



LFW

G r a p e v i n e

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Finest Harvest Moon Event; Nickel & Nickel Earns Our Highest Praise!

Steve Pitcher, Cellar Master of Lawyer Friends of Wine, and Helene Weiss, Director of Hospitality at Nickel & Nickel, combined forces to provide our group one of those magical evenings that makes you realize you're experiencing something very very special.

I think they even had something to do with that gorgeous harvest moon that shined on us (especially Bill Smith and Laureen, his new bride-to-be).

Sharie Shute was so inspired, she turned in this guest report:

As our luxury motor coach left a chilly, misty, blustery San Francisco, diminished expectations for a warm, sunny twilight at a Napa Winery crept into our minds. But those quickly dissipated as did the fog beyond the Golden Gate. Copies of Steve Pitcher's "Wine News" article (June/July '03) circulated among us to whet our anticipation (and palates) even more.

After a picturesque ride through the changing colors of the Napa Valley, we arrived at the beautiful vineyards of Nickel & Nickel. Helene Weiss greeted us warmly

as we disembarked and were handed a glass of their incredible 2001 John's Creek Vineyard Chardonnay.

Some of our members noted this was simply the best Chardonnay they had ever tasted, and Nickel & Nickel generously refreshed our glasses with refills.

Scrumptious, perfectly paired hors d'oeuvres were passed repeatedly, and after just the right amount of time, we were off on a guided tour of the winery's historic buildings and state-of-the-art facilities.

First, we visited the Queen Anne Sullenger Farmhouse, built in 1884, and now the N & N Visitors Center, sitting in 42 acres of prime Napa Valley vineyards.

We learned the following from Helene:

*16,000 cases are currently produced (anticipating a production of 30,000) from their single varietal vineyards, with *no blending*.

* The # of single vineyards and their resulting unblended wines are:

- 8 cabernet sauvignon
- 3 merlot
- 3 chardonnay
- 2 syrah
- 1 zinfandel



* The Root Cellar offered a 'hands-on' display of soil samples from the 8 cabernet vineyards.

* Darice Spinelli is their winemaker and among the 25% women who hold this title in the Napa Valley.

* The harvest was 3 weeks early this year with the first signs of this appearing in April.

* The Brix # was the same for all varietals this year.

* Regarding extraction from the grapes, a "press" gets more tannin, while the bladder method is better for chardonnay grapes which have thinner skins.

* Specially designed tanks (26) from Mueller Co. have sloped bottoms to slow fermentation, dual thermometers (top and bottom of tanks) and an additional spigot (for ease in tasting).

* Only French Oak is used (55-60% new wood).



Dinner followed in the gloriously illuminated Gleason Barn, which was built of hand-hewn hemlock in Meriden, New Hampshire in the 1770's; it was scheduled to be burned to the ground, and it was spared in the nick of time. It was dismantled, transported and in 2001 reassembled at Nickel & Nickel.

[Additional note of interest from Sharie: There is a wonderful video, "Earth Nectar" which describes in 'accessible' terms the geology of the Napa Valley soils and the differences in the wines these soils produce within the same varietal.]

[Editor Christopher Blunden's note: Nickel & Nickel has a terrific website where you'll discover interesting facts about their wines, tours, tastings and history. You can also join their wine club and buy directly online.] <http://www.nickelandnickel.com/>



Wine Tasting 101

How will Cellar Master Steve Pitcher be able to follow the Harvest Moon event? He's got it all planned, and you're invited!

Oct. 27, 2004 (Wednesday evening) marks our exciting new wine and food appreciation event in the aptly named Bayview Room at the World Trade Club, One Ferry Plaza, in San Francisco. LFW Board members will be on hand to fill your glasses. Check your mailed flyer for details.

And remember, following this interactive learning session, you're invited to revisit your favorite wines with more hors d'oeuvres while enjoying the spectacular view of Treasure Island and the Bay Bridge lighted up against the evening sky.

RSVP deadline for this special evening is 10/25/04.

Bordeaux Event Rescheduled

Bill Smith reports the tentative plans for our event in June 2005 are being revised to schedule the event in late May 2006. This will provide an opportunity for a greater turnout and preparation. *Remark les calendars.*

Save these Dates

October 27, 2004: Wine Tasting 101, by Steve Pitcher, World Trade Club, SF

December 4, 2004: Holiday Claret Dinner at Harris' Steakhouse, SF

January 29, 2005: Winter Follies at the home of Paul Gutierrez

February 2005: German Consulate, SF

March 26, 2005: Cellar Treasure Dinner at Boulevard restaurant, SF