



Diamond Series



Sojourn Cellars

After the infamous dot-com crash of 2000, many in the high tech world were left scrambling. Amidst the bust, however, came a very unexpected success story that is the basis for this month's *Diamond Series* selection, Sojourn Cellars.

Ex-computer software salesman Craig Haserot decided to move to Sonoma County after the crash, hoping to pursue a new career path while escaping the cold weather of San Francisco. Haserot began playing tennis at the local Maxwell Farms Regional Park and struck up a friendship with doubles partner, Erich Bradley, who was then the winemaker at Arrowood Winery and Audelssa (both in Sonoma). Bradley specialized in producing Cabernet Sauvignons from select local vineyards.

Haserot and Bradley bonded over their passion for great wines, and began playing with the idea of making their own. Haserot had the background in sales and marketing, while Bradley was happy just making wine – without all the business details. It was the beginning of a wonderfully successful friendship and business partnership.

In 2001, the two made 150 cases of project Cabernet from Sonoma's Glen Ellen vineyard – and the finished product was better than they ever could have anticipated.

"When we released the Cab, it was actually really good and we realized there was potential with our wines," Haserot explained. "The following year, we upped the Cab production to 250 cases and then to 350 cases in 2004."

With Bradley's experience in making Sonoma Cabs, it was only natural that Cabernet Sauvignon would be the first endeavor for Sojourn Cellars, but it wasn't long before their love for Pinot Noir led to new experimentation.

"In 2004 we decided to make 210 cases of Sangiacomo Vineyard Pinot Noir," Haserot stated. This first Pinot

release took home 95- and 92-point ratings and really set the stage for the caliber of wines produced thereafter.

What Haserot and Bradley didn't anticipate was the reaction 2004's *Sideways* movie would have on the California Pinot Noir industry. "Our sales literally took off!" Haserot enthused. The two increased their Pinot production tenfold and what began as an avid hobby had become an incredibly successful business move.

When Haserot and Bradley brainstormed names for their budding winery, a friend aptly suggested Sojourn, which actually has two significant meanings: the French sojourner refers to a journey, vacation, or road trip, while the English sojourn implies rest, relax and respite.

"That's how we came up with the lawn chair," Haserot explains about the wine label's significant depiction. "People really like it, too! It's how drinking a glass of wine should be."

Sojourn Cellars' unique Tasting Salon concept in downtown Sonoma further promotes the winery's appealing philosophy with a living room-type setting of cozy furniture and a dining room table (no tasting bar). Both Haserot and Bradley join guests for private tasting sessions to share their limited production, highly rated wines. The tasting salon certainly stands out in its personal approach to winetasting, and the customers seem to be enjoying themselves as well.

At a current production level of 5,000 cases, Haserot is comfortable with the size of Sojourn Cellars and would like to only slightly increase the production size in the coming years.

The newest achievement at the winery is the successful addition of two Sonoma Coast Chardonnays to round out the portfolio of four Cabernet Sauvignons and nine Pinot Noirs. Each of the wines are made with limited production numbers and are sourced from some of Sonoma, Napa, and Mendocino County's most highly coveted and desirable vineyards.



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Craig Haserot –
Proprietor

Sojourn does not own its own vineyards, which gives them the flexibility to select fruit from these distinguished vineyard sites. By helping direct farming operations, the Sojourn team assures that their grapes are produced using world-class growing techniques. Looking into the future, the Sojourn

team plans on seeking out new vineyard locations to further diversify their already exceptional line-up.

Sojourn Cellars has become one of the most reputable boutique wineries in California, with nearly every vintage of every wine garnering 90+ scores from the top wine industry periodicals. A reputation of this caliber is rarely seen, and it's no question that the Sojourn wines are all in high demand. Please enjoy this month's special *Diamond Series* feature, a stellar wine from a now legendary winery. Cheers!

Accolades and Tasting Notes

Sojourn 2010 Beckstoffer Georges III Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

93 Points, *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar* — "Youthful purple color. A heady bouquet evokes cherry, cassis, vanilla, licorice and fruitcake, with a spicy topnote. Fleshy and sweet, offering intense dark berry compote and floral pastille flavors lifted by cracked pepper and mineral nuances. Shows impressive power on the clinging, gently tannic finish, which features notes of vanilla and cocoa powder. This wine was aged in 75% new French oak."

92 Points, *California Grapevine* — "Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, complex, spicy, cassis and black cherry fruit aroma with a note of new French oak; full body; big, rich, intense, concentrated, ripe, dark berry fruit flavors; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Nicely balanced and firmly structured, with hints of elegance and complexity... Very highly recommended."

Winemaker Erich Bradley's Notes — "The 2010 vintage of this wine is impressive. It has an added layer of complexity, while showing the lush textures, full body and lingering flavors of the previous two vintages. Red and dark fruit aromas lead to flavors of dark cherry, earth and chocolate. This vineyard is the former Beaulieu Vineyard No. 3, which was originally planted by Georges DeLatour of Beaulieu in 1928. In 2010, we sourced Cabernet Sauvignon from the famed F Block within the Georges III Vineyard. This block is known for its exceptional "Rutherford Dust" red fruit and earth profile and high levels of concentration." Just 225 Cases Produced.

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