

AHLGREN VINEYARD

Founded 1976

WINE CLUB NEWS

Fall 2008

The latest Wine Club tasting selections are:

**2007 AHLGREN Chardonnay
Ventana Vineyards**

**2002 AHLGREN Syrah
Ventana Vineyards**

**AHLGREN Zinfandel
*Livermore Valley***

**2007 AHLGREN Chardonnay
Ventana Vineyards**

This is another in our continuing series of unfiltered Chardonnays.

The richness of bouquet and flavors with accompanying complexity make for a very tasty wine. Butterscotch/pineapple bouquet. Balanced and complex. Bright, rich, crisp and dry. Long, creamy finish.

\$27.00 per bottle

Club Member price per bottle-10% \$24.30

Club Member 12 bottle price-15% \$22.95

**2002 AHLGREN Syrah
Ventana Vineyards**

2002 was a very nice vintage, and this Syrah shows its blessings: distinct varietal characteristics, good, complex flavors, and forward bouquet. This is a user-friendly wine, matching up especially well with grilled and barbecued meats and veggies with the natural hints of smoke that compliment the typical smoky flavors of the variety. However, in addition to the fruits of the grill, we also like this Syrah on the table with pasta, sandwiches, and hearty soups. Actually, this wine complements almost any menu, with the obvious exceptions of light fish and shellfish dishes, or white poultry flesh. Having said that, most unexpectedly, it is a big hit with sushi, and our sushi pals at our favorite local sushi bar are big fans of the Syrah with all manner of sushi. The Semillon is also a big hit there.

We are continuing the special Syrah price, so, Ahlgren Syrah continues to be a great bargain. 230 cases produced. Unfined and unfiltered.

\$15.00 per bottle

Club Member price per bottle - 10% \$13.50

Club Member 12 bottle price - 15% \$12.75

**AHLGREN Zinfandel
Livermore**

At last, the long anticipated AHLGREN Livermore Zinfandel is back! (A sign to that effect was actually posted in our local market in

Boulder Creek.) No vintage date on this one: it is a blend of the 2005 and the 2006, but the Federal Government, in all its wisdom, will not allow us to say that on the label, so non-vintage designated, it is.

This wine is reminiscent of the widely loved 2003, definitely in the late harvest style with 16.9% alcohol and 2% residual sugar. Here again is wine to boldly go with the grilled and the barbecued. Also, excellent for after dinner with nuts, dried fruit, and most definitely with chocolate. We enjoyed it with a stupendous chocolate cake on Dexter's recent birthday: a huge hit.

In fact, this wine has turned out far better than anyone anticipated and has been ranked up with the Ridge late harvest Zin by our reps.

The wine has bright, clean fruit in both the bouquet and the flavors. Unfined and Unfiltered. 356 cases produced.

\$35.00 per bottle

Club Member price per bottle - 10% \$31.90

Club Member 12 bottle price - 15% \$29.75

THE RANT ON DECANT CONTINUES: (A highly abbreviated form.) Remember, give these red wines air! They are wonderful poured straight from the bottle into the glass, but from the bottle to a decanter of any description, and then into the glass, they are even better. Enjoy!

ADDITIONAL WINES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE: We now hold back some wines to have them available for sale at the winery and for Wine Club member rather than just selling them out through restaurants and stores, leaving ourselves the first to run out. So, you will find a nice selection of slightly older vintages, limited quantities, some unavailable elsewhere. (750 ml unless otherwise noted.)

2001AHLGREN Syrah Ventana \$15.00 per bottle

2004 AHLGREN Pinot Noir, Santa Cruz Mountains \$45.00

Three bottle limit

2001 AHLGREN Cab. Sauv. Bates' \$45.00

2001 AHLGREN Cab. Sauv. Bates', Reserve \$65.00

2001 AHLGREN Pinot Noir, Monterey Ventana, 350 ml. \$20.00

2002 AHLGREN Pinot Noir, Monterey Ventana, 350 ml \$25.00

Note: See enclosed Price List for complete listing of wines available at the winery

LATE BREAKING NEWS: 2004 AHLGREN Pinot Noir was just awarded a Gold Medal and Best of Appellation by appellationamerica.com. Search Ahlgren Vineyard under Best of Appellation to find the tasting notes. A very little bit of this wine is left at the winery and may be found in some shops that regularly carry Ahlgren.

ADVENTURES AT AHLGREN VINEYARD, Winemakers' Journal: On September 7th, our own Estate Pinot Noir was the first harvest of Vintage 2008 here at Ahlgren. Like the other vineyards with which, we work, the crop was down, something to do with the droughty year: no rain in March or April, let alone later, and hot late summer days, resulting in earlier than usual ripening in some places. Later, cool weather slowed things down in other vineyards. Location was everything.

The Livermore Valley Semillon crop was so low that there will not be a 2008 AHLGREN Semillon.

Many vineyards ripened a whole month earlier than last year, but in mid-September, the weather cooled a bit, both days and nights, and ripening slowed down. The Bates' Ranch grapes actually went backwards, with sugars falling at one point. This was a blessing, because before the cooling off, the sugars were high, but the flavors had not developed fully. Then, things slowed a bit, giving flavors and balance a chance to developing moderate temperatures.

The Cab and Pinot grapes themselves were small, as were the bunches. We anticipate quite intense wines, not unusual in drought years, indicating the possibility of very high quality, assuming the balance we hope for. As for our Estate Pinot Noir, the balance of acids, sugars, and nicely ripened flavors hold great promise, but the quantity is such that we will have to blend it with a select Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot in order to get a barrel filled.

As of 11/5/08, all of our grapes were fermented and in the barrels. The second batch of Bates' Cabernet was pressed on 11/3/08, which signaled the end of the crush of Vintage 2008 here at Ahlgren Vineyard.

Regarding quantities, of the requested five tons of Bates' Cab, we received just a tad over two tons, and only one ton of Bates' Cab Franc, with so little Bates' Merlot, only a few dozen pounds, that we fermented it with the Cabernet Sauvignon. We felt very lucky to get two tons of Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir of the five

we requested, but, happily, we received a full five tons of Livermore Zinfandel, and an equal amount of Ventana Chardonnay.

The grapes are all promising, flavors fairly intense, tannins and acids solid.

While harvest volumes were 30%-50% down overall statewide, prices were up quite a bit from last year on all varieties.

A RECIPE? If it had not been so tasty, it could not be mentioned here, but the popcorn we had planned to accompany election night returns was forgotten in the excitement, anxiety, and intensity of our attention to the events of the evening. Following up the next night, Val popped some in a cast iron skillet and seasoned it with melted butter, olive oil, a bit of cumin, garlic powder, and paprika plus the mandatory salt.

Good enough to become a standard snack in a household that, in the interests of keeping waistlines under control, if never again buff, typically does not indulge in many snacks.

ABOUT OUR BOTTLE CHOICES: Ahlgren sticks to traditional bottles, Bordeaux and Burgundy styles, varying colors somewhat, but avoiding the beautiful heavy glass sometimes favored by some other producers of fine wines. Why? For environmental reasons: heavier glass requires more energy to produce and to transport without enhancing the quality of the wine inside. Please recycle.

VINEYARD AND WINERY PRACTICE AT AHLGREN VINEYARD: The vineyard, garden, and surrounding property have been managed organically and sustainably from the beginning of our ownership in 1972, with the single exception of some mineral fertilizer as a part of getting the vines established some years ago, and an innocuous herbicide used in 1973 on a massive growth of poison oak growing just where our water tank had to go.

When organic certification first came along, we started the process, but were deterred from completing it by the cost of the inspections, the paperwork, and the fact that we were spending hours educating the inspector who was new to the concept. Nevertheless, we continue our practice: perennial cover cropping, mowed not tilled; organic fertilizer applied in very limited amounts, no herbicides or pesticides. Crop, hand picked.

In the winery, similar environmentally sound practices are followed. We use minimal amounts of sulfites and then only to protect the wines from oxidation. In spite of concern about sulfites, there has never been a wine that is totally free of them, because sulfite is naturally occurring in wine, created by the yeast during fermentation.

We add a pure strain of wine yeast at fermentation and a malo lactic culture to insure the secondary, the malo lactic fermentation that yields a stable wine. If the malo lactic fermentation is completed, that is, all the natural malic acid is converted into lactic acid, the wine is smoother, more complex, and will not require filtration. Because of its complex acids, tannins, and alcohol, wine is a self preserving beverage, and requires no additives to make it sound or age well. And, no human pathogen has ever been found to live in wine. Wine is remarkable, and very nice stuff.

ORDERING AHLGREN WINES: As a Wine Club Member, your credit card information is on file here, so you can simply fax or email us your orders, or just give us a call. No need to worry about online security. We always enjoy talking with you. Just let us know what you want shipped. We can run the charge using your credit card number on file, and the wine will be on its way.

Or, to fax an order, you can use the enclosed order form, or download the order form from the web site, fill it in, and fax it on to us.

Tell a friend! They can download the order form and/or the Wine Club Application directly from the web page, or they can give us a call.

To contact us directly:

Long distance: 1-800-338-6071; fax 1-831-338-9111.

Local phone: 831-338-6071; email ahlgren@ahlgrenvineyard.com.

AVOID MISSING YOUR WINE CLUB SHIPMENT. If you have missed a shipment, it is because your credit card did not clear, or because the wine was returned due to an address problem. Contact us, if we have not contacted you.

We send postcards to alert you to update all info before it is time to ship, but even so, sometimes credit card charges will not go through for all the various reasons that such things happen. Please be certain to call us, email, or fax us, keeping us up to date on all of your info, so that you can receive your wines without delay.

As you know, delivery requires a signature. It is the law, and sometimes an inconvenient one. If it is difficult for you to be available for the signature, shipping to a business address where someone is always present, can be a perfect solution.

PICK UP AT THE WINERY: Some members, for whom it is convenient, choose to pick up their Wine Club wines at the winery on a Saturday afternoon during our tasting hours. This makes for an opportunity to avoid shipping charges, to taste, talk, and enjoy the always gorgeous views. Due to very limited storage space here at the winery, if wine is not picked up before the next shipment is ready, we will ship the previous box on to you. We will give you a call before doing so, however. But please pick up promptly to avoid the cost of shipping.

REGARDING OUT OF STATE SHIPPING: We now have permits to ship to a growing number of states. The shipping situation changes almost daily, so if you have friends or family who would enjoy the delights and benefits of becoming an Ahlgren Wine Club Member, have them give us a call to discuss the possibilities of shipping to them.

We continue to ship third day rather than second day, except where faster delivery is needed. It does reduce the shipping cost, at least a little. With gas prices coming down, we hope that the fuel surcharges will be reduced. FedEx readjusts them every month.

GIFT SHOPPING: Don't forget how easy and convenient it is to send wine for holidays or special celebrations! We are finding a number of folks are selecting Ahlgren wines as birthday, business and wedding gifts. Also, we have gift certificates available in any amount. Save time and traveling around for holiday shopping. Just give us a call. We can include a card with your message and a gold wine bag gift wrap. Give us a call for the most convenient of gift shopping: 800-338-6071 or 831-338-6071.

WINE CLUB MOVING FORWARD: *We have all suffered from the nightmare of the wine club third party database. We have a new consultant, and will be moving it all in-house. Our incredibly competent bookkeeper, Shealagh, is now managing the Wine Club computer records. Things are shaping up and settling down. Please know that we are working very hard to get and keep it all going smoothly.*

TASTINGS AND SALES: SATURDAYS 12-4 AT THE WINERY: *As always, it is great time to visit, pick up your Wine Club packages, and taste some current releases, and meet the interesting people who, like you, find their way to Ahlgren Vineyard. We look forward to seeing you.*

*That's all for now.
SALUD! CHEERS! À VOTRE SANTÈ! PAX!*

Dexter and Val Ahlgren

GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) ACCORDING TO THE SURGEON GENERAL, WOMEN SHOULD NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES DURING PREGNANCY BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF BIRTH DEFECTS. (2) CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IMPAIRS YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE A CAR OR OPERATE MACHINERY, AND MAY CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS."