

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 17 No. 2

Clos LaChance Winery Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

BACKYARD BEGINNINGS EVOLVE INTO HUGE SUCCESS STORY FOR CLOS LACHANCE

It would be easy to concede that Clos LaChance Winery was much more than a "chance" happening. In fact, the evolution of the much-respected San Martin winery is the stuff legends are made of, particularly in the much-storied wine industry where many of the characters and entities sometimes seem larger than life.

Clos LaChance had its humble beginnings back in 1987 when owners Bill and Brenda Murphy grew tired of looking out the browned out back

windows of their home. They were residents in the Santa Cruz foothills outside Saratoga, California and decided at the time to plant the acreage in grape vines, Chardonnay to be exact. They felt the vines would offer a degree of erosion control and would also add value to their property.

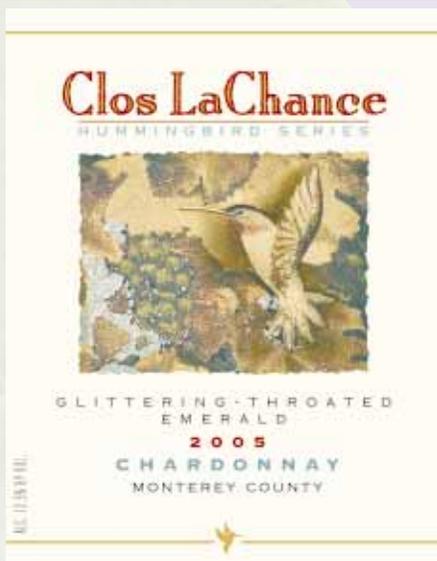
In the picturesque Santa Cruz Foothills and the first "backyard" vineyard in Sarasota, California is where it all started for Bill and Brenda Murphy.

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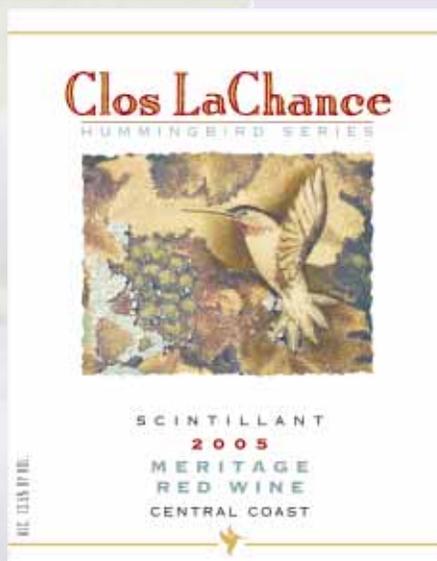
The picturesque Santa Cruz Foothills and the first "backyard" vineyard in Sarasota, California, where it all started for Bill and Brenda Murphy.

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 1,800 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



2005 CHARDONNAY

The Clos LaChance 2005 Glittering-Throated Emerald Chardonnay is a delicious wine that has already won an eye-popping **Double Gold** and **Best of Show**, at the *San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*. The fruit for this Chardonnay is from longtime Monterey County grower, Scheid Vineyards. This gem of a Chardonnay is reminiscent of an Old World, white Burgundy; pastel yellow melon in color, clean, crisp, refreshingly complex and well balanced. The wine opens with an abundance of aromas of freshly cut green apple, melon, pear, coupled with tropical fruit encompassing pineapple, banana, mango and papaya. On the palate, the refreshing flavors of crisp apple, citrus and tropical fruits are balanced with an acidic component. The finish is fairly long considering there was no oak used when making this wine. Try pairing with Grilled Sea Bass with Tropical Salsa Chicken Salad, Camembert Cheese. 100% Monterey County Chardonnay. Enjoy now until 2010.



2005 MERITAGE

With wine competition results just starting to be announced, Clos LaChance's 2005 Meritage was awarded its first **Silver Medal** at the *San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*. The fruit for the Scintillant Meritage is exclusively from the estate's vineyard in San Martin. Medium ruby color with a full array of aromas of blackberries, blueberries, dried cherries, and black tea lightly layered in-between. The bouquet leads to rich flavors of ripe cherries and blackberries with a hint of spice. The mouth is completely filled with a well-rounded blend of fruit and tannins with a bit of vanilla that references the French oak barrels used for aging. The silky smooth finish is extra long and carries the fruit to the end. Try pairing with pork tenderloin with pomegranate sauce, Beef Stew, or Roquefort Cheese. 100% Estate grown; 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Cabernet Franc, 15% Merlot, 15% Petite Verdot. Aged in oak for 8 months. Enjoy now or until 2012.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2005 VINTAGE: Double Gold and Best of Show—*San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*.

LEGACY: In 1992, The Clos LaChance Winery was a small backyard endeavor; today they are a leader in vineyard development, management, and in the production of ultra-premium wines from Monterey County.

Just the facts:

pH	3.45
Alcohol	13.5%
Total Acid	0.67 g/100 mls
Cases Produced	2,238
Drink Now or Up to Year	2010

2005 VINTAGE: Silver Medal—*San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*.

LEGACY: The 2005 Scintillant Meritage is the first Bordeaux style blend to be released under the Hummingbird Series. Produced by winemaker Stephen Tebb using all estate fruit.

Just the facts:

pH	3.58
Alcohol	13.5%
Total Acid	0.62 g/100 mls
Aged in Oak	8 Months
Cases Produced	1,500
Drink Now or Up to Year	2012

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Bill & Brenda Murphy

As with many high tech executives, Ivy League-trained (Tufts) Bill Murphy never expected to face the prospect of burn out in his chosen profession. As a high earner and featured executive for high tech giant Hewlett Packard during the incredible development of the 1970s and '80s, Murphy was even credited with coining the name "laser jet" for a new era of printers for the company.

When he and his wife Brenda decided to plant an undesirable part of their backyard with grape vines, Murphy would have bet that the experience was nothing more than an attempt to make "better use of our property and have a little fun with it."

The fact that industry icons Ridge Vineyards and Mt. Eden were next door neighbors didn't hurt and when his neighbors heard about what he was doing, they also wanted vineyards planted on their own property.

"The backyard vineyard concept sort of grew on its own," Murphy, now 61, added with a smile. "We turned our

backyards into these beautiful viable vineyards. I guess it was up to me to figure out how to put them all together and make it all work."

From the onset, Murphy decided to model his Clos LaChance winery after the classic Bordeaux chateaux of France.

"We wanted to be able to control our destiny," he explained. "The Bordeaux chateau do practically all of their own growing and bottling, and that method leaves little to chance. It is one of the most important factors in building a really solid brand, the ultimate aim of every winery owner."

The process of leaving an incredibly secure job with a super, industry leading company such as Hewlett Packard wasn't all that easy and took some getting used to according to Murphy.

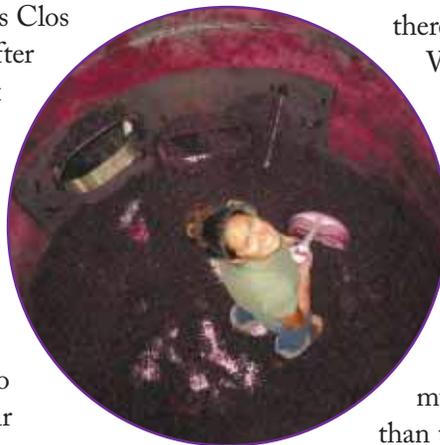
"Let me give you an example," he recalled. "At HP, you flew to your appointments on either a corporate jet or chartered jet of some sort. When you arrived at the airport, there was always someone there to meet you.

When we started the winery, we flew commercially and no one ever met us. Some executives forget that it is the position they hold that attracts so much attention rather than the person. They confuse the job they have with who they are. You become very humble very quickly when you decide to set out on your own."

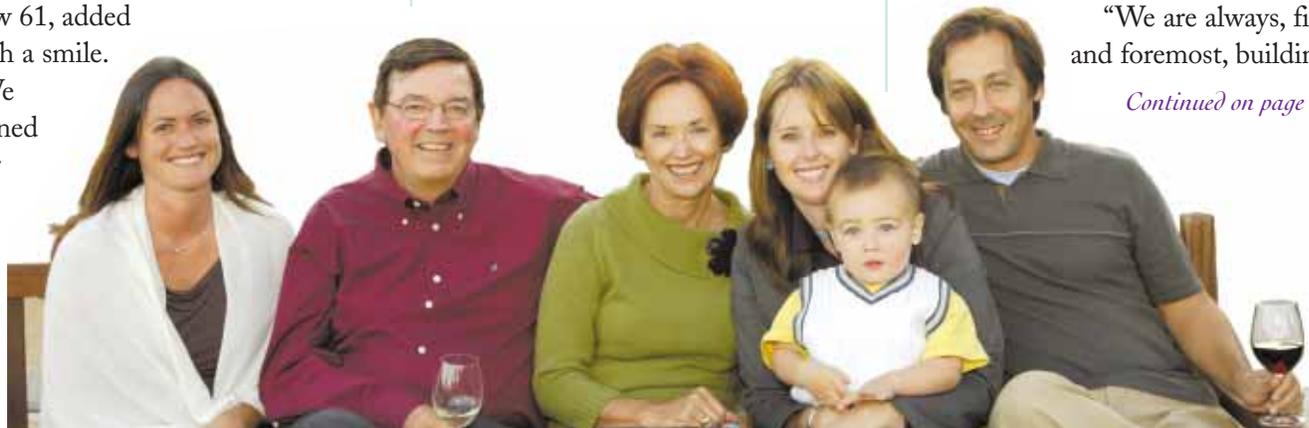
Murphy sees no shortage of challenges ahead for Clos LaChance. He pointed to the long-term economic success of the winery from a business standpoint as his main goal.

"We are always, first and foremost, building

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Cleaning the inside of the stainless steel vats is a dirty job—today it's Kristin's job!



It's all in the family— Kristin Murphy, Bill and Brenda Murphy, Cheryl Murphy Durzy with A.J. and husband Hani.



WINE WIZARD

- 1) Who is considered to be the first wine journalist in America?
- 2) Who is André Tchelistcheff?
- 3) How old is the World's oldest bottle of wine?

Continued from page 1

As the vines matured, they approached neighbors about the project and eventually planted over 50 acres in some thirty-three neighboring backyards. Among the participants were former figure skater Peggy Fleming and her husband who jumped at the chance

of having their own backyard vineyard and making their own wine. The neighbors were paid in either wine or cash, and the shell of Clos LaChance was born into the wine industry. After months of discussion, the Murphys selected a hummingbird to occupy the prominent position on its new label.

In 1997, Clos LaChance entered the world of big boutique wineries. Bill Murphy had been introduced to the developer of the prestigious CordeValle resort located in San Martin, not far from Clos LaChance's initial base of operations. CordeValle's operating contract called for part of the land to be used for vineyards and Clos LaChance's reputation as a backyard winery seemed to fit the resort to the proverbial "T."

An agreement was reached and Clos LaChance was relocated to its new facility at the incredibly festooned resort.

For the record, the word Clos means "place of" in French and LaChance was Brenda Murphy's

maiden name. It is ironic that the new location actually gave the winery its chance for success.

The addition of around 150 acres scattered throughout the resort



The backyard terrace of the Clos LaChance Winery overlooks the estate vineyard.

grew Clos LaChance's production capability significantly. These new vineyards were extremely high tech and combined both vinery and binary systems to make the vines and the winery more effective.

"I just didn't have the luxury of having hundreds of years to perfect our winemaking like the French did," remarked Murphy recently. "Therefore, we needed to make everything as efficient as humanly possible. Our vineyards and some of our systems might seem futuristic, but they give us the data we need to make really great wines."

Both critics and consumers alike are in agreement that Clos LaChance wine are something special and have heaped praise and medals on the winery since its very beginning. Clos LaChance now sells its wines in thirty states and exports to five different countries.

The winery is still a family affair, a fact that makes Bill Murphy proud. Wife Brenda continues to be involved as president and operations



Today, the Clos LaChance vineyards caress the CordeValle Resort's Golf Course in San Martin, California.

manager, and daughters Cheryl and Kristin are also involved. Cheryl heads the sales and marketing aspect of Clos LaChance and Kristin serves as events manager for the winery and its liaison with the CordeValle resort.

The production of Clos LaChance had grown to the 60,000 case level and Murphy expects it to remain at that level or rise slightly during the next few years.

The winery's emergence as a respected influence in the area has also given rise to a serious nature venture that Clos LaChance has championed. In harmony with the Hummingbird Society, Clos



The Clos LaChance crew celebrates the end of the 2005 Chardonnay harvest.

LaChance introduced last November, a Threatened Species Series, with proceeds going to aid severely threatened birds. The first release featured the Juan Fernandez Firecrown Hummingbird that is on the critically endangered list, where species are given only a 50% chance

of existing after the next ten years.

“It was natural for us to do,” acknowledged Cheryl Murphy-Durzy. “Our symbol since the beginning was the hummingbird and we consider there to be a cultural significance in being identified with these wonderful birds.

“Being nectar collectors, they don’t eat grapes. As pollinators, they are an asset to the winery and finally, their territorial behavior drives other birds away from the vines.”

Without a doubt, Clos LaChance’s attitude and direction are remarkable. It’s a fact that their wines are also. 

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) *Robert Lawrence Balzer* (b. 1912) has been called the first serious wine journalist in the United States. He has been a wine writer for over 70 years. After graduating from Stanford University he joined the family business, Balzer’s on Larchmont, a gourmet market in Los Angeles. In 1936, Balzer’s father put him in charge of the wine department. He first began writing about the California wines in the newsletter they sent to their regular customers. Will Rogers Jr. was intrigued by Balzer’s writing and in 1937 asked him to write a wine column for his newspaper, the *Beverly Hills Citizen*. In 1948 he published *California’s Best Wines*, the first of his 11 books. His wine writings included articles published in *Travel Holiday* for over twenty years, a weekly column in the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Robert Lawrence Balzer’s Private Guide to Food and Wine*, which is quite likely the first wine newsletter in America.

2) *André Tchelistcheff* (1901-1994) is considered America’s most influential post-Prohibition winemaker most known for his contributions toward defining the style of California’s best varietals. Born to an aristocratic family in Moscow, Russia, André Tchelistcheff studied enology, fermentation, and microbiology in France. In 1938, he joined Beaulieu Vineyard in Napa Valley as chief winemaker. His impact at BV was profound; he concentrated on defining a style for high-quality California wines, and created the Georges de Latour “Private Reserve” label. By the mid-1940s, “Private Reserve” was widely recognized as the benchmark for California Cabernet Sauvignon. Tchelistcheff also provided significant contributions to the techniques of cold fermentation, aging wine in small oak barrels, vineyard frost prevention, and malolactic fermentation. Endearred by three generations of California winemakers, André Tchelistcheff is affectionately referred to as the “Maestro” in Napa Valley.

3) In 1867, while digging a foundation for a new house in a vineyard near the town of Speyer, Germany, workers unearthed a Roman stone sarcophagus dating back to 325 A.D.; to everyone’s amazement, they found a greenish-yellow glass amphora (a Roman wine bottle) with the wine still preserved inside. About two-thirds of the contents is a thick, hazy mixture, which is most-likely olive oil. The Romans commonly used olive oil to “float” atop the wine to preserve it from oxidation. Cork closures, although known to exist at the time, were uncommon. The olive oil seal preserved the wine from evaporating for 1,862 years.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

GRILLED SEA BASS WITH TROPICAL SALSA

*Pair with Clos LaChance 2005 Chardonnay
Makes 6 servings.*

1 cup pineapple, peeled, cored, 1/4-inch pieces
3/4 cup peeled pitted mango, 1/4-inch pieces
2/3 cup red bell pepper, 1/4-inch pieces
3/4 cup seeded tomato, 1/4-inch pieces
1/2 cup English hothouse cucumber, seeded,
1/4-inch pieces
1/4 cup red onion, 1/4-inch pieces
2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, minced
2 tablespoons fresh mint, minced
2 tablespoons jalapeño chili, seeded, minced
2 tablespoons lime juice, fresh squeezed
6 six-ounce sea bass fillets
Extra Virgin Olive Oil as needed

Combine first 10 ingredients in medium bowl; season with salt. Chill to blend flavors, 1 - 4 hours tossing occasionally. Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Brush fish with oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill until center is opaque, (about 5 minutes per side). Transfer to plates. Top Sea Bass with salsa. Serve with garlic mashed potatoes and sautéed asparagus.

PORK TENDERLOIN WITH POMEGRANATE SAUCE

*Pair with Clos LaChance 2005 Scintillant Meritage.
Makes 4 servings.*

3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
3/4 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
2 pork tenderloins (about 3/4 lb each)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup plain pomegranate juice (POM)
(Substitute unsweetened cranberry juice if necessary.)
3/4 teaspoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon water
1 to 2 teaspoons Sherry vinegar
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Mix cumin, coriander, pepper, cinnamon, and salt together in a shallow bowl. Pat tenderloins dry and dredge in spice mixture until evenly coated. Heat olive oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. Reduce heat to moderate and cook pork until meat is browned on all sides (20 to 25 minutes) and internal temperature reaches 145°F. Transfer pork to a cutting board (reserve skillet), cover with foil and let stand 10 minutes.

While pork stands, pour off and discard fat from skillet, add pomegranate juice to skillet and boil over moderately high heat until reduced to about 2/5 cup (5 minutes); if side of skillet begins to scorch, reduce heat. Stir cornstarch in water, whisk into juice, boil sauce until thickened slightly, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat and add Sherry vinegar to taste, swirl in butter. Pour sauce through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl and skim off fat. Season with salt. Slice pork to desired thickness and drizzle with sauce, serve with pan roasted new potatoes and fresh steamed vegetables. Serve sauce on the side.

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our brand. To do that we must have consistent quality from our estate fruit that is the prerequisite for really great wines. Next, the winery must be multi-generational. Every great winery operation, both in California and in Europe that I am familiar with, is multi-generational and steeped in tradition. That's definitely one of my aims."

Murphy has also brought his high tech expertise with him from Hewlett Packard. He employs

state-of-the-art monitoring devices in the vineyards that feed data into a field computer that measure everything from humidity to wind speed and issues warnings whenever something occurs out of the ordinary. Many modern growers call the use of such systems "sophisticated farming," and consider their usage as nothing out of the ordinary.

"In my former business, there was an adage that you can't manage

what you can't measure. I learned to measure as many variables as I could. Then, I also learned to manage these variables as much as possible. It's much the same in the wine business, only, this time; it's my money that is at risk."

Murphy recently inquired about installing solar panels at the winery and was chagrined when the representative asked him why he wanted to install the panels. It seemed odd to Murphy that the

JUDGE-THE-WINES RESULTS

In this section we publish the cumulative, on-going tallies of the Judge-the-Wines Scorecards 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 Scorecards 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 Scorecard results which are printed in green indicate the wine selections that as of press time are still available for reorder.

2002 Vina Robles Cabernet Sauvignon

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

2001 Vina Robles Syrah

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

2005 Vina Robles Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	7%	4%

2005 Castoro Cabernet Franc

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

2004 Castoro Reserve Tempranillo

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

2004 Castoro Reserve Pinot Blanc

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

2005 Barnwood Sauvignon Blanc

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	89%	7%	4%

2004 Barnwood Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	7%	3%

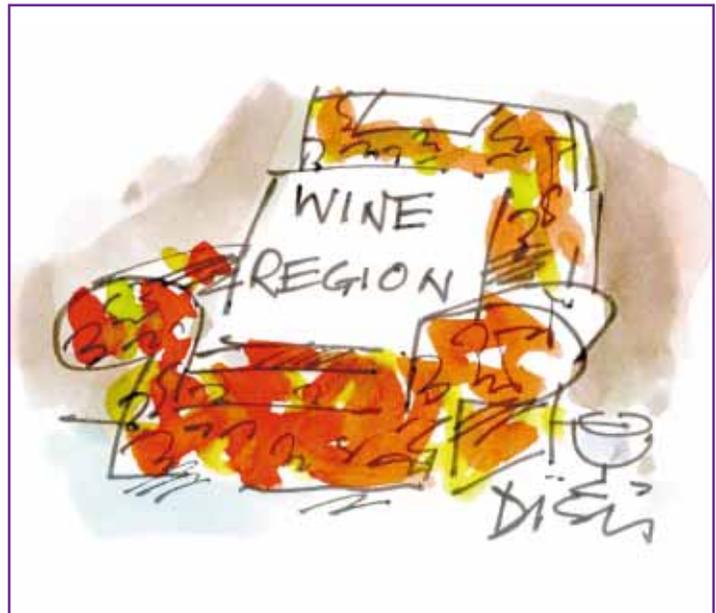
The above wines were recently featured. Due to space limitations, the entire list of available wines is not listed.

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

■ Indicates wine is still available

person selling the panels would wonder about saving money and helping the environment. In many ways, Bill Murphy is a most comfortable man who is firmly established in an uplifting business that is currently reaching its business potential. His family who all work with him in his venture surrounds him.

His three-year-old grandson, A.J., has already shown fondness for wine in very slight dosages. "We have already applied for an early admission for AJ to UC Davis," Murphy smiled. "You know, it is never too early to start."



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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

As a long standing tradition for this publication, this month's *Grapevine* has been dedicated to listing the **Top Ten Wines of the Year!** Normally, the Top Ten wines of the year are decided by the cumulative results of the Judge-the-Wines Scorecards submitted throughout the year, as well as each wine's reorder activity. This year we decided to add another variable to the decision making process by giving you a chance to vote directly for your top favorites on-line. And just by submitting your vote before February 28, you have a chance to **Win a Bonus Mixed Case of wines that were featured in 2006!** Cast your vote online at www.goldmedalwine.com/topten or fax to 1-800-266-8889. The Top Ten Wines of 2006 will be published in an upcoming month's *Grapevine*, along with the announcement of the winner of the bonus case of wine.

Four Exciting Wine Club Series



Members who send in their wine ratings on the provided Scorecards 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 Scorecard per wine per membership)...GMWC

R E O R D E R

Even since the original "backyard vineyard," in the early days of Clos LaChance, their estate wines have quietly won dozens of top awards at competitions and received solid critical acclaim from national wine reviewers. The 2005 Meritage is a Gold Medal Wine Club special pre-release purchase, and the word is already out on the Chardonnay, as it is already sold out at the winery. However, you can purchase more of these terrific wines directly from us at prices substantially below winery-direct.

CLOS LACHANCE WINERY	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members
2005 Chardonnay* Monterey County	Half Case-6 \$90 Full Case-12 \$180	\$69 (\$11.50) Save 23% \$129 (\$10.75) Save 28%	\$65 (\$10.83) Save 28% \$119 (\$9.92) Save 34%
2005 Meritage* Central Coast	Half Case-6 \$114 Full Case-12 \$228	\$88 (\$14.67) Save 23% \$165 (\$13.75) Save 28%	\$82 (\$13.67) Save 28% \$152 (\$12.67) Save 33%

Reorder Hotline: 1-800-266-8888 • www.goldmedalwine.com/member

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

**Availability is very limited*

Note: Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included in the above prices. Call for details.