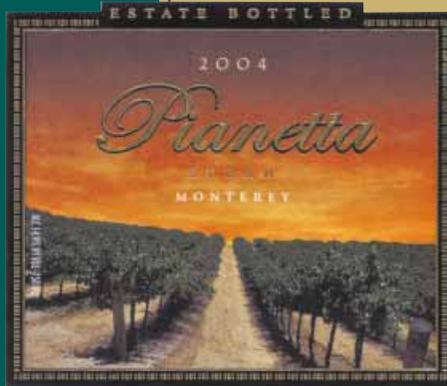


*Four generations of farming experience highlight the growing traditions behind the wines at Pianetta Winery.*



# PIANETTA 2004 SYRAH

Pianetta's 2004 Syrah was produced from the family's estate vineyard, Pianetta Vineyards, in Monterey County, California. The vineyard is part of a 95-acre ranch seven miles north of San Miguel above the Big Sandy River in Indian Valley. Its growing conditions are ideal for hearty red grape varietals, and Pianetta's Syrahs have become known for their intense, bold flavors. The Pianetta 2004 Syrah was awarded **4 Silver Medals**, including a **Silver Medal** at the Monterey Fair Wine Challenge, a **Silver Medal** at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, a **Silver Medal** at the Riverside International Wine Competition and a **Silver Medal** at the Finger Lakes International Wine Competition. Deep and dense, this is a mouth-filling wine loaded with chewy black cherry and dark plum, earthy flavors, wrapped around spice and smoky accents. On the palate, the wine is well balanced with a long and velvety finish. Enjoyable now, this wine will nevertheless mature gracefully over the next 5 years as the generous tannins soften. Aged 18 months in oak. 100% Syrah. Enjoy now until 2015.



### 2004 VINTAGE:

- SILVER MEDAL** – MONTEREY FAIR WINE CHALLENGE,
- SILVER MEDAL** – SF CHRONICLE WINE COMPETITION,
- SILVER MEDAL** – RIVERSIDE INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION,
- SILVER MEDAL** – FINGER LAKES INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION

**LEGACY:** THE SECOND SYRAH VINTAGE FROM PIANETTA WINERY, THIS 2004 VINTAGE FOLLOWS THE INAUGURAL MEDAL WINNING BOTTLING.

## Just the facts:

pH.....	3.58
Alcohol.....	14.9%
Total Acid.....	0.67 g/100 mls
Cases Produced.....	645
Drink Now or Up to Year.....	2015



# PIANETTA WINERY

The roots of the Pianetta Winery go back as far as the early 20th Century when the patriarch of the Pianetta Family, Ernesto Pianetta, emigrated from the small town of Bulgetta near Lake Como in breathtaking Northern Italy. That was 1918 and Ernesto settled in Oakland and eventually began acquiring ranches for farming grapes around the Fremont and San Leandro areas. That acreage ultimately grew to over 1,500 acres and made Ernest and his descendants major growers on the East Bay farming scene.

Ernesto's son John became part of the business and, in due time, a winery was erected on the property. It was there that John Pianetta, Jr., first learned the basics of the wine business from his father and grandfather.

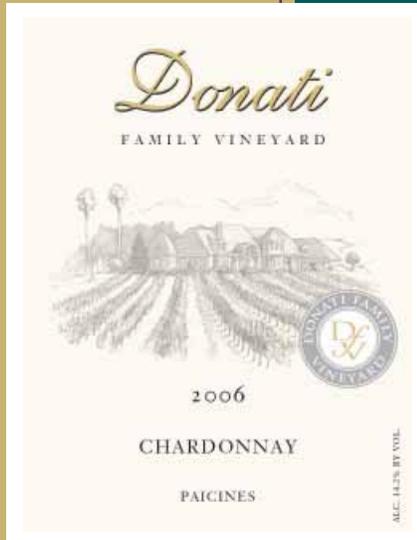
"Like most Italian families, the Pianettas were a close family and shared many things," recalled John Pianetta, Jr. "My father had learned from his father and he passed along everything to me. When I went away to college, I always had in the back of my mind to one day return to growing grapes in some manner or fashion."

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**2006 VINTAGE:**

*GOLD MEDAL SPECIAL SELECTION!*

**LEGACY:** THE 2006 CHARDONNAY CONTINUES TO UPHOLD THE DONATI FAMILY VINEYARD STANDARD FOR CHARDONNAY, AND THEY BELIEVE THIS IS THEIR FINEST VINTAGE TO DATE!



A *Gold Medal Special Selection!* The Donati 2006 Chardonnay was produced from a hillside vineyard in Paicines, California, just east of Monterey County. Achieving optimal fruit ripeness is essential with Central Coast Chardonnays, so Donati chose a specific vineyard on steeply sloped, southern exposed hills, allowing maximum sunlight to reach the slowly ripening grapes. This hillside vineyard's small berries provided a good concentration of flavors and acidity, both essential elements in styling Chardonnay. To give their 2006 Chardonnay a distinctive personality, Donati opted to age 80% of the lot in toasted French Oak barrels, giving the wine tremendous body and texture while imparting delicate levels of oak. The remaining 20% was fermented in stainless steel tanks, allowing the naturally vibrant fruit flavors to develop. The two separate lots were blended prior to bottling, giving the finished Chardonnay a wonderfully expressive character. Laced with just enough oak, the luscious fruit in Donati's Chardonnay presents notes of pineapple and lemon custard perfectly balanced with delicious toasted oak notes. Donati says "the 2006 Chardonnay is our finest version of this elegant wine to date!" Try pairing the Donati 2006 Chardonnay with herb-roasted chicken, grilled wild salmon or Dungeness crab cakes. 100% Chardonnay. Enjoy now until 2012.

*Just the facts:*

pH .....	3.4
Alcohol .....	14.2%
Total Acid .....	0.63 g/100 mls
Drink Now or Up to Year .....	2012
Cases Produced .....	1,587



## DONATI FAMILY VINEYARD

In the modern California wine industry, the term pioneer is not used loosely. Rather, it is usually awarded to a person or business that has demonstrated excessive determination and grit to achieve a goal. It is also a word that could aptly describe this month's *Gold Series Selection*, Donati Family Vineyard.

Begun in 1997 as a project for the father/son team of Ron and Matt Donati, Donati Family Vineyard is a 1,000-acre estate in San Benito County, not many miles east of the magical city of Monterey.

"I had just sold my electronic business that produced printed circuit boards," informed Ron Donati, a youthful 68-year-old. "My son Matt had a degree in sports marketing and was serving as a coach, but wanted a change in his lifestyle. At the time we owned a large hunting ranch near Salinas that we thought might work as a vineyard but

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*The Pianetta Vineyards are located in Southern Monterey County near Paso Robles on the eastern slopes of Indian Valley.*

## *About The Winemaker*

Unlike many modern day winemakers with specific academic credentials, John Pianetta describes himself as “an everyday winemaker that has learned my trade from a number of professionals while on the job.” Pianetta credits his close association with a number of Napa Valley wineries (including Robert Mondavi Winery and Franciscan Oakville Estates to name a couple) that allowed him to gain great insight to the fine art of winemaking.

He also singles out winemaker Robert Cook (Estancia Winery and Franciscan) as particularly helpful in making him a complete winemaker.

Pianetta has also taken a number of classes that have aided certain aspects of his winemaking expertise.



Pianetta Winery, continued from page 2

Skip forward to January 1996, and John Pianetta, Jr., is able to fulfill his long time vision of getting back in the wine business. Nearing retirement from his career as an airline pilot, Pianetta selects a 95-acre tract just north of Paso Robles for his new vineyard project. The area is known as Indian Valley and Pianetta feels the extra heat generated there is just what he needs for his Cabernet and Syrah vines to flourish and produce the type of fruit he needs to make heavy reds, his favorite type of wines.

The vines are planted in three phases, beginning in 1997 and concluding just after the turn of the millennium. The grapes from Pianetta Vineyards are immediately successful and are soon sold to a number of Napa Valley giant wineries including Robert Mondavi Winery and Franciscan Oakville Estates.

In the back of John Pianetta Jr.’s mind is his long time dream of producing his own wine. In 2004, a grand total of 369 cases are released to the wine world and Pianetta Winery becomes a real entity. A 2800-square foot winery is constructed and the business slowly evolves.

“With all our acreage, we still sell almost 80 percent of our fruit,” explained Pianetta. “We have a great working relationship with our wineries and they love the type of fruit we are

able to produce. I can’t see much changing for the foreseeable future, unless our own production happens to grow.”

Pianetta Winery currently produces around 2,800 cases of wine, but has the capacity to expand to between 5 and 6,000 cases should the necessity arise.

“It all depends on the marketing and the overall condition of the wine industry,” Pianetta explained. “The current recession has put most wineries’ plans on hold, and it’s mostly the same with us. I hope we can grow slowly and continue to produce exceptional wines.”

So far, Pianetta Winery’s releases have been greeted with laudatory marks by the nation’s wine press and

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*“Like most Italian families, the Pianettas were a close family and shared many things,” recalled John Pianetta, Jr. “My father had learned from his father and he passed along everything to me.”*

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judging panels, a truly significant sign in an uneasy economy.

John Pianetta’s daughter Caitlin, 26, is the fourth generation of her family to become part of the wine business. An AgBusiness graduate of Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo, Caitlin has responsibility for several aspects of Pianetta Winery. She handles all the

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found there wasn't enough water to support the plants. At that point we began looking around, a period that

and ultimately purchased some 1,000 acres on which to plant their new vineyards. Ultimately, more than 800

*"I think consistency is the most important aspect of the wine business and my young winemakers are completely dedicated to that sort of philosophy." - Ron Donati*

acres were planted in vine and a home was built for Matt and his family in which to live. A number of vines (mostly Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc) had remained from the days of Almaden's ownership and the Donatis decided

lasted for quite some time. Some friends in Hollister learned about a former vineyard property that became available and we went to take a look. When I saw the area and learned of its history, I became attracted to this particular part of San Benito County."

Donati took note of the fact that iconic wineries Calera Wine Co and Chalone Vineyard were located on the opposite side of the Cienega Valley

to make some "shiners" (wines with no labels) from the 40-year-old vines to see what could be produced.

When the shiners were given to friends and acquaintances, the result was an enthusiastic thumb up from everyone concerned. It was also the impetus that propelled Ron and Matt Donati to produce their first commercial wines.

Donati Family Vineyard's first release came in 2004, a total of 800 cases. Encouraged by favorable market acceptance and excellent press, the winery has expanded its production to around 12,000 cases for 2010. "We will let the public market dictate to us our growth in the future," added

Donati. "We have the capability of producing a good deal more estate wine since we now sell a good portion of the fruit we grow on our estate."

A new 12,000 square foot winery was also constructed that will be expanded in the near future. The complex features a barrel facility, tasting room and an administrative section where the winery's business is directed.

"We have a 5-year plan that calls for us to be around the 25,000 case

continued on page 10



*In 2007, the Donati Family Vineyard made its new home in Templeton, California in San Luis Obispo County.*

## About The Winemakers

**Winemaking responsibilities are shared by a pair of assistant winemakers, Denise Valoff**



**and Ian Hudson. Both are graduates of nearby Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo and bring varied talents to the Donati family operation. Denise is a ten-year veteran of the wine industry with prior stints at Meridian Vineyards, Chumeia Vineyards and Courtside Cellars. She joined the Donati Family Vineyard operation in December of 2007 and is considered the**

**senior assistant winemaker.**

**Ian Hudson hails from nearby Hollister, CA and has been in the wine business for three years.**



# PIANETTA SPOTLIGHT



## *John Pianetta, Jr.*

When John Pianetta, Jr., left his family's East Bay home to attend the University of Santa Clara in the mid 1960s, he had no idea of just what waited ahead for him in his business career. He graduated with a degree in mathematics and physics and entered the United States Navy.

John Jr., became a Navy pilot and flew the A-7 Corsair II for two tours off the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA 63) during the Vietnam War. After his Navy career ended, he became an airline pilot for American Airlines and finally retired in 2005 after 26 years of service.

He felt a calling to his roots in California's grape growing regions and began seeking a suitable property sometime after the turn of the century. Pianetta spent a long time in search of the perfect land. Included were visits to Napa Valley, the farming areas around Chico and Lodi, and also the eastern San Joaquin Valley

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## PIANETTA'S WINE REGION



It's almost amazing how far the Central Coast region has progressed as one of California's top wine producing areas. Given the wide variety of growing conditions found in the south around Santa Barbara and Santa Maria and the wildly diversified environs of more northern Monterey County, it is

easy to see just how the Central Coast has become the darling of the post millennium wine focus.

Now, the microclimates of the Central Coast have jumped into vogue to compete with their northern neighbors in Sonoma County and Napa Valley. The acreage that comprises Pianetta Winery's estate holdings originates from such a microclimate. Located on the eastern slopes of Indian Valley and just north of the historic mission town of San Miguel, Pianetta Vineyards is located above the Big Sandy River that winds its way through the valley. The vines are exposed to the sun in the day along with an easy afternoon breeze during the growing season that provides optimum conditions for the

fruit. The heat aids the growth of the red varietals and produces the heavy flavors that mark the Pianetta Winery's distinctive whopping red wines. 🍇



*John Pianetta Jr. decided the beautiful views and ideal growing conditions presented this Central Coast site with the greatest potential for an estate vineyard for Cabernet and Syrah varietals.*

# Ron Donati

Even though his son Matt shares the winery’s limelight, it is Ron Donati who has had the insight and determination to push forward with his family’s initial winery venture.

He points to the fact that his father emigrated from the medieval walled town of Lucca in Tuscany, famous for its great wine tradition of superb Chiantis and Brunello de Montalcinos to name just a few. He recalls growing up in a



typical Italian-American house where watered wines were served to children to accompany many meals.

“I guess it’s in your blood,” he stated recently.

“I suppose the idea of growing grapes was always in the back of my mind.”

A native of South San Francisco and a CPA by profession, Ron Donati, sold his electronics business and opted for another venture he feels is even harder---the incredibly competitive wine business.

“I knew it would be difficult but I wanted to do something that everyone could benefit from. I also wanted a business that Matt could control part of, and in this case that was the vineyard aspect. The business side I left for myself, because that’s where my expertise lay,” he said pointedly.

Donati chose the sparsely populated (with wineries as well as people) Paicines area for his project and knew it would be a major challenge. “I realized it has been almost 40 years since there were producing vines on the property, but I looked at our neighbors and I asked myself, ‘why not?’”

continued on page 9



## DONATI’S WINE REGION

If the word Paicines (*pronounced pie-see-ness*) isn’t exactly familiar to you, you shouldn’t feel bad. The growing area is located just east and off landmark US Highway 101, the north/south route of coastal California. It is almost due east of the city of Monterey and therefore shares some of the excellent nautical effects that cover the entire area.

Paicines was first planted during early mission times, but those vineyards have long since disappeared. Industry giant Almaden replanted the area during the 1960s but gave up on the vines after unsuccessfully attempting overcoming the violent labor problems of that era.

Paicines AVA became official in 1982 and is actually part of the Cienega Valley and occupies the northern tip of the Gavilan Mountains chain that runs north/south and is part of the much larger Central Coast AVA. The Paicines area is in a wind tunnel of cool ocean air flowing to the San Joaquin Valley. In the afternoon,



*Donati Family Vineyard is the only brand located in the Paicines appellation, although there are approximately five other vineyards located in the appellation, growing primarily Bordeaux varieties.*

Paicines takes advantage of the cooling breeze that comes in off Monterey Valley. At night, the area is more protected from the evening fog due to its openness and lack of trees. During periods of heavy fog, the Paicines area holds the fog longer than much of the nearby area.

Various soils constitute the land, are generally well drained with deep root zones. Most of the planted areas of the Paicines AVA hold an array of Bordeaux varietals that seems perfectly suited to the myriad conditions to be found within its parameters.



# John Pianetta, Jr.

Spotlight, continued from page 6

around Merced. While he considered citrus and nut farming, he eventually came back to his first love—growing high quality varietal grapes. John Jr., finally settled upon an appropriate piece of land (approximately 95 acres) in the Central Coast region just north of Paso Robles. The time was around the beginning of the Central Coast wine explosion and Paso Robles was arguably the center of attention for the entire area.

“I admit that part of my decision was based on my personal tastes,” Pianetta offered. “I am a lover of big, hearty red wines with great flavor and incredible color. I wanted a growing area with enough heat and a drier climate that aided canopy issues. I am also a fan of allowing the fruit to hang as long as possible so as to be able to achieve ultimate ripeness. The long hanging actually energizes tannic acids. To me, that is where the flavor is stored and the reason the wines are able to achieve greatness. Indian Valley had all the right growing and climate features so I went out and bought the property I really wanted.”

While Pianetta admits the resulting wines tend to be a bit higher in alcohol, he feels that he is able to achieve the fruit/acid balance necessary for great wines. “There must be a balance in the field and a balance in the winery,” Pianetta added. “The two are absolutely necessary for a good wine.”

Pianetta is also pleased that his winery has established a reputation for bigger, full-bodied wines. A loyal following has developed that insures John Pianetta and his substantial wines will be around for a long, long time.

The modest Pianetta doesn't feel his winery's accomplishments are all that spectacular. “We don't think we're that big of a deal,” he ended. “What's more important is that we are making wines that are really appreciated. That's what makes all our hard work worthwhile. It's very fulfilling to all of us.” 

## The Wine Wizard

- 1) What is a Blanc de Noir?
- 2) What is the job of a Sommelier?
- 3) What are the general flavor differences in American and French oak?

See Page 9 for Answers.

*Pianetta Winery produces just 2,800 cases of strictly red wines – all estate grown, representing the best their premium vineyards have to offer.*



## Results

### 2005 Windstream "Two Country Cuvée"

GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
93%	6%	1%

### 2007 Windstream Pinot Gris

GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
94%	4%	2%

### 2006 Castoro "Zinfusion" Zinfandel

GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
95%	4%	1%

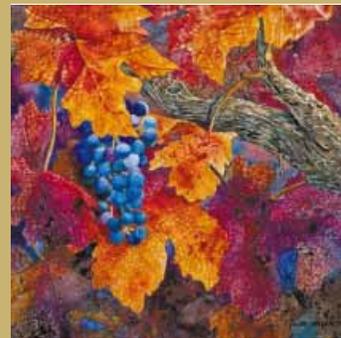
### 2007 Castoro Pinot Grigio

GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
93%	5%	2%

The above wines were recently featured.

To see our current inventory, reorder online, and Judge the Wines, visit us at [www.GoldMedalWine.com/member](http://www.GoldMedalWine.com/member).

## THE ART OF FINE WINE



Yountville Vineyard was painted by Sandy Delehanty, who works as a full time artist in northern

California. She leads painting trips around the world and also instructs watercolor and oil painting classes.

## Ron Donati

Spotlight, continued from page 7

If there is one aspect of the winery operation that is purely Ron Donati, it is his drive toward consistency in his family's wines. He has underscored that aspect of the business to everyone, including his young winemaking staff.

"Consistency from year to year is what everyone judges you by," he again related. "If you expect a consumer to continue buying your wine, it had better be as good as last year's and in line with what you intend to produce the following year. When we set out to make our first wines, we didn't copy anyone else's style, we made wines that we liked to drink and that we thought afforded a good value. To us, that philosophy is extremely elementary and that's how it should be."

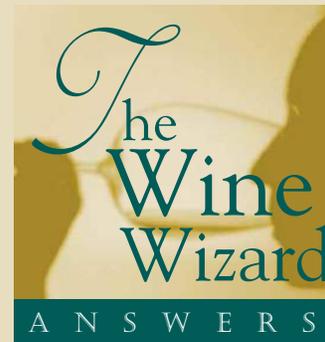
Donati also embraces future plans that could result in an expansion to the winery and speaks in a language that indicates it is nearly a done deal. "We'll let the public decide," he stated confidently, "that's the proper way to think."

In the case of Ron Donati and his Donati Family Vineyard, it already seems like a foregone conclusion. 

1) *Blanc de Noir* is a French term that translates to "white wine from red grapes." It is most often describes a Champagne, made from either Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, or a blend of the two. Occasionally this phrase refers to still wines made from Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon or Zinfandel. In the United States, however, these rosé wines usually go by other names such as Blanc de Pinot Noir, Cabernet Blanc or White Zinfandel.

2) Sommeliers, or wine stewards, are trained and knowledgeable wine professionals, commonly working in fine restaurants and specializing in all aspects of wine services, including food and wine pairing. Sommeliers typically develop wine lists, train the other restaurant staff, and work along with the culinary team to pair and suggest wines to best complement each menu item. Sommeliers also often work the floor of the restaurant, in direct contact with customers to suggest options within their taste and budget preferences.

3) While both American and French oak contribute tannins and aromas, French oak contains more tannins and flavor components with less "oaky" flavor and smell than American oak. American oak is more intensely flavored, with a more aggressive mouthfeel and immediately apparent aroma. American oak also contains more sweet and vanilla overtones than French oak. When it comes to wine barrels, all winemakers are looking for something different, and there is no right or wrong choice – it's just a difference in style preference.



Pianetta Winery, continued from page 4

marketing chores and runs the winery's dual tasting facilities (a wine bar at the winery itself and a tasting room operation in downtown Paso Robles just off the square). Caitlin also aids her dad around the winery and helps put the final blends together that constitute Pianetta Winery's releases.

"I am very proud of Caitlin's inputs," added John Pianetta, Jr. "She really knows her wines and is determined to see us become even more successful. When we expand, it will be through her efforts."

Pianetta Winery is typical of the small family-owned and run wineries that make up the backbone of the modern California wine business. With only five employees (including the Pianettas), Pianetta Winery is tiny in comparison to many industry giants.

As this month's *Gold Series Selection*, we are happy to introduce this excellent small winery to our members.

We know you will enjoy Pianetta Winery's hearty wines. 🍇



*John Pianetta Jr. proudly carries on the tradition of the Pianetta farming family as he harvests his estate-grown fruit and produces stunning, award-winning wines.*

Donati Family Vineyard, continued from page 5

level," commented Ron Donati, "but that's still way in the future. What we are committed to is continuing to make wines that really taste good and that people like to drink and that are consistent from year to year. I think consistency is the most important aspect of the wine business and my young winemakers are completely dedicated to that sort of philosophy."

Donati also is keen about keeping his wines priced at reasonable levels so as to afford everyone the opportunity to buy Donati Family Vineyard's estate wines. Thus far, he has developed a sizeable legion of followers that often visit the winery for themselves.

"We have an almost perfect location," he said. "We are right off HWY 46 West and only an hour from San Jose to the north and only three hours from the populous Los Angeles area. That makes us a great destination for any weekend."

Currently, Donati Family Vineyard is the only winery utilizing the Paicines AVA, even though winery giant Blossom Hill Winery is located just across the road from Donati. In true pioneer spirit, Ron Donati declared his intention to continue his family's effort to persuade Blossom Hill into using the distinctive Paicines appellation on some of their wines.

From the Donati Family's current record of undertakings, we think it won't take them all that long to accomplish. 🍇



*The Donatis selected a unique and superior site for their vineyard plantings, one that would develop stellar wines with a distinctive personality.*

## Marinated Lamb Over Polenta

## Crab Cakes

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pair with Pianetta 2004 Syrah

### Ingredients:

3 lbs. Lamb, removed from bone and most of silver skin

### Chanterelle Pancetta:

6 oz. Pancetta  
1/4 lbs. Fresh Chanterelles  
3 Tbs. Virgin Olive Oil  
3/4 cup Shallots  
3 tsp. Roasted Garlic  
3 tsp. Fresh Basil  
1 cup Red Wine  
1 1/2 cup Beef Stock  
1 tsp. Dijon Mustard  
1 1/2 cup Seeded Tomatoes

### Marinade:

3/4 cup Red Wine  
1/3 cup Soy Sauce  
2 Bay Leaves  
3 Tbs. Virgin Olive Oil  
1 Tbs. Worcestershire  
1/3 cup Diced Shallots  
3 Smashed Garlic Cloves  
3 Tbs. Fresh Rosemary  
3 Juniper Berries  
Pinch Sea Salt  
Fresh Cracked Pepper

### Preparation:

Combine Marinade ingredients in bowl and whisk thoroughly. Transfer to 11-pound freezer bag. Add Lamb and massage. Refrigerate 2 hours.

Saute Pancetta. Then add Shallots, Garlic and Basil. Saute 6-7 minutes. Add Red Wine and Chanterelles, then reduce heat by half to simmer. Add Stock, Mustard, Tomatoes and reduce for 15 minutes. Season to taste.

Grill Lamb to rare temperature and let rest 5 minutes. Cut against the grain and serve over polenta. Top with Chanterelle Pancetta and enjoy! Serves 4.

Pair with Donati 2006 Chardonnay  
Makes 6-8 Crab Cakes

### Ingredients:

1 Pound Jumbo Lump Crab Meat (Very important)  
1 Cup Panko Breadcrumbs (Japanese Breadcrumbs)  
Kosher Salt to taste  
Fresh Ground Black Pepper to taste  
Worcester Sauce (Exactly 8 1/2 Drops!)

2 Eggs  
Melted Butter  
3/4 Cup Chopped Parsley  
Optional Cayenne Pepper  
1 Fresh Lemon

### Preparation:

In a good size bowl, combine the 2 eggs with the salt and pepper. Cut the lemon in half and remove the seeds. Squeeze 1 half of the lemon into the bowl. Add parsley and melted butter, and then fold in the mayo. Put in a few drops of the Worcester Sauce and check the color and smell. You should smell the butter, lemon, and parsley pretty good by now. If not, I'd add a little more of whatever is lacking. Also, add the cayenne pepper if you want. Make sure you mix everything up pretty good but not too hard. So now all you have left is the Breadcrumbs and crabmeat! The crabmeat is BEST if you can actually remove it from the shell of the crab, but it's much easier to go to Costco and buy the 1lb containers. I like Phillips the best!

Now in another bowl, put all of the crabmeat you have and be careful not to break it up too much. You actually want it in as big of pieces as you can maintain. Slowly fold in the mixture you have just created, into the crabmeat. At this point I like to add a little bit of the breadcrumbs and then a little bit of the mixture. This way you have a good idea of the consistency you're working with.

When everything is combined you should have a nice mix of crabmeat, breadcrumbs, and the mixture. Keep in mind that you'll be molding these into descent size cakes, much like a hamburger patty. If your end product is too wet and/or runny, they will have a hard time staying together while cooking.

I like to let my mix sit in the fridge for about 20 min or so just to absorb everything. You don't really have to this, so basically you can just begin to mold your cakes and place them on a plate or baking sheet. Once they are molded pretty tight I heat a large skillet to med heat. Add some extra virgin olive oil and make sure it doesn't get too hot. Once your heat is where it should be, place the cakes into the skillet. They should cook for about 3-5 minutes per side, depending on how you like them. I go for 4 min each side and they are a perfect golden brown.

Once they're done, remove them from the skillet and you can serve right away, or keep them in the oven on very low heat as to keep them warm. Take the other half of the lemon you have, and squeeze it all on the tops of the cakes.

Find these recipes and all of your favorites online at [www.GoldMedalWine.com](http://www.GoldMedalWine.com).  
From the Gold Series page, click on Winery Recipes and find delicious entrées to pair with your favorite wines.

# THE GRAPEVINE

“Red fruit dominates, but in perfect balance. Smooth tannins that went well with spaghetti meatballs and a lentil soup [Viansa 2005 Sempre Avanti Red Blend].”

– James Dietz

“This was an excellent wine for us. It was our first wine in the GMWC. We are sold on the GMWC as a result. We loved the oak flavor of this Chardonnay. Thanks Gold Medal, you made our Christmas with this choice [White Oak 2008 Chardonnay].”

– Suzanne LeBlanc

## Do you want more wine

each month? Most of our wine club members do, and we don't blame you! That's why we'd like to let you in on the special deals and discounts that our 4-Bottle Members are currently receiving – and you can, too. Each 4-Bottle delivery, you will save an additional **10% OFF** plus when you reorder your favorite wines, you save even more (up to **45% OFF** winery direct!). Along with these special discounts each month, you're receiving essentially a double shipment – more wines and more opportunities to enjoy the special selections with friends and family. It's easy to upgrade your account, too. Simply visit us at [www.GoldMedalWine.com/upgrade](http://www.GoldMedalWine.com/upgrade) or call us at **1-800-266-8888**. Remember, we can always customize your account, too...that means reds only, whites only, a mix, whatever works best for you. Upgrade today, and start receiving more wine in your next scheduled delivery!



The *Gold Series* features wines from only the best small wineries of California. The selected wines have earned medals in the top wine-industry competitions or have been highly rated by respected national wine publications. On occasion we feature a wine of high medal-quality with very limited availability that may not be submitted to these venues for review.



## THE GOLD MEDAL WINE STORE

### Reorders

Donati Family Vineyard's 2006 Chardonnay and Pianetta Winery's 2004 Syrah are both estate grown, classic Central Coast varietal wines, produced in very limited quantities. Together, they represent two of the Central Coast's most distinctive, focused, and impressive boutique family wineries. A very special pairing for our Gold Series members this month!

**Save up to 38%  
off Winery Direct**

	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members And Multiple Series Members
Pianetta 2004 Syrah*	\$25.00/btl.	\$17.00/btl. Save 32%	\$15.50/btl. Save 38%
Donati 2006 Chardonnay*	\$20.00/btl.	\$15.50/btl. Save 23%	\$14.00/btl. Save 30%



**Reorder Online: [www.goldmedalwine.com](http://www.goldmedalwine.com)**

**Toll Free: 1-800-266-8888 Fax: 1-800-266-8889**

Gold Medal Wine Club – 5330 Debbie Road, Suite 200 • Santa Barbara, California 93111



**If you are also a 2-bottle member of another Series, you are now eligible to receive the 4-bottle member prices above!**

\*Availability is extremely limited Note: Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included in the above prices. Call for details.