

AHLGREN VINEYARD

Founded 1976

WINE CLUB NEWS

Fall 2006

The latest Wine Club tasting selections are:

**2005 AHLGREN Chardonnay
Monterey, Ventana Vineyards**

**2002 AHLGREN Merlot
Santa Cruz Mountains, Bates' Ranch**

**2002 AHLGREN Cabernet Franc
Santa Cruz Mountains, Bates' Ranch**

**2005 AHLGREN Chardonnay
Monterey, Ventana Vineyards**

Here is another unfiltered Ahlgren Chardonnay. This is definitely a path we plan to follow whenever the inherent stability of the wine permits. As is to be expected with an unfiltered white wine, there is a slight haze, but not to worry, the wine is fine, more than fine.

The flavors of this 2005 are entirely consistent with those of the 2003 and 2004, which were also unfiltered, although this wine is still richer and more complex. We have repeated earlier label descriptions for this Chardonnay for the practical reason of avoiding federal label approval delays that occur every time we have to apply to Washington, D.C. for permission to make a change in description.

In this wine, we detect the presence of butterscotch and pineapple in the bouquet with a richness suggesting something else, almost like perfectly ripened melon. Flavors galore burst out in the mouth: again, a suggestion of melon plus a tease of citrus, rather like orange zest. The feeling in the mouth ("Mouthfeel," that disgusting bit of jargon used as though it were nice and professional.) is rich and full, and the finish seems determined to just keep keeping on. The wine is balanced, crisp and dry, even though rich, and should go well with a broad selection of food, but we like it as a lightly chilled aperitif. Great way to start a meal or any occasion!

*We chill this wine before serving, but not too cold, please. Fermented and aged in French oak barrels. Unfiltered.
135 cases produced.*

\$20.00 per bottle

Club Member price per bottle - 10% = \$18.00

Club Member 12 bottle price - 15% = \$ 17.00

(The price on this wine will be raised to \$25 on January 1. Wine Club discounts will still apply.)

**2002 AHLGREN Merlot
Santa Cruz Mountains, Bates' Ranch**

With the bad press given Merlot in Sideways, we can only say, had the movie had been made in the Santa Cruz Mountains, they could not have gotten away with the trashing. Perhaps it is easy to slam Santa Barbara Merlot, but you would have a hard time discounting our Santa Cruz Mountains, Bates' Ranch Merlot.

The Bates' Ranch Merlot vineyard has very low yields, only about a half of ton to the acre, resulting in concentrated flavors. And, this wine is especially full of flavors, starting with suggestions of rich blackberries. No hint, to our palates, of the herbaceous qualities of many Merlots from other appellations.

95% Merlot, 5% Cab Sauv, all from Bates' Ranch. Lovely fruity, briery, dusty bouquet, full of big, rich, fruity flavors with notes of the aforementioned blackberry. Mouth filling, complex, and dry. Definitely an attention getting Merlot. Great with anything you would match to a favorite Cabernet Sauvignon. Unfined and unfiltered. Bottled 4/28/04. Only 32 cases produced. Wine Club, as always, gets first dibs.

\$26.00 per bottle.

Club Member price per bottle - 10% = \$23.40 per bottle.

Club Member 12 bottle price - 15% = \$22.10 per bottle.

**2002 AHLGREN Cabernet Franc
Santa Cruz Mountains, Bates' Ranch**

This 2002 Ahlgren Cab Franc exhibits the familiar and popular characteristics of previous vintages: Softness, richness, with a spicy, earthy, berry bouquet followed by bright complex fruit flavors. Elegant, balanced and firm of structure. Complex and mouth filling with a long finish. Unfined and unfiltered. Only 97 cases produced.

\$26.00 per bottle

Club Member price per bottle - 10% = \$23.40 per bottle

Club Member 12 bottle price - 15% = \$22.10 per bottle

NOTES ON THE 2001 AHLGREN, CABERNET SAUVIGNON, SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS, BATES' RANCH: *We are pleased to report that this wine, included in your last Wine Club shipment, was awarded a Gold Medal and a Best of Show at the 2006 Santa Cruz Wine Judging.*

RESERVE AHLGREN CABERNET SAUVIGNON, SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS, BATE'S RANCH: *Now available. So impressed and pleased were we with the 2001 Cab, that we selected three barrels and set them aside for another year of barrel aging, resulting in additional layers of complexity coming from the evaporation through the barrel more than from the additional flavors extracted from the wood itself. Consider the barrel as a filter between the atmosphere of the winery and the wine, and you have a suggestion of what this extra year of time involves. This wine is firmly structured, has sound fruit and acid balance as does the original release, and needs more time in the bottle to bring its many blessings together. Three bottle limit on orders. \$65 per bottle. 10% Wine Club discount = \$58.50*

PREMIER CRUZ TASTING: *On November 4th an elegant tasting of Santa Cruz Mountain Cabernet Sauvignons was held at the Marriott Hotel in San Jose. Some 24 Cabernets were presented. We poured the 2001 Bates' and also, participating in a special tasting of rare and older Cabs, poured a 1990 Bates'. It was a wonderful and fascinating experience. Watch for this tasting next fall. Coming early next year will be the "Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Paradise" tasting, featuring Pinot Noirs from our appellation. You can contact the Santa*

Cruz Winegrowers' Association for information on these and other special appellation events. (831-479-9463)

THE RANT ON DECANT CONTINUES: *(Lots of repetition here for the benefit of the new Wine Club Members.)* We keep hearing from Wine Club members, reporting success and surprise with the results of their decanting experiments. If you do not have a handy decanter, but you do have a steady hand or a funnel, simply decant into a clean wine bottle, a pitcher, or even a Mason jar. If you cannot decant, at least pull the corks and put the reds in a place where they can gently come up to room temperature.

We are reminded every time we open a bottle of our red wines and taste, then decant, and then taste again, that all Ahlgren reds, and other reds as well, but most especially Pinot Noirs, respond dramatically to decanting.

Heed not our advice on warming and airing, and you will still have a very satisfying experience, but something even finer awaits you in these well-structured red wines. Young or old, they have been closed away from air for many months or many years. Give 'em air!

ARE YOU A TASTER OR A PROCRASTINATOR? *This release is comprised of three wines: the 2005, Ventana Chardonnay, the 2002 Bates' Ranch Merlot, and the 2002 Bates' Ranch Cabernet Franc. We say, in all humility, that each is an exceptional wine, produced in small quantities, and destined to be highly sought after for drinking and cellaring. Before any of us realize it, they will be sold out, and no longer available.*

When you taste your Wine Club wines within a reasonable time following their arrival, you have the opportunity to order more of your favorites before we are sold out. Some folks stash the Wine Club Shipment away when it arrives to give the wines additional age before tasting. A good idea, but we frequently get calls from Wine Club Members asking for more of a wine that was shipped a year or two ago, but has just been tasted. They love it! Too late! We are sold out. So, taste your wines without waiting too long to insure that you can get more of the wines you want, before they are sold out. If you prefer to hold the shipment for aging, increase your Wine Club order and receive more bottles in the regular shipment, some to taste and some to cellar. Then, you can both evaluate and age the wines. In any event, be ready to reorder in a timely fashion.

ADDITIONAL WINES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:

2000 AHLGREN Syrah Ventana

Special price on this lovely Syrah: \$15 per bottle, or \$180 per case.

(No additional discounts on this wine.)

2001 AHLGREN Semillon, Livermore

\$16.50

A lovely, refreshing wine. Great for the holidays.

2002 AHLGREN Pinot Noir, Ventana

\$25.00

Nice bottle age, showing very well.

Non Vintage AHLGREN Zin	\$17.00
<i>An exceptional buy, good Zin character, fine food Zin.</i>	
2003 AHLGREN Zin, Livermore.	\$26.00
<i>The same mighty Zin sent in your last Wine Club shipment.</i>	
2001 AHLGREN Cab, S.C. Mts., Bates	\$30.00
<i>Wonderful vintage, wonderful Cab.</i>	
1998 Tre Vini Rossi	A great food wine. \$15.00
<i>Blend of Nebbiolo and Cab Franc. Very European in style.</i>	

ADVENTURES AT AHLGREN VINEYARD: *As we write this, we have just completed the 2006 Vintage. The Chardonnay is safely in French barrels, fermenting away, filling the winery with unbelievably gorgeous aromas that wafted up into the house above the winery. That is something to wake up to in the morning! All of the reds are pressed and safely in barrels to begin aging, except for the last batch of Bates' Cab, which was pressed last Friday and is being racked into barrels today.*

The crush has gone very well, batches of grapes ripening at a leisurely rate, if crush can be called leisurely at all. A couple of weeks of cold foggy weather was worrisome, but it passed and our Indian Summer came, a bit later than expected, but in time to warm things up and completing the last days of ripening.

This could well be called our Year of the Raccoon. We have been visited repeatedly by what we think is a female raccoon of rather light colored markings. She is a little smaller than her friend, a larger, darker companion, that we call The Consort. She has only brought him to meet us once, that we know of, so we do not know if this is a serious relationship.

The other day, we discovered her in the bottom of one of the redwood fermentors outside the winery door. Fortunately, the fermentor was empty, except for the raccoon. Since she is remarkably athletic, leaping tall living room rafters at a single bound, we expected that she could easily leap the four-foot high staves of the tank, and be on her way. The more we thought about it, worrying that she might be ill, sitting so quietly, as we observed her resigned patience, seeing the keen attention registered in her bright, alert eyes, the more we suspected that because she could not get a running start to make the leap to freedom, she was stuck. So, Val got a board and made a plank for her to run up to the top of the tank. It took her about a half a minute to calculate the possibilities and make her move up the board and away, down the hillside. A beautiful little creature, and a welcome neighbor, who like other neighbors, is best appreciated when she is here only on brief and unobtrusive visits.

YES, THE WINERY, HOME AND LAND ARE STILL FOR SALE

The contract with the agent has expired, and the sign is gone, but we are still looking for the future owners of this beloved place. Wineries are notoriously difficult to sell, taking an average of two years on the market. The number of folks who wish to own and operate a winery is remarkably small, however enthusiastic they may be. So, we will welcome the one or ones who find this

place just right for their desires and ambitions. If you know of a likely prospect, let us know. We will be listing on craigslist as soon as we recover from the work of vintage and our absorption with this Wine Club shipment.

A RECIPE: *When we were in Nice in February 2005, we had socca at the market. Shortly after we got home, we found the enclosed recipe in the Santa Cruz Sentinel, and tried it out. It tasted just like it had in Nice! Easily made. Just get some garbanzo bean flour, and you are on your way. Val made it very simply, no added onions or rosemary, options that the recipe suggests, and we thought it was delicious.*
Enjoy!

MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC: *Recently, we donated a magnum plus a 375ml bottle of 1983 AHLGREN Cabernet Sauvignon, Bates' Ranch to the annual auction at Kuumba Jazz Center in Santa Cruz, a non-profit venue for all sorts of wonderful live jazz, and more. Pleased to say, our auction item brought in \$375. It is fun to see a wine so honored.*

If you like small clubs serving food and wine at the little table in front of your seat, check out Kuumba's Monday night concerts. They catch big name performers traveling up or down the west coast, to and from San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Ocean of Love, written and sung by Travis James Humphry on his album Cowgirl Romance features an inspired love song that includes the remarkable line, ... "sailing on our ocean of love, boat's just big enough to bring what we need, a barbecue, and blanket or two, and a bottle of Ahlgren wine...."

Ocean of Love is coming soon to www.ahlgrenvineyard.com.

BOULDER CREEK: *The local business association of our little town has produced a pamphlet featuring a self guided historical walking tour, illustrated with sketches by the late Rachel Bachrach, our own local artist, who for years, devoted much of her talent to creating works of art, preserving our local heritage.*

We include a copy for your pleasure.

REGARDING OUT OF STATE SHIPPING: *We have made great headway, and 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 can also ship gifts of wine to many states.*

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 here, and the wine will be on its way. A great escape from shopping the mall for gifts!

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.

Unless excessively hot or cold weather indicates otherwise, we ship at the beginning of each week so that wines reach you before the weekend.

PICK UP AND DELIVERY: 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.

GIFT SHOPPING: Don't forget how easy and convenient it is to send wine for the holidays or special occasions! And, we are finding that an increasing number of folks are selecting Ahlgren wines as wedding gifts.

It may seem difficult to think of gifts or ways to say thank you these days when so many of us have more than we need of everything, but Ahlgren wines never fail to please and are appropriate for almost any occasion. Also, we have gift certificates available in any amount. Give us a call for the most convenient of gift shopping: 800-338-6071 or 831-338-6071.

TASTINGS AND SALES: SATURDAYS 12-4 AT THE WINERY: It is a great time to visit, pick up your Wine Club packages, and taste some current releases.

That's all for now. We look forward to seeing you. In the meantime, sail on your own ocean of love with a bottle of Ahlgren wine!

SALUD! CHEERS! À VOTRE SANTÈ! PAX!

Dexter and Val

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."