



# Joseph Swan Vineyards

## 2005 Winter Newsletter

### The 2005 Vintage Is In The Barrel—Finally!

The great roller coaster ride of 2005 is almost over. Over the last few months I have read that it was a huge crop, a tiny crop, a great vintage, a less than stellar one. What it turned out to be was a little bit of everything.

Spring was late and wet. Rains, sometimes heavy, continued into June. The late rains made it difficult to get into the vineyards to mow and to spray. Those of us who farm organically were especially challenged. In many cases crews were brought in to walk the vineyards to spray by hand. Hand hoeing under the vines had to be repeated as the moisture produced a hearty second crop of weeds. Early botrytis was a major concern and had to be dealt with early and aggressively. However, the worst problem was with bloom. Early blooming varieties such as chardonnay and pinot noir, were, in some vineyards, hit with rain, causing shatter, reducing a potentially huge crop to near nothing.

Once the rains stopped we ended up with a near textbook growing season. Stretches of sunny cool days were broken only occasionally by warm spells. As the ber-

ries sized up it became clear that in those vineyards not adversely affected by the late rains, it was going to be a very large crop. The concern then became one of whether the vines would be able to ripen their fruit. Extensive thinning in some vineyards seemed to do the trick. The weather held throughout August and most everyone waited for our usual burst of late season warmth, usually referred to as Indian summer. However it failed to materialize. The warm, mild days continued. Our usual long hang time became extended hang time, resulting in deep color and even deeper flavors, with great acidity. Our harvest began with pinot noir from Great Oak Vineyard in early September and proceeded on an even pace through the third week of October. We picked our final grapes, our Estate Cabernet, on November 14. It was late but not our latest harvest.

The resulting wines at this point have wonderful aromas, color and intensity. At the same time they seem to have an unusual elegance. I am reluctant to make vintage pronouncements until the spring following the harvest but at this point the wines look to be very promising.



## New Releases

### 2003 Côtes du Rosa

This is our lucky 13th vintage of this wine. Always produced from the same block of old vines on the Mancini Ranch and always made in a similar fashion—100% whole cluster fermentation in open top fermenters with the fruit treaded several times per day and aging in totally neutral barrels. This year we did change one thing—we extended the barrel aging to a full year. Whether it was the additional time in barrel or just the vintage, the wine has turned out to be much more serious than in the past.

All of the usual bright fruit is there but it is deeper and more complex. The aromas are of lavender, dark roses, red plums and Gucci handbag leather\*. It is medium bodied, with moderate richness and a slight tannic grip. It is usually very evocative of the wines of France's southern Rhone valley but this year it has more in common with the northern Rhone. 112 cases bottled.

\*(I just threw that in to see if anyone actually reads this!)

### 2002 Pinot Noir Saralee's

The other day Paul Bullard, our California wine broker, commented that he liked the 2002 better than the 2001. My response was that while it is a more obvious wine,



with more color, richness and depth, it simply wasn't as good a wine as the 2001. His response was that the 2001 was indeed a prettier wine but that the 2002 was a wine that everyone would love. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I tend to love the underdog. The 2001 took a full year after release to fully express itself. The 2002 is there now.

A blend of several different clones of pinot noir, each vinified and aged separately, it was blended and bottled just before the 2003 harvest.

The nose evokes ripe red tree fruit and berries intertwined with mushrooms and spice. In the mouth it is quite lush, round with soft tannins and adequate but not overwhelming acidity. Aged in 1/3 new French Burgundy barrels, the oak is barely apparent. It should drink well for at least 5-6 years. 780 cases bottled

### **2002 Zinfandel Sonoma County**

Although we won't reveal the exact blend, it includes at least a little of all of our zinfandel vineyards. When we harvest our fruit, and in particular zinfandel, we often pick the vineyards at different times in order to capture each section of each vineyard at peak maturity. In 2002 there were lots

that while excellent, did not seem to work well with the other components. After numerous blending trials we came up with a wine that meant that not only were we able to bottle vineyard wines that were most reflective of their individual terroirs, but were able to bottle a blended zinfandel of great interest. Although it will, like almost all of our wines, continue to develop in the bottle, its greatest glory is its immediate approachability.

The aromas are of bright black berry fruit tinged with cherry and a hint of pepper. The flavors echo the aromas. It is medium bodied but quite rich, with bright acidity and very little tannin. A classic Sonoma County zinfandel. 484 cases bottled.

### **2002 Zinfandel Stellwagen**

Some vintages, like 2000, produce zinfandels that are easy to understand. They are all about rich primary fruit. Other vintages, like 2001 and 2002 are more classic-plenty of fruit but in a more reserved, understated way. However, when you spend some time with them you realize that they are the equal if not actually superior to their more flashy counterparts.

The aromas are a combination of deep dark fruit and spice. Slowly at first, it opens to reveal layer upon layer of complexity. In the mouth it is equally rich but shows little of the impression of sweetness showed by the 2000. The perfect acidity balances and hides the 15.3% alcohol beautifully. The tannins, while present, are barely noticeable and the finish is long. A great food wine at present, it should continue to develop and show additional complexity, elegance and interest over the next decade. 350 cases bottled.

## ***Are Older Wines Better?***

You have probably noticed that we tend to release our wines much later than most wineries. The current vintage in the market for white wines is 2004 with the release of 2005s not that far off. There are also plenty of 2004 red wines in the market. Obviously, with the increasing costs of production and storage, it makes sound business sense to release wine as soon as possible. Or does it? While virtually all wine is best consumed within months or at most a year or two from release, there are exceptions. While the trend is toward up-front, fruit filled wines, low in acidity and often tarted up with loads of oak, which are rarely better with age, many of the classic producers in Europe still make wines which take time to reveal all of their charms. Our wines usually have more in common with the old classics than the new wave wines. While not a value judgment (many people neither care about aged wines nor are they able to properly store wine once purchased), there is a time and a place for both. Our usual practice is to taste each of the un-released wines before each of our three annual releases.

While some of our wines follow a predictable path, some do not. With the exception of our Estate pinot noir (which we have always released the second February following the vintage), there is no set pattern to when we will release a wine. There is no magic point at which our wines are at their best. They usually continue to evolve and develop over time. What we try to do is to release them when they are showing much, if not all of what they have to offer. However,



since they do tend to gain interest over time, we often have older wines available for tasting and sale at the winery. A common question that is asked is how is, say, the 2000 of one of our wines different from the 2001. Our not quite tongue-in-cheek answer is “about 12 months”. Granted there are going to be vintage differences but, that aside, the difference is what that extra twelve months of bottle age can provide. This release we have put together 4 mini verticals so you can see for yourself what bottle age can do. They also would make nice gifts for naysayers who don’t believe that wines can benefit from bottle age.

### **Trenton Estate Pinot Noir**

2000, 2001, and 2002

The 2000 was recently included as one of 25 great American pinot noirs on Forbes.com. Those in the know have been following this wine from the beginning. Our Estate pinot noir is probably our most consistently age-worthy wine (a bottle of the 1973 opened last year was still quite youthful). The 2001 and 2002 are more classically from the Estate, showing great structure, complexity and richness, but less of the immediate up-front, almost sweet fruit of the 2000. All wonderful, all destined to continue to give pleasure for many more years.

### **Lone Redwood Ranch Zinfandel**

1999, 2000, and 2001

Our youngest zinfandel vineyard at 40 something years of age, it usually shows the least complexity upon release of any of our zinfandels. However, give it a couple of years and voila, brightness and excitement. If I had to guess why, I would venture to guess that it is because it is 100% zinfandel and, unlike our older vineyards with the small percentage of other varietals to add spice and complexity, it requires the additional age to get there. We have poured the 1999 at the winery several times recently and it has been a big hit.

### **Mancini Ranch Zinfandel**

1999, 2000, and 2001

This vineyard is probably our least consistent, not in terms of quality but in terms of intensity. For some reason these old vines (CA 1922), planted just across the road from Zeigler Vineyard, seem to march to a different drummer. In some years such as 1998 and 2000, flavor maturity comes only when the grapes have reached a very high level of sugar. Other years, harvest is quite late but the fruit comes in with much lower sugar levels. It doesn’t seem to be related to crop levels or anything else I can point to—it is just an interesting phenomenon. As noted the 2000 is the big boy

of this group. It is very ripe, high in alcohol but with perfect balancing acidity. It was so popular we sold out very quickly. We did keep a few extra cases in the library. I poured the 1999 Mancini for a series of tastings I did in the UK in May and it was a major hit. The 2001 is similar in style to the 1999 but shows more primary fruit at this point and less bottle development. Viva la difference!

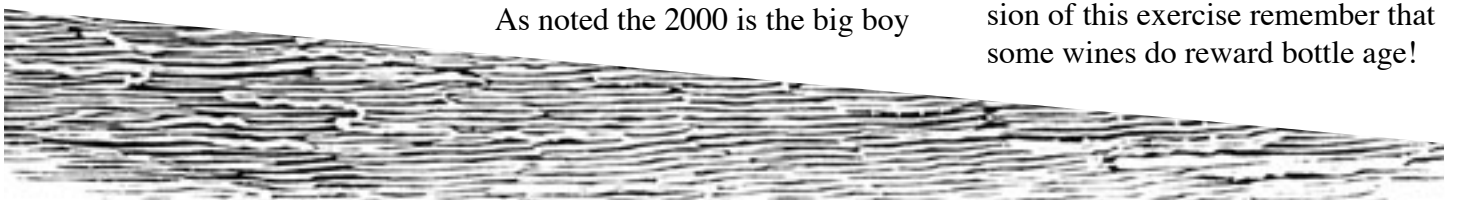
### **Stellwagen Vineyard Zinfandel**

2000, 2001 and 2002

Our oldest vineyard (CA 1882), the gnarly old vines produce wines that show wonderfully upon release but evolve and change over time. As the years go on it seems to become something new each time it is opened. The 2000 is a huge zinfandel both in scale and flavor interest. The 2001 and 2002 are a bit more classic. I don’t have a favorite as each has its own personality. If the older wines in the library are any indication, all should age very gracefully.

### ***User Instructions:***

Within a few months of receipt, open one bottle of each wine in vertical to be tasted side by side. Make mental notes on each wine. Save the other three bottles to drink individually at a later date and note how they have changed. At conclusion of this exercise remember that some wines do reward bottle age!



Joseph Swan Vineyards  
2916 Laguna Rd  
Forestville, CA 95436

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT #470  
SANTA ROSA, CA

Return Service Requested

## Calendar of Events

**NOW-2003 Zinfandel and Syrah Futures pickups**— We are still holding wine for many of you. Please make arrangements to pick up your futures at your earliest convenience.

January 22 - Taste of Sonoma County at Copia, Napa. Panel discussions on various appellations 11:30-1:00, walk-around tasting 1-4. For tickets or information phone 707.259.1600 or toll free 888.51-COPIA.

January 14-15, 11-4 -Winter Wineland. Along with about 95 other wineries, we will be participating in Winter Wineland again this year. For program information go to <http://www.wineroad.com>. Tickets are \$5 for designated drivers, \$30 for tasters. We will be previewing our up-coming releases (including the 2003 Trenton Estate Pinot Noir) and pouring a rotating selection from our library. We will also have some library wines for sale that weekend only. **NOTE— WE WILL BE CLOSED TO ALL BUT TICKET HOLDERS THAT WEEKEND.**

February 1—Next release

March 3-5. Barrel Tasting. We will be tasting 2004 Zinfandels and Syrahs from the barrel. We will be offering futures as well. If you will not able to attend that weekend but would like to purchase futures, contact us after February 1 and we will send you an offering when we finalize it.

Thank you all and have a wonderful holiday season— Lynn & Rod Berglund, Joe Webb and Pappy.

# Joseph Swan Vineyards

2916 Laguna Rd., Forestville, CA 95436

Fax 707.575.1605 Ph. 707.573.3747

We are open 11 to 4:30 Saturday & Sunday for tasting & sales and Monday & Friday by appointment.

Winter 2005 New Release Order Form

	Btls.	
2003 Côtes du Rosa	_____ \$16.00	_____
2002 Sonoma County Zinfandel	_____ \$22.00	_____
2002 Stellwagen Vineyard Zinfandel	_____ \$25.00	_____
2002 Saralee's Vineyard Pinot Noir	_____ \$30.00	_____
	Total from above	_____
	10% Case (12 btl or more) Discount	(_____)
	Sub Total	_____
Vertical #1, 2 ea. 1999, 2000, 2001 Lone Redwood Ranch, Zinfandel (reg. \$144)	_____ \$129.60	_____
Vertical #2, 2 ea. 1999, 2000, 2001 Mancini Ranch, Zinfandel (reg. \$144)	_____ \$129.60	_____
Vertical #3, 2 ea. 2000, 2001, 2002 Stellwagen Vineyard Zinfandel (reg. \$144)	_____ \$129.60	_____
Vertical #4, 2 ea. 2000, 2001, 2002 Trenton Estate, Pinot Noir (reg. \$270)	_____ \$243.00	_____
	Sub Total	_____
	**Sales Tax 7.75%	_____
	Shipping	_____
	Grand Total	_____

Ship \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hold for pick up on \_\_\_\_\_

Wine must be picked up or shipped within  
6 months or a storage charge will be applied.

Delivery address, Residence \_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

c/o \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MC \_\_\_\_\_ AE \_\_\_\_\_

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**All orders must have a daytime phone number.**

SHIPPING :	3 btl,	6 btl,	12 btl,
CA, OR, NV	\$15.00	\$19.00	\$26.00
AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, WA, WY	16.00	20.00	28.00
IA, NE, MO, MN, SD, TX	18.00	24.00	35.00
CT, DE, DC, FL, GA, IL, IN	19.00	26.00	38.00
KY, LA, ME, NC, NJ, ND, OK			
RI, SC, TN, VA, WI, WV			

AK, HI Air only - please call, other locations please call.

If at all possible please ship to a commercial business address. Someone 21 or older must sign for shipment.

At this time we can only ship to California and the reciprocal states. However, if you are not in a reciprocal state and wish to arrange shipping, please contact us. We may be able to put you in touch with a company that will ship on your behalf. Because the sale takes place in California and title to the wine passes to you here at the winery, sales tax is due on all wine except wine shipped to the authorized, reciprocal states, when shipping is paid for at time of order.

\*\* (Out of state residents paying for shipment out of state, to the above states, at the time of ordering, can omit sales tax).

*At this time we are not able to sell wine over the internet but our web page is somewhat up-dated on the wines that we currently have available for sale. We can take phone orders but prefer fax orders so there is a written paper copy of your order.*

