

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 17 No. 6

White Oak Vineyards & Winery Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

ESTATE OWNED VINEYARDS IN NAPA AND SONOMA ENSURE TOP-QUALITY FRUIT FOR WHITE OAK WINES.

Anyone who spent any amount of time during the late 1980s or early 90s around the town of Healdsburg in Sonoma County was certainly aware of the upscale presence of White Oak Winery. From a rather unassuming tasting room located adjacent to the old Clos du Bois winery, White Oak successfully established itself as one of Sonoma's principal wineries with a minimum of marketing dollars and with

even less observable fanfare. The word on the street was that White Oak's wines sold themselves and that the quality in the bottle was undeniable.

A little more than a decade after its establishment in 1981, White Oak's 1990 Chardonnay won the Sweepstakes (best individual wine out of 654 entries) at the

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The newly completed Mediterranean-style tasting room is a testament to winery owner Bill Meyer's dedication and his craft.

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 2,000 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



2006 SAUVIGNON BLANC

A Gold Medal Wine Club Special Selection! This newly released 2006 White Oak Sauvignon Blanc is entered into major competitions and will follow in the multi-award winning footsteps of White Oaks prior vintages. A pastel, mustard yellow in color that glistens in the glass. The fruit forward bouquet is crisp and clean, presenting an abundant aroma of tree ripened yellow Texas grapefruit, lechee nut, lime and lemon citrus in the nose. This very refreshing Sauvignon Blanc explodes on the palate at the first sip. The creamy tropical flavors abound in the mouth with a hint of mineral leading to a crisp citrusy and brilliant finish. The rich, clean texture works very well with poached or grilled Salmon, steamed Oysters, or Alaskan King Crab legs. 100% Russian River Sauvignon Blanc. Enjoy now until 2008.



2003 MERLOT

The White Oak 2003 Napa Valley Merlot earned an amazing **92 Points**, and was honored as one of the **Year's Best Merlot in 2006**, by *Wine & Spirits* magazine—“There’s a sophisticated wine here, even if it’s intensely reduced when first poured. That funky reduction blows off and the wine shifts rapidly and dramatically toward mineral tannins and bold, succulent fruit. The graphite feel of the tannin and dense, slightly floral, black fruit make this a wine for slowly-smoked beef ribs.” Winemaker Bill Parker’s notes suggest “Dark, rich and chocolaty, with layers of mouth-coating mocha, currant, blackberry and coffee grounds, revealing extra dimensions of depth and complexity. Sharply focused, long and intense, with well-integrated tannins.” Pair with Onion-braised Short Ribs with Walnut mashed Potatoes. Aged 15 months in oak. 84% Merlot, 16% Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy now until 2010.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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

LEGACY: Since 1990, Sauvignon Blanc, a Flagship varietal for White Oak Vineyards, has been awarded multiple Medals and is a two time Sweepstakes Award winner.

Just the facts:

pH.....	3.31
Alcohol	14.2%
Total Acid	0.67 g/100 mls
Cases Produced	5,838
Drink Now or Up to Year.....	2008

2003 VINTAGE: **92 Points, Year’s Best Merlot**, *Wine & Spirits* magazine. Voted as one of the top 12 Merlots out of 269 American Merlots tasted in 2006.

LEGACY: A dark purple wine that stains the glass. Every vintage retains the density of the extract and the intensity of the fruit from White Oak’s small estate vineyard in Napa Valley.

Just the facts:

pH.....	3.75
Alcohol	14.1%
Total Acid	0.58 g/100 mls
Aged in Oak	15 Months
Cases Produced	2,750
Drink Now or Up to Year.....	2010

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Bill Myers

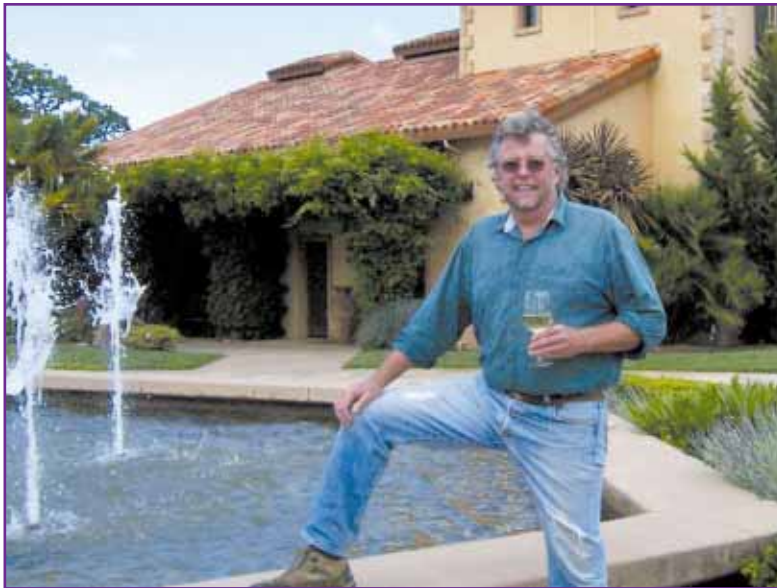
Many stories have been written about the varied backgrounds and former occupations of many of today's premier wine industry personalities. White Oak Vineyards and Winery owner Bill Myers lists building contractor and salmon fisherman as his former professions, and it is, the latter that provides him with his most direct correlation to the wine industry.

The Los Angeles-born, San Jose State-educated Myers actually hitchhiked to Alaska in his youth without viable resources, following the footsteps of his grandfather who had made the trek back in 1898. Bill Myers was following his family's stories and began the task of establishing a business for himself in the salmon fishing industry. This occupied the greater part of the 1970s and extended into the middle of the next decade.

During the latter part of this period, Myers became a part-time resident of Healdsburg in Sonoma County and regularly traded some of his prize catch for bottles of wine from his favorite wineries. He became closely enamored with the

area and after a while was sufficiently charmed with the wine bug to be convinced that his immediate future lay within the boundaries of the wine industry and Sonoma County.

Encouraged by his close friends and supporters, Myers began the task of establishing a winery



Bill Myers – Owner/Winemaker, fisherman, and builder.

operation that would fit his needs. He was extremely fortunate to attract Mary Ann Graf, one of the pioneer female winemakers in the industry who had recently left Simi Winery (with great accolades), into becoming his winery consultant.

Myers immediately sold his salmon fishing boat and invested in his first Alexander Valley vineyards. Since money was certainly a significant factor, White Oak's initial wines were produced in a rented garage

that was outfitted to become a small lab and winery.


White Oak Winery started small and can arguably be called a moderate sized winery in today's competitive wine industry.

White Oak and Bill Myers's style is pure Burgundian, and according to the personable Myers, seems to be getting more so with each succeeding vintage. He points to the fact that he and present winemaker Bill Parker, Bill was winemaker at Matanzas Creek for 15 years before coming to White Oak, are producing a sur-lies Chardonnay that carries with it a reserve status.

Myers has turned over the winemaking duties to Parker but admits that he still has a great deal to say about White Oak's final blends. Bill Myers seems a happy, fulfilled man that is extremely proud of his winery's staff and their cumulative accomplishments.

His tasting room is one of his proudest endeavors, and he feels his in-house staff's efforts make other things happen for White Oak. The winery enjoys a fiercely loyal

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WINE WIZARD

- 1) How is a LOT # used in wine production?
- 2) How many bottles of wine are produced from a ton of grapes?
- 3) What was Charles Wetmore's contribution to California's wine industry?

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Sonoma Harvest Fair and the still smallish winery (production was around 10- 12 thousand cases at that time) was no longer an insider's secret to the area residents around Healdsburg. Most recently, the 2004 Russian River Sauvignon Blanc won



Bottling the 2006 Sauvignon Blanc.

the Sweepstakes Award again in 2006 and the wine sold out in one day. Since the Sonoma Harvest Fair is considered by Sonoma inhabitants to be the single most important competition held in California (or anywhere else for that matter), White Oak Winery was suddenly thrust into virtually every local conversation and the winery's entire production that amounted to over \$300,000 in sales was immediately sold out within the next thirty days.

Even with such fanfare, it took White Oak's laid back owner Bill Myers over five years to affect a change in White Oak's basic setup. Myers gathered together a small group of his friends and some outside investors and together successfully obtained a beautiful piece of Alexander Valley property that contained some sixteen acres of old vine Zinfandel that had been planted sometime during the 1920s. This unique merger with a grower-oriented base of investors, provided the setting for White Oak's new winery and tasting room, a splendid Mediterranean-inspired villa that Bill Myers designed and built almost by hand. The entire project took Myers nearly five years to complete, and the new winery enabled White Oak to increase its production to its present 22,000 case level, a mark that Myers feels he will hold for some time to come.

"Even though I have been in the business for over 25 years,"



A variety of magnificent metal sculptures can be seen around the winery.

Myers reflects, "I have taken White Oak's growth very slowly and have been able to control our quality."

He is also exceedingly proud of his comfortable and attractive tasting room, where he proudly states, "We sell more wine here than we do in the entire rest of California."

Another key to White Oak's success is the 325-acre ranch in Sonoma's Russian River Region that is planted entirely in Chardonnay and that produces unusually high-caliber fruit that insures White Oak a leg up on other wineries. White Oak also owns an additional 420 acres in Napa Valley that is planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petite Verdot, Malbec and Syrah. White Oak owns the property in partnership with a San Rafael company called Burdell Properties who in turn has some 200 individual investors involved in the ownership of their combined vineyard land. This appealing alliance gives White Oak a better than normal retail sales base for its wines and also offers to each investor a carrot in the form of a

small discount on White Oak wines.

“When all is said and done,” Myers adds, “it is absolutely necessary that the winery make money. We figure to do well even in a down economy. We sell a lot of our grapes (Alexander Valley neighbor Jordan Winery is White Oak’s largest customer) but we must always insure that White Oak’s bottom line is favorable.”

In 2002, White Oak focused its marketing attention to the Eastern Seaboard and attempted to break into the attractive Boston and New

York markets, today, White Oak is in 36 states as well as being in Japan, Canada, Germany and Austria.

Bill Myers feels that this accomplishment is due to the fact



The grapes for White Oak Merlot come from their Napa Valley Vineyard.

that White Oak’s wines are perceived as exceptional values in the national and international marketplace. What’s more, he realized that increasing his winery’s capacity makes it that much more attractive to national distributors, most of who possess huge portfolios.

Gold Medal also considers White Oak’s wines a terrific value and is delighted to introduce them to you as this month’s *Gold Series* selections. We know they will bring you a great deal of enjoyment. 🍷

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) In wine production a Lot # (number) is used in several different ways, it is basically a tracking or identification method for the winemaker. Most commonly Lot #'s are assigned by the winemaker to differentiate wines of the same type from the same vintage that were bottled at different times. Lot #'s are also used by some wineries to identify the wine when it is a blend of two or more different vintages or if the wine was produced from different growing regions. A small amount of wineries use the Lot # to indicate the same wine was aged in different kinds of barrels. Lot #'s have no legal definition and as a result means as little or as much as the winery wishes it to mean.

2) One acre of mature vines in a high yield vineyard will produce up to 10 tons of grapes that are generally used in the production of less expensive wines, compared to a one acre in a low-yield vineyard that produces 2-4 tons of fruit for ultra-premium wines. One ton of grapes will produce approximately 2 1/3 barrels of juice. A 750ml bottle of wine is 1/5th of a gallon and a single 60 gallon barrel will hold 25 cases or 300 750ml bottles of wine, therefore one ton of grapes will produce about 700 bottles of wine.



3.) It is believed that Charles Wetmore, founder of Cresta Blanca winery, brought the first cuttings of Sauvignon Blanc to California in the 1880s. Some of the original vine stock came from the vineyards of the legendary Sauternes Chateau Y'Quem which still produces the world's most expensive and famous dessert wine. These plantings did well in the Livermore Valley, just north of San Francisco and Sauvignon Blanc became one of the early favorite dry whites from California. Eventually, Sauvignon Blanc became a varietal with an alias in California, where it is now often known and labeled as "Fumé Blanc". The history of Sauvignon Blanc shows that this wine variety originated in the Gironde area of southwest of France during the seventeenth century where it may have been called Petit Sauvignon or Jaune. In western and central France, the varietal is known as Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

AVOCADO AND MANGO SALAD

Pair with 2006 White Oak Sauvignon Blanc
Serves 4

3 tablespoons Passion Fruit Juice, frozen concentrate, thawed
3 tablespoons Shallots, minced
4 teaspoons Sherry Wine Vinegar
1 teaspoon Dijon Mustard
1 teaspoon whole Coriander Seeds, coarsely cracked
3 tablespoons Olive Oil
8 cups Herb Salad Lettuce mix (about 4 ounces)
1 large ripe Mango, halved, pitted, peeled, sliced
2 small Avocados, halved, pitted, peeled, sliced

Whisk first 5 ingredients in small bowl to blend; gradually whisk in oil. Season dressing generously with salt and pepper. Toss salad lettuce mix in large bowl with 1/4 cup dressing. Divide salad among 4 plates. Tuck mango and avocado into salad; drizzle some of remaining dressing over mango and avocado.

GARLIC PEPPER STEAK WITH ROOT VEGETABLES

Pair with 2005 White Oak Napa Valley Merlot
Serves 4

1/4 cup Butter
1 tablespoon Garlic, fresh finely chopped
1 teaspoon Black Pepper, whole, coarsely ground
1/2 teaspoon Salt or to taste
4 medium Carrots, sliced 1/4 -inch
1 medium Leek, sliced 1/4 - inch
1 medium Turnip, cut into thin wedges
1 pound Beef Sirloin Steak, cut into 4 pieces

Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in 10-inch skillet until sizzling; stir in garlic, pepper and salt. Add carrots, leek and turnip. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are crisply tender and caramelized (8 - 10 minutes).

Remove vegetables from pan. Add remaining butter and sirloin pieces. Cook meat, turning once, approximately 5 minutes per side. Add vegetables; continue cooking until meat reaches desired doneness (2-4 minutes). Enjoy a glass of Merlot or two while cooking.



Winemaker Bill Parker samples the Merlot ...weekly!

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customer base and Myers feels this base has been built very patiently, by offering value-oriented wines in a productive environment staffed by really knowledgeable personnel.

He smiles and adds, "When we started in Healdsburg, there wasn't any money for marketing or anything. It was simply word of mouth and most of our customers were from the local area. I realized that if I could make wines that impressed these people who had a whole assortment of wines and wineries to choose from, I might just be able to make it. Over the years I have made some incredible

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.

2006 Brutocao Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	92%	5%	3%

2006 Summerland Sauvignon Blanc

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

2005 Mission Trails Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	88%	7%	5%

Voted #1 Top Wine for 2006 2002 Vina Robles Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	6%	3%

2005 Brutocao Quadriga Red

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	95%	3%	2%

2005 Summerland Syrah

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	7%	2%

2005 Mission Trails Merlot

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

Voted #2 Top Wine for 2006 2001 Vina Robles Syrah

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

friends and they have enjoyed some remarkable wines.”

Such candor is refreshing in a wine industry that has steadily eroded into mega wineries with mega marketing budgets and accompanying marketing techniques. Bill Myers and White Oak continue to be basically the same entities that started in business over twenty five years ago. Sonoma insiders and winery friends are betting the situation at White Oak won't change much for the next twenty years. 🍷



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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

Summer is here, and it's time to bring out the barbeque and invite family and friends over for great food and fine wine. When having a backyard barbeque, offer a few different whites and a few red varietals to your guests so they can mix and match the wines to your entrees to suit their preferences and palette. There are no rules when it comes to pairing wines with grilled foods, just generalities. Sauvignon Blanc has a herbaceous quality that supports marinades and sauces with similar attributes. Pairing a grilled chicken that has been covered in Italian dressing or a citrus marinade will be unbeatable with a Sauvignon Blanc. Likewise, roasted peppers, veggies in fresh herbs, grilled fish with dill and lemon will all be highlighted in tandem with a glass or two of Sauvignon Blanc. Merlot will pair well with spicy barbeque sauces, steak sauce, mild salsas, grilled pork chops, chicken and garden-variety salads with lighter dressings. It's time to stock up on 1/2 or full cases of *Gold Series* wines for those warm summer evenings and great get-togethers. Save 20% to 40% off winery direct prices on case reorders just by visiting www.goldmedalwine.com/reorder or calling us at 1-800-266-8888.

Are you receiving our email advance notifications?

Throughout the year (but not too often!) we send out emails to pre-announce wine sales, promotions, giveaways, trips and other special offers that we dream up. Get the scoop before the rest of the world knows! (we do not share your email address with *anyone!*)

To have your email address verified or added to our Specials Email List, send an email to orders@goldmedalwine.com with your *name, address and phone number* in the body copy of the email or simply call 1-800-266-8888 and we'll do it for you.

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

Gold Series members are in for a real treat this month! White Oak's delicious 2006 Sauvignon Blanc and show-stopping 2003 Napa Valley Merlot will impress wine connoisseurs and novices alike. For more than twenty-five years White Oak has produced outstanding wines. These two shining examples will show you why the winery has earned numerous awards and distinctions along the way. We urge you to take advantage of the huge savings below before these selections disappear.

WHITE OAK VINEYARDS & WINERY	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members
2006 Sauvignon Blanc* Russian River Valley	Half Case-6 \$90 Full Case-12 \$180	\$69 (\$11.50) Save 23% \$129 (\$10.75) Save 28%	\$64 (\$10.67) Save 29% \$119 (\$9.92) Save 34%
2003 Merlot* Napa Valley	Half Case-6 \$144 Full Case-12 \$288	\$102 (\$17.00) Save 29% \$189 (\$15.75) Save 34%	\$92 (\$15.33) Save 36% \$169 (\$14.08) Save 41%

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.