

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 17 No. 4

Brutocao Cellars Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

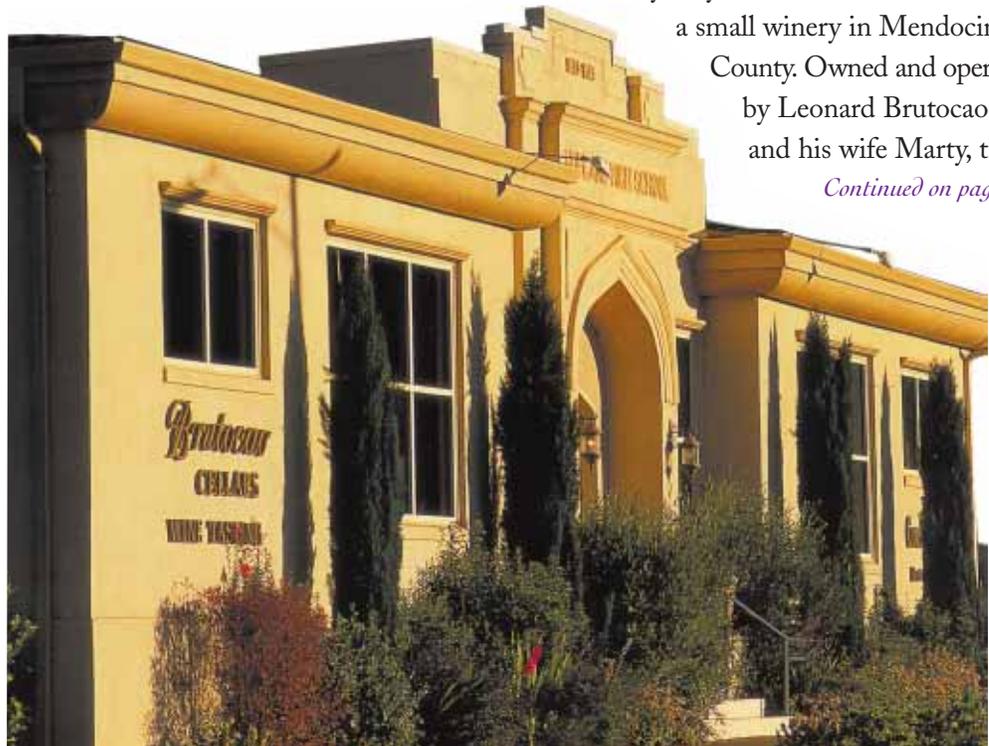
BRUTOCAO FAMILY TRADITION: PRODUCE WINE WITH GOOD FOOD AND GOOD FRIENDS IN MIND

In a small town called Treviso near Venice, Italy, the Lion of St. Mark is prevalent wherever you go. The lion has been a symbolic figure in the cathedral of St. Mark in Venice for generations. So

ingrained in the heritage of Venice and the surrounding area, it has become a symbol for the city of Venice itself.

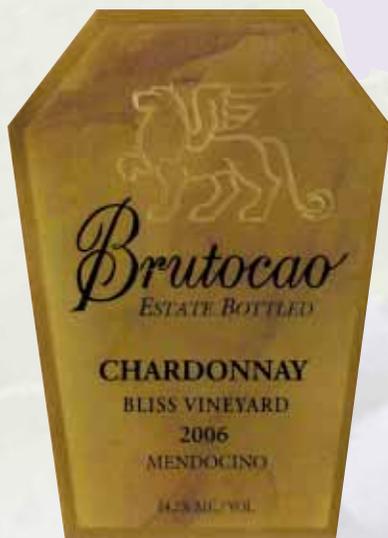
In America that symbol has become synonymous with Brutocao Cellars, a small winery in Mendocino County. Owned and operated by Leonard Brutocao and his wife Marty, the

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Renovating the defunct Hopland High School is one of Brutocao Cellars many contributions to the area. The Schoolhouse Plaza now hosts their tasting room, restaurant, conference center, 6 regulation Bocce ball courts and more.

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.



2006 CHARDONNAY

The Bliss Vineyard Chardonnay is a flagship wine for the Brutocao family. Dating back to the first release in 1991, the Estate Chardonnay has been an award-winning varietal for the winery year after year. The newly released 2006 Chardonnay is classic Bliss Vineyard, golden in color, with a spring bouquet of green apple, ripe honeydew melon, and lemon grass that harmoniously fills the nose. From the very first sip the abundantly fruity wine caresses the palate. Winemaker, Fred Nickel aged the Chardonnay in neutral French oak for six months prior to bottling to introduce an oak element and to create his wine's trademark mouthfeel. The oak adds complexity and depth to the texture; coupled with the succulent fruit from the Bliss Vineyard the result is a perfect Chardonnay to enjoy with food, family and friends. 100% Estate Chardonnay. Enjoy now or until 2010.



2004 QUADRIGA

The 2004 Quadriga, Hopland Ranches, Mendocino Estate red blend is a portrait of aromas and flavors that have resonated throughout the Mediterranean for centuries. This delicious wine is a deep red color with a beautiful violet hue on the rim. A stately wine, in which the fruit forward aromas of plum are met with intense flavors of dark cherry, earth and spice. The first release was bottled solely for the Brutocao family and a few friends, and now, this second vintage is a *Gold Medal Wine Club Exclusive*. With the exception of just a few cases being held back at the winery for the family, the 2004 Quadriga is being distributed to *Gold Series* members only. Pair this with almost any Italian dish, we recommend the Chicken Cacciatore served over penne pasta. Aged in oak for 24 months. Estate Bottled blend. Sangiovese 44%, Primitivo 39%, Dolcetto 13%, Barbera 4%. Enjoy now until 2012.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2006 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal Wine Club Special Selection* — newly released and currently entered into this season's wine competitions. Medals are forthcoming.

LEGACY: The Brutocao family has been growing wine grapes in Mendocino County since the 1940s. Their wonderful Chardonnays have been multiple award-winners since the first release.

Just the facts:

pH.....	3.44
Alcohol.....	13.7%
Total Acid.....	0.65 g/100 mls
Aged in Oak.....	6 Months
Cases Produced.....	1,728
Drink Now or Up to Year.....	2010

2004 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal Wine Club Exclusive!* — Since Gold Medal Wine Club purchased essentially the entire production of this wine, it is not scheduled to be entered into the national wine competitions.

LEGACY: Only 165 cases of the 2003 inaugural release were produced of this superb Italian blend by winemaker Fred Nickel.

Just the facts:

pH.....	3.58
Alcohol.....	13.9%
Total Acid.....	0.64 g/100 mls
Aged in Oak.....	24 Months
Cases Produced.....	1,178
Drink Now or Up to Year.....	2012

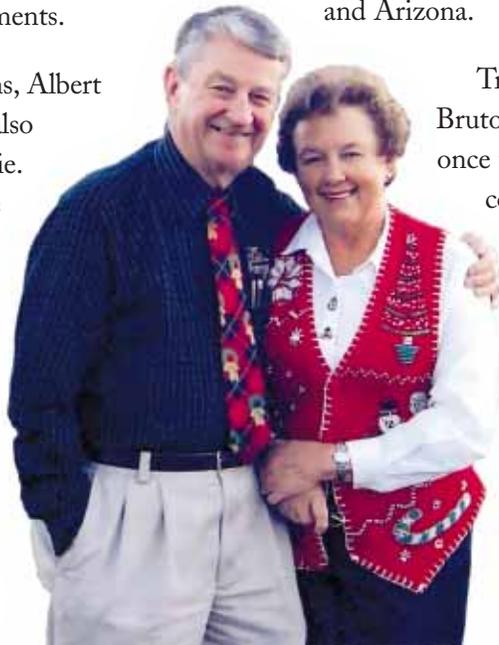
GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Len & Marty Brutocao

Times were tough in Italy at the turn of the century and distant lands were calling all comers with the hopes of new prosperity. In 1910, Leonard and Albert Brutocao's father, Leonard Brutocao Sr., left Italy with his family, at the age of one, to settle in Canada. He and his two brothers, Louie and Angelo, grew up in Ft. Erie, Ontario, across the border from Buffalo, New York.

As adults, the three Brutocao brothers took the opportunities of their new homeland to heart, involving themselves in a myriad of entrepreneurial businesses. They started companies that manufactured everything from grass mats to stove radiators. But at the heart of their enterprises was their construction business that specialized in building houses and apartments.

Leonard's sons, Albert and Leonard Jr., also grew up in Ft. Erie. In 1949 while the two were still teenagers, the entire Brutocao clan emigrated to the U.S. They moved to the town of Covina, in southern California and continued to prosper in the



Winery owners Len & Marty Brutocao are celebrating 50 years together.

construction business. Their entrepreneurial spirit persisted, starting new enterprises such as the first modern bowling alley west of the Mississippi. They also dabbled in real estate and chicken farming!

Meanwhile, son Leonard went to college at U.C. Berkeley to obtain an engineering degree. Out of college he worked for the Federal government for a while, then joined brother Al at an engineering company in Merced. In 1967, the two brothers struck out on their own to form Brutocao Engineering. Their company specialized in heavy construction projects, building bridges and highways throughout California and Arizona.

True to the Brutocao tradition, once the engineering company was established as the backbone of their operations they began a hand full of other ventures one of which included running a pasta store! When the opportunity



Inside Brutocao's Anderson Valley tasting room in Philo, California.

arose to buy back the family vineyard property in Mendocino that Len's father-in-law had sold years earlier, Al and Len jumped at the chance. They both liked the thought of owning a farm and being outdoors; and someday they hoped to build a couple of houses on the land to retire there with their families.

Al decided he would manage the vineyard while Len continued to run the construction and other businesses in southern California. However, his untimely death in 1989 changed everything and accelerated Len's timetable to spend his time at the vineyard.

Len is now busy fulfilling both his and Al's dreams. The winery is making serious inroads as they had both hoped it would someday. Len "retired" in 1994 but still directs the strategic direction of the business. He and his wife, Marty built a house on the Mendocino vineyard property where they now reside.





**WINE
WIZARD**

- 1) True or False? Racking is a technique to store wine barrels.
- 2) What does the *fining* process do for wine?
- 3) Can you name a parent grape varietal of Chardonnay?

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winery's Lion of St. Mark logo is a perpetual embracing of the Brutocao family's Italian heritage that originated in Treviso.

You may not have heard of Brutocao (pronounced *brute' oh coe*) Cellars, even though they've been producing wines since 1980. In the early 1940s Marty Brutocao's father, Irv Bliss, bought the 500-acre property where Brutocao Cellars now sits. It was comprised of 60 acres of grapes and figs back then, but the land was used mostly for raising livestock. Irv soon discovered the area was suited for growing grapes and expanded the property's vineyards. By the 1970s he was harvesting over 100 acres of

mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel.

Irv Bliss retired in 1969 and sold the ranch to Sonoma Vineyards. They in turn planted 100 additional acres of the land to Chardonnay, Petite Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, and added to the existing Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon vines. Five years later ownership of the property returned to the family when Sonoma Vineyards ran into financial trouble and sold it to Irv Bliss's son-in-law Leonard Brutocao and his brother Albert.

The vineyards were not in good shape and the two brothers had never before been involved with grape growing. They recognized the opportunity though, and as with their other entrepreneurial ventures, they were determined to make it work. The basic idea was to nurse the vineyards back to health, sell the majority of the crop to other wineries and make a little bit of wine in the process.

By 1980 the plan was well on its way. The vineyards were back in shape, the grapes were being sold to local area wineries

such as Beringer, Mondavi and Fetzer, and the Brutocaos made several hundred cases of Cabernet Sauvignon to sell under their own label. For the next decade the operational plan remained unchanged until 1989 when Al Brutocao, who managed the day-to-day activities, suddenly passed away.

Brother Len Brutocao, who up until then had been directing the family's other enterprises in southern California, became actively involved in the wine business. Len counted on Tony Stephen, who was the grape grower and vineyard manager, at that time to handle that aspect of the business. He also decided to get serious about being in the winery business. Starting a winery and making a real impact with their wines was something the two brothers had talked about for years and Len was finally going to make it happen.

Brutocao Cellars was off and running with the 1991 harvest. That



The Brutocao "Chapel" area at the winery is a beautiful setting for weddings and non-profit events.

first year, a mix of 1,200 cases was made of Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. The wines hit with immediate critical success. The Wine Spectator rated the 1991 Sauvignon Blanc 90 points, its highest rating of the year. The ensuing years brought steady increases in overall production and more critical success for their wines. Thirty-five hundred cases were made in 1992, 8,000 cases the following year, and 10,000 cases were produced in 1994. "At 15,000 cases or so we would have been at maximum capacity," says Len Brutocao. "So we knew we had to make plans

right then to expand our facilities," he added.

In 1995, Brutocao Cellars finished construction of a larger winery. "Our comfort level will eventually reach 25,000 to 35,000 cases," Len Brutocao reveals. At roughly the same time the new facilities were completed, the Brutocaos purchased an additional 275-acre vineyard on the opposite side of the road from the winery. The property is planted to Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir, so as Brutocao wine production increases,



Grandfather Irv Bliss purchased the Mendocino County property in the mid-1940s.

the additional grapes will secure the luxury of using only the best grapes for their own brand. And in 1999, the winery started development of a vineyard they called Contento, located adjacent to their Bliss Vineyard. The experts are convinced the site's red volcanic soil will eventually yield top-of-the-line, ultra-premium Cabernet Sauvignon.

Continuing their expansion mode, the Brutocaos purchased the

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ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) False. Racking is the term to describe the process used to siphon off the clear juice from the sediment that has fallen to the bottom of the container either naturally or with the help of fining agents. During the winemaking process, racking can occur three or four times before the wine is clear. After racking, some wines are also filtered prior to bottling to remove any remaining miniscule particles.

2) Fining (*FYE-noon*) is a process winemakers may choose to remove microscopic elements such as protein particles that would cloud the wine and phenolic compounds like tannins that could cause bitterness and astringency. The most frequently used fining agents are activated carbon, activated charcoal, egg whites, and gelatin to name a few. When added to wine, fining agents capture suspended particles by absorption or coagulation, causing them to settle to the bottom of the container. Once the particles sink, the wine can be racked, filtered, or centrifuged to separate it from this sediment. In addition to clarifying wines, various fining agents can also be used to remove color from white wines, deodorize wines with an off odor, and reduce acids.

3) Through DNA testing, at U.C. Davis, Davis California, scientists have identified Gouais blanc (*goo-WAY blahn*) as one of the parent varieties of Chardonnay. The Gouais blanc grape is a variety that was once very widely grown in northeastern France. It was considered a mediocre variety and was grown only by the peasants and on the land not considered good enough for the noble Pinot. Gouais blanc is not a French varietal. It is a Central European varietal and may have been brought to France by the Romans. The Roman Emperor Probus was from what is now Croatia and in the 3rd century A.D. he is said to have given the Gauls a gift of a grape from his homeland. This may well have been Gouais blanc. Can you name the other parent grape of Chardonnay? If you guessed Pinot (Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris), you are correct.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

CHICKEN CACCIATORE

*Pair with Brutocao 2004 Quadriga Red
4-6 servings*

- 1 Chicken, cooked, about 3 cups
- 1 large can (28 ounces) crushed or diced Tomatoes
- 1 can (6 ounces) Tomato paste
- 1 cup chopped yellow Onion
- 1 large green Bell Pepper, chopped
- 4 to 8 ounces sliced Mushrooms
- 1/4 cup fresh chopped Parsley
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried leaf Basil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried leaf Oregano
- 1 can Chicken broth
- Hot cooked Spaghetti or Pasta of your choice

Cook chicken in seasoned water or broth until done; drain. When chicken is cool enough to handle, remove chicken meat from bones and cut in pieces. While chicken is cooking, combine tomatoes, tomato paste, onion, bell pepper, mushrooms, and parsley in a large pot. Stir well and add garlic powder, basil, and oregano. Cover and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Add chicken broth as needed to thin sauce. Add cooked chicken and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes longer. Serve chicken cacciatore over spaghetti or pasta with baguette.

TORTELLINI CHICKEN SALAD

*Pair with Brutocao 2006 Bliss Vineyard Chardonnay
4-6 servings*

- 6 half Chicken breasts
- 2 tablespoons Olive Oil
- 2 cloves minced Garlic
- 9 ounces fresh Tortellini Pasta
- 3 stalks of Celery
- 1 chopped purple Onion
- 1 seeded and chopped Bell Pepper
- 1/4 pound smoked Gruyere cheese, cubed
- 1/2 teaspoon Salt

VINAIGRETTE:

- 3/4 cup Cider Vinegar
- 1/4 cup Honey
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 3/4 cup Olive Oil

Place chicken breasts in a large pot and cover with cold water; Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes, or until cooked through. Let chicken cool slightly in liquid. Remove meat from bones and cut into small strips. Heat olive oil in skillet, add garlic and sauté until browned. Remove garlic and set aside. Add chicken and sauté 1 minute. Cook tortellini in large pot according to directions on package. Drain and rinse in cold water. Toss the chicken, garlic, tortellini, celery, onion, peppers, Gruyere, salt and black pepper in a large bowl. Combine vinaigrette ingredients in bowl, blend and pour over salad, toss well. Serve with baguette.



Winemaker Fred Nickel follows time-honored, minimally invasive methods and uses oak as an element to create Brutocao's Chardonnay.

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defunct Hopland High School and turned the property into a fabulous visitor destination center called Schoolhouse Plaza. In the old school building, a huge tasting room was constructed along with an Italian restaurant. Next door the old school gymnasium houses several small retail shops, along with offices, and a conference center. On the grounds, the Brutocao's

completed six regulation Bocce ball courts where official tournaments are held to attract Bocce players from far and wide. The final result is a fabulous, attractive, multi-use complex for both locals and tourists.

To help guide the winery, Len & Marty's son Steve, is the CEO and directs the winery's sales and marketing efforts. The winery's winemaker, 27-year wine industry

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.

2005 Clos LaChance Meritage

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

2005 Mission Trails Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	90%	5%	5%

2002 Vina Robles Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	5%	3%

2005 Vina Robles Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	89%	6%	4%

2005 Clos LaChance Monterey Chardonnay

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

2004 Mission Trails Merlot

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

2001 Vina Robles Syrah

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

2005 Castoro Cabernet Franc

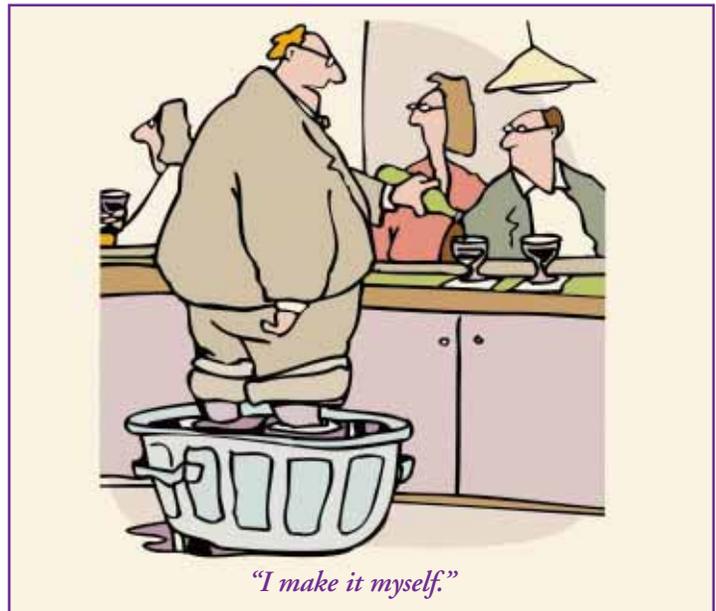
MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	88%	6%	6%

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

veteran, Fred Nickel, arrived in 1997 to handle all aspects of production. David Brutocao works along with Fred in wine production. Len Jr. manages the facilities construction projects and most importantly he is the Manager of Vineyard Operations. Len's daughter-in-law Leslie will soon start handling sales in the Sonoma County area. And even though Len Brutocao claims he's retired now, when we ask who runs the show—he just smiles.



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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

Thank you to everyone who cast their vote for the **Top-Ten-Wines for 2006**. Three white wines and seven reds made the list. The *Gold Series* winning wines for 2006 are as follows; The unoaked *Serenity 2004 Reserve Santa Barbara Chardonnay* came in at number ten just under the *Contrada 2004 Sauvignon Blanc* from Napa Valley. *Castoro Cellars 2004 Tempranillo* and *2005 Cabernet Franc* from Paso Robles earned the seventh and eight spot respectfully. Sixth place is Sonoma County's *Lambert Bridge 2001 Merlot*. The *Arbios 2000 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon* featured in June holds the fifth spot and *Abundance Vineyards 2002 Merlot* produced the fourth position winner. Third place was picked up by *Castoro 2004 Reserve Pinot Blanc*. Second place is also from Paso Robles, the *Vina Robles 2001 Estate Syrah*. We must say, voting a top-rated **92 Point, Double-Gold Medal** winner as the **Top Choice for 2006** shows us that *Gold Series* members have great taste. The number one wine selected for 2006 is the *Vina Robles 2002 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon*. Thanks again for making 2006 a great year!

Michael Gallagher voted for his favorite Top-Ten-Wines online and his name was drawn as the winner of the mixed case of 2006 Top-Ten-Wines.

"Fantastic, that's great! I'll gladly add these wines to my cellar."—*Michael Gallagher, CO.*

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

This month's selection of Brutocao Cellars 2006 Bliss Vineyard Chardonnay and the 2004 Quadriga are superb examples of fruit forward, refined wines from Mendocino County. Brutocao Chardonnays have earned many top awards since the first release in 1991. The Quadriga is a carefully blended wine of Italy's finest varietals that was produced initially for the Brutocao family and friends. Here is a unique opportunity to sample and purchase more of these wonderful hard-to-find selections.

BRUTOCAO CELLARS	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members
2006 Chardonnay* Mendocino County	Half Case-6 \$96 Full Case-12 \$192	\$69 (\$11.50) Save 28% \$129 (\$10.75) Save 33%	\$64 (\$10.67) Save 33% \$119 (\$9.92) Save 38%
2004 Quadriga Red* Mendocino County	Half Case-6 \$144 Full Case-12 \$288	\$96 (\$16.00) Save 33% \$179 (\$14.92) Save 38%	\$89 (\$14.83) Save 38% \$165 (\$13.75) Save 43%

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.