



LFW

G r a p e v i n e

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July Wine Country Getaway

By Eric Behrens



On July 28, our merry band of members boarded a chartered coach that whisked us off to [Canard Vineyard](#) in Calistoga.

We owe thanks to Dick Katz and Steve Martin who organized our visit (and doubled as wine and food servers en route).

As this trip confirmed, some of the best LFW outings are inspired and initiated by our wine-loving members.



Canard's owner, Rich Czapleski, provided a very educational tour of a portion of the 22 acres of vineyards which surround his home. These vineyards, containing vines as

old as 120 years, provide the grapes for all of the varietals (Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc) produced under the Canard label.

Members of LFW were exposed to a very dedicated grower whose entire focus is on the quality of the grapes he produces, a focus which spares no expense to ensure that the wine will be delicious, regardless of the market and weather conditions.

Rich explained the quality of his wines is enhanced by "deficit irrigation" which means he only irrigates his grapes during the most drought-sensitive growth stages of the crop. This selective irrigation forces the grape vines to send roots deeply into the soil. He estimates that some of his roots exceed 30 feet in depth which increases the intensity, depth, and focus of the grapes, but also significantly reduces the yield of the vines.

Rich also brings in workers more often than the average vineyard if quality considerations warrant that extra expense.

LFW members were treated to the results of this dedicated farming both before and during dinner, including some limited quantity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon which retails for \$120 per bottle. Since Rich's limited quantity production always sells out, we especially appreciated his generosity. The extraordinary wine was complemented by a delicious, healthy dinner grilled by Adam, Rich's Marketing Director, which we ate outdoors in the beautiful setting that surrounds Rich's home. It is times like these which make me wonder whether I made the right career choice!

Cellar Master's Corner

by Rod Santos



In my role as your Cellarmaster, I provide an unbiased service as a wine educator, as well as procure world-class wines for short-term aging that we can serve at certain events during the

year. As discussed with the Board of Directors when I assumed this position three years ago, I have a distinct advantage toward that end in my “day job” as a fine wine merchant, because I often have unique opportunities to secure those bottles at a fraction of their original price.

I was also encouraged, however, to alert the LFW membership to any one-time “steals” that I deemed too good to pass up, with full disclosure of having resumed my retail capacity.



Last month, I presented the Board with one such [wine](#), and it was well received (they bought 11 bottles!). Because I have a dear friend who works for the winery, I've been given access to all that remains of the scant inventory – a mere 42 magnums! Please take a look, and let me know via email at

rsantos@winethieves.com if you'd like to order some. I'll then be in contact for payment information. Thanks

[Editor's note: read more about Rod or contact him via the link on our website: <http://www.lawyerfriendsofwine.com/CellarMaster.htm>.]

When a Pioneer Offers You a Glass of Wine . . .

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On the first day of meeting of my future father-in-law Roy Harris, who was at the other end of the pool table in his modest hillside home in Calistoga, he asked me, “So, do you like wine?”

At age 22 on a miniscule budget as a law student at Hastings, my prior exposure to wine was in college and was typical for many students in those days: Cold Duck (a cheap blending of one part dregs of nondescript red wine with two parts of New York sparkling wine); and a medium-sweet, lightly sparkling wine, Lancers (its primary appeal to me was the crock bottle which looked great with a candle and melted wax, but for me, neither of these was worth the subsequent headache I got from actually drinking the stuff).



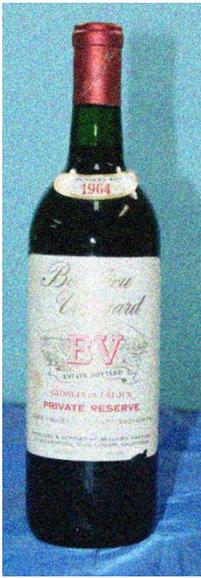
Roy Harris was one of those people who believed if you don't like wine, you simply haven't tasted the wine you like.

At the time, Roy was helping start a vineyard management company for Heublein with his 30-year old boss he later introduced to me named Andy Beckstoffer. (The two of them represented the wine industry in negotiating the first contract with Cesar Chavez and the UFW and went on to negotiate the Farm Workers contract in Napa Valley.)

So what was my brilliant response to Roy (who the [Napa Valley Grape Growers Association](#) and [Napa Valley Vintners Association](#) later designated a Pioneer for the Napa Valley wine industry)?

“Actually, I kind of like beer.”

Tall, handsome Roy smiled broadly and replied with confidence, "I think we can fix that."



He put down his pool cue, told me to take my turn while he disappeared briefly, and returned with two glasses, a cork screw, and a bottle of 1964 BV Napa Valley Private Reserve Georges de Latour Cabernet Sauvignon crafted by legendary winemaker André Tchelistcheff.

He poured us one-third of a glass each, got me to swirl mine a bit, I tasted it

as he smiled tasting his, and he asked, "So, what do you think?"

Pleasantly surprised, I said, "I think I like wine . . . this wine."

Rather than pour more, he said "We'll let that one sit for a while." Like a pleased instructor confirming he'd found a teachable pupil, he promptly produced a different bottle which he opened and poured, a 1968 Inglenook Charbono. "Now try this," he said. Sure enough, I liked that one, too.

In the following memorable minutes, he told me about the dependent relationship between the growers plus their workers (the grape farmers) and the crushers (the wineries), how diverse the climates, soils, and grapes were within the Napa Valley, and how the winemaker serves as a master chef producing wonderful results from key ingredients.

Next, we tasted the first wine again – which was even better now that it had opened up. Then he proceeded to trounce me at pool.

That was my introduction to what back then I called "real" wine, and the

beginning of a joyful life-long adventure discovering my palate's keepers.

In the ensuing forty-two years, Roy has passed on, and is fondly remembered by many fellow Pioneers. Vinifera (that vineyard management company Roy was helping Andy forge) within three years became Beckstoffer Vineyards and since then has grown to be the largest vineyard owner, farming group, and wine grape seller in the Napa Valley and the North Coast, delivering grapes to more than 100 of the state's most famous wineries.

Andy Beckstoffer has won just about every award the wine industry can think up for his significant contributions to the advancement of viticulture quality, vine quality, and business strategies for growers.

Andy even developed a formula for paying growers based on the finished wine value, which reduced the incentive for excessive yield and focused growers on quality.

The next time a spectacular wine thrills your palate, share it of course, and perhaps raise your glass a little higher to toast the Pioneers who helped make it all possible.



Save The Date

August 30, 2012: Thursday Luncheon at Alfred's in San Francisco.

September 22, 2012: Harvest Moon – Winery Dinner (TBA).