



Spring 2010 Newsletter
Including

A GUIDE TO NAPA VALLEY RESTAURANTS

Upcoming Release Dates:

<i>2006 Concerto</i>	Just Released
<i>2008 Vivacé Ermitage Blanc</i>	June 1
<i>2009 Scherzo Cabernet Rosato</i>	June 1
<i>2007 Adagio</i>	October 2010

Early Bud Break. March 22 marked our “official” bud break this year. It was a week or two earlier than normal. The Sauvignon Blanc grapes were the first to sprout. Then the Merlot with the Cabernet Franc close behind. The Cabernet Sauvignon was last, as expected.



Bud Break in the Merlot Vineyard

Early Frost Worries. Spring is always the most dangerous for grapes in the Napa Valley. Early frost can easily kill young leaves and shoots which can significantly reduce the size of the fall crop. The threat of frost does not generally disappear until mid-May. We were worried this

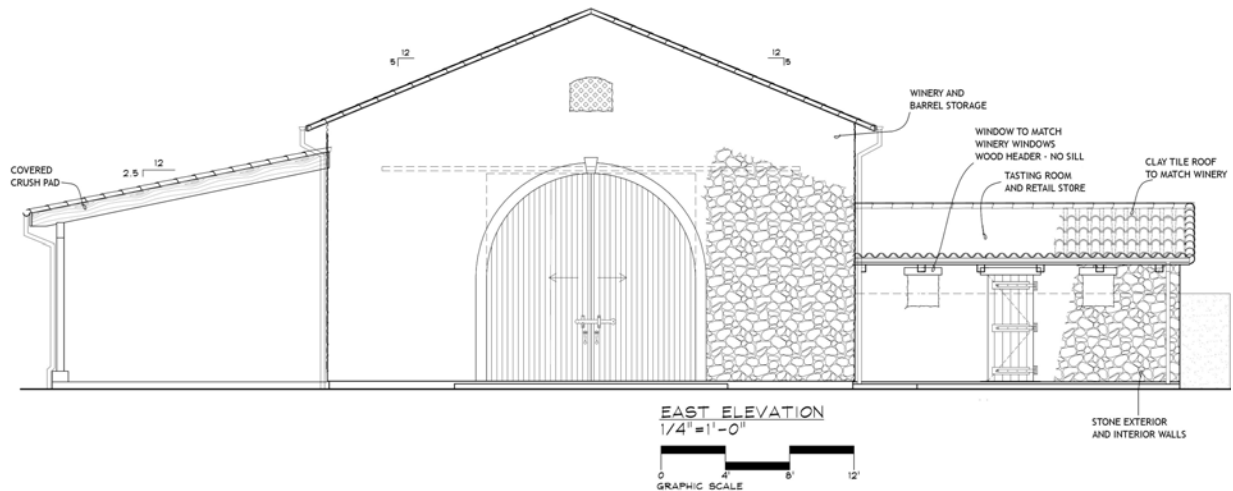
year when, from bud break until April 10, the low was in the 30's every night except one. However, it looks like we made it through that period without any major problem and we are now breathing a little more easily. Our next worry will be very hot summer days. Then, we will worry about rain just before harvest. But that's farming.

CONCERTO Release. We released our stunning *2006 Concerto, Beckstoffer ToKalon Vineyard, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon* on April 18. The release was very successful and we expect to be sold out of the wine soon. If you have not purchased your allotment you should do so quickly. While it is possible to purchase single bottles of *Concerto*, if you purchase either 3 bottles or 6 bottles it comes packaged in a branded collector wooden box. Maximum allotment is one 6 bottle box for non-wine club members and two 6 bottle boxes for club members.



Winery Permit Update. After more than a year in the process, we finally have our winery use permit. We have been making our wines at a custom crush facility since 2005, but this fall we will be making wines “at home.” We will be converting our barn to a winery over the summer, adding a covered crushpad, installing the equipment and building a small stone building for our tasting room. We expect to be completed just before harvest, so if you are in the Napa Valley call (707-225-2276) and come visit. We will be open for tours and tastings by appointment.

KITCHAK CELLARS WINERY, CRUSHPAD AND TASTING ROOM



NAPA RESTAURANT GUIDE

Our Favorite Napa Restaurants. Everyone seems to ask about the best Napa Valley Restaurants, or new Napa Restaurants. So, after extensive, detailed research and testing, here are our recommendations.

Yountville. Thomas Keller's **French Laundry (707-944-2380)** is on everyone's list. Wine Spectator recently ran a cover story that called it the "Best Restaurant in America." Michelin gave it 3 stars. It is also the most expensive and the most difficult to reserve. You have to plan ahead. Call exactly 2 months ahead of the day you want to be there. If you can't get in or don't want to spend hundreds of dollars for lunch, you can also try Thomas' fare at the two other local restaurants he owns. **Bouchon (707-944-8037)**, just down the street from the French Laundry, is a classic French Bistro. Noisy and cramped, it is exciting, great food, and won't require a trip to Fort Knox before you go. You can also try **Ad Hoc (707-944-2487)** another Thomas Keller restaurant in "Kellerville" (Yountville). Fixed menu, fixed price and a lot of food to eat. You can check out the day's menu on the internet before you go at www.adhocrestaurant.com. While interesting, we think there are some better choices. **Bistro Jeanty (707-944-0103)** is our overall favorite. Also in Yountville, it is nestled midway between Bouchon and Ad Hoc. It has the best Mussels in America and a lot of other very interesting dishes, such as French fried smelt and roasted bone-

marrow; it is a quintessential French Bistro. You can also sit at the bar or the community table. Surprisingly, it is one of the few restaurants where you can eat outside on the patio. Go for a late lunch, arrive at 1:30 and stay until 4. You will enjoy every minute of it. Also consider Michael Chiarello's Bottega Ristorante (**707-945-1050**) for a lively time and good Italian food.

St. Helena, a little further up the valley, offers a number of very good options. For lunch, you can stop at **Gott's Roadside Tray Gourmet** (formerly Taylor's Refresher). No reservation required, just drive up for a gourmet picnic at a former drive-in. Don't be put off by the line around noon. It moves fast and the food is worth it. You can get a shrimp burger and a ½ bottle of wine and eat at a picnic table on their large lawn. Fun, fast and interesting. **The Farmstead (707-963-9181)** is a new restaurant at the south edge of St. Helena. Created by the owners of a large organic farm named Long Meadow Ranch, it is a classic American restaurant with a grass-fed beef special every day. Chef Sheamus Feeley (formerly of the Rutherford Grill) is doing a great job and the farm-like ambiance is delightful. Sit at one of the community tables and meet some new friends. **Cook (707-963-7088)** a tiny restaurant in St. Helena, is a local favorite. It is right on the main street, just a few steps south of the movie theater. It is easy to miss. With a bar that seats 8 and only about 30 other seats in the restaurant, it is cozy and comfortable. Every dish on the menu is done to perfection. It is an

excellent spot for an early dinner or a late lunch. If you are observant you will most certainly see a local winemaker there during either lunch or dinner. We also like **Market (707-963-3799)** for a quick bite and a glass of wine any time of the day, just across the street from the movie theater.

There are more than a few very good restaurants in the **Town of Napa** worth the trip “down-valley.” **Bistro Don Giovanni (707-224-3300)** just north of town and on the east side of highway 29, is a typical Italian eatery. Although a bit large and “touristy”, the food is reliably good and the atmosphere pleasant. Keep your eyes open for the Napa Mafia, they are sure to be at the table next to you. It is hard to imagine a vegetarian restaurant with a Michelin star, but **Ubuntu (707-251-5656)** in downtown Napa has that unique distinction. Not only is it vegetarian, but it also has a yoga studio on a mezzanine above the restaurant. Funky, but really good food, even though the portions may be a bit small. You need to be a bit adventuresome to like it. **Angele (707-252-8115)**, on the Napa River and in the same complex as the Napa River Inn, is another French bistro. It is housed in what appears on the inside to be an antique boat house. Quiet and intimate, it is not quite as consistent as we would like a good restaurant to be, but we have generally enjoyed the food and the service. In the summer you can dine outside on their patio, but remember, summer evenings in Napa, while warmer than San Francisco, usually require a sweater. Finally, **Cole’s Chop House (707-224-6328)** in downtown Napa is one of the best stops for Steaks and Chops. Housed in an old stone building, it has a pleasant “old world” atmosphere if a bit noisy. Here you can find a lamb chop, a pork chop or a beef chop and a number of great cuts of dry aged beef. It also has a good wine list, but then most of the restaurants in the valley do.

Buying Wine in Napa Valley Restaurants

Wine buying in Napa Restaurants is quite different from most other places. Wine mark-up is smaller than we are used to seeing in other resort areas around the US, and you are welcome to bring your own bottle to virtually every restaurant in the valley (including the **French**

Laundry). Corkage costs are never very high with \$15-\$20 per bottle being typical (The French Laundry is \$50). A few restaurants have a policy of “No Corkage...Ever” (**Market** in St. Helena is an example) while **Farmstead** in St. Helena charges \$2.00 per bottle, yes only \$2, which goes to a different local charity each month. It is also very typical for a restaurant to provide one complimentary corkage fee for each bottle you buy from the menu. Bottom line is that we often take a favorite wine and almost as often order our first wine from their menu. If you take your own bottle remember to tip as if you paid for all of your wine at retail.

BUYING OUR WINES

Ordering on the Internet. We do not sell our wines in retail stores. You can order all of them direct from the winery via the internet. Once you order a wine from us, you have an account on our web site. All you have to do is know your username and password. Because we set up the accounts for many of our original customers, you may not know either your username or your password. If not, send us an e-mail at info@kitchakcellars.com and we will send you both via a return e-mail. You can always change your user name and password if you wish.

Kitchak Cellars Wine Clubs. You can join one of Kitchak Cellars wine clubs by visiting www.kitchakcellars.com. When you join a wine club you get automatic discounts of 15-20% on all your future purchases.

Kitchak Cellars’ Shipping Policy. All orders are shipped ground unless you request otherwise. Orders of a full case (or mixed case) or more will continue to receive free ground shipping. If you want overnight or second day air shipping we can accommodate that. You will only be charged our exact cost of the shipping.

New Website update. I know we keep saying this, but we are now very close to going “live” with our new website. It has certainly taken us a lot longer than we anticipated, but we really are getting close. We now hope to have the new site up and running by the first of June.





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SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

