



# The Grapevine

## Newsletter of the Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains

March, 2005

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### **VINE TALK**

Budbreak! The vines are off and running. As temperatures increase so do the length of the shoots. It is this period of time between budbreak and fruit set that the greatest amount of vegetative growth takes place. It is an important time to protect fresh green foliage from early infections of powdery mildew. Dormant cleistothecia release active ascospores of powdery mildew via spring rains onto the young shoots and leaves. These primary infections can establish on new growth within 6 to 7 days after a rain. Powdery mildew loves our climate as much as do the premium wine grapes. The optimal temperature for spore germination is between 70 to 86 degrees F. The pleasant spring weather that we all hope to enjoy requires our vigilance in protecting the developing tender soft plant tissue so favored for colonization by the new spores. Develop a plan now for a regular spray program that can be adapted to adverse rainy conditions followed by pleasant temperatures. Protecting the shoots now will go a long way toward protecting the fruit after set.

Water and nitrogen are two other key factors in rate of growth. It has been a wet winter and the water table is full. Soil conditions are ripe for plenty of growth. If your vineyard has experienced too much growth and you want to reduce vigor consider keeping the ground cover mowed instead of discing it in. Maybe leave a few kicker canes on the vines and remove them after 8 -10 inches of growth on the shoots on those canes. Definitely hold off irrigation until you see some sign of vegetative growth slowing down. Monitor soil moisture carefully either with one of the fancy new monitoring devices (some are somewhat

### **Next Meeting**

**April 5: Next VASCM Meeting  
3:00pm, Vine Hill Winery (previously, Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyards), Santa Cruz**  
*(directions on last page)*

- Business meeting. *Vote on slate of officers.*
  - 'Vine Talk'
  - Juan Hidalgo, County Ag Commissioner's Office to distribute Vine Mealybug traps
  - **Presentation: "Grapes Into Wine: Distribution and Sales"**
- Speakers include Ross Kemp, Wine Warehouse & local wine retailers and restaurant wine buyers
- Wine tasting

### **... And Events**

**April 4:** Trade tasting (SCMWA)

**April 7:** Variety Focus course on Pinot Noir, 8-5pm; UC Davis Extension, Sacramento  
800-752-0881

**April 10: Pinot Paradise** - 24+ local wineries will send you to heaven with the first Pinot fest in the Santa Cruz Mountains! 1-5pm, Testarossa Vineyards, Los Gatos. Contact the SCMWA. Advance tickets only.

reasonably priced) or just take out the trusty shovel or soil probe and dig into the ground to see how things are drying out.

As always, pay attention to your fertilizer program. What you did last year might not be necessary again this year. Look to your petiole tests from past years to note any deficiencies. You may want to focus more on micronutrient management if you have had problems with

fruit set. Many vineyards are commonly deficient in zinc and boron. Applying these with your regular foliar program pre-bloom will contribute to a more even and successful fruit set. This is especially true if you have noticed deficiencies in last year's petiole samples. If you didn't take samples last year than think back to how your fruit looked. If it was uneven in set or the clusters had little and big berries you could be looking at a micronutrient deficiency. Calcium is another product that is available in some foliar amendments that can contribute to healthier vine tissue and fruit formation.

Finally, pay attention to canopy management right from the start. After budbreak is complete look at shoot density. Reduce doubles (two or three shoots emerging from the same bud) to one healthy shoot per bud. If you have a VSP system, be sure to start training the shoots to grow straight up right from the start. Don't allow them to cross in front of other shoots and allow enough space between shoots for airflow and light penetration. Remember that each shoot will produce 1 or 2 clusters per cane. Make sure to allow space for that fruit to mature.

Keep the weeds down and enjoy the promise of this time. Plant extra flowers and other attractive plants to enhance the beauty of your place and to promote biodiversity. Beneficial insects love the sweet nectar of a variety of flowers. Having an abundance of variety contributes to the health of the population and is easy on your eyes.

Finally, be on the lookout for early mealy bug infections. Get some traps from your local Agricultural Commissioner and hang them in your vineyard. Start a monitoring program now to see if you are at risk.

Your local viticulture organization is hard at work expanding opportunities for growers in our appellation. We are working with the Santa Cruz Winegrowers Association in the planning and presentation of Pinot Paradise and the April Trade Tasting. VASCM will have a booth at both events and will be hosting grower-winemaker "vignettes" that offer the public an informal and intimate insight into the relationship between grower and winemaker through the season. Development of a logo, ongoing presentations, and emphasis on the

unique attributes and publicity for what makes the Santa Cruz Mountain appellation special continue to be a major focus for our organization.

Thank you for your support and be well and attentive as we start off 2005.

La vaya bien and good luck to all!

Prudy Foxx  
President, Viticulture Association of  
the Santa Cruz Mountains



### ***Mealybug Traps from the Ag Commissioner Free at April Meeting***

Juan Hidalgo from the Santa Cruz Agricultural Commissioner's Office will give a short presentation of the Vine Mealybug trapping program at the April meeting, and will distribute traps. He'll return to subsequent meetings to collect traps and distribute new ones. Traps should be changed every 6-8 weeks. This makes it real easy to get and use VMB traps and get them analyzed – and at no cost!

***“A mountain vineyard is the most  
beautiful sight on earth!”***

***- Martin Ray***

The VASCM Board and promo committee members have produced some informational documents on the Santa Cruz Mountains Appellation as part of our work with the SCMWA and Pinot Paradise committee on this event. This information encompasses what we feel are the germaine messages we should be conveying about our appellation, its vineyards, the grapes we grow and the unique characteristics of the wine they produce. It also includes some important information on the acreage in the appellation, derived from the latest vineyard inventory available from the SCMWA. We'd like to share with you some of the appellation description we have developed (on the next page). The full document, as well as a separate description on "Pinot Noir in the Santa Cruz Mountains" can be found on our website at [www.vascm.org](http://www.vascm.org).

*Breathtaking vistas. Ocean and valley views. Lush forests. Majestic first-growth redwoods. Misty fog. Ocean breezes. Surf and sand. And mountain vineyards. This is the Santa Cruz Mountains. And this mountain terroir is where we grow the grapes that produce our acclaimed wines.*

## **The Santa Cruz Mountains Appellation**

The Santa Cruz Mountains Viticultural Appellation was federally recognized in 1981, one of the first American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) to be defined by geophysical and climatic factors. The appellation encompasses the Santa Cruz Mountains range, from Half Moon Bay in the north to Mount Madonna in the south, and is defined primarily by elevation – down to 800 feet in the east (the valley side) and 400 feet in the west (the coastal side). Some ridge top vineyards are as high as 2600’.

The appellation is characterized by intimate, artisan wineries tucked in among the trees along beautiful mountain roads, or perched atop the ridges with sweeping views into the valleys or along the coast. Visitors can meet with and talk with the winemakers and enjoy exploring the mountain and coastal ambience and little towns.

The Santa Cruz Mountains has played a pivotal role in the history of winemaking in California, with roots going back over 100 years. Celebrated wines have been made in the Santa Cruz Mountains by Martin Ray following Prohibition and others since. Martin Ray’s original property is now farmed by Mt. Eden Vineyards, Peter Martin Ray Vineyards, and The Mountain Winery, which has recently replanted. Wineries such as Ridge, Mt. Eden and David Bruce have all played a pivotal role in establishing the legacy of exceptional wines from the Santa Cruz Mountains, a legacy that continues today with the growth of many new vineyards and wineries in the appellation.

The appellation now is on the cusp of significant growth and change. Since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the number of wineries has grown from about 40 to now over 60. And, changes in viticultural and winemaking practices (new trellising and improved canopy management, new clones, sustainable agricultural practices) are producing improved, more reliable and consistent quality wines throughout the appellation. Santa Cruz Mountains wines possess great character

reflecting the mountain terroir, depth and balance, and they age extremely well.

## **The Vineyards**

Santa Cruz Mountains vineyards, whether looking west into the Pacific Ocean or Monterey Bay, or east into the Santa Clara (Silicon) Valley, benefit from their proximity to the ocean. This marine influence gives us not only fabulous views, but also moderates the climate and sends coastal fog across the mountains with its cooling temperatures. Santa Cruz Mountains vineyards are almost unique among California vineyards in being so close to the ocean and the benefits it brings to producing quality winegrapes. Plus, visitors can come and taste our wines, then enjoy a sunset walk on the beach!

The Santa Cruz Mountains appellation is characterized by many small, family-owned vineyards. Because of the generally small acreage they can be tended with great care. Most growers and vineyard workers personally know each vine! There is little mechanized farming, other than small tractors and ATVs for plowing and routine maintenance; harvesting is all done by hand, which protects the grapes from bruising and the plants from damage. This personal attention to the vines follows through in personal attention to winemaking, all of which creates better quality wines.

There are over 200 vineyards\* in the appellation, ranging from very small plantings under one acre to the largest at 64 acres. Only about 40 of these are larger than 10 acres, and 14 larger than 20. The largest vineyards are Jimsomare on Montebello Ridge in Cupertino (64 acres); Ridge Vineyards in Cupertino (55.9 acres); and Mt. Eden Vineyards in Saratoga (43 acres).

Total acreage\* is a little over 1100 acres, with about one quarter of that planted in Pinot Noir (229 acres); one quarter in Cabernet (249 acres); a little more than one quarter in Chardonnay (298 acres); and the rest in other varieties, most notably Merlot (at 94 acres) and Zinfandel (40 acres). There are upwards of 75 Pinot vineyards and all are very small –almost all under 15 acres. Most of the Pinot acreage (app. 70%) is planted in Santa Cruz County or on the mountain ridges above Monterey Bay.

*\*Figures based on latest vineyard inventory conducted in 2003.*

## 2005 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

The Viticulture Assn. of the Santa Cruz Mountains recognizes and congratulates our local wineries for their award-winning wines made from appellation grapes:

### Double Gold Winner:

- Soquel Vineyards 2003 Pinot Noir Partners Reserve Santa Cruz

### Gold Medal Winners:

- Burrell School Vineyards 2002 Bordeaux Blends Valedictorian Santa Cruz
- Cinnabar Vineyards 2002 Chardonnay Santa Cruz
- Windy Oaks Estate 2001 Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountains Estate Reserve

### Silver Medal Winners:

- Beauregard 2002 Chardonnay Beauregard Vineyards
- Burrell School Vineyards 2002 Pinot Noir Reserve Santa Cruz Mountains
  - Burrell School Vineyards 2003 Syrah Santa Cruz Mountains
  - Burrell School Vineyards 2002 Cabernet Franc Santa Cruz Mountains
    - Byington Winery 2002 Chardonnay Santa Cruz Mountains
- Byington Winery 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Bates Ranch
  - Cinnabar Vineyards 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Cruz
    - Cooper-Garrod 2002 Syrah Finley Estate Vineyard
- Cooper-Garrod 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon George's Estate Vineyard
- Muccigrosso Vineyards 2002 Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountains
- Muccigrosso Vineyards 2002 Italian Blend Syrah Sangiovese Blend Macchia
- Thomas Fogarty Winery 2001 Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountains
- Windy Oaks Estate 2002 Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountain Estate Blend



## A note about the April 5 program:

We have received requests for this program topic and, although not strictly viticultural we think it's important for growers to be aware of distribution, sales and marketing issues as the grapes we grow are made into wine destined to sell. And, some of our growers either are currently or are planning to soon make and sell their own wine. This should be a good opportunity to hear from the distribution and sales professionals.

## Thank You to the Promo Committee!

The Promotional Committee has been meeting for the past year, working on the various activities that we've engaged in representing the VASCM. These projects include participation in the Santa Cruz County Fair, the holiday party, Pinot Paradise, the trade tasting, creation of displays, the new press materials, etc. We want to thank the Committee members for their extra effort and hard work:

Judy Schultze	Barbara Woodruff
Jim Schultze	Peter Woodruff
Frank Remde	Prudy Foxx
Mary Lindsay	Craig Handley

*If you are interested in helping the promo committee, please contact one of us. We would welcome you!*

## Now Is the Time to Use the Buy/Sell Exchange!!

If you are a grower looking for a home for your grapes in the Fall, or a winemaker wanting a source of fruit, now is the time to make the connections and secure your arrangements. Use VASCM's Buy/Sell Exchange, established as a mechanism for growers and wineries to connect for the purpose of buying and selling appellation grapes, as well as other wine industry related services and products.

To participate on the Exchange, send an email message to the list mailman at [VASCM-owner@kkn.net](mailto:VASCM-owner@kkn.net). You can also view the Exchange listings on our website at [www.VASCM.org](http://www.VASCM.org).

**Officers of the Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains:**

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**Check Out Our Website: [www.vascm.org](http://www.vascm.org)**

The VASCM website includes information on upcoming meetings and events, copies of speaker presentations and newsletters, links to valuable resources. You'll find all the listings for the VASCM Buy/Sell Exchange. Plus, we're adding profiles of our members' vineyards. To be included, send information on your vineyard, including acreage, varieties, when it was founded and other history and information you'd like to include to [mary@munsvineyard.com](mailto:mary@munsvineyard.com). Also provide a picture if you have it, or we can arrange to take one. Come back often to see what's new!

***Directions to Vine Hill Winery in Santa Cruz (for April 5 meeting):***

*2300 Jarvis Rd., Santa Cruz 831-427-0436*

*From Hwy. 17, exit West Vine Hill Rd. (at the yellow St. Clare's Retreat sign, to the left as you approach Scotts Valley). To exit, get into the center turning lane if you're coming from the summit.*

*From West Vine Hill Rd. make the next left onto Vine Hill Rd. and drive downhill app. 2 miles*

*Turn left onto Jarvis Rd.*

*Drive uphill app. 2-1/4 miles (the last 1/2 mile is steep and narrow)*

*The winery driveway is the first right after you pass Rider Ridge Rd.*

The Viticulture Association of the  
Santa Cruz Mountains  
P.O. Box 126  
Saratoga, CA 95071

***Newsletter***



***Next Meeting: April 5, 3:00pm at Vine Hill Winery  
"Grapes Into Wine – Distribution and Sales"  
& Free Vine Mealybug Traps***

