



## Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains

# The Grapevine

## September, 2006

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### VINE TALK

Harvest. August, and the late summer fog is giving way to hot afternoons on the coast side. Inland the August heat sets in and bakes the landscape, evenly distributing the light and temperatures around the grapes. It's the perfect summer to the dreadful spring. If Fall is kind this will be another spectacular vintage for the Santa Cruz Mountains on both sides of the ridge.

With veraison upon us we can turn our thoughts from canopy management (though some continuous tweaking may be in order in spots) to water management for those who have that option. This is the time to think seriously about deficit irrigation and how it may be applied productively in your vineyard. If you have a drip system this is the time to really pay attention to the vines. Pinot Noir is in particularly sensitive to shrivel, especially in those unpredictable heat waves that assault our region almost every year. Maybe those record breaking temperatures in July were our heat wave and it won't happen again. Vigilance is key. It is important to maintain the water status of the vine as the ripening process progresses. Inducing a little stress with water deficit practices (applying proportionally less water per vine than you would if you were growing say, watermelons) is a proven method of increasing quality in wine grapes. However, too often people will think that more is better and if a little stress is good than a lot of stress must be great. Many growers have been punished with this attitude by watching their grapes shrivel to raisins while the winemakers insist on a little more "hang time" to "get the numbers right" or to achieve "the right flavors".

### Next Meeting

**September 14, 3:00pm: Next VASCM Meeting "Hillside Farming" at Clos de la Tech Vineyards** including erosion control and cover crops. This vineyard is considered the steepest in California. With speakers Jim Howard and Rich Casale from the NRCS. Rex Geitner, vineyard manager, will tell us the story of this amazing vineyard. (See directions on the back.)

We are asking for RSVPs for this meeting – please call Mary at 408-984-7242.

Don't forget to bring your mealybug traps.

As always, bring a bottle of wine to share for tasting at the end of the meeting. Remember that the after-meeting tasting is strictly that - a tasting. Drink responsibly or bring a designated driver.

We look forward to seeing you at this meeting. It is a busy time, just before harvest. But we hope you can make it.

### And Events

**Santa Cruz County Fair** (12-17 September 2006): Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, Watsonville. VASCM will have a display booth in the agricultural Harvest Building. This is the 3rd year the VASCM is exhibiting at the Fair.

**September is California Wine Month!** Celebrate harvest in the Santa Cruz Mountains at the Santa Cruz County Fair. Week-long educational exhibits and displays by the SCMWA and VASCM, judging results of the amateur and commercial wine competitions, and wine tasting on Saturday and Sunday, 9/16-17. Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, 2601 East Lake Ave, Watsonville. Tues.- Fri. noon - 11pm; Sat. 10am-11pm, Sun. 10am - 10pm. Note: Various wineries and vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains are planning special harvest events for California Wine Month. Go to SCMWA.com or VASCM.org for a complete list.

*More Events Next Page*

*(Vine Talk, continued from page 1)*

The truth is a healthy, properly maintained vine will have stopped growing vegetatively by now and is putting its energy toward fruit maturation. This vine is more likely to produce premium fruit. An overvigorous vine with too much access to water may have flabby fruit and an anorexic vine may produce fruit lacking in character or worse.

Keep an eye on water status either utilizing expensive monitoring equipment, the weather ET (evapotranspiration) numbers published on the web, common observation, or a combination of this and other techniques. Listen to weather forecasts and if a heat wave is headed our way put on some extra water and help the fruit get through it in good shape. If the vine is in balance it will still ripen and without those undesirable soy sauce raisin qualities.

Harvest will be here though probably a tad later this year than last. As you patiently await the process turn your thoughts toward what you will be doing after the harvest. Think cover crops and floor management. We have discussed many options for cover crops in the past. You can consider mixes of annual grasses and legumes for nitrogen enhancement or choose a permanent cover of perennial grasses and clovers. There are endless combinations and the choice is always site specific. Factors of soil type and slope are key to these decisions. We will be discussing specific cover crop blends and planting techniques at our next meeting so all I want to say here is be prepared to think about and make a plan. What are your goals? Erosion control? Soil amendment? Easier road and row access during the winter? Better water penetration into the soil profile? Bring your questions, experience, and ideas to the next meeting and everyone, most of all you, will benefit.

Most of all enjoy this magical phase of the season. All the effort of this year and the years before will soon be in fruition. Cut out the bad and damaged fruit now. It will only get worse. Green thin clusters that are clearly out of phase with the other clusters on the vine. Allow the healthy fruit to have space and stippled light and good air flow to maintain quality through the next month. Take pictures of the beauty of it all. Eat a grape every day and taste the transformation. Revel in the value of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

In your spare moments, consider writing your congressman to encourage him or her to come up with meaningful legislation regarding immigration reform. We are all together in this.

Salud.

Prudy Foxx  
Viticulture Assn. of the Santa Cruz Mountains

### ***Our New Logo!***

Thank you, all, for your comments on our new logo. We heard some suggestions for changes, but by and large everyone was very complimentary, and we are glad you like it. And so with widespread support we will start to implement the logo. We didn't have a chance to print it in color for this issue of the newsletter, but hope to do so for the next one so you can see it at its best. We will also be looking at making available items with our new logo, such as wineglasses, hats and shirts, so stay tuned. And we welcome your input for ideas! Thank you to Tom Trujillo for working with us on this fine design to represent our organization and the vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains appellation!

### ***More Events (cont.)***

**Sustainable Ag Expo**, 2-3 November, Monterey County Fairgrounds. [www.vineyardteam.org/expo](http://www.vineyardteam.org/expo) or 805-369-2288. Water quality practices, pest management, energy efficiency programs; exhibits. CE credits.

**Napa Valley Viticultural Fair**, 14 November, Napa Valley Expo. Programs, exhibits, equipment. PCA credits. <http://www.napavalleyvitfair.com>. 707-227-9997.

### ***With Harvest Looming, There is Still Time to Use the Buy/Sell Exchange!!***

If you still have or are seeking winegrapes, it's not too late to use VASCM's email-based Buy/Sell Exchange to make the connections and secure your arrangements. Established as a mechanism for growers and wineries to connect for the purpose of buying and selling appellation grapes, the Exchange can be used for other wine industry related services and products. Just send your email message to [VASCM@kkn.net](mailto:VASCM@kkn.net) and everyone on the list will receive it.

If you are not already on the Exchange list, 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).

## **Where You Can Buy and Taste Appellation Wines**

We are offering this list to our members who have asked sometimes where is a good place to buy our local wines? A number of local restaurants also offer some good tasting opportunities you might like to know about. This is only a partial list. Please let us know if you have some more to add:

### **Retail:**

- Summit Store, on Summit Rd., Los Gatos
- Deluxe Foods, Aptos
- Shopper's Corner, Santa Cruz
- Pleasure Point Wine & Spirits, Sta. Cruz
- Nonno's, Redwood Estates
- The Grapevine, Willow Glen
- Uncorked!, Saratoga (regular wine tasting events) [uncorked-wines.com](http://uncorked-wines.com)
- Whole Foods stores

### **Tasting Bars:**

- Cava, Capitola [cavacapitola.com](http://cavacapitola.com)
- Vino Locale, Palo Alto [vinolocale.com](http://vinolocale.com)
- Vino Cruz, Santa Cruz (to open soon)
- Los Gatos Coffee Roastery (tasting bar to open soon)

Restaurants and hotels with tastings and winemaker events featuring local wines:

- California Café, Los Gatos  
[www.californiacafe.com/los\\_gatos.php](http://www.californiacafe.com/los_gatos.php)
- Michael's on Main, Soquel  
[www.michaelsonmain.net](http://www.michaelsonmain.net)
- Shadowbrook, Capitola  
[shadowbrook-capitola.com](http://shadowbrook-capitola.com)
- Hotel Los Gatos  
[www.hotellosgatos.com](http://www.hotellosgatos.com)
- Theo's, Soquel – monthly brown bag tastings paired with dinner [www.theosrestaurant.com](http://www.theosrestaurant.com)

For notice of local wine tasting events, sign up at <http://www.localwineevents.com> for news of events in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

### **Membership**

Membership in the VASCM is \$50 annually, payable at the beginning of the calendar year. Members must be winegrape growers (own or manage a vineyard) in the Santa Cruz Mountains appellation. We welcome friends of growers and other professionals providing services to growers to our meetings, but non-members are charged \$15/meeting to attend.

Membership forms are available online at <http://www.vascm.org>.

## **Photos Wanted for the Website**

We are always looking for photos to illustrate our website at [www.vascm.org](http://www.vascm.org), and we would love to receive your photos of your vineyards. We change the photos on our homepage all the time to illustrate the seasons in the vineyard, and will post your photos if you send them. Choose a couple of your best and send them to the webmaster, [ed@munsvineyard.com](mailto:ed@munsvineyard.com) or to Mary at [mary@munsvineyard.com](mailto:mary@munsvineyard.com). With harvest coming up we would especially appreciate your photos of harvest in your vineyards – or any showing your vineyards in the Fall.



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

President: Prudy Foxx, 831-359-9100,  
[Prudyfoxx@aol.com](mailto:Prudyfoxx@aol.com)

Treasurer: Pete Woodruff, 831-728-8661  
[bpdmwff@aol.com](mailto:bpdmwff@aol.com)

Vice President/Program Chair/Newsletter:  
Mary Lindsay, Muns Vineyard/Lindsay PR,  
408-984-7242, [mary@munsvineyard.com](mailto:mary@munsvineyard.com) or  
[mary@lindsaypr.com](mailto:mary@lindsaypr.com)



**Directions to Clos de la Tech** in La Honda for the 9/14 meeting:

From the south and Hwy. 9: head north on Skyline for 10 miles. You will see signs for the quarry, for Yerba Buena Nursery, and for Clos de la Tech. Make a left on Rapley Ranch Road, across from Thomas Fogarty Winery. Continue past the quarry, make a left into the first drive (there are signs for Clos de la Tech), and bear to the right to get to the vineyards.

From Hwy. 92, go left on Skyline and it is 18 miles to the turnoff onto Rapley Ranch Road on your right.

From Hwy. 84, go left on Skyline and to Rapley Ranch Road on your right.



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

**NEWSLETTER**



**Next Meeting: Sept. 14, 3:00pm**  
**At Clos de la Tech Vineyards**  
**“Hillside Farming”- erosion control, cover crops**