

# AHLGREN VINEYARD

*Founded 1976*

## WINE CLUB NEWS

*Spring 2009*

*The latest Wine Club tasting selections are:*

**2007 AHLGREN Semillon  
Livermore Valley**

**2007 AHLGREN Pinot Noir  
Santa Cruz Mountains, Veranda Vineyard**

**2006 AHLGREN Cabernet Sauvignon  
*Santa Cruz Mountains, Bates' Ranch***

**2007 AHLGREN Semillon  
Livermore Valley**

To borrow from a previous edition of the Wine Club News: "Our early experimentation with Semillon yielded the surprise that we preferred American oak over French oak barrels for this variety," even though we continue to prefer French oak barrels for Chardonnay as well as Pinot Noir.

The 2007 Semillon, is dry as Ahlgren Semillon always is, and is a wonderful wine to accompany shellfish, fish, and poultry. We especially like it with cracked Dungeness crab, spicy oriental foods, sushi, sashimi, and curries as well. A big favorite is Semillon with sushi. The wine complements the cool rice, bringing out a creamy character, enhancing the flavors marvelously well. Incidentally, it was not until Val bought a little Japanese rice cooker and started making sushi rolls that this favorite wine/food combination was discovered at Ahlgren Vineyard. Since it is not realistic to expect fresh, raw fish here on the mountain, except under special circumstances, Val mainly depends on cooked shrimp for the fish in her homemade sushi rolls, and the results are more than satisfactory, in fact, delicious, especially when accompanied by Ahlgren Semillon.

Ahlgren Semillon ages very well, almost always. The 2003 shows some bottles to be the exception to that rule, and we really do not know if it is a few corks, or exactly what. However, vintages back to the original Ahlgren Livermore Valley Semillon of 1981 are still sound, and sought after.

The Semillon vineyard production in 2008 was so low that there will be no Ahlgren Semillon, Vintage 2008. So now, let us concentrate on the 2007.

This 2007 Semillon exhibits a lovely, rich Semillon bouquet and flavors. Crisp, bright and fresh with notes of citrus. Along with clean, crisp flavors, the wine shows a pleasing richness that is typical of Ahlgren Semillon. There are tropical notes, and a hint of honey, no doubt due to a touch of botrytis, the famous "noble rot." The Feds will not let us say "botrytis" on the label unless it is a late harvest wine. It is not late harvest, but it does have a touch of the enriching qualities given by a touch of botrytis. You can read it here, but you may not have that information on the label. The wine has fine balance with a long finish. It was fermented in 50 gallon oak barrels and aged on the lees. We like to drink it lightly chilled and enjoy it both as an aperitif and with food. 252 cases produced.

	\$17.00 per bottle
Club Member price per bottle-10%	\$15.30
Club Member 12 bottle price-15%	\$14.45

**2007 AHLGREN Pinot Noir  
Santa Cruz Mountains, Veranda Vineyard**

Veranda Vineyard is a relatively new vineyard for Ahlgren. It is located in the mountains above the County Fairgrounds in Watsonville, and is owned by Frank and Nancy Remde. The vineyard is dedicated to Pinot Noir and clones 15, 115, and Pommard. Although the Ahlgren Pinot from this vineyard may be faultless, the vineyard is located on the San Andreas Fault at an altitude of about 500 feet, a very cool area. Several wineries buy these grapes, and we are pleased to be among them. 2007 was a very nice vintage, and this Pinot Noir bears witness to that statement: distinct varietal characters, tasty complex flavors, and forward floral toasty bouquet with rich fruit flavors showing notes of cherry. The wine is mouth filling and balanced with a long finish This is a sophisticated, user-friendly wine, and will complement almost any menu.

	\$28.50 per bottle
Club Member price per bottle - 10%	\$25.65
Club Member 12 bottle price - 15%	\$24.23

**2006 AHLGREN Cabernet Sauvignon  
Santa Cruz Mountains, Bates Ranch**

Bates' Ranch never fails to please. This 2006 continues to fulfill expectations. At 12.5%, it is not the big, high alcohol wine that some recent vintages have produced. It does, however have everything that mere alcohol cannot bring to a wine. It has elegance and balance that is classic Cabernet at its best. Complexity graces its bouquet and flavors. There are hints of herbs, without greenness, and a tease of spice. This wine really loves air and opens beautifully in the glass. Needless to say, given our past record on the subject, we recommend decanting. Unfined and Unfiltered. 488 cases produced.

	\$35.00 per bottle
Club Member price per bottle - 10%	\$31.50
Club Member 12 bottle price - 15%	\$29.75

**THE RANT ON DECANT CONTINUES:** *(A highly abbreviated version.)* Veteran wine club members have heard this all before, but for new members, we must continue our mission. 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. Try tasting a sip or two from the bottle to the glass. Then decant and taste again. You will quickly get the idea. The wines will continue to open in the glass and give you an increasingly pleasurable experience, which is what this is all about. Enjoy!

**ADDITIONAL WINES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:** We now hold back some wines to have them available for sale at the winery and for Wine Club members rather than just selling them out through restaurants and stores, only to leave 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.)

2005 AHLGREN Cab. Sauv. Bates'	\$37.50
2001 AHLGREN Cab. Sauv. Bates'	\$45.00
2001 AHLGREN Cab. Sauv. Bates', Reserve	\$65.00
2001 AHLGREN Pinot Noir, Monterey Ventana, 375 ml.	\$20.00
2002 AHLGREN Pinot Noir, Monterey Ventana, 375 ml	\$25.00

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

**LATE BREAKING NEWS:** This comes under the category of "Can you believe this? After many years of showing the bottling date of our wines on the side label, the Feds denied our original label approval application for the 2007, Santa Cruz Mountain, Veranda Vineyard Pinot Noir on the grounds that it listed the bottling date. This very relevant piece of information is no longer permitted. Whodda thunk? A truthful statement giving useful information to the consumer is not allowed!

**ADVENTURES AT AHLGREN VINEYARD:** Spring is definitely here. The permanent Cover crop in the vineyard is luxuriant in all its varieties of early ripening beneficial clovers Val has broadcast over the years, most notably including rose clover, plus the deep rooted, very early ripening Zorro fescue, the lupins, and all the other volunteers that thrive on the spring rains like those we had this year. The vine rows are being string mowed, and the family Lamborghini, the tractor, is just about finished with its spring renovation, so the rest of the serious mowing will begin very soon.

While watering the plants on the porch the other day, Dexter glanced over toward the driveway and saw a beautiful wild bobcat sauntering along, looking as poised as if he was tame, which he definitely is not.

Our very welcome Black Phoebes are back, and there seem to be more this year than ever before. They like to be around households and gardens, roosting on any convenient place with a view so they can watch for insects. Once the prey is spotted, the Phoebe puts on a aerial display, flitting, diving, rising and dining. We love these little birds, but do wish they would find a little more fitting roosting spot than the antennae of the our cars! They create their own little guano island wherever they stand and wait, which means that the cars have to be washed down constantly in order to be presentable. Mother Nature always wins.

The latest bird sighting of special note: a big, beautiful Great Blue Heron flapping its way through the redwoods on the north side of the house/winery just at window level, eye to eye. An amazing and unexpected sight. Not since 1986 have we spotted one here.

Working in the vineyard, shoot thinning to make certain there is no over-cropping, we are seeing lots of lady bugs, juvenile and adult, always a sign of a healthy environment and one of the untold benefits of never having used insecticide there. The vines are looking very good. The rains this spring were more than welcome. In fact, the whole landscape is looking lovely, live oaks sprouting a halo of fresh green leaves, little wildflowers and big ones too like the wild Douglas irises. We see lots of blue-eyed grass this year, actually a small prolific wild iris that just comes into the garden and around the place.

And speaking of lady bugs, we came upon clouds of "flies" down below the vineyard toward the river, the San Lorenzo, that were strangely red. Closer inspection revealed that they were lady bugs, a hatch of multitudes, remarkable to see.

Val picked up the tomato plants, the peppers and the eggplants and basil, from our local organic educational garden, Camp Joy, in Boulder Creek, to which we recommend a visit when you are in the neighborhood.

If you remember our standard poodle Art, you will know how much we miss him now that he is holding forth in Poodle Heaven. The good news is that we made a match with a sort of mini-Art on the internet a couple of months ago.

His name is Prez. It was "President" when we got him, but that is much too long a name for a 16 pound presence, so we shortened it up. He is very poodle at first glance, although his legs are a bit short for a poodle, even a mini, and his ears have a bit of a fold, not hanging straight down like a pure poodle. Take him for a walk, and you begin to get the idea that there is some beagle in the mix. Nose to the ground, beagling all the way. "Beagling," Val heard on a TV doggie show means a dog running along with its nose to the ground sniffing for prey. Britannica says it means hunting for rabbits with a beagle. Either way, walking with Prez down the driveway in the morning to get the paper is an adventure. His breed? A secret recipe.

Shealagh, our bookkeeper, just reported seeing "our" bobcat rolling around, celebrating the pleasures of the freshly mown hay down by the gate near the big oak tree.

**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.*

**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, have moved 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."