



**WILDHURST**  
VINEYARDS

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## Wildhurst Wines Take Top Awards

Wildhurst Vineyards is among the producers that received the Best of Class distinction for their wines at the annual San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. Several Lake County wines won medals at the prestigious event. More than 60 professional judges tasted over 4,700 wines in January.

"Lake County made a very good showing at this competition," observed Wildhurst winemaker Mark Burch. Wildhurst's **2007 Reserve Chardonnay** took Best of Class in the "Chardonnay: \$14 to \$19.99" category. Burch noted that Wildhurst also garnered awards for its **2007 Sauvignon**

**Blanc** (double gold), **2007 Home Ranch Zinfandel** (gold), and **Merlot** (silver) in their respective categories.

Both the Chardonnay and the Sauvignon Blanc have been "very consistent" winners in competition since 2006, according to Burch. The Chardonnay is produced from "outstanding stock" and is competing with cooler climate Chardonnays, he explained. As for the Sauvignon Blanc, he looks to produce a 2008 with "more intensity" and continue the award-winning tradition.

"It's not surprising to see that Lake County wines are among those chosen as the best

by the wine competition judges," noted Shannon Gunier, executive director of the Lake County Winegrape Commission. "Our wineries are making some of the top vintages in the nation. California and the rest of the country is hearing about Lake County because of our wine."

Touted as the largest competition of American wines in the world, the 2008 San Francisco Wine Competition featured a record number of competitors from throughout the United States.

*❧ A Day Without Wine ..... Is Out of the Question ❧*

### Featured Wines for March

❧ **2007 Zinfandel Home Ranch, Lake County, Vineyard Designate** - Pure in varietal character from the white pepper to the wild berry jam and coffee flavors. Toasty vanilla tames a feral edge but doesn't mask the brambly fruit character. It's bone dry with a big Zin finish. Composed of 100% Zinfandel harvested from the Holdenried Ranch. Fermented in 100% stainless; 100% barrel-aged for nine months in 100% two-year old American oak. 15.0% alcohol.

Retail: \$29     Aging potential: 7 years     Cases produced: 314

❧ **2008 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Lake County** - Crisp, clean, fast and racy; special design for 2008 brings a riper style with the lean, crisp grapefruit, lychee nut and herbs you expect. High impact wine with an elegant, pure Sauvignon Blanc finish. Combination of grapes harvested from Holdenried (36.1%), Oldham (21.8%), Dorn (16.7%), Price (10.5%), Roumiguier (10.5%), and Ghilarducci (4.4%) vineyards. Fermented 100% in stainless with no barrel time. 13.75% alcohol.

Retail: \$12     Aging potential: 5 years     Cases produced: 10,500

**Wine Club Members: Please pick up your wines within the next 30 days.  
TASTING ROOM OPEN DAILY 10-5**



### "MARCH MADNESS" CASE SALE

**March 14-17**

Arrive Early for Deals!

Wildhurst Tasting Room

Open Daily 10-5



# Valentine's Winemaker Dinner

An elegant Valentine's Eve dinner at Rob Roy Golf Club on Cobb Mountain featured a special menu, prepared by Chef Israel Gonzales and his staff, paired with Wildhurst wines. The appetizers included Polenta Bruschetta with Mozzarella, roasted pepper, fresh basil and Balsamic Vinaigrette, and Crostini with dill crème fraiche and cucumber relish presented with the **2007 Reserve Chardonnay**.

A creamy crab bisque topped with fresh crab and chives was served with the **2007 Plunkett Creek Chardonnay**. The warm mushroom salad with baby greens and Pancetta Vinaigrette was accompanied by the **2006 Petite Syrah**.

The entrée of Dijon-crusted lamb chops and pepper-dusted salmon fillet, with thyme-scented scalloped potatoes, was masterfully paired with the **2007 Home Ranch Zinfandel**. Dessert was a French

chocolate mousse with fresh berries and espresso whipped cream, served with Wildhurst's **Non Vintage Port**.

Mark your calendar for the 2010 Valentine's Winemaker Dinner, an annual special event one doesn't want to miss!



Tom and Nancy Harty



Sandi Ciardelli and Louie Larroque



Amy Stephenson and Banyon Kirkendall

## Pepper-Dusted Salmon Fillet

Ground pepper medley  
(black, white, green, and allspice)

Salmon fillet

Olive oil

Red wine (Wildhurst Home Ranch Zinfandel)

Beef stock

Lightly dust salmon fillet with the pepper medley. Sear over medium-high heat for four minutes, undisturbed. Flip and finish in a 375° oven for 6-8 minutes. While the salmon is in the oven, reduce one-half cup of the red wine by half. Add the beef stock to the reduced wine; bring to boil, thicken with corn starch mixed with a small amount of water.

Makes one serving

Present the salmon over the red wine sauce along with thyme-scented scallop potatoes. Serve with Wildhurst's Home Ranch Zinfandel.

*Chef Israel Gonzales, Rob Roy Golf Club*

## Featured Employee



**Brent Liner** joined Wildhurst Vineyards one year ago. His extensive background in food and beverage and customer service positions prepared him for retail work in the Tasting Room and helping with special events.

Brent started his 15-year career in customer service with Ritz Carlton Hotels in the early 1990s. He became co-owner of a restaurant in southern California before moving north to a corporate position as Food and Beverage Director for five years at the San Francisco Towers.

After moving to Kelseyville three years ago, Brent worked at local top restaurants before joining the Wildhurst team. Please stop by the Tasting Room and get acquainted with Brent. We welcome him aboard!

## New Stuff



Here we are with our annual release of Sauvignon Blanc. I make my usual promise that you will like it. Actually, I'm hoping you, the competition judges and the wine critics are going to notice the "extra zeal" that's coming in this vintage of **Sauvignon Blanc**. When I say, "fast and racy," I do indeed mean it. It's definitely stylistically what you expect from Wildhurst Sauvignon Blanc, but I'm going after that next level... again! I'll never stop trying to make it better.

In 2008 I have gone after the ripeness that can often elude you when trying to make a Sauvignon Blanc that is crisp and lean. One of the things we do is pick at a somewhat lower sugar level. This will give you great acid, fresh herbaceous characters and an alcohol that fits this style, i.e., under 14.0%. However, if you could find a vineyard that has unusually high acid, even at higher sugar levels, and a vineyard that has high herbaceous components, even at high sugar levels, then perhaps you could have your cake and eat it too...*Shazam!* The end result would certainly be a higher impact wine with all the great flavors of the variety.

The problem is that the higher sugar levels result in too high of an alcohol, which renders the wine hot and masked by the heat of the alcohol. Not to worry; technology to the rescue. Lowering the alcohol content of a wine has been around for quite some time and is legal in the U.S. There are a couple of different methods which we can discuss another time. The important thing for you to know is that it can be done with minimal negative impact on the wine.

So here's the good news: we have the vineyards that I mentioned for acid and herbaceous components. We picked at riper levels than usual. One vineyard we hung the fruit to 30 degrees brix (we usually pick at about 22.0 to 23.0 degrees brix). That is extremely ripe, but the flavors were so intense. It was just what we were looking for. And as you are sure to have guessed by now, the alcohol was definitely out of spec for our style. We (legally) lowered the alcohol content, which also resulted in a slight concentration of the wine. It's everything you want in your Wildhurst S.B. with an amplifier on the flavor and intensity. This one comes to you with a warning: "Buckle your seatbelt and prepare for warp speed, Scotty, this one is fast, fat, racy, with beauty, resilience, and a propensity to say, *Honey, let's go ahead and open another bottle!*"

We are also pleased to release our first vineyard designate Zinfandel. The **Home Ranch Zinfandel** comes from Myron's home ranch. The block that was planted in 1980 has matured to the level that often produces a stellar vintage. The 2007 vintage was just that. The grapes hung to that magical 28 degrees brix and were literally in perfect condition when we picked them. We picked the block three weeks earlier and had fantastic results with the fruit, but decided to hang an additional 4 tons because we felt there was a lot more to gain with this additional hang time.

After a flawless fermentation, we put the wine into 100% two-year old American oak. Looking to maintain intensity, we pulled it out of the barrels and bottled it in August, 2008. I feel this is the nicest Zinfandel we have ever produced. It inspired me to give the label a new look to reflect the brightness in fruit character as well as the uniqueness that it brings to the Wildhurst portfolio.

I think this is a great set of wines, and hope you enjoy each and every glass.

Health and Happiness!

Mark Burch  
Wildhurst Vineyards Winemaker

## News from the Tasting Room

The staff at the Tasting Room is gearing up for springtime and an exciting summer season. We have new spring linens, candles, and great giftware - perfect for that special someone on your list.

The next Wine Club release features two bottles: the **2008 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc**, and our new and exciting **2007 Home Ranch Zinfandel**. Wine Club members regularly receive 30% off the retail price of wines during the featured quarter.

**Saturday, March 14**, starts our "March Madness" case sale; mark your calendar for this 4-day only event. You won't want to miss this! No pre-orders will be taken.

**Friday, April 3**, will be "Girls Just Wanna Have Wine" at the Tasting Room, 6-9 p.m. The theme will be "Best Eyewear While Drinking Wine." Ladies, bring all your best girlfriends to this fun evening. Reservations recommended. \$5 will be collected at the door.

**Friday, May 29**, Wildhurst wines will be poured during a social hour preceding a "Concert with Conversation" at the Tallman Hotel in Upper Lake featuring steel-string guitar soloist Alex de Grassi. Meet the musician at 6:00 p.m. and then enjoy an informal concert with dialog in the adjacent Riffe's Meeting House. For information and tickets, call 707-275-2244.

Please join us for these special events, and every day, 10-5, in the Tasting Room.

Tasting Room Staff



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## Spring is on the Way!



It is March and Spring is soon to arrive. As I write this, it is finally raining just like in the old days... a front has gone through and we are getting rain and snow mixed, with the snow level down to 2500 feet. Now all that needs to happen is for Clear Lake to fill.

No matter how they try, it is impossible to predict the weather...a little bit like predicting the economy.

Regarding the economy, the media is certainly full of bad news which helps create mass uncertainty. Although wine sales have not really contracted like everything else, people are choosing lower-priced premium wines. The wine industry will meet the challenge to give the consumers what they want.

There are some real values in the marketplace. The wine industry is just

coming off a "wine lake" from 2005 and 2006 which has been corrected by short grape crops in 2007 and especially in 2008. Grape supply and demand are now in close balance. Merlot was especially long in supply in 2005 and 2006, so some excellent Merlot was in surplus from the North Coast. There are some real value Merlots from that vintage.

This brings us to our Mackinaw wines. We produce these wines to be fruitful with good flavors and acidity. Priced at \$10.00 per bottle, they are an excellent choice for everyday meals. Check out our **Mackinaw Merlot**...really good flavors that go well with steak or spaghetti or salmon. Merlot with baked salmon is excellent!

**Mackinaw Zinfandel** really teams up with pizza...spicy wine with spicy food.

Currently, we are bottling our **2008 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc**, which is in the March Wine Club release. I think you will be pleased with this new vintage. Lake

County continues to be the terroir of choice for Sauvignon Blanc.

Also in this Wine Club release is our **2007 Home Ranch Zinfandel**, of which we are especially proud. I have always felt that we can produce excellent Zinfandel in Lake County because of our cool nights and warm days during the late summer ripening period. We have eight rows of vines in the Gaddy Lane vineyard set aside for this product and we watch them daily during harvest for the perfect time to pick. Harvesting the grapes correctly combined with some excellent Missouri oak barrels makes for a great wine. It may be set down for three to five years for perfect aging, but waiting that long can be difficult to do.

Enjoy your wines!

Myron Holdenried