

March 2005



# WineGiftClub.com

The Internet's Premier Wine Gift Shop



## The Grape Vine Newsletter

### This Month's Wine Club Selections

Every month our Wine Club members receive one or two bottles of our featured wines. The wines you get depend on the membership you are enrolled in. If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join the fun. Happy wine tasting.

### *Paso Robles Wine Country*

The interior coastal valleys of California, from Santa Barbara to the Napa Valley north of San Francisco, are home to some of the world's finest vineyards and wineries. The climate of warm summer days and cool nights, in addition to its mild winters, is ideal for growing wine grapes.

The highly scenic region is an endless succession of oak studded hills and valleys, low hillsides covered in grapevines, gorgeous country roads canopied by big trees, well-kept small cities and towns, and attractive, lushly landscaped wineries, many of which are open to the public for wine tasting. The beautiful and idyllic lifestyle is uniquely Californian.

The quaint town of Paso Robles, just inland from California's Central Coast, is the hub of one of the state's oldest grape growing regions. Spanish missionaries started to cultivate grapes for wine here in the 1790's. The area's unusual microclimate (summer temperatures often exceed 100°F by day and always drop into the 50's at night) results in the production of very outstanding and very robust red wines and some fantastic whites as well.

The dominant feature of Paso Robles wine country is the flourishing wine industry of more than 65 wineries and 250 vineyards. Paso Robles wine country tours and wine-tasting tours are extremely popular activities, as most Paso Robles wineries operate tasting rooms which feature critically acclaimed, award-winning wines of the highest quality. Paso Robles also hosts numerous Wine Festivals and other events during the year which offer a first hand experience of the Paso Robles wine region, a rising star of the California wine country.

"...the overall quality of Paso Robles wines is high and getting higher, and it's nice to think that, after all these years, Paso might get the respect it deserves -- not only for easy-drinking red wines, but serious ones, as well." - *Steve Heimoff, Wine Enthusiast*

Summer temperatures are ideal for growing the wine grape varieties that have earned the winemakers accolades and notoriety for their wines from the Paso Robles Appellation. The area is characterized by warm, clear days, generally unencumbered by clouds, fog or severe winds. The nighttime temperatures drop by approximately 40°, cooled by a marine layer that moves over the region following the sunset. Most area winemakers consider this fluctuation to be a key to the varietal character displayed in the resulting wines.

The proximity to the ocean, orientation of the numerous canyons and valleys, and elevation produces many different macroclimates. This allows for high quality production of such diverse varieties as the cool loving Pinot Noir and Chardonnay to varieties such as Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon that thrive in the warm day/cool night weather patterns of the Paso Robles area.

Winter temperatures dip into the low twenties in the cooler regions, with most vineyards becoming fully dormant by mid-December. Frost is also a potential threat in the spring, especially following a northern weather system.

The soils in the Paso Robles area vary regionally and within short distances according to differences in geology, macroclimatic conditions, sloping landforms, crop growing history, and past natural vegetative community. The four general soil associations in the Paso Robles viticultural are primarily formed from the weathering of granite, serpentine, shale and sandstone, with the shale being the most predominant bedrock type.

"Paso Robles may be America's most dynamic wine region--and its most diverse. A critical mass of large and small producers whose focus is excellence is raising grape quality in a region blessed with natural grape-growing advantages... Wine lovers seeking thrilling wines should grab a pass to Paso." - *Rob Costantino, Managing Editor, Santé Magazine*



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## Wine Gift Baskets

Our wonderful collection of Wine Gift Baskets, Corporate Gift Baskets and Gourmet Food Gift Baskets are perfect for any occasion. **Customizable** - You can choose to include only reds, only whites, or a combination of red and white wines. You can even substitute bottles of our fine Private Label Wine (see below) with any wine gift basket we offer. We are definitely the most unique and complete Wine Gift Shop online!

## Wine of the Month Club

Because California is widely regarded as the finest wine growing region in America and one of the best wine producing regions in the world, the vast majority of our featured wines are from **California's finest, boutique wineries**. Now and then, when our wine experts find an outstanding selection, we may feature wines from some of the best growing regions of Washington and Oregon. However, the vast majority of our featured wines are California wines - arguably the best wines in the world.

- **You pick the number of bottles** - Monthly Wine Club memberships can be either 1-bottle per month or 2-bottles per month.
- **You pick the Wines** - all red, all white, or a mixture of both red and white wines. **You pick the Frequency** - Wine Club deliveries can be Every Month or you can Skip Months between deliveries.
- **You pick the Duration** - Wine Club memberships range from 2 to 12 months in duration.
- **You choose how to pay** - you can pay monthly or prepay the wine club membership up front - it's totally up to you.

We give you all the choices - **You make all the decisions!** No other clubs can compare.

## Personalized Label Wines

We have a great selection of wine label templates available on our website that you can use to create your very own Private Label Wine. Simply click your favorite label template and change the words. You can also take a digital photo, or create your own label design and email it to us. Either way, we will print professional quality labels and apply them to your choice of our fine private wine selections. **Minimum order - only 1 bottle!**

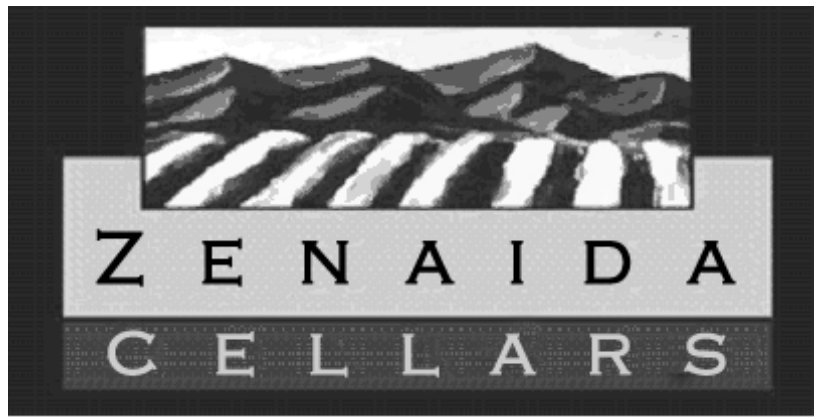
Our private label wines come in either red or white varieties and you can mix and match them as you please. You can even choose to substitute private label wines in any of our wine gift baskets!

**Private Label Wines are perfect for** Birthdays, all Holidays, Thank You, Congratulations, House Warming, Corporate Gifts and Promotional Items.

## The California Wine Store

We always purchase a few extra cases of the fine wines we send our Wine Club members, and the wines we include with our Wine Gift Baskets. While these fine wines last, we make them available to you in our Wine Store, at discount prices that you won't be able to resist. As a bonus, our Wine Club members can buy more of the wines they really enjoyed at these discount prices, while they are available. **Check it out NOW!**

**Order Online fast & SECURE or call us toll free**  
**www.WineGiftClub.com 1-888-840-2337**



*Zenaida Cellars*  
Paso Robles, California

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*Chardonnay, Estate 2000*  
Only 790 Cases Produced

Seventy percent of this wonderful, Paso Robles Chardonnay was fermented in French and Hungarian oak barrels with the remaining 30% fermented in stainless steel tanks, to give it a balanced oak infusion. The wine was whole cluster pressed, and allowed only limited malolactic fermentation while it aged, sur lees, for 8 months, before being bottled.

Stainless steel tank fermented wines retain fruity esters and lean toward a crispier, fruitier Chablis style, while oak aged wines usually have characteristics of vanilla and toasted oak. The final blend of these two wines created a full-bodied, smooth and warm Chardonnay, with a crisp fruit forward, hinting of grapefruit. This wine pairs exceptionally well with crab and other fresh shellfish and should be served at a temperature of about 50° (take it out of the refrigerator about an hour before serving).

*Cabernet Sauvignon, Estate 2000*  
Only 296 Cases Produced

The estate grapes for this fantastic Cabernet Sauvignon were harvested by hand and allowed to cold soak in the winery's cellar for three days before they were fermented in small 200-gallon lots.

The must (hardened layers of the fermenting fruit that rise to the surface) in the open-air fermenting bins was punched down by hand twice daily for approximately 20 days and then pressed in a small oak basket bladder press. The small press squeezes gently, slowly building pressure to avoid harshness in the finished wine. The young wine was then transferred to French oak barrels where it aged for 24 months before it was bottled.

This beautiful Cabernet Sauvignon has a multi-layered dark fruit component, highlighted by a touch of sweet anise and has a lingering, pepper finish. Serve at a temperature of about 65°, which is a bit cooler than most homes (put it in the refrigerator for about 45 minutes before serving).

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# Z E N A I D A C E L L A R S

## **Zenaida Cellars, Paso Robles, California**

Eric Ogorzolka, the winemaker and owner of Zenaida Cellars has been growing and making wine since 1994. In 1988 the Ogorzolka family purchased the west Paso Robles property and soon began planting the estate vineyard. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, Eric began working the vineyard and making small lots of experimental wines. In 1998 Eric began work on the winery and soon launched the Zenaida Cellars label.

The Zenaida winery is located in the heart of West Paso Robles, in an area know as Templeton Gap. The 95 acre property consists of 66 acres of rolling vineyard, with the remaining areas being primarily oak woodland and open space. The winery building occupies the original homestead of the property, dating back over 100 years.

With the first vine planting in 1989 totaling a modest five acres, the winery building is currently surrounded by their estate Zinfandel vines and an expansive 66 acres of other grape varietals including Zinfandel, Syrah, Petite Syrah, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Pinot Noir, as well as this month's featured wines, their wonderful **Cabernet Sauvignon** and **Chardonnay**.

The old saying "Great wines are made in the vineyard" appears to be Zenaida's mantra for wine making. With the beautiful Santa Lucia Mountains as their backdrop, they utilize sustainable and low impact farming methods, allowing the basic elements of the soil, water, and sun to come through in the flavors and aromas of their wines.

The vines are carefully preened through the summer, thinning out any bunches that may be inferior or behind in maturation, only allowing the very best of the best to make it to harvest. At the winery, the fruit goes through a final screening to assure only the ripest bunches are loaded into the de-stemmer.

### **Eric's Philosophy**

Eric's philosophy on winemaking is straightforward and simple. "People have been making and drinking wine since the Neolithic period (8500-4000 B.C.), that's a pretty good stretch of time. During that time, basic winemaking really hasn't changed that much."

In his opinion, it is a simple process, based on knowledge of your specific location. A friend expressed a philosophy to him once: "Every year is a learning process, if you are lucky, you will get to make wine once every year. If you start early, you may get to make wine only 30 to 40 times in your whole life!"

Given so few chances to make magic, pursuit of knowledge is key. He is never satisfied with "good enough", there is always room for improvement. In his little "sphere of activity", aka Zenaida Cellars, he believes "that you must know the vineyard; this is where great wines begin. It's crucial to understand your soils and how each varietal interacts with it to express its true character. Lastly, try your best not to get in the way and screw it up!"

### **Zenaida Viticulture**

The Zenaida vineyards are made up of a lean soil layered with calcareous shale, limestone, clay and sand. According to Eric, the varied soils are the key to the complexity in the their wines. The vines are trained in a vertically positioned trellis which allows for adequate sun and air flow. This method maximizes the leaf surface area which promotes good sugar production, and even ripening of the fruit.

Low impact and sustainable agricultural practices entail cover-cropping with perennial grasses, and the recycling of the grape pomace (the byproduct of the wine making process) into mulch. This high quality mulch proliferates the soil organisms, which in turn help the plants uptake the much needed nutrients, discounting the need for harsh chemical fertilizers.

### **Zenaida Wine Making**

Zenaida puts a serious effort into ensuring that their wines are made using only the highest quality fruit from their estate vineyard. The vines are meticulously preened and thinned to ensure even ripeness throughout. At harvest, the fruit is hand picked and brought into the winery in the cool of the morning.

They process all of their fruit without the use of pumps or augers, thus eliminating excess handling. The grapes are de-stemmed, not crushed, and then fall directly into small fermenting bins below. The bins are then wheeled into the winery to settle, where they begin their fermentation process. The fermenting "must", a hardened layer of grapes that rises to the top to form a cake-like layer, is mixed twice daily to ensure superior color, structure, and create a nicely balanced, finished wine.