

Spring-Summer 2000

SPRINGTIME AT THE WINERY

To me there is nothing quite as magically impressive as springtime in the vineyard. The sight of green shoots erupting out of bare wood that for all intents and purposes, had appeared totally lifeless for the previous three or four months is timelessly amazing.

This spring seems especially vibrant. Five consecutive years of above-average rainfall combined with the perfect weather of the last week of March and first ten days of April got this spring off to a roaring start. The second Friday in April, I was walking through the Chardonnay vineyard experiencing what could only be described as weather perfection. The air quality was crystal perfect. The sun was radiant but not too hot; there were no thoughts of hats. The shoots on the Chardonnay vines were 5 to 7 inches long, which was about 4 inches longer than they were the week before!

My mind was filled with positive images and thoughts. March had been the best sales month in California in the entire 23-year history of the winery! [Special mention to our Northern California broker: The Monterey Bay Wine Co!] The '99 Chardonnay barrel lots were tasting exceptionally well, especially the lot from our own vineyard. Last year (1999) was our first significant crop since replanting in 1995 due to Pierce's disease; and 2000 should be our first full harvest of Chardonnay.

So there I was strolling through the vineyard with happy memories, happy thoughts, and happy projections for the future (hey, maybe even the Giants this year...) when I got to the end of the vineyard row and saw the bug trap. In the trap were nine blue-green sharpshooters, the little leafhopping bug that passes Pierce's disease from vine to vine! This is the disease that caused us to replant 85% of our vineyards since 1995. For crying out loud, we have not even had one full crop off of our newly replanted vineyard yet - this is not fair!

So now you all know our dirty little secret; we are certifiably insane! Being in this business is proof positive. But what the heck, we make outstanding Chardonnay - just get it while you can.

Michael Keenan