

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 17 No. 8

KitFox Vineyards Edition

In This Issue

KITFOX VINEYARDS
Page 1

THIS MONTH'S WINES
Page 2

SPOTLIGHT PROFILES
Page 5

WINE WIZARD
Page 4

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Page 6

JUDGE-THE-WINES
Page 7

REORDERS
Page 8



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

www.goldmedalwine.com

KitFox VINEYARDS CONSIDERED THE PIONEER OF THE SOLADO CREEK APPELLATION

While not particularly known for growing grapes, Stanislaus County in the lower San Joaquin Valley of Northern California is the home of a family winery operation that strives to make its location viable and its wines considered on par with other quality appellations in the northern part of the State.

The entity is called KitFox Vineyards, named after the San Joaquin Kit Fox an endangered species that has populated the area for the past three centuries. KitFox is the ambitious project of the Vogel Family, and more particularly the handiwork of 33-year old Hunter Vogel and his wife

Continued on page 4



Carson, Laura, and Hunter Vogel take great pride in the culmination of four generations of farming in Stanislaus County, and in the wines of KitFox.

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.



2005 FOXY WHITE

The 2005 Foxy White is a combination of seven unique grape varietals, meticulously proportioned to produce this delicious white wine. Hand-picking the fruit in the early morning and storing the wine cold in stainless steel tanks contributes to preserving the wonderful fruit characteristics. The 2005 Foxy White is light pastel yellow in color. Scents of a summer harvest elude from the glass, the bountiful bouquet leads to the abundantly rich fruity flavor. Winemaker Chad Joseph writes “This elegant wine delivers bright notes of peach, pear, and pineapple with juicy honeysuckle finish. Ripe fruit flavors and a crisp acidity give this wine its structured balance and long fruit finish.” The 2005 Foxy White is a blend of 62.3% Chenin Blanc, 12% Sauvignon Blanc, 6.7% Verdelho, 5.3% Orange Muscat, 4.9% Riesling, 4.2% Gewürztraminer, 4% Viognier, and 0.4% of mixed white grapes. This is a easy sipping, dry fruit forward wine that pairs well with summer salads, scallops and shrimp. Serve chilled and enjoy now until 2009.



2003 FOXY RED

The 2003 Foxy Estate Red Blend with its exquisite bouquet and jam packed flavors garnered a **Gold Medal** and was bestowed **Best of Class** at the *Los Angeles County Fair International Wine Competition*. The wine showed extremely well at the *Tasters Guild International Wine Festival* receiving a **Silver Medal**. At the *Hilton Head SpringFest Wine Competition* this foxy wine won an additional **Silver Medal**. The 2003 Foxy Red is garnet in color with a ruby red rim. The bountiful bouquet of homemade cherry pie with accents of dried cranberry and vanilla fill the glass. On the palate the vibrant flavors of fresh raspberry and silky blueberries balance out the velvety oak and tannins. The long and lingering finish is no surprise. Pairs exceptionally well with Chef Bruce Biron's Grilled Mediterranean Beef Skewers. Aged 12 months in oak. 75.2 % Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, 23.9% Estate Syrah. Enjoy now until 2010.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2005 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal Wine Club Special Selection!*

Recently released and entered in numerous wine competitions, awards to follow forthwith.

LEGACY: Award-winning proprietary blends skillfully crafted combining varietals from the Clarksburg and Solado Creek appellations. Each vintage blend varies from year to year.

Just the facts:

pH.....	3.35
Alcohol	12.5%
Total Acid	0.60 g/100 mls
Cases Produced	3,750
Drink Now or Up to Year.....	2009

2003 VINTAGE: **Gold Medal / Best of Class** — *Los Angeles County Fair International Wine Competition*,

Silver Medal — *Tasters Guild International Wine Festival*,

Silver Medal — *Hilton Head SpringFest Wine Competition*

LEGACY: Every vintage of the estate Foxy Red has won multiple awards. Each vintage portrays the terrior of Solado Creek Appellation and each blend varies from year to year.

Just the facts:

pH.....	3.69
Alcohol	13.5%
Total Acid	0.63 g/100 mls
Aged in Oak	12 Months
Cases Produced	4,965
Drink Now or Up to Year.....	2010

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Hunter Vogel

Hunter Vogel was a 15-year-old high school exchange student living with a family in Paris when he first began to appreciate wine. Since each meal he enjoyed included a watered version of the real thing served as a beverage, Vogel correctly figured the French must be on to something good.

“Over there,” he recently explained, “people treat wine as an every meal substance. The younger people are taught to appreciate wine early and it stays with them for their entire lives.”

Upon returning home, Hunter took new interest in his parents’ wine at mealtime, but had to wait until the age of 21 to enjoy wine on his own. Upon graduation from Dallas’s Southern Methodist University where he majored in history, Vogel felt the call of his family’s business that at the time consisted of almond and walnut groves. All the time, the lure of the wine business was deeply rooted in his heart.

“I looked around and saw a number of the small nut growers having a hard time and some were even going out of business,” he reflected. “Since I am an only child I felt it was my responsibility to keep our family business intact. It was very fortunate that when I married Laura, her family also happened to be in the growing business. When

I formalized my idea for KitFox Vineyards, I took my concept to them and when it was all said and done everyone enthusiastically supported my proposal.”

It helped greatly that the aforementioned wine business connoted a certain lifestyle and was also considered by Hunter Vogel to be a ‘passionate’ business or more precisely a business he could develop a real passion for. It was also a challenge to him that the area around his farm was, for the most part, an untested grape growing area with regard to premium grapes.

“I felt this area around our little town of Patterson was truly a field of dreams,” he admitted. “I am truly fortunate to even have the opportunity to do what I’m doing. I have also learned to love the people in the wine business. It’s nothing for me to call someone and ask for help or advice. Everyone gives such help willingly, even if they are your competitors. I don’t believe there are many businesses where this happens as a matter of course.”

Hunter Vogel also has some creative plans for KitFox Vineyards. He envisions a reserve selection

addition in the future that will vary somewhat from year to year. Vogel says that only the best single wine of each vintage will be taken and made into a reserve selection and the profits from this particular reserve level wine will be turned over to one of the associations that attempt to protect the animals on the endangered list.

“There is a Kit Fox Habitat Association that we are very close to because of our winery’s obvious namesake and also another one that protects the Yellow-Billed Cuckoo,” he added. “The reserve labels would reflect the particular animal and each year would be different. The very idea presents us with a number of major challenges.”

It all seems quite normal to Hunter Vogel who strives to propel his small area into a formidable food and wine destination. “There are so many small cottage industry type products being made around this area,” he pointed out, “and some of them are really world class. Few consumers really associate Stanislaus County with these types of products. I knew it would be good for everyone to try and market them collectively and so far it’s been a lot of fun. I needed to work with something I felt a real



Hunter Vogel

Continued on page 7



WINE WIZARD

- 1) Who is responsible for introducing the 100 point wine rating scale?
- 2) Does the 100-point wine exist?
3. What wine did Robert Parker award 100-Plus points?

Continued from page 1

Laura. Hunter Vogel's father Fred, 60, along with his mother Jill, are also minority owners of KitFox.

It all started several generations ago when Hunter and Laura's families each became serious farming families. Their endeavors produced mainly tomatoes and varied row crops as well as nearly a thousand acres of both almonds and walnuts.

Sometime in mid 1998 a decision was made to change direction and invest in the planting of some



Hand-picking Estate Cabernet for the Foxy Red.

44 acres with grapes. The decision came after a period of due diligence that also involved the University of California Davis's soil analysis experts who visited the Vogel's property and pronounced it perfectly capable of producing as high a caliber of grapes as anyone else in the area.

Actual planting took place in 2000 and the winery's first release came the following year. A total of 10,000 cases of KitFox's first release were produced, a rather optimistic figure given the already downward spiral facing the wine industry at the time.

"We went into KitFox with our eyes wide open," explained Hunter Vogel, "and I must say we learned our lesson the hard way. The problem was simply there was no real market for our wines and we were sitting there with that entire inventory. I spent the entire next year doing something about and reducing our inventory to a controllable level."

At the same time Hunter also set about the task of having his immediate area made into a specific



The San Joaquin Valley's Kit Fox is an endangered species.

appellation. The area is known as the Solado Creek region and was granted its own prowess in 2004. The Solado Creek Appellation consists of only three thousand acres and KitFox has the only vineyard in the appellation. The appellation is mostly comprised of marvelous deep draining, loamy soils that are particular to the foothills and its environs. Vogel and his family are betting that these excellent conditions (hot days and cool nights) along with the choice gravelly top soils will produce excellent fruit and subsequently premium quality wines.

One stumbling block is the area's ongoing approach to grape growing that emphasizes quantity over quality. It is not unusual for area growers to deliver up to twelve tons per acre from their vines and Hunter Vogel sees this as a negative in his efforts to secure respectability for the fledgling Solado Creek appellation.

KitFox's own production is strictly limited to between four and six tons per acre from their 44 acres of vineyards, which is in line with the better growers throughout Northern California.

"It's nice that we have been able to garner so many awards for our

wines,” Vogel added. “Many of our neighbors who are growers have begun to sit up and take notice. In order to produce really good wines, wines with real character, it is necessary that our area utilize better viticulture practices. Our medals point out the validity of the Solado Creek area, and that is good news for everyone.”

KitFox has great plans for a new winery and tasting room facility that will be completed sometime in 2009, with increased

production facilities within five years. In the meantime, KitFox



The Diablo Coastal Mountains embrace KitFox's Sunflower Vineyard.

Vineyards has surrounded itself with a number of local artisans that

produce a variety of gourmet style items, from Olive Oil, upscale caviar, cheeses and even “Estate-Grown” varietal honey. This attempt at grass roots marketing is a boom to the local area and elevates KitFox Vineyards to its rightful place as a leader in the movement to establish the area around tiny Patterson, California as a food and wine destination. However much time it takes, KitFox is definitely in it for the long run. The quality of wine that is currently being put into the bottle insures that run will be of very long duration. 🍷

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) Most novice, enthusiast, and wine aficionados are familiar with the standard 100-point scale used today to rate the quality of a wine. The 100-point scale is common place in national wine publications and is utilized at numerous wine competitions across the country. The 100-point scale was developed and first implemented by one of the most internationally recognized and respected wine advocates, Robert Parker. As a fledging wine critic/writer in the early 1980s, Robert Parker decided to attach a score to every wine he tasted, judged, and reviewed. He based his scoring system on the grading scale from his earlier days in school. It was commonly known that 70 points or better on a test was a passing grade, 80 to 89 was a good to above average, and 90-plus was “A” quality. Initially, most wine writers and publications scorned Parker for trivializing wine, although, within two years they were all using Robert Parker’s 100-point scale. The *Wine Advocate*, *Wine Spectator*, *Wine Enthusiast*, and *Wine & Spirits* are among the highly respected wine publications that publish ratings based on the Robert Parker’s 100 point scale.

2) Many of us have experienced the “100-point wine” at a party or an evening gathering with friends and family, but to Judges and Wine Critics, the 100-point wine is extremely rare. Only a few wines have ever been rated a perfect 100. The general guidelines most critics agree on are: Scores of 95-99 represent a truly great wine, the best of the best and a wine destined for legendary status. Wines scoring 91 to 94-points are highly recommended wines that definitely should be tried and are cellar worthy. The score of 90-points denotes a good wine or an “A minus” in Robert Parker’s book. In *Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate*, wines over 80 are very good, over 90 are excellent and 95 points and above are outstanding! Not everyone agrees with all of Parker’s ratings, but if your tastes merge with his, anything over an 85 will make you happy.

3.) Robert Parker in the *Wine Advocate* awarded “100-plus” points to the 2003 Domaine du Pegau Cuvee da Capo Chateaneuf-du-Pape. Over the years Robert Parker has awarded only 17 California wines the perfect score of 100 points. Stephen Tanzer on the other hand, has never given 100 points to a current release.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

KitFox recipes are contributed by Chef Bruce Biron, www.chefbiron.com, as well as George Edwards, owner of the Monterey Wine Market (www.montereywinemarket.com). Bruce Biron has cooked for the likes of the Dalai Lama, Hillary Clinton, Yasser Arafat, Aerosmith's Steven Tyler, and several members of the Kennedy family, to name a few. He has also cooked with Julia Child, Jacques Pépin, and the U.S. Culinary Olympic Chefs.

HONEY-LIME SCALLOPS AND SHRIMP WITH SPELT GRAINS

An Incredibly delicious seafood pan seared right on a hot grill. The spelt grain is flavored with smoked almonds and currants.

Pair with the 2005 Foxy White.

Serves 4

- 8 Ounces Spelt grain
- 4 Cups broth, flavored with Anise seeds, salt and pepper
- 2 Ounces Currants, dried 2 ounces smoked almonds
- 1 Large Red Onions, sliced 1/2" thick
- 2 Tablespoons Balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons Lime zest
- 2 Tablespoons Foxy White wine
- 2 Tablespoons Honey
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon Pepper
- 8 Large Sea Scallops, cleaned
- 8 Jumbo Shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 Green Onion, chopped fine
- 1 Tablespoon Cilantro, chopped fine.

Rinse spelt grains clean. Simmer 4 cups of water with anise seeds, salt and pepper. Add grain, cover and remain cooking on low heat for one hour. At the end of one hour, pour off any excess liquid, add the almonds and currants. Remain covered until dinner is served. Rinse the shellfish, season with salt and pepper, then place in a shallow bowl. Combine the zest, wine, green onion, cilantro and honey, whisk until incorporated. Pour over the shellfish. Allow to marinate for 30 minutes. Pour the balsamic vinegar over sliced red onions. Lightly salt and pepper, reserve.

Preheat the grill. Place a cast iron skillet on hot surface to preheat the skillet. Add red onion slices onto one side of hot grill. Turn every couple minutes until browned. After the grains are cooked, add oil to the hot skillet. Place scallops slightly apart from each other into skillet. Do not move them for 2 minutes. This will allow the scallop to sear properly and yield a nice caramelized color. Slightly lift one scallop to check for color, then flip over to other side and repeat the process for 2 or 5 minutes. Remove from skillet. Now add the shrimp and allow to cook for one minute on each side. When done, remove from skillet right away. Pour any remaining marinade in skillet and allow to simmer for added flavor. Place a spoon of spelt grain in center of each plate. Top with scallop and shrimp. Top with grilled onions. Spoon any remaining juices from skillet over seafood. Serve and experience the WOW factor. Incredibly healthy.

GRILLED MEDITERRANEAN BEEF SKEWERS

Pair with the 2005 Foxy Red.

Serves 6

Marinade of herbs and wine:

- 2 Teaspoons Sage, finely chopped
- 2 Teaspoons Thyme, finely chopped
- 2 Teaspoons Peppercorns, ground
- 1 Tablespoons Salt, kosher
- 1 Tablespoon Garlic, finely chopped
- 1 Teaspoon Rosemary, finely chopped
- 1 Teaspoon Basil, finely chopped
- 5 Tablespoons Olive Oil, extra virgin
- 1 Tablespoons Lemon peel
- 1 Tablespoons Honey
- 5 Tablespoons Foxy Red wine

1-1/2 pounds beef skirt steak, sliced fairly thin strips for skewers

- 2 Heads Bibb lettuce, washed and patted dry
- 2 Cups Tomatoes, chopped
- 1 Cucumber per serving, seedless, peeled and chopped
- 1 Cup plain Yogurt, for dressing

Combine all herbs, garlic, lemon peel, olive oil, honey and wine. Place beef in zip-lock bag or storage container and pour marinade over beef. Marinade for 2 hours or overnight. (be sure to soak the wooden skewers in water for same amount of time). Once marinated, weave a slice of beef onto each skewer. On a preheated grill, place the skewered beef side by side, and close the lid. Cook for 2 minutes on one side, then turn over and cook for 2 additional minutes. Baste with any remaining marinade while grilling meat on second side. Remove when done. For each serving, remove the meat from skewer and place onto the center of a lettuce leaf. Add chopped tomatoes, chopped cucumber and yogurt. Fold outer sides of leaves into center- surrounding the beef filling and enjoy. If desired, prepare a Cilantro flavored Rice to serve on the side.

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 White Oak Sauvignon Blanc

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

2005 White Oak Merlot

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

2006 San Simeon Pinot Gris

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

2005 San Simeon Opaque Red

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	94%	4%	2%

2006 Brutocao Chardonnay

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

2004 Brutocao Quadriga Red

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

2006 Summerland Sauvignon Blanc

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

2005 Summerland Syrah

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

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

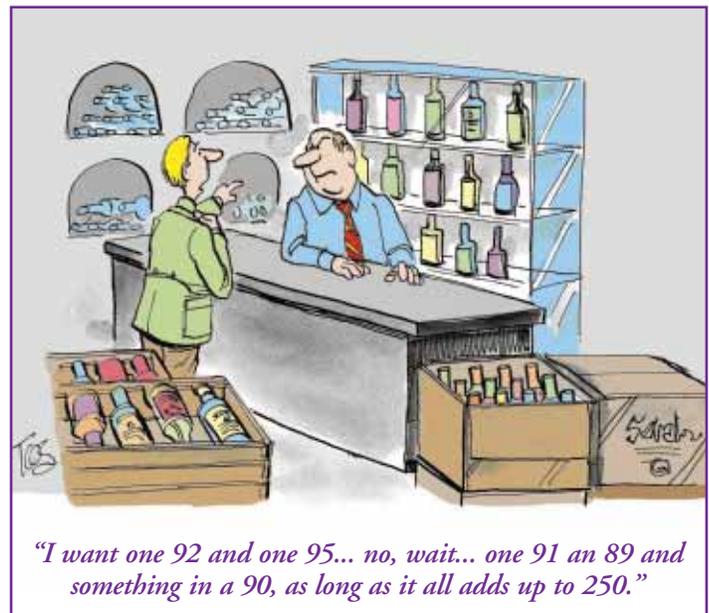
■ Indicates wine is still available

Continued from page 3

passion toward and the wine and food business is just perfect.”

Such a fervent approach is natural for Hunter Vogel who seems destined for continued future success. His wines have met with much critical acclaim and his best wines seem to lay ahead with the development of his estate selections.

The wine business needs serious people like Hunter Vogel, whose youthful approach to a particularly competitive business is quite refreshing. If passion is what he is looking for, the wine business is a marvelous outlet for his enthusiasm.



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THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

Since the introduction of the *International Series* in December of 2005, we have featured classic signature wines (two incredible reds and one delicious white wine) from Italy, Australia, Argentina, Spain, France, and New Zealand. Each quarterly wine shipment also includes our exclusive six-page, full-color *Taste the Adventure* newsletter filled with interesting information on the country, winery, and the wines. There are additional insert sheets pairing traditional recipes with each wine and regional tidbits to give more complete picture of the featured wines and country. Also included in each *International Series* shipment is the fun and unique *Adventure Package* featuring specialty gourmet and cultural items especially selected to take you beyond just experiencing the wine. The *International Series* introduces members to the same type of quality wines we are known for finding in California. We only feature; small case production, hard-to-find, family owned boutique wineries from around the world in the *International Series*. There are no passports required! All it takes is an adventurous spirit, a quick visit to www.goldmedalwine.com/international or a phone call to 1-800-266-8888 and you will be on your way. The *International Series* with the *Adventure Package* makes a great gift too!

International Series

*Discover Wonderful Wines from the Great Small Wineries of the World –
Delivered Direct to Your Door!*

www.goldmedalwine.com/international 1-800-266-8888

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

KitFox Vineyards is a classic example of a small family winery doing big things. Since their first release of the 2001 Foxy wines they have accumulated numerous medals including multiple Golds and Double Golds. The Foxy White and Foxy Red are both palate-pleasing wines at terrific values.

KITFOX VINEYARDS	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members
2005 Foxy White*	Half Case-6 \$102	\$75 (\$12.50) Save 26%	\$69 (\$11.50) Save 32%
California Blend	Full Case-12 \$204	\$139 (\$11.58) Save 32%	\$122 (\$10.17) Save 40%
2003 Foxy Red Blend*	Half Case-6 \$102	\$79 (\$13.17) Save 23%	\$72 (\$12.00) Save 29%
Estate Blend	Full Case-12 \$204	\$145 (\$12.08) Save 29%	\$135 (\$11.25) Save 34%

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

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

**Availability is limited*

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