

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 18 No. 1

Midnight Cellars Edition

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

www.goldmedalwine.com

FAMILY DREAM COMES TRUE FOR AWARD-WINNING MIDNIGHT CELLARS.

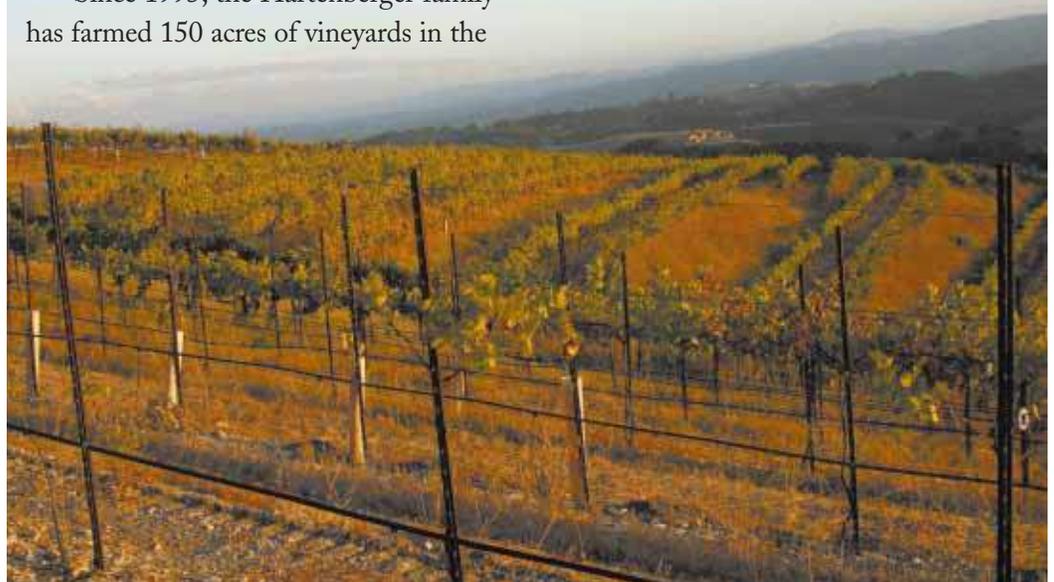
OK, raise your hands, how many of you have ever fantasized about quitting your job and starting a winery? You and your family, and maybe some extended family too, would move to the wine country, buy a piece of land, refurbish the old house, convert the barn into a winery, plant some vines and you're living your dream.

Since 1995, the Hartenberger family has farmed 150 acres of vineyards in the

heart of the Central Coast's famed wine region just outside of Paso Robles, California.

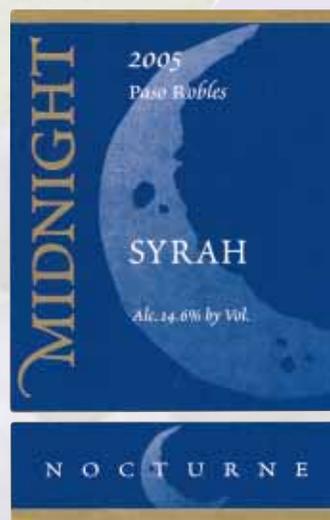
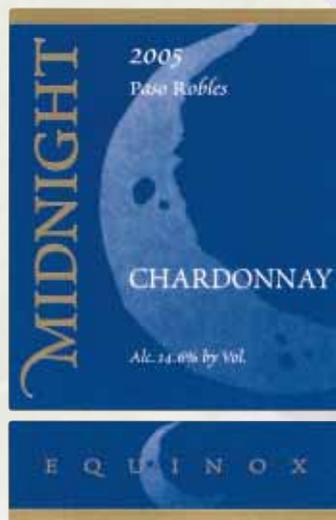
Although it's not even remotely close to being that simple, you can now live vicariously through members of the Hartenberger family who are experiencing your dream at this very moment.

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The view of the rolling hills of California's Central Coast, Templeton Gap Region from Midnight Cellars estate vineyard is absolutely stellar.

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 CHARDONNAY "EQUINOX"

Midnight Cellars 2005 Chardonnay "Equinox" is a nicely balanced wine expressing the flavors of the fruit from California's Central Coast growing region near Paso Robles. The 2005 Chardonnay won a **Silver Medal** at the *Los Angeles County Fair Wine Competition*, and a **Silver Medal** at the *American Wine Society Wine Competition*. The color is a beautiful straw and the nose is full of tropical fruits and fig. Flavors of green apple, pear, fig, ginger, and vanilla bean intermingle across the palate. The mouth feel is full and crisp. The finish is impressively long with roasted vanilla bean and crisp acidity lingering well into the next sip. This crisp clean Chardonnay pairs perfectly with seafood, oriental cuisine, and fresh green garden salads. Aged 14 months in oak. 100% Chardonnay. Enjoy now until 2010.

2005 SYRAH "NOCTURNE"

The Midnight Cellars 2005 Syrah "Nocturne" has received numerous awards in major wine competitions across the country which includes the following: **Silver Medal**—*Indy International Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*Long Beach Grand Cru Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*Eastern International Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*Central Coast Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*Florida International Wine Challenge*, **Silver Medal**—*American Wine Society Wine Competition*. Since these competitions were held last spring and summer, the wine has aged and developed even further and is showing beautifully. The color is a deep dark violet with a rich ruby rim. The bouquet is an explosion of fruit portraying aromas of ripe blackberry, black cherry, plums, and strawberries, layered with vanilla, and an earthy spice. The mouthfeel is rich and full of fruit with well balanced tannins and acidity throughout the long extended finish. Aged 18 months in oak. 100% Syrah. Enjoy now until 2015.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2005 VINTAGE: **Silver Medal**—*Los Angeles County Fair Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*American Wine Society Wine Competition*.

LEGACY: First released in 1995, Midnight Cellars Chardonnay has earned numerous awards over the past twelve years. By limiting production each vintage sells out almost immediately after the initial release.

Just the facts:

pH	3.41
Alcohol	14.6%
Total Acid	0.69 g/100 mls
Aged in Oak	14 months
Cases Produced	1,300
Drink Now or Up to Year.	2010

2005 VINTAGE: **Silver Medal**—*Eastern International Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*Central Coast Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*Florida International Wine Challenge*, **Silver Medal**—*Indy International Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*Long Beach Grand Cru Wine Competition*, **Silver Medal**—*American Wine Society Wine Competition*.

LEGACY: First released in 1995, Midnight Cellars Syrah has been a consistent award-winning varietal for the past ten vintages for the Hartenberger family.

Just the facts:

pH	3.69
Alcohol	14.6%
Total Acid	0.62 g/100 mls
Aged in Oak	18 months
Cases Produced	1,300
Drink Now or Up to Year.	2015

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Bob Hartenberger

It wasn't until Bob Hartenberger began traveling extensively in the 1980s that he became interested in wine. "It was a gradual appreciation that grew out of many business dinners and meeting people with varying degrees of wine knowledge," recalls Bob. "I became more and more intrigued with not only wine itself, but with the scientific aspect, and finally started making wine in the basement of our home in the Chicago area."

The Hartenberger family was living in Chicago by way of St. Louis where Bob grew up. He attended St. Louis University in the 1950s, earning degrees in both Chemistry and Law. A brief and dissatisfying stint at Shell Oil immediately after college led to locally

headquartered Monsanto Corporation where Bob found his career niche. Using his educational background in both chemistry and law, Bob was hired as a Patent Attorney in 1962.

Bob stayed at Monsanto for 11 years before moving to Chicago to become Chief Patent Lawyer for American Hospital Supply Corporation. For 17 years,



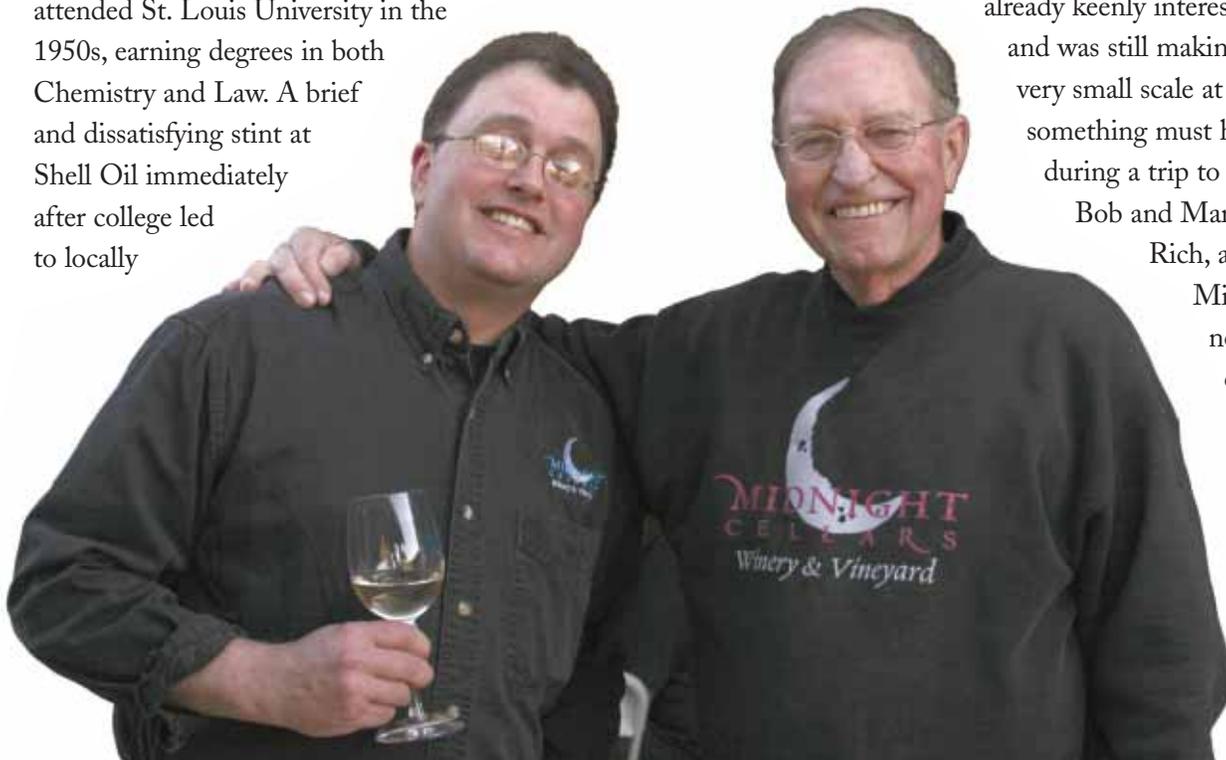
Mary Jane wine tasting on the patio.

the Hartenbergers lived in Chicago, during which time, the company was bought by another company, Baxter Corporation. Then in 1990, Bob was transferred to Glendale, California to become General Counsel at a new corporate location.

Four years later, Bob retired the corporate life and decided to take on a completely new challenge. Even though he was already keenly interested in wines and was still making wine on a very small scale at home, something must have hit a chord during a trip to Napa that year.

Bob and Mary Jane met son, Rich, and his wife, Michele, in the northern wine country for a weekend of wine tasting. As millions of people do

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Rich and Bob Hartenberger.



WINE WIZARD

- 1) Midnight Cellars' Chardonnay is aged sur lie. What are "lees" and what does "sur lie" mean?
- 2) Midnight Cellars' Chardonnay is "whole cluster pressed." What does this mean?
- 3) Midnight Cellars uses a majority of new oak barrels to age their red wines. What significance does this have?

Continued from page 1

"I would not have started this winery without the help of my kids," assures owner and founder Bob Hartenberger.



Midnight Winery started in a remodeled horse barn over ten years ago. Today the family winery is a new 10,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility next to the tasting room.

"I did it for the lifestyle but I knew the task was too great without their help, and besides, I wanted them there."

To Bob and his family, it seems longer than the thirteen years that have flown by since buying their 150 acre plot of land in the heart of Central California's wine country. Bob's due diligence took him to every section of California's wine producing regions before choosing to locate in the Paso Robles area. With a world-class reputation for grape growing and relatively affordable land prices, the Paso Robles area was the logical spot. "What's appealing too," Bob notes, "is that the area still has the unspoiled beauty and charm of real wine country with a feeling of close-knit cooperation among our friends and neighbors."

Not surprisingly, it didn't take a lot of convincing for family members to exchange their briefcases and commutes in the car for shovels and rides on the tractor. In fact, if anything, it was Bob's sons, Rich and Mike, who encouraged Dad to take the plunge.



The Winter Solstice sunset over Midnight Cellars.

"Years ago, I made a half-serious comment to my dad when we were visiting Napa that he should start a winery when he retired, and my wife, Michele, and I would run it!" recalls Rich Hartenberger. That must have been a catalyst of sorts because it was only a year or so later that things were rolling and the kids got the call. Rich promptly quit his job in Chicago as a product manager for a medical supply company

and his wife, Michele, gave up her job as a biochemist. Their eldest son, Mike, not only followed suit by leaving his career as a salesman for an electronics firm, but also paid the ultimate price by relinquishing his Chicago Bulls season tickets!

The first order of business was to turn the old horse barn into a winery and the barley field into a vineyard. Easier said than done; the barn required extensive refurbishing to retrofit the stainless steel tanks, French and American oak barrels, water treatment systems and hundreds of other devices.

After planting just 450 vines of the planned 11,000, it didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out they were in for a long haul. "Sure, it was expensive and it's hard work too!" says Bob Hartenberger. "But we started this with one idea in mind: to create the best wines possible and wines we can be proud of. We're not

about to cut any corners.”

In 1996, they planted about 18 acres of the potential 100+ suitable acres. Zinfandel, Merlot, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon were the first varieties to be planted. Additional acreage of each, along with Cabernet Franc, will be added eventually. And while these vines were maturing, the Hartenbergers secured first class grapes from other local area well-known vineyards to begin the winemaking process.

As a home winemaker in Chicago for many years, Bob knew the fundamentals. To help ensure success with their first commercial releases, though, they called upon the expert guidance of Nick Martin of nearby Martin Brothers Winery.

With Nick’s help and the assistance of a handful of neighboring wineries, the first releases of Midnight Cellars wine were a hit — all earned medals at wine competitions throughout the state and country. With now over thirteen years in the vineyards and winery, Rich Hartenberger enjoys the role of family winemaker.

Over 990 wineries existed in California when they started and today there are over 2,000. So, the Hartenbergers know full well the importance of maintaining a high quality

reputation. “We have to have the very best wine,” says Rich Hartenberger.

So far so good. Year after year Midnight Cellar wines have won a plethora of competitive awards in the state, as well as across the nation. 🍷



Bob Hartenberger enjoys pouring wine for tasting room guests.

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) After fermentation is complete, yeast cells settle out and form sediment at the bottom of the tank. This sediment is called *lees*. Typically, the wine is transferred off the lees into another tank where clarification and stabilization are begun. A common practice with Chardonnay, however, is to add a yeast character by allowing the wine to remain in contact with the yeast for weeks or months—this is called *sur lie* aging. Winemakers who use this method add aroma, flavor and body complexity to their wines.

2) As you might guess, *whole cluster pressing* is a winemaking technique whereby intact bunches of grapes are pressed whole. The stems are intact and act as conduits for what can often be particularly viscous juice. It is almost universal in the production of sparkling wines and most other white wines made from dark-skinned grapes. Quality conscious producers tend to use this method since the resulting juice is low in phenolics (compounds which sometimes impart an astringent or bitter flavor) and high in quality.

3) *New oak barrels* are used systematically for good vintages of classed growth red Bordeaux and, therefore, for a high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon made by ambitious and well-funded winemakers in newer wine regions. The newer the barrel, the more wood flavor it’s capable of imparting, and in most regions, new barrels command a premium price. For instance, 1-year-old barrels sell for 70% of new barrels; 50% for 2-year-old barrels; 10% for 5-year-old barrels. Older barrels are important for wines where the winemaker seeks slow oxygenation of the wine but no perceptible wood flavor, such as making Port, Sherry and Rioja.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

POTATO CRUSTED SNAPPER WITH BEURRE BLANC SAUCE

Pair with Midnight Cellars 2005 Chardonnay "Equinox"

Serves 4

Potato Crusted Snapper Ingredients:

2 Idaho Potatoes, peeled
4 (5-ounce) Snapper filets
1 Cup Butter, warmed, clarified
Sea Salt
Fresh ground black pepper
Lemon herb seasoning

Beurre Blanc Sauce Ingredients:

2 Cups of heavy cream
1 Cup Chardonnay
12 Whole Black Peppercorns
1/4 Cup Lemon juice, freshly squeezed
2 Shallots, diced
1 Pound Butter, cut into pieces, softened

For the Potato Crusted Snapper: Finely julienne the potatoes and immediately put them into cold water and rinse thoroughly. Repeat 2 or 3 times, or until water is clear. The purpose of this is to rinse off all of the starches and sugars so the potatoes do not burn while cooking. Drain the water from potatoes and towel dry thoroughly. In a mixing bowl, add potatoes and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add about 1/2 cup of the warm clarified butter, or enough to coat. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Season snapper fillets well with salt and pepper. Take the julienne potatoes and put thin layer on the top-side of the fish only. In a large sauté pan, heat about 1/4 inch of clarified butter over medium heat. Carefully lay fillets in the hot butter, potato side down, and pan-fry until the potato crust turns golden brown. Remove from heat, turn the fish over, and finish cooking in the pan in the oven. Place one snapper fillet on each of the 4 dinner plates and top with Buerre Blanc Sauce. Garnish with lemon herb seasoning.

For Beurre Blanc Sauce: Heat cream in a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat until reduced to 3/4 cup. Reserve. In a large skillet, reduce wine, peppercorns, lemon juice, and shallots over a high heat until almost dry (only a little liquid remains). Add reduced cream, whipping constantly. Remove from heat, and slowly whip in butter until thickened and smooth. Serve over snapper.

LEG OF LAMB GASCONY (CUISSÉ DE MOUTON GASCONY)

Pair with Midnight Cellars 2005 Syrah "Nocturne"

Serves 8

1 (7 Pound) Leg of Lamb, fat trimmed to 1/4 inch
12 Anchovy fillets, packed in oil
12 Garlic cloves, peeled and halved lengthwise
1/4 Cup of Duck, Bacon fat or Olive Oil
3 Tablespoons Rosemary, fresh, chopped
1 Tablespoon Creole seasoning
1 Teaspoon Sea Salt
1 Teaspoon Black Pepper, fresh ground
1 Yellow Onion, large, peeled, quartered
1 Carrot, large, cut into 2 inch pieces
1 Turnip, large, trimmed and quartered
2 Celery stalks, cut into 2 inch pieces
1/2 Cup Chicken or Beef stock
2 Tablespoons Unsalted Butter, cold cut into 4 pieces

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. With a small, sharp knife, make 12 (1-1/2 inch deep) slits about every two inches of the lamb. Wrap the anchovies around the garlic cloves and stuff into the slits. In a large roasting pan set over 2 burners, heat the fat or olive oil over medium heat. Add the lamb and sear on all sides (about 5 minutes). Remove from the heat and in a small bowl combine the rosemary, Creole seasoning, salt and pepper to create a rub. Rub evenly over all of the lamb. Add the vegetables and stir to coat with the fat. Roast 1-1/4 hours until internal temperature reaches 130 degrees for medium-rare; stir the vegetables every 30 minutes during this time. Remove lamb and vegetables from the oven and transfer to a large platter; cover and let it rest for 15 minutes. Place the pan over two burners. Add wine and cook stirring to deglaze the pan and reduce by half. Add the stock; reduce by 1/2 again. Strain into a small saucepan through a fine mesh strainer; extract as much liquid as you can. Return liquid to medium heat, stirring constantly and add the butter cubes to complete gravy. Carve the lamb, place along side of roasted vegetables and top with gravy. Take a large sip of Syrah.

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 Van Ruiten Reserve Syrah

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

2004 Van Ruiten Old Vine Zinfandel

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	94%	5%	1%

2005 Madroña Cabernet Sauvignon

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

2004 Madroña Estate Merlot

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

2005 Belvedere Chardonnay

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

2004 Bradford Mtn. Zinfandel

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	5%	2%

2005 Ledgewood Creek Chardonnay

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

2004 Ledgewood Creek GSM

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

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

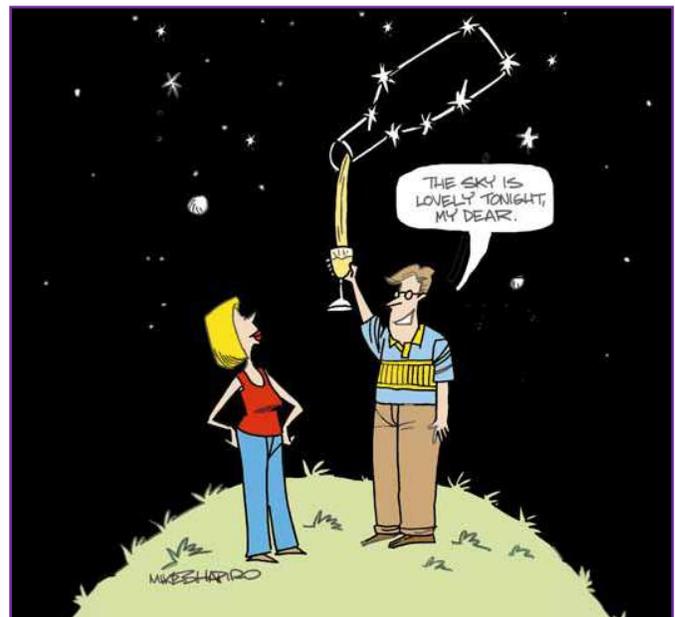
Continued from page 5

each year, the Hartenbergers thought how great a lifestyle it would be to own and operate their own winery. "The thought grew on me for an entire year before finally taking the plunge," recalls Bob.

That dream is now a reality for Bob, Mary Jane, Rich, Michele, and Mike Hartenberger. 



Mike Hartenberger and his sister-in-law Michele.



©Mike Shapiro

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!** In the past, the Top Ten wines of the year were decided by the cumulative results of the Judge-the-Wines Scorecards submitted throughout the year, as well as each wine's reorder activity. Last year we introduced another variable to the decision making process by giving you, our *Gold Series* members, a chance to vote directly for your top favorites online. 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 2007!** Cast your vote online at www.goldmedalwine.com/topten or fax to 1-800-266-8889. The Top Ten Wines of 2007 will be published in an upcoming month's Grapevine along with the announcement of the winner of the bonus case of wine.

We are pleased to announce our international expansion into the United Kingdom. We now offer UK wine enthusiasts *Platinum Series* and *Diamond Series* wines delivered to their door via www.goldmedalwine.co.uk. And of course, we also ship to UK recipients on behalf of U.S. customers wishing to give gifts to friends, family members and acquaintances there. For more information, please give us a call at 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

Midnight Cellars 2005 Chardonnay "Equinox" and 2005 Syrah "Nocturne" are stellar examples of the Central Coast's wine growing region and the Hartenberger family's winery. Both wines exemplify the essence and elegance of California's classic varietals in every sip. Midnight Cellars is the epitome of the small, family-owned and operated, quality winery we strive to feature to *Gold Series* members.

MIDNIGHT CELLARS	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members		Club Price 4-Bottle Members	
2005 Chardonnay – "Equinox"* Paso Robles	Half Case-6 \$108 Full Case-12 \$216	\$79 (\$13.17)	Save 27%	\$72 (\$12.00)	Save 33%
		\$145 (\$12.08)	Save 33%	\$125 (\$10.42)	Save 42%
2005 Syrah – "Nocturne"* Paso Robles	Half Case-6 \$138 Full Case-12 \$276	\$99 (\$16.50)	Save 28%	\$85 (\$14.17)	Save 38%
		\$175 (\$14.58)	Save 37%	\$155 (\$12.92)	Save 44%

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.