



Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains

The Grapevine

September, 2008

VINE TALK

Harvest.

Vineyards in the Summit area started off the 2008 harvest bringing the vine to wine in late August. After a year of fire and ice, a blast of heat came through the state just as the kids went back to school. We baked in temperatures sometimes exceeding 100 degrees F for nearly 2 weeks. Even the nights were hot and the fog and cooling ocean breezes scarce. Sugars shot up and some fruit was rushed to harvest while others surged ahead in what might otherwise have been a late year. Another example of how you never can tell.

2008 has been a year of temperature extremes that has affected set, berry development and harvest. Many vineyards are reporting smaller than usual cluster size, small berry size and lighter yields. Such news often plays well to the winemakers ears because small clusters and small berries, as long as they don't shrivel up, provide the essence of quality for the best of our Santa Cruz Mountain wines. For growers it is a year to enjoy the wine and console ourselves in the knowledge that the wine starts in the vineyard.

For vineyards with fruit still hanging, monitor vine water status closely. Pinot Noir with its delicate skin is especially sensitive to temperature swings. Severe heat events can lead to shrivel. Deep roots or watering ahead of the heat can be an effective defense strategy. Other varieties seem to hold up better. Older, deep rooted healthy Syrah vines may benefit from some stress and a little shrivel can show well.

Crop estimating is a challenging job each year. This year many growers may overestimate their crop because they may not account for the reduced cluster size and misses on frost damaged vines. Be sure to put cluster weight into the equation when estimating crop.

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Next Meeting

September 24 at Vine Hill – Cover Crops!

3:00pm. Rich Casale from the NRCS will conduct a 'walk and talk' session on cover crops in the vineyard at Vine Hill. Rich has consulted with Vine Hill and will talk about the use of cover crops here to solve erosion issues, as well as their general benefits and seed selection so you can make your choices for planting this winter. As well, Vine Hill vineyard manager Rachel Ormes will talk about her cover crop plans for this season, and we plan to return in the Spring to see the results.

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.

Directions to Vine Hill on back of newsletter.

President's Corner

It's been a year since I took this office. Time passes quickly when one reaches my age. It's been a fun and busy and productive year for the Association. Thanks to all of you who have helped make it that way. Thanks especially to Mary Lindsay who has been working for many years to improve the organization. She is the sole nominee for president next year and you will have the opportunity to vote for her at the next meeting. Speaking of sole nominees, Rachel Ormes is the sole nominee for Vice President. If you haven't met Rachel yet you will have a chance to meet her at the next meeting. She is the vineyard manager of Gatos Locos at Vine Hill Winery where we will be having our next meeting on September 24.

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(Vine Talk, cont.)

Post harvest is a crucial time for action in the vineyard. Once the vines are harvested immediately apply deep irrigation if possible to the vines. A deep drink all through the night will go a long way to putting the vines to bed content. Consider some post season nutrient supplements especially if your vines exhibited deficiencies during the year. In our area in the fall nutrients are best applied through the drip unless an early rain comes to wash in dry material.

It is time as well to consider what to do with the vineyard floor once the grapes are in. Cover crops are useful for holding the soil in place as well as providing organic matter to the profile. They also enhance diversity and contribute beauty to the landscape.

Crimson clover is a versatile cover crop that provides some Nitrogen to the soil and a stunning splash of color in the spring. The bees love it but so do the gophers. If gophers are a significant problem consider planting sour clover, repudiated to repel gophers. Bell beans, or fava beans, are a standard annual nitrogen fixing legume. It is a good idea to mix the beans with a small amount of barley to help hold the stand upright. Also the barley germinates under many different conditions and will hold the soil if erosion is a significant threat. This strategy is especially useful in a newly planted site.

Enjoy the elegance and reward of fruit well ripened. Taste the depth of the fresh juice. Raise a glass to the beautiful promise of the 2008 vintage.

Buena suerte.

Prudy Foxx
Foxx Viticulture
Santa Cruz Mountains

Copies of all of Prudy's Vine Talk columns since 2004 can be found on our website at www.vascm.org.

President's Corner, cont.

I don't believe Pete Woodruff is retiring from his position of treasurer. On the other hand, Jeannene Rawlsky will be retiring her position as secretary after the next meeting and we need someone to volunteer to take her place. Any takers? Give Mary or me a call if you can help us out.

I will not be going into full retirement as I will be helping Mary produce this newsletter and writing vineyard profiles – let me know if you would be willing to have one written on your particular vineyard.

Well, some of the luckier ones whose vineyards are at the higher, hotter elevations have already

completed their harvest and are preparing to put their vineyards to rest for the upcoming winter while the rest of us in the cooler micro climates are still praying for a good and plentiful harvest without too many problems. Good Luck to all and we hope to see you on September 24 at Vine Hill.

- Bruce Manildi

Vineyard Profile

(This is a new section to share information about our members' vineyards. If you would like to profile your vineyard in an upcoming newsletter, please send your story to the newsletter editor at mary@munsvineyard.com.)

Déjà View Farm and Vineyard

- owned by David and Natalain Schwartz

The highpoint of this vineyard is clearly the personable and interesting owners. The Schwartzs, Natalain and David, lived near Scotts Valley and desired a vineyard. A consultant told them that their property wasn't suitable so they started looking for a new location. David saw a listing in the paper and called Natalain on her cell as she was in the area. The previous owners welcomed Natalain who quickly called David to meet her there. The rest is history; they purchased the eight acres at 201 Lael Lane in Corralitos in 1999.

This is truly a small family farm with a one-third acre Pinot vineyard, a 40 tree fruit orchard, several citrus trees, 30 blueberry bushes, a couple of rams and several ewes, chickens and three guard geese. Oh, yes, and a cat who challenges the resident bob cats (2). When their chickens are in full production, they will lay nearly a dozen eggs a day. The sheep keep the farm nicely weeded, no Roundup needed here! This farm is run organically, with few inputs from outside the farm and no waste output. They maintain compost piles and worm bins. They have constructed, with help from the county, hedgerows and two ponds.

They live in a beautiful and spacious farm house which they rebuilt from the ground up in the style of the old farm house which was the center of a much larger piece of property which has been subdivided. The Pinot vineyard (clones are 115, 667, and 777), whose name was selected because of the physical view and the fact that this was their vision, is on 4 foot spacing in 16 rows containing 550 vines. It is on a gentle slope (those of us who farm on hillsides would call it flat) with a southern exposure. Like many of us with small family farms, the Schwartzs have to work to support their farming habit. David has a tax accounting firm in Capitola and Natalain produces landscape designs, formerly owning a landscape company.

- Bruce Manildi

EQIP Applications Being Accepted Now

Conservation cost share applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are being accepted for funding consideration in fiscal year 2009 from now through Nov. 2 at USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices throughout California.

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers for natural resource improvements. In fiscal year 2008, California NRCS partnered with farmers on nearly \$54 million in conservation cost-share contracts, setting a new record for the program in the state. The contracts covered a broad spectrum of natural resource enhancements including increasing irrigation efficiency; nutrient and manure management on dairies; riparian buffers and wildlife habitat; wetland protection; and more.

Assistance can be in the form of structures and conservation 'hardware' such as irrigation, as well as incentive payments for proper management to achieve environmental benefits. The 2008 Farm Bill included several conservation programs administered by NRCS and the USDA's Farm Service Agency. These include the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and others.

For more information on EQIP and how you can apply, contact Rich Casale of the NRCS at 831-475-1967; or see him at the September meeting.



In Memorium: Stu Miller

Our friend, fellow vineyard owner, and long standing member of VASCM (way before this little group had an official name!), Stu Miller passed away on Aug 6. Stu was a very special person, unpretentious and proud of his Chardonnay Vineyard on Rider Ridge Road - his grapes have been a part of this appellation for years. Stu was born in San Francisco in 1928 and had the great good fortune to live in Santa Cruz since he was 2 years old. No wonder he had such a great attitude!

A life celebration and an 80th birthday party will be held on October 4th. Please email JkimbleM@aol.com or call Joan Kimble (Stu's wife and life partner since 1953) at 831-426-8945.

Memorial donations may be made to Hospice of Santa Cruz County at 94- Disc Drive, Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

May we all be inspired by Stu's absolute love of his grapes and the miracle of the vine.

Thank you to everyone who helped with VASCM's annual display at the Santa Cruz County Fair: Frank Remde; Pete and Barb Woodruff; Bruce Manildi; John Rogers; and others. This is a great opportunity for our local vineyards and viticulture to be more visible to the public.



Directions to Gatos Locos of Vine Hill for the 9/24 meeting:

2300 Jarvis Rd., Santa Cruz

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.

Officers of the Viticulture Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains:

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Newsletter



**Next Meeting & Workshop: September 24 - "Cover Crops"
at Vine Hill**