

Woodside Vineyards

Robert Mullen

If we date the modern wine revolution in California from the mid-1960s, Woodside Vineyards qualifies as a true harbinger of that important historical process. It was bonded in 1963, but Robert and Polly Mullen made their first wine in Woodside in 1960, a homemade effort from local grapes. They came to California in 1954 from Rock Island, Illinois and bought the land for their home, the little winery, and their home vineyard in 1962. Since then Woodside Vineyards has been a continuous factor in the premium winegrowing community of the Santa Cruz Mountains. These interviews were made during the 1992 vintage, the thirty-third in the history of the little wine operation.

I interviewed *Robert Mullen (RM)* several times, beginning September 8, 1992, at his home. We sat in the patio between his house and the little winery, which actually predates the house. Just to the west the little Chardonnay-Pinot noir vineyard was wrapped in netting to protect the almost ripe grapes from the local birds. We finished this series with all the grapes harvested and fermenting.

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September 8, 1992

CS: You came to Woodside in 1954 and in 1960 you made some wine. What happened in that period that moved you to become a wine producer?

RM: Those were my learning years on wine because when I moved to California in 1954 both my wife and I drank very little. Back in the Midwest we didn't even move in circles with beer drinkers. When we arrived here I was working for what was then the Armstrong Cork Company; it was my first day at the office in San Francisco, and a gentleman named Paul Hershey took me out to lunch and we went to A. Sabella's. He recommended that I have the "Pirate Salad," but I can't remember what was in it, and he ordered a bottle of wine.

CS: Do you remember what it was?

RM: Charles Krug Grey Riesling. Paul picked up the bottle and started to pour a glass for me. I said, "No thanks, I don't drink." He said, "You're a Californian now. You'll drink wine." He poured it and it was so thoroughly enjoyable that on my way home from work that night, I stopped at the local bottle shop and picked up a bottle of that wine, chilled, as I recall. I took it home to my sister's place in San Carlos. That is where we were staying, since we'd just arrived here. I said, "Polly, you've got to try it. This is wonderful stuff they make out here." So that was our start in wine and it was just a continuing love affair.

Before long we were making weekend sojourns up to Napa Valley and Sonoma, and we got to know those areas reasonably well. There weren't many more than twenty wineries in the whole Napa Valley then.

CS: Were you living in Woodside during these years?

RM: My sister and her husband bought a home in Woodside while we were living with them in San Carlos. We hadn't found ourselves a place yet.

CS: So it was luck. The fact that your sister bought a house here in Woodside plops you into this historic winegrowing district.

RM: The real estate salesman asked if we'd looked in Woodside. But we said we couldn't afford it and kept looking in Redwood City and Menlo Park. But he said that he had a place here that we should look at. It was a place just half a mile down this street on Martin Lane where they were building on 1/3 acre sites, which was still legal then. So we moved here in February of 1955. We lived there for eight years and then wound up buying this property. So we traveled around to the wine country, Napa, Sonoma, Santa Clara Valley. We'd take visitors with us.

CS: Well I understand that, but there's quite a difference between getting to like California white wine in the fifties and becoming a winery owner. How do you move in that direction?

Founding Woodside Vineyards

RM: We got interested enough to have wine tasting parties at our home on Martin Lane. We'd invite some of our Woodside friends. We just went out and bought a selection of wines, a rosé, some whites and a couple of reds. At one of those parties we met a couple named Bev and Bob Groetzinger. He was a management consultant on permanent assignment to Louis Petri.¹ He had an interest in wine from his connection with the industry. So he managed to get us an invitation to the wine tasting at the California State Fair. That was a grand and glorious occasion for us to go up and spend a day in Sacramento with people in the industry and sampling all those fine wines. Then that fall the Groetzingers invited us to come over and help them make wine in their patio. They had an acre of land right where the old La Questa Vineyard was.² It had originally been about 37 acres, primarily Cab and a little Merlot. It had been sub-divided back in the late forties and early fifties. Groetzinger discovered that the weed field in the side yard had some grape stumps in it, and he brought them up from shoots and made grape vines out of them again.

CS: So he had done this before you started helping him.

RM: Yes, I think he had started making wine there in 1957. He was making what was essentially a rosé wine out of those fine Cabernet grapes, in five gallon carboys, out on his back patio. We helped them in 1960 and it was so much fun that the next day I was driving up Kings Mountain Road, right below us there, right past this vineyard. I had driven by it many times, but for the first time I became aware that the vines were hanging heavy with grapes. And I also noticed that the place was for sale. So the next day, Monday, I called the real estate agent and he called a fellow named Jacques Burgess, who owned the property then, all ten acres, which now have these three places on them today. The agent called me back and said Burgess told him that the Italian family who usually picks them hadn't called him this year, and to tell Mr. Mullen he can have them himself.

So on Tuesday or Wednesday I recruited five ladies around town, wives of friends, and we picked grapes.

CS: Let's go back a bit in history on this. How had Burgess got this land?

RM: Right. To go way back, there was a mining engineer named Josslyn who built a home you can't see from here, but it's only about 150 yards to the north over there. He called it Vineland. It's a beautiful old stone structure that has changed hands many times since then. He had about 150-180 acres here. It goes almost down to where I used to live. Later he sub-divided the property and gave

¹ Louis Petri (1912-1980) was an important leader in the California wine industry. See: *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/8/1980 for biographical information.

² Emmett H. Rixford founded La Questa in 1883. By the turn of the century its Cabernet Sauvignon was one of the top premium wines in California. See my *Like Modern Edens* (Cupertino, 1982):58, and at 76 for references. Also good for this area is Janet Loustaunou's "A History of Woodside Wineries." *La Peninsula* (San Mateo Historical Society)(Summer 1980):3-8.

parcels to his daughters.

CS: I wonder why he called it Vineland.

RM: I don't know why. But this goes back to the turn of the century. And already Rixford had his La Questa Vineyard over there, and Dr. Tripp's vineyard was just up the road. So he was in between. The name makes sense.³

So Josslyn planted a vineyard here and a walnut orchard over there. Later a tennis court. You can see that this entire area is surrounded by eucalyptus trees. Much of his property is bounded that way. One of his daughters married a man named Avenali and they took over the portion where we are. They had the vineyard and the walnut trees up above. Eventually they sold the property and it was subdivided, about ten acres to Jacques Burgess.

CS: Were they the ones who planted that vineyard?

RM: Yes. I think it was in the twenties. So Burgess subdivided his property into three parcels and had them up for sale when I drove by that day.

CS: So you were making wine with the grapes here before you owned it.

RM: We didn't really know what was planted here at first. That first year we just made wine from what five rookies could pick that one day. There were Groetzinger's wife and Polly, and three other ladies. We went home and borrowed Bob's crusher and that was our first vintage in 1960. I didn't know what the varieties were, and varietals weren't all that important at that early date.

So the real estate salesman stayed on me for a while and kept trying to sell me this place. He kept trying to get me to make an offer. But I didn't think we could afford it. Finally he called up and told me to make a ridiculous offer. He said Burgess needed the money now. So we lay awake all night and we decided to make a ridiculous offer. We were asking \$31,000 and we offered \$27,000. He countered with \$28,000.

CS: Back in those days that made a heck of a difference.

RM: Right. Today it doesn't sound like much. But it was a major commitment. We had to sell our other house. He carried us on a note until we could sell it. Then we had to borrow the money to build this house.

CS: What happened to that first historic wine?

RM: I could take you down in the cellar and show you the last five or six bottles. I haven't opened one for three or four years. I have no idea how drinkable it is. Five years ago it was pretty drinkable. That was a wine that was made with no knowledge of what we were doing. We crushed the grapes and pressed them and put them in the carboys and let them sit for a while.

That was the start. Once we owned the property, well, in 1961 we didn't make the wine here. We picked the grapes here and we picked Groetzinger's grapes. And we made it all together on his patio again.

CS: Did you mix the grapes?

RM: No. No. We made Cab out of his and . . .

³Dr. Robert O. Tripp's historic Woodside Store is but a few hundred yards up Kings Mt. Road from Mullen's place. He founded it in 1854 and planted a five acre vineyard there in the 1870s. At his little winery he produced his "San Mateo County Pioneer" wines. For Tripp and other San Mateo winegrowers in the 19th Century see: Gilbert Richards. *Crossroads*. (Woodside 1973): 101-108.

CS: You knew what you had there now.

RM: Oh, yes. There were two other Italian families over there who also had La Questa grapes. They were maintaining the vineyards. Each of them had about a half an acre of grapes on their property.

La Questa

CS: Tell me what La Questa, that hog back of land where Rixford planted that vineyard, what did it look like then, about 1960?

RM: It had already been subdivided. The main road to the old winery went right up there. The old Rixford winery was still there; it was somebody's house now. The people who live there now are Joe and Terry Ackerman. The original home is gone. Another home has been built on that spot, but the winery is still in tact. Volney Chase was the man who first converted the winery. His son's name was MacArthur Chase.⁴ He was in my scout troop.

In 1960 there were about twelve one acre building sites. Eight or nine were already built at that time. There have only been a few houses built on that road since I've been here.

CS: Did the vineyard look like anything?

RM: No. There was nothing to make you think it was a vineyard. When Groetzinger bought his house he didn't even know he had vines out there. By the time I saw it first he had pretty well cleaned it up. He made his first wine in 1957, maybe 1958.

CS: I'm trying to get this straight in my mind. Martin Ray got grapes there in the late forties to make his Cabernets.

RM: Yes, that's correct. The homes we're talking about on La Questa were built in the late forties and early fifties. That was before I arrived.

The last wine from La Questa that I have seen was 1938.⁵

CS: I got one half bottle of it.

RM: They started subdividing it a few years later. I'm not sure of the date. That land sat there uncultivated for some time.

Two of the families that bought property in there built houses. There was Joe Quilici and Tony D'Amico. The Quilici property is the one that Tom Peters now owns. The other sort of disappeared, the vineyard, that is. The people who lived there didn't maintain it and we didn't have the time to do it. So the D'Amico vineyard is gone.

So when I first saw it there were these two vineyards, right across from each other along the road, and then up the road was Groetzinger's place. Most of the people had corrals, and they'd scraped the land and the old vineyards were gone.

Of course, it was much more open and clear than it is now. The trees have grown up, and when you live in a place you don't really notice the trees growing up. But in 1960 it was really a residential neighborhood, much as it is today. But three people had grapes growing in their side yards instead of a corral.

⁴ Emmett Rixford died in 1928. His sons, Halsey and Allen, began winemaking again after Repeal. See Gemello interview on the disposal of their last vintages. Volney Chase, an architect, bought the property in 1949 and converted the winery. The press house's concrete base is part of the carport. *Redwood City Tribune*, 2/15/1962; *Country Almanac* (Woodside)(November 5, 1968).

⁵ See Gemello interview on the disposition of the last vintages from La Questa.



An old vineyard on La Questa



R. Mullen in the home vineyard in Woodside

There are still three vineyards, but we sort of made a swap. The D'Amico vineyard went under. They just weren't doing anything, and we didn't have a tractor at that time, so we had to tell them that we just weren't interested anymore. We pruned and did the basic things, but it just kept going down-hill. But our minister-emeritus had built a house on the location of the original winery house and he had about a half acre in front of that. He came to me one time and said, "You know, Bob, I live right in the middle of that old vineyard and I'd love to have a vineyard in my front yard. I don't know if I'll live long enough to see any wine come from it, but I'd like to have it."

So we went in with a bulldozer to get the pampas grass out, leveled it and graded it and planted about 150 vines.

CS: What was his name?

RM: Pat McConnell. Happily, he lived probably eight or ten years after that. We used to take the wine from his property and use it for the communion wine at church. That was a very special thing for him. And we still do.

Partnership

CS: How did this partnership with Groetzinger get going? But, we still don't know about the varieties in the vineyard you bought where your house was going to go.

RM: Once we'd bought the property and got serious about the whole thing we took leaves and sent them up to UC Davis. And they came back and told us we had some Zinfandel, Carignane, Petite Sirah, and a little Alicante Bouschet.

CS: So you had what we'd call an old Prohibition vineyard.

RM: That's probably when it was planted. There was a little less than we have today, so far as acreage is concerned. Behind the house were gardens and we took them out and planted grapes. I'd say we have a little under two acres. So back then there was probably an acre or so.

CS: Heck, they probably didn't sell them. They'd get three or four tons per acre and make their 200 gallons, maybe a little more.

RM: Sure. And there would be enough to share with neighbors and friends.

CS: Back to the Groetzinger relationship.

RM: We had a lot in common. We traveled a lot. It was handy to have wives who were interested in this thing. They could do the punching down and those little things when we were on the road. It started as a hobby. Back in those days you had to register with the BATF that you wanted to make 200 gallons of wine at home. But the law said that you couldn't do it with somebody else or in their home. So we thought we could bend that law a little.

CS: Right. They don't care, as long as you don't try to sell it.

RM: Having made the 1961 wine together and knowing the we owned this property now. Well, that year we picked all of the grapes here. In 1960 we probably didn't pick more than 25% of the grapes here. So we called that our King's Mountain Red. And the Cabernet was a light one. That was all made at Groetzinger's place. Then, we built the winery here, the first thing we built here, by the way.

CS: But is the winery part of the home winemaking operation?

RM: Yes it was. It was strictly a home venture. We figured that between the two of us we'd probably make 300-400 gallons a year. We'd get together on weekends to do the bottling and labeling and racking, and such. We bought our first barrels for the 1961. We got them from the A. Sabella Barrel Company on Harrison Street in San Francisco. And also picked up some from another winery. It wasn't very long before we had a 500 gallon inventory of wine. So we decided it was appropriate to get bonded and sell some.

CS: Had you started getting grapes from the other two La Questa vineyards yet?

RM: Not yet. It was just the grapes from Groetzinger's place and mine.

CS: What was he getting off that half acre, tonnage?

RM: Probably somewhere between a quarter and a half ton. We got a lot more from my place. Some of our vines were very productive. But we got a lot of immature grapes too. We didn't have a refractometer yet. We'd go out and taste them and decide when to harvest them. Actually our second year wine from here wasn't as good as the first.

CS: So, we'll break here and take up when you go commercial.

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October 19, 1992

The Winery

CS: First let's talk about the winery, which gets built before the 1962 vintage.

RM: The location of the winery was the first thing that we did on the property. Our landscape architect had Polly and me lay out the whole thing and we established all the grades and levels. From that we decided, from among a number of choices, that its present location was the best one because that is the place where we could put it mostly underground. So we ended up with two walls that were 100% under ground and the other two were about 50-60% underground. We had an access to the winery both from upstairs, from the carport itself, and below. The winery was actually the basement of the carport. We established that location and then we established the location of the house. The house was forty feet away and the whole thing is somewhat parallel to the eastern property line. But actually the house is oriented eight feet away from and parallel to the first row of grapes in the vineyard.

The builder built the bulk of the house. We did this thing on a shoestring. Polly was the painting contractor. The builder had his mason do all of the foundation for the winery and put in the steel beam that supports the carport. Then I put in the plywood decking and he poured the concrete on top of that. Then I built the rest of the carport. The winery was exactly 24x24 feet. Down below there was a double door for access.

CS: You were still living down the road?

RM: Yes, on Martin Lane. We moved in here during the vintage of October 1962. That year all we processed here were the grapes from this property. We hadn't had time to build racks. Groetzinger had racks for his barrels, so we left the Cabernet over there.

CS: Before we talk about the vintage, I have down that you started replanting the vineyard here in 1962. Is that correct?

Woodside Wines and Vines

RM: In 1962 we ripped some out. We replanted them in the spring of 1963. The septic tank drain field had to be located underneath the vineyard, and they took out a lot more vines than you'd think. About 150 vines came out. We already knew that these weren't the right kind of grapes for here. They weren't maturing properly. So when we replanted we put in Chardonnay. Unfortunately, it was not one of the great clones of Chardonnay. It was what Davis had for sale for 15 cents per rooting and it seemed like a good value then. Then from then on every year we ripped out about a hundred vines and we replaced them. The smart thing would have been to replace them all at once but my other time commitments and the fact that we couldn't afford help to do it for us meant we'd just do what we could handle on our own.

CS: You have Pinot noir here too.

RM: Yes, in fact the first area we tore up we planted to Pinot noir. Then later as we worked up to the north we put in Chardonnay.

CS: How long did it take you to replace the vineyard?

RM: It took about six or seven years.

CS: Have you changed the clones, budded over any since then?

RM: No, but when vines died from oak root fungus, eutypa or something else then we did buy better clones, mostly from the Sonoma nursery.

CS: The Kunde place?

RM: Yes. I would say that about 20-25% of the vineyard has been replanted a second time by us. We have a little less than two acres now.

CS: Did you ever have any inclination to plant Cabernet here?

RM: We had so much difficulty to get our Cabernet to ripen that we thought that wasn't the advisable thing to do. Our experience has been that with the vineyards on La Questa and all the new vineyards that have gone in here in Woodside since have difficulty ripening. I'm not sure whether its the clone or the climate.

CS: I think the climate has changed here since the 1890s. It's gotten cooler than what it was back in the Rixford days. And yet we get far less frost in the spring.

RM: I think it has cooled off since we've been here.

CS: Back in the old days before Prohibition you didn't hear complaints about getting grapes ripe here except in years where it was a problem in other places.

RM: I did talk to Dr. Curt Alley of Davis about that and what to plant here. You know we started up after Dr. Winkler had published that study rating all of California identifying each region in terms of temperature accumulation.

CS: Right, and I'll bet this area came out as a Region I.

RM: Right, this was Region I. And you look at the chart and you should plant Pinot noir and Chardonnay. Maybe some Riesling as well.

CS: That's right. Actually the study had been done much earlier, but the publication that the Experimental Station published came out shortly before you got started.

RM: Incidentally, I have to tell you that we are going to plant some Cabernet on a two acre plot down in Atherton. It's right across the city line where Woodside and Atherton touch one another. We think that that will be a bit warmer. And we think, well, we need more Cabernet now. We have enough Chardonnay.

CS: That isn't on our map.

RM: No. It belongs to Ann Ramsay.

CS: Let's look at the 1962 vintage.

RM: It was very simple. The grapes from this property went into our King's Mountain Red and at Groetzinger's it was all Cabernet Sauvignon. Plus, he had a few neighbors who had a few vines, so we went around the neighborhood collecting what we could. We probably picked up another few hundred pounds that way.

CS: So that 1962 Cabernet is going to be your first commercial wine.

RM: Right. I think we released it in 1966. Back in those days we left it two years in the barrel and two years in the bottle. Our first real sale, other than to people here, was to Robert's Store in Woodside.

CS: How much was there of that 1962 Cab?

RM: Probably about three barrels. About sixty cases.

CS: How much did you get off this place for the King's Mountain Red?

RM: I think that we made about the same amount of that. Perhaps three or four barrels.

CS: Now you get your bond. Any problems?

RM: No. It was relatively easy then. I'm not sure how many wineries there were in California at that time but I think that there were about 120 bonded wineries in 1963. So there weren't very many then. We're number 4492.

CS: However high that number may sound, that's a very early one. Stony Hill and Heitz Cellars are numbered in the 4400s.

RM: We actually hired a consultant. Someone told us it's not too difficult to get it but you've got to know whom to write to and the proper forms, and so forth. They recommended a guy named Bob

Peffer, someplace on Market Street in San Francisco. It sounds low, but I think that for \$100 he got us our bond. He was a consultant on tax matters for wineries. He did it in record time. In a couple of months we had the bond.

CS: There was no question as to the size of the place?

RM: No. No discussion at all about size. Subsequent to that I think they started talking about a minimum of a thousand gallons. The thing that we did have a big question about was the 470 gallons we had in stock which was wine we had made as home winemakers. Somebody made the decision that we could not sell that wine, that we could only sell wine produced after the date we got the bond. And we could not commingle that wine with other wine we later produced. And we had to keep it physically separate.

CS: That's something for a small operation. That's almost 2500 bottles of wine.

RM: And we did that a long time. So we figured we'd drink that wine.

CS: Wait a minute. That would mean that your 1962 Cabernet couldn't be sold.

RM: So they changed their mind. Back then they had lots of inspectors and only a hundred or so wineries. We got an annual inspection. They never missed it. The inspector would be here a whole day counting bottles. Each one would ask what this wine was, the wine we couldn't sell.

CS: Did they play this physical separation game, a wall or something between the wine you could sell and what you couldn't?

RM: I think that was why I built this refrigerated store room upstairs. To have a place to store that wine. Then this one fellow came out and said that he just didn't understand this situation. He asked me if I wanted to keep it separate, and I said no, not at all. So he talked to his director and he called me and said the boss says, bring it into bond. So we could sell the 1962 Cabernet, which was the only one we thought was of saleable quality.

CS: That's refreshing. A bureaucrat who questioned a dumb rule.

I recall that you had a non-vintage blend you sold in those early days. What was that?

RM: Yes, we did that. I'm jumping ahead now, but we'll make a lot of Cabernet now which goes into, say, six or seven different barrels. Back then when we had all used barrels this was particularly true. We'd find that the taste would really vary from barrel to barrel. The first two years we didn't pay much attention. But as we got a little more sophisticated we'd say that if we left this or that barrel out it would be a better blend. So we accumulated a few of these barrels that weren't quite good enough to go into the first mix and we blended them together and it seemed that when we blended them across the years, like 1963-64-65, there was a good wine resulting.

CS: I recall that wine was really excellent.

RM: We still do that today. We have nine barrels down there right now with wine that didn't turn out as well as we hoped it would. Some of our local vineyards' Cabernets don't ripen as well as we want, so we'll put them in this blend.

CS: So you and Groetzing stay together until 1969. What happened in this time, other than the normal progression of vintages? When do you start bringing in grapes from your own property here?

RM: About the same time that we planted this vineyard another place around the corner was planted, that's the Hsu vineyard, was planted to Chardonnay. So, in the late sixties we had enough Chardonnay from the two vineyards to make a wine. Then Bob Groetzinger planted Chenin blanc grapes on the Noack property. Then we started making a Chenin blanc wine and that was our big volume item. Those vines really produced great tonnage. Years later we grafted that over to Chardonnay.

Over the years we made a King's Mountain wine that we called "Red" when we put some Cab, maybe Pinot noir, sometimes Zinfandel together. When they were all Cabernets we called it King's Mountain Cabernet.

We had our first Chardonnay in the late sixties. We also had a very small amount of Pinot noir. It was so small we didn't even put it on the market.

CS: You blended it in to something?

RM: No. We kept it separate. There were perhaps twenty gallons the first year. Then there were thirty or forty the next year.

CS: So, you brought out a non-vintage Pinot noir?

RM: No. When we had enough to support making a label for it then we brought out a vintage Pinot noir.

CS: But what did you do with the little lots earlier?

RM: We drank it. The first commercial Pinot noir was in 1970.

CS: Let's talk about your labels. Back then you had something you aren't using now, the La Questa script label.

RM: First of all, it was something to be proud of; it had a history. Second, the Groetzingers lived on La Questa Way and they liked to have that identification on the product. Since that was our first commercial wine, the 1962 Cabernet, we thought that was the logical way to go. Then, when we had enough Chardonnay, Pinot noir and/or Chenin blanc, we thought we really ought to differentiate. Those grapes really aren't grown on La Questa, so we shouldn't put a La Questa label on those wines. On those we just used Woodside Vineyards. Beverly Groetzinger designed both of those labels, and that WV label we have. This was all back in the sixties. Later Bruce Hart up-graded the color some and put some variety in the labels. But other than that we haven't changed any of what she designed way back then.

CS: How long did the La Questa label last?

RM: I'll have to look that up, from our old label collection. It was toward the end of the seventies, after the Groetzingers had left. The decision came from the wine salesperson at the old Roberts Store in Woodside, before George Thaler. She said that they had a lot of confusion with their customers, now that we are selling several of your wines. They think these are two different wineries here in Woodside, a La Questa Winery and a Woodside Winery. We decided that with the few hundred cases that we had then, we didn't need to have a divided loyalty. And it even went further than that. In one of the first issues of *Wines & Vines* where they listed wineries and the varietals they produced, they had us listed separately. We decided that we just weren't big enough to afford that kind of confusion. That was when we changed over to the newly designed label that Bruce Hart made for us. But again, using the same script, and refining all the other things.

Now, for your information, we are thinking about going back. When we pick the different vineyards we keep the barrels separate, until some stage of the game when we decide to blend them.

But typically we blend certain ones, and make a decision on others, yes or no, whether they're up to snuff. But the La Questa wine is still distinct. And we think that we are in a position to set that aside as our proprietor's reserve. And we wouldn't mind getting some more money for it. If we do that we'll go back to the old Rixford La Questa script label. Last year we even picked the old vines separately. We picked them after the last rain. It's a nice wine but not a great wine. This year we think we'll take all the vines up there. Right now those vineyards are just about 50-50, old and new vines. Unless we feel that we need to blend the La Questa back with the others to bring up the overall quality of our Cabernet, we'll probably start up the La Questa label with strictly grapes from La Questa, and we'll have a Woodside Cabernet Sauvignon. Maybe we'll go back to 1991; probably 1992. We may confuse a few people again, but we think we have established enough name identity now that we can get through it.

Other Grape Sources

CS: During this period of time, up to 1969, did you go outside the area here to buy grapes?

RM: Yes, we did. But we didn't buy them. That was one of our fun social events that we started. Before we had our own white grapes, we needed some white wine for our own drinking, and we wanted to get some experience making white wine. The first time we ever made white wine we went over to the Livermore Valley and picked some French Colombard and made white wine the same way we made red wine, except for when we pressed the grapes. We cooked it at a nice high temperature and it came out just barely drinkable. So we learned that there were specific white winemaking techniques and that we had to learn them.

Then we tried again. We didn't want to have to pay a lot for high priced varieties, so we looked and asked around. I'm not sure, but I think that it might have been through our friend Nat Fay⁸, or perhaps the Mondavis. We were referred to the Galleron Ranch in Napa. Right at the end of Galleron Lane was a very large vineyard of Traminer. They let us go in and pick the second crop. So we'd take a gang of twelve or fourteen people up on a Saturday morning and pick all the grapes we could before lunch time, and then knock off and have a picnic lunch, usually on the hillside behind Inglenook. We had access to that through a friend of ours. We had a nice party. We had a couple of friends who played the guitar and we'd have a beautiful, bucolic October afternoon party. We'd come back with two pickup loads of grapes. We could get enough to make a barrel or two of wine. But it was an awful lot of walking and not very much picking. We made that for quite a few years and we actually put a label on some of it and sold it commercially. We did that perhaps up into the early seventies, but by then we were getting enough production from our white vines here in Woodside, particularly the Chenin blanc, which came in in big volume.

CS: I guess this was the old Red Traminer we'd see around before the Gewürztraminer became popular, the spicy clone.

RM: I understand it was really the Red Veltliner.

CS: But that's a different grape. The Red and Green Veltliner are Austrian grapes.

RM: You said *Red* Traminer.

CS: Right, if you let it hang long enough it gets reddish. You can actually make a pink wine from Gewürztraminer. Sebastiani once sold one. But it loses its special fruitiness if you let it hang that long.

RM: I'm sure they said it was really Veltliner.

⁸Nathan Fay was the modern premium wine pioneer of the Stags Leap District in Napa Valley. He was particularly famous for the quality of his Cabernet Sauvignon. See *Wine Spectator* 1/1/85, 2/28/90, 10/15/92. In 1985 Fay sold his vineyard to Warren Winiarski. See *Wine Spectator* 10/16/85.

CS: Well, one or the other. But I'll bet it was Traminer if you heard of it from Mondavi. They had a lock on Traminer in the Napa Valley in the early days. I don't know how many years running they won gold medals for it, as Traminer.

Let's talk about marketing these early wines.

RM: We had tastings on our patio, as we do now. We invited friends. We sent an invitation to everyone on our church mailing list. Groetzinger had a lot of business connections. And I had mine as well. We didn't have a lot of wine to sell. Twenty cases of this and fifty cases of that. And we sold to Roberts Store in Woodside. For quite a while that was the only place. Then we put the wine in the Village Pub here in Woodside. Later in the Stagecoach Restaurant.

CS: Some time in those early years we saw Woodside Cabernet at Ken Burnap's place in Southern California, The Hobbit.⁷

RM: That's right. Ken and his partner came up here on a wine buying trip. We were one of the few small wineries then, and getting a lot more press than we deserved, probably because we were small and different. They saw a writeup on us someplace and came by. They bought a couple of cases of Cabernet and Chardonnay.

CS: I think that we saw the 1968 Cabernet down there.

RM: That would make sense. It was probably the early seventies when they came up. It was fun to have our wine in a restaurant in Southern California. I'd take my friends there. It was relatively expensive, but a good place.

CS: I think he had an excellent restaurant there.

RM: And you know Trader Joe's market down there? Joe Colombe owned them and he read about us too. He and his wife came by. He was really interested in handling our wine. But at that time he had twenty stores down there and I told him we couldn't take care of one, much less twenty. So we agreed to not do it. We had to tell all our early customers, that we could put a wine in their place, but we couldn't guarantee to keep it in stock. And we still do that.

CS: What are we talking about here through 1969 as to total gallons?

RM: I'll be looking those numbers up and we can plug it in here. I think we were at about a thousand gallons by then. Or perhaps a little less, perhaps 800 gallons. We sort of went up in steps over the years. Later we were up to 1500 for a long time. After I hired a full-time winemaker in 1985 we stepped up the pace and started producing larger quantities.

CS: Is there anything about the organization of the work worth noting in the early years?

RM: The vintage was always a party. Usually two weekends, one to pick Groetzinger's and one for ours. We were all much younger then and so were our friends. All you had to do then was to pick up the telephone and we'd have twenty people here to help. In fact sometimes we'd have too many people. I still enjoy it to this day. Polly and Beverly Groetzinger always put on a delightful lunch spread. We'd pick until noon or one o'clock, have lunch and then do the crushing. That was when we were using the hand crusher and the hand stemmer. It was tiring work.

⁷ Ken D. Burnap later, in 1975, founded the Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard winery on Jarvis Road, above Santa Cruz (BW 4697).

CS: I remember you showed me that wooden stemmer, with all the holes, the first time I ever came here.

RM: That went well into the seventies. The rest of the work, we scheduled around Bob's business as a management consultant and my business traveling for Armstrong. In the early years I was only covering Northern California, so I was in pretty good shape, and didn't have to travel too much. Then in the seventies I took over the whole West Coast and I was traveling all the time. And that was about the time that Groetzinger left, which didn't make it easier. We'd look at our work schedules and plan to work, say on a Saturday morning before Bob hopped on a plane for New York. We were able to do it, the four of us, that includes the two wives, of course. If we took off on a Monday morning, the girls might have to punch down the grapes all week long, that we'd harvested on Saturday.

CS: So tell me about the end of this first period.

RM: When Groetzinger left there weren't many changes immediately. We had a good cadre of friends who were helping us. And we had a young man named George Lutje who became very active in the operation. He started as our "cellar rat" and washed barrels and such. Worked in the vineyard hoeing weeds for a couple of bucks an hour. He was a college student. He lived in Redwood City and went to college in San Jose. But he spent his weekends up here and really became an integral part of the operation. We were like his second home up here.

CS: So he's your first employee on a regular basis.

RM: That's right. He sort of stepped in for Groetzinger. But when he turned twenty-one he said I'm an adult now and I'm going to start working for free the way everyone else does around here. He went off the payroll and just became a friend.

CS: Now he could work when he wanted to.

RM: Some time in that period Bruce Hart began to show a real interest and really became actively involved.

CS: Yes, he becomes more important later on. He becomes a sort of non-partner partner.

RM: Yes, very definitely. There were lots of people who worked here for whom this place was their second hobby. Any time you wanted to bottle or label, and it was just a couple of phone calls. Just about everything was done on weekends.

Woodside After Groetzinger

CS: So, where does Groetzinger go and why does he leave?

RM: He was a management consultant. He and a couple of other fellows decided to set up their own business. Their timing was quite good. They got started in Silicon Valley. You've probably heard of Hambrick and Quist.

CS: Yes, now they're in the winery world, very big.

RM: Hambrick owns a couple of hundred acres of grapes in the North Bay. Anyway, they grew up with a lot of the Silicon Valley companies. Groetzinger's group provided management counseling. His Management Resources operation could come in and quote prices that would beat the bid from the

group they'd formerly worked for. They did extremely well. He was looking for a bigger and better challenge and he decided to do the same thing in Europe. They weren't sure it would go at first; they kept their place up on La Questa and we tended the vineyard. When they got established they sold their place to a family named Loveless. Mary Loveless still lives there. That was probably in 1972 or 1973 that they sold their place. Lee Loveless died about eight or ten years later.

He worked for Smith, Kline and French, the medical laboratory people. He'd been working for them in St. Louis. They sent him out here to head up a chain of labs in the Bay Area. A real estate person took Lee by there and he decided that this was just what his wife and daughter would like. They were very reluctant to leave St. Louis. The real estate person was a man I knew and he told me that I had better to talk to this guy. So I called him and we made a date to meet. I told him what we had been doing taking care of the property and the vineyard. I asked him what his intentions might be. He said he had no choice. "I'll have to rip out most of those grapes because I promised my daughter if she'd move to California I'd buy her a horse and I promised Mary I'd build her a swimming pool." So by the time they did that he didn't think there would be much place to keep many of those grape vines.

Well, I said, let's talk a little bit. I told him the story of all of our friends' children when they were nine and ten just had to have a horse and when they got to be fourteen they were ignoring the horses because they had discovered boys. His daughter was going on thirteen at that time. I told him there was a corral over there, you can rent horses all over. Maybe you should take it slow. Well, I forget how I conned him out of the swimming pool too, but that later was a standing joke between us. He had a great sense of humor. Later he'd always tell the story about how Mullen had conned him out of the horses and the swimming pool.

CS: That's a great story. Meanwhile you were saving some of the oldest and most historic Cabernet Sauvignon vines in California.

RM: And they got very involved in the winery, Lee in particular. He just loved it, picking, crushing, the whole thing. Later he told me that I was absolutely right about his daughter and the horse business.

It is about that same period of time that both Joe Quilici and Tony D'Amico decided that they were getting too old to be making wine. So they turned over the management of their vineyards to us. And we inherited some of their equipment. Today Tom Peters owns the Quilici property. The other property had a really serious septic tank problem and the new people who moved in handled it very casually and they allowed the water to pretty well drown out the grape vines. When we got down to where there were only about 50% of the vines still alive, and I wouldn't put any new ones in because they couldn't have survived, we just gave it up.

CS: I guess we should talk about some of your new grape sources in the seventies. Earlier you mentioned knowing Nathan Fay, and I know you made Cabernet from his vines in the Stags Leap area. I still have some of the 1978.

RM: I think we started using his grapes in 1976.

CS: How does it get started?

RM: Well, he became famous later on.

CS: Sure, later, but not in 1976.

RM: We knew him before he was famous. But our first outside source of any real consequence was Rene Di Rosa. He had planted his Winery Lake Vineyards in the 1960s in the Carneros area. He was a real pioneer, and a lot of people thought he was a crackpot planting those vines so close to the Bay.

But that place turned out to be one of the all-time great Chardonnay vineyards.⁸ We started buying from him in the early seventies. We worked out a deal where we would bring up our own crew to pick and get a reduced price. These would be the same people who helped us every year, friends from around here.

CS: This was before Di Rosa was a celebrity.

RM: When we're talking about my connections up in Napa, most of them were through Justin Meyer.⁹ This relates to a UC Davis short course on winemaking in the late sixties. It was during the summer time and was very comprehensive. We had the entire UC Davis professional staff there: Amerine, Winkler, Alley, Kunkee, Ough, you name it. We lived in the dormitory there. As much as the course, our evening sessions were just great. We were in with people like Justin Meyer. Michael Mondavi was there.

CS: He was probably going to Santa Clara University at the time. His dad was just opening his new winery, so he was probably getting some basic training.

RM: We also met John O'Connell, the assistant winemaker at Inglenook. I mentioned we had a connection there, and he was it. Lots of these people later went back to Davis for their degree. I forgot to mention, George Lutje went up with me. I was older than most of these other people and George was about the same age. Oh, and Warren Winiarski was also there.¹⁰

CS: That's a Fay connection. They were good friends and he later bought Fay's vineyard.

RM: That's not the connection.

CS: The suspense is killing me.

RM: Actually, it was one of the people I met there, but I can't recall which one it was. It might have been Winiarski.

Anyway, those were the great connections I made in Napa in the late sixties from taking that course at UC Davis. And just about anybody in the industry we met subsequent to that, we connected with one of the people we had met at that course. They liked helping us because there was a really powerful interest in small wineries then. There just weren't so many. For Fay and Di Rosa it was sort of fun to help us. Next session I'll pull out the papers on that course and give you the class list.

October 27, 1992

Napa and Ventana Grapes

CS: Let's start by talking about Nathan Fay and your Napa grape connection.

RM: Since we met last time and I got to thinking about it, I remembered that Nat Fay actually

⁸ For the Winery Lake story see: *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/28/81; *Practical Winery*, 11/1/84. Di Rosa sold the vineyards to Seagram in 1986. See: *Wine Spectator*, 3/1/86.

⁹ Brother Justin Meyer was Brother Timothy's assistant at Christian Brothers in the sixties. Later, in 1972 he founded Silver Oak Wine Cellars in Napa. See: *Wines & Vines*, 4/1/77.

¹⁰ Warren Winiarski founded Stag's Leap Wine Cellars in 1972, and had previously worked for Robert Mondavi and at Lee Stewart's original Souverain Cellars on Howell Mountain. See: *Wine Spectator*, 2/28/90.

looked us up. In all probability he heard about us from one of our Davis connections. I think it was Michael Mondavi. Nat called up and said that he had a neighbor who wanted to build a small winery, probably something very similar to ours, and who wanted to come down and see an actual operating small winery.

CS: Who was that?

RM: It was John Shafer.¹¹ The two of them came down - I think it was at one of our wine tasting events- and we took them through the winery and showed them the whole setup. I think that Nat was interested in the fact that we used Cabernet grapes and he indicated that it was one of the principle grapes he grew on his property. And whether we struck up a connection and that time, or just thought we knew him well enough, the next year we called him up and asked if it would be possible to buy some of his grapes. I think they came down in 1975 and we started buying grapes from him in 1976. It wasn't much more than a ton of grapes.

Then we just became good friends. We never went to the Napa Valley when we didn't stop in and visit Nat and Nellie. We took Bruce Hart up there and he became particularly fond of Nat. When Hart built a little winery at his place down in Atherton, he duplicated the little winery that Nat had built.

CS: Yes, even though Fay never had a bonded winery, he was always making small amounts of wine. We have to get into the Hart connection on the next tape. How long did you get grapes from Napa?

RM: Probably not more than three or four years. I'm not sure why we stopped. I don't think it was that we had such an abundance of grapes here. Over the years, depending on how much time I had to devote to the winery, we went up and down in production. I think that we probably felt we couldn't handle one more lot of wine in a particular year. And then when we got out we didn't get back in. Anyway, it really was not my purpose in the long run to have Napa as a second source of grapes for our winery. I would rather have had something more regional. But there was nothing I could find then in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Later we decided to deal south of the Bay, rather than with Napa. It was a conscious effort on our part and I was a little reluctant to resume taking Napa grapes. It may be that Nat didn't have many more grapes to spare anyway and was selling to Winiarski.

CS: Let's go to Monterey and Ventana.

RM: Ventana was fairly simple. We had always been sort of a red wine winery, but we were growing Chardonnay, first for our own pleasure, and then we established a small market for it. Then that market grew and all of a sudden the white wine rage was on us. We seemed to sitting here with large quantities of red wine, at that time, (wouldn't I love to have it back now). So we needed some more white to round out the picture.

CS: When is this, in the mid-seventies?

RM: Yes. We've been dealing with Ventana for perhaps fifteen years.

We talked to people like Dexter Ahlgren¹² and Duane Cronin¹³ and some others who were using Ventana grapes and they were very happy with them. So we got together with Doug Meador¹⁴, I think at the Monterey Wine Festival one year. So once we established that relationship we kept it up

¹¹ John Shafer planted his vineyard later, but did not acquire his bond in Stags Leap until 1979.

¹² Dexter and Valerie Ahlgren bonded their Ahlgren Vineyard near Boulder Creek in 1976.

¹³ Cronin Vineyard is not far from here, on Old La Honda Road, bonded in 1980.

¹⁴ Doug Meador planted his Ventana Vineyards near Soledad several years before he received his winery bond in 1978.

right down to today, and we'll probably keep it up until we get to the point where there are enough Chardonnay grapes here in Woodside to give us all we need. But it's been a good source, and he's been a good friend; he's been very dependable. In years when I forgot to order grapes until too late, he still covered me.

CS: How much do you take from him?

RM: We take about 700 gallons per year. We actually take settled juice from him from grapes crushed there. It's easier to let them do it. We can go down there with two large tanks on one truck, and it would take us at least two truckloads to get the grapes themselves up here.

CS: Have you ever bought grapes other than Chardonnay from him?

RM: Yes. We discovered that they had Pinot noir that seemed to be very compatible with ours here. We have always been very limited in our Pinot noir production; we never have any more than two or three barrels, depending on the yield. And we always sell it out in a very short period of time. So we thought this was another opportunity to enhance our production. And this was about the time when reds were starting to come back into fashion. This was about five or six years ago, when we picked up a ton of his Pinot noir and made an experimental batch. It went nicely with the wine we grow here in Woodside. Now we buy about two or three tons of Pinot noir from him every year. I think we'll continue that. We keep the two wines separate; one is our estate bottled and the other is labeled Monterey County, Ventana Vineyards.

CS: Ah, I see, you mean you have two wines that are stylistically

RM: . . . compatible.

And there's another grape. We now make a Gewürztraminer from their grapes. The reason for that is that when we first had access to the Zinfandel grapes on the Christensen property, we had real problems getting them to ripen. I think they were heavily overcropped, and then we weren't as actively involved in farming them as we are now. So we started making a white Zinfandel from them. And we also could make a blush Cabernet, when we had grapes from vineyards that had low sugar. Here again, we were trying to get more white goods to meet demand. So we developed a market for slightly sweet wines. Lots of people thought these wines were wonderful, and we could sell them for \$5.75 per bottle.

CS: Let me ask you here how you stabilize such small lots of sweet wine. Filtration?

RM: Yes, sterile filtration. We did have one lot go bad on us and we lost it.

So, that's the reason we got into Gewürz. People would say they just loved these wines, and we knew why. They were sweet. We have made some sweet French Colombard previously, but we weren't so happy with it. We still do, but we've brought the sugar down quite a bit. So, three or four years ago we started buying Gewürztraminer from Ventana. Last year we made it in a dry style, because we made it both styles two years ago and people about five to one preferred the dry wine. And we couldn't justify having both of them. Maybe we should get out of that and the French Colombard, but it does give us something at the lower end of the price spectrum. Our top wines now are up in the \$15-20 range and a lot of people who support us don't drink much wine in that price range.

CS: So, why don't you sum up your wines as of right now.

RM: We say we're famous for our Cabernet and Chardonnay. But our Zin and Pinot noir are quite popular. Both the Cab and Zin have been estate bottled until the last couple of years when we bought

some additional Cab to get our red production up. We have both the Ventana and estate Pinot noirs. About 80% of our white wine production is Chardonnay, about half of it estate bottled from Woodside and about half from Ventana. Then there are about 50-100 cases of French Colombard and about the same quantity of Gewürztraminer. And we supplement that with a Champagne we get from Weibel put up under our label.

CS: Where are they making it that now?

RM: They still make it at the old Mission San Jose winery. They've sold off the vineyard and they say that they are going to keep that facility, at least for now.

CS: I saw them let the vineyard go two years ago, when they didn't prune it after the harvest.¹⁶

RM: Yes, you can see the sub-divisions moving in from both directions.

CS: When did you start that? I can remember buying that wine from you years ago.

RM: It's been over twenty years. It's a nice plus for the business. Lots of people like to buy it for weddings and special events.

CS: When you were going through your wines a minute ago you mentioned your Zinfandel estate-bottled wine. Now, there's no Zinfandel out there on your estate, and technically those little Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards up on La Questa aren't either. This might be a good place to explain how you've worked out this estate-bottled designation with the powers that be.

RM: For some years we used the "estate" designation only for the Chardonnay and the Pinot noir that were grown right here, since it was our understanding that the grapes had to be grown on the estate, where the winery stood.

When a BATF inspector made a routine visit one year, at least ten or fifteen years ago, I asked a question about the other vineyards that we maintained and over which we had full control, so far as the farming of the grapes was concerned, and which were here in Woodside within a short distance from the winery. I asked whether we might not call them estate wines. I think I had heard that they were allowing some people up in Napa to call a Carneros grape an estate grape when the winery was up in the Valley.

So I got a very prompt response and they said, yes, that's OK, so long as they are grown in Woodside and you maintain the vineyards. And there have been a couple of vineyards here which we have not maintained, such as the Keenan place, to which we always give a vineyard designation, rather than estate.

CS: So it's pretty simple to figure it out by looking at this map we have made. Can you add the word "Woodside" on the label, other than the term in your DBA?

RM: We call the Chardonnay we make here "Woodside Chardonnay." It's actually the name of the wine. That has been approved too. And it can be called "estate" as well.

CS: It's almost as if you had a situation here that lent itself to becoming an appellation. But then Woodside is a political term, like a county.

Let's talk now about some of your relations with other Santa Cruz Mountain winegrowers in the early sixties.

¹⁶ For the winding down of the Weibel Mission San Jose operation, see: *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/11/88; *San Jose Mercury*, 10/15/88; *Oakland Tribune*, 11/1/89; *Wine Spectator*, 4/15/88.

The Santa Cruz Mt. Winegrowing Community

RM: So far as starting dates are concerned, Ridge¹⁶ was a year or so before us and then David Bruce¹⁷ comes soon after us. I recall that, primarily because David came up to our place to get some ideas for building his own, although eventually his turned out to be substantially different.

CS: In the very early days it was more like yours.

RM: I met them fairly early, including Dave Bennion's partners at Ridge. We would meet at Wine Institute events and wine tastings, two or three times a year at the most. We'd talk some about the business, with maybe an occasional phone call. It was really too bad we didn't communicate more then, because that's probably when we needed each other's help as much as any time.

CS: Does part of this come from the fact that you're all doing something else as well as starting up a winery?

RM: That's right. At first this was an avocation for all of us. That was true for those first three, but for virtually everyone else here who has come into the business since then. Just about everybody else had another job and did the wine thing on weekends. Gradually people were weaned over after a time and some, like me, waited until they retired from the first job.

The fourth one was George Burtness, who was starting up about that same time over in Portola Valley.¹⁸

Polly likes to take credit for starting up the Santa Cruz Mountain Vintners, since she invited them all up for dinner. As a result of that first dinner, with our wives, we decided that we should get together periodically. So about once every quarter, in a very casual way, we'd get together.

CS: This would be in the late sixties?

RM: More like 1965. As other people came into the winegrowing community, we would invite them. But in the early days they came in very slowly. It wasn't until the mid-seventies when the flood began.

These were very informal dinners. But as a result of these social get-togethers we did start communicating more about the operation of our wineries.

CS: I notice that you didn't mention Martin Ray here, or the Mt. Eden group. They weren't part of these early meetings?

RM: They certainly weren't. I think that Martin Ray had driven a wedge between himself and each of us in some fashion in the early sixties. And we didn't think he would want to belong to the group. And in the beginning it was strictly social. If it had been a formal business operation I think he would have been invited.

It was not until we actually formed the Santa Cruz Mountain Vintners Association as an active business group that the Mt. Eden operation took part. For a while there it was a sort of winemaker-of-the-month situation. It was changing every couple of years until Jeffrey Patterson came in and stabilized the operation.¹⁹

It was from that rather informal social group that the organization evolved. And I think that Jan Sherrill for pushing the idea that it should be a business group with so many people around making wine. And this sort of tied in to the move to acquire the appellation from the BATF in 1981,

¹⁶ Ridge Vineyards on Monte Bello Road actually was not bonded until 1962, but was selling grapes in 1959. See Gemello interview.

¹⁷ David Bruce Winery on Bear Creek Road received its bond in 1964.

¹⁸ Burtness received his bond for Nepenthe Cellars in 1967 (BW 4517), but ended commercial production in 1978.

¹⁹ See *Wine Spectator*, 8/1/84; 7/1/85.

but it actually precedes this by five or six years.

We became incorporated about three years ago. And we were in the process of applying for a non-profit corporate status when we merged with the Santa Cruz County Winegrowers Association, who had already acquired that status.

CS: What was the difference between the two groups in the beginning?

RM: When we set up the machinery to get the appellation, Dave Bennion, Ken Burnap, and Jan Sherrill were the principle people who worked on it. They had to define the limits of the viticultural district. They worked Woodside in because of its history and the fact that one of the oldest wineries in the area was here. Technically we could have been excluded.

Chuck Devlin had a small winery near Aptos and owned a piece of property there which was not planted to vines. And it was right on the edge of the appellation, as it was defined in the application.

CS: I seem to remember hearing that the contour line ran right through the middle of where he was planning to plant his vineyard.

RM: He asked to be included, but he was not included, I guess because there was no vineyard there as yet. That also excluded his being a member of our group, because we defined potential membership by saying you had to have a winery within the appellation.

CS: I see. Just having a vineyard wouldn't be enough, since this was a "Vintners Association." Even if you were inside the appellation.

RM: I have always thought we were a bit restrictive in drawing the lines.

CS: But at the time I recall the question coming up, it was a question of, is there a vineyard or not? And the answer was NO. Remember, Kathryn Kennedy was later brought in, even though she was below the contour line, because she did have a vineyard. She would have been left out in the unamended first application.²⁰

RM: Yes, that's right. It was because there was no vineyard. But he didn't feel that way and he worked to form another organization, the Santa Cruz County Winegrowers Association. The two names were regrettably close. You had to be in the County, or make wine from grapes grown in the County. It was a more liberal designation than ours.

CS: So, vineyard people could join. What Santa Cruz County wineries could join that group which were not in your Vintners group?

RM: Bargetto, Devlin, River Run, Salamandre, Crescini.²¹ They are the ones I can think of.

CS: Did you have people in your group join his group? It would obviously be possible.

RM: Sure. It was appealing since they had a clear geographic identity, which was helpful. And there was the Santa Cruz County Fair, which that group immediately became identified with. If you didn't belong to that group you couldn't exhibit your wines at the Santa Cruz County Fair. They did become a very active organization. I think they were more creative than we were for quite a few years. I think that it was a personality thing that we stayed separate as long as we did.

When I took over the presidency of our group in 1990, two and a half years ago, I announced

²⁰ The Kennedy winery and vineyard are on Pierce Road in Saratoga, directly across from the Knight Smith vineyard. See Knight Smith interview.

²¹ Bargetto= Soquel, Devlin=Soquel, Salamandre=Aptos, River Run=Watsonville, Cescini=Soquel.

that my first objective was to get the two organizations merged. Of our membership half belonged to that group and almost half of theirs belonged to ours. It was really difficult for some of these people to attend two different sets of meetings and be involved with two separate sets of promotional activities, which tended to parallel one another.

CS: How did you get this fusion to take place?

RM: I guess if you're determined enough you can get a thing done. I thought this was very important and it was easy to get a lot of support from the people involved. The people over there were for it and so were many on this side. People at Ridge and Sunrise were all for it.

One of the first things I did was to set up a marketing committee and to encourage them to try and do some joint promotional activities with the Santa Cruz Mountains group. We've had two major tastings, one here at Green Gables and another at Villa Montalvo. Green Gables is the Fleischaker estate just a few hundred yards from here.

We found that when we met with these people that they were very much the same as we were as far as their interests and problems were concerned, they on their side of the mountains and we over here. There are some really fine people in that organization. That's how I got to know John Bargetto, and Steve and Pam Storrs.

We had these activities going and at a meeting about a year ago we had a number of business topics come up, such as whether to get an 800 phone number, and have an answering machine give a canned message. After we got through about six of these topics, it came up that if we were going to get together with the other group, wouldn't it make sense to wait on this until we did get together with them? We agreed that it would. So finally someone, I think it was Don Reisen, sales manager of Ridge Vineyards, asked why we didn't get going on this merger. I said, "wonderful."

I immediately appointed five people at the meeting to be on the merger committee and told them to get with it. We wrote a letter to Chuck Devlin, who was the president of their association, and we told him what we had in mind. We suggested that his group also appoint a merger committee. We had discussed this informally already, particularly with Steve Storrs. Actually, we put it together in about four months.

CS: What did you call the new group?

RM: That was one of the trickier things we had to put together. We came up with Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association. It brings both names together. The corporate situation was easy, since they were already a non-profit corporation. So we just folded our organization into theirs. And as far as the officers were concerned, my second year had expired in July, so we just continued on a month to month basis until this was put through. So about the first of September the new organization came into being. There weren't any really big problems. And we just made their group officers the new officers, since their terms run to the end of the year. And three of us, Don Reisen, Ron Stortz of Sunrise, and I were added to the executive committee. We had a get-together party at the Byington Winery after it was done, but we really haven't even had a meeting yet. We were running right into the vintage season, and you don't meet in September or October, for obvious reasons. We have other fish to fry.

I take a lot of pride in this development. It happened quickly and under my administration, and it looks as if it going to work out beautifully.

CS: Concerning group events, the annual Syntex tasting was a Vintners operations, wasn't it?

RM: Yes, but that was an event where we showed up and poured our wine. Basically, it's a Children's Health Council function. They make the arrangements. They tell us the date and send us posters. It started out as a Vintners tasting, but last year, before we had merged, we asked the Winegrowers to take part.

CS: Remember the flood benefit event after the 1987 slides in the mountains?

RM: Both sides were in on that. I think that the Ahlgrens were the driving force behind that. But it was more the result of individuals than the organizations' efforts.

CS: How about the earthquake wine?

RM: That was the County group. They did a Chardonnay, Epicenter Cuvée, a blend of wines from the year of the earthquake. We did something similar to that at the last Syntex function. Eight of us contributed Cabernet Sauvignon, which was blended into a special cuvée and it was presented to Carl Schmidt, the head of the University National Bank, who has been one of the guiding lights of that Children's Health Council event, and a great wine fan.

The new group will now have a number of events. We'll probably have at least four such functions per year.

We also worked on something we called the "Passport" program. In this case there were twenty-two wineries that participated, from both associations. It covered the whole year, and just finished. One of the problems we have putting together any kind of an event is the fact that seven or eight of us are open by appointment only. Some wineries are open every weekend, others aren't. At Woodside we have our events on certain weekends. The idea of this event was to make sure that people could visit every one of these wineries and they would know that there was a certain date when they would all be open. So we picked four dates, one each quarter. Some wineries you could go to any weekend, like Ridge, Sunrise, or Roudon-Smith. On Passport weekends you went to the others like Page Mill or Thomas Fogarty.

You bought a book for \$10.00. That was your ticket to visit wineries on any of these four days, or to any that were open other times. Each winery had a distinctive stamp and you had your passport stamped at the winery. Our stamp was a ram's head. If you visited all twenty-two wineries you were invited to the Villa Montalvo function free of charge as a guest of the Association. We had about 250 people who did the whole thing. And we sold two or three thousand books. Each winery sold the books and kept the money. We paid a dollar apiece for the books and sold them for \$10.00, so it was a good deal. But I would give people a passport if they bought a case of wine.

CS: That's a great idea. You're hustling for yourself and in doing so you insure that people are going to go to other wineries as well. Who thought of that?

RM: Some other group had done it. Maybe Sonoma County Vintners; I'm not sure. I think that Pam Storrs²² had picked up on it. The Wine Institute would have these meetings where people shared ideas with one another and you could pick up on some good ones. There were associations from Mendocino to San Diego exchanging ideas with one another. At a meeting, that I didn't attend, she proposed the idea to the Winegrowers group. They were just about to do it when we started talking about merging. So we asked them to join the Syntex tasting and they asked us to join the Passport program.

We're going to have another one. I know they have set the dates for next year.

Another event is the Vintners Festival, which they had last year. It was strictly a product of the County Winegrowers group. Everyone was to be open on the same day, one weekend, and the same hours. There would be three starting points, wineries. It worked well for them because geographically they are pretty compact. You start at any point and you pay \$10.00 for a glass which you carry through. That embossed glass was your ticket. This has become a big affair, in its third or fourth year. They have done a good job publicizing it. They've sent out a detailed newsletter with a good map on it. Some of the more hard-to-reach wineries had their affair at a restaurant in the area. I'm not sure how we'd do that with a merged group that is going to stretch from Watsonville to Woodside and Half Moon Bay. I think that the answer is that there will be an event on the west side

²² Pamela Bianchini-Storrs and Stephen Storrs own the Storrs Winery in Santa Cruz (BW 5477-1988).

of the mountains one weekend and the east side on another.

Next year the Passport event is aimed to make money for the organization. It wasn't this year at a dollar per ticket. I think that we'll charge three or four dollars and still sell them for \$10.00.

CS: That will really be good for what you might call generic regional public relations for the organization.

RM: That's the whole idea. It works wonderfully. I send my customers to Santa Cruz and they send theirs to me. People would have their routes all mapped out, with designated drivers. Every week our attendance increased and our sales increased. We were doing a couple of thousand dollars worth of sales on a weekend, and for us that's good any time. We developed new customers, new names for our mailing list.

CS: How will you publicize it.

RM: Primarily in our own newsletters. And we each try to get our local newspapers to carry something on it.

CS: Let's get back to your own activities here.

RM: The bulk of our sales have taken place at what we call our spring tastings and our fall tastings. We started out just doing it on the Memorial Day weekend and the Labor Day weekend. As our mailing list grew and our number of wines grew, we began expanding these to the weekends before and after. We probably do better than 50% of our sales at those events. And typically we release our new wines then. We have a mailing list of 2,000, which we purge regularly.

A few years ago we came up with the idea of a barrel tasting. So we sent out a mailing to people we could identify as our Cab customers and told them we'd have a barrel tasting on the first two weekends in December. We had a pretty good turnout. We offered futures sales. The wines would be bottled in January. They buy them at a 20% discount from what we thought our release price would be. They'd pay half then and half when they picked up the wine. We still have a few wines that haven't been picked up from two years ago. That has been a booming success. This year we sold better than a third of our Zinfandel and half of our Cabernet. People really enjoy that; they get a kick out of a barrel tasting.

CS: Is this a real barrel tasting? Nowadays they're usually in labeled bottles marked barrel samples.

RM: This is the real thing. They go right back in the rear cellar and taste it right there. And we also sell some regular wine since it comes before the holidays. It's worked out very well for us.

CS: Are there other community related things the winery has been involved with?

RM: Of course, the harvest is our biggest social event, and a very functional one. And we do more and more community things. For example, just last weekend we had what they called the Woodside Vineyards Harvest Tour. That didn't mean our winery, but the vineyards of Woodside. The idea was a tour of the vineyards and the houses related to them. They talked to me, but I said that the problem was that it would be right at harvest time. But that's what they had in mind. Then people could see others picking and crushing grapes. So I asked them to come over and look at the amount of space we had and to see what they could do with seventy or eighty people on our patio while the grapes were being crushed in the carport. So they came over and thought it would just be wonderful.

They sold better than 200 tickets. There was a very nice program and they sold a lot of ads in it. They scheduled it so that there would be about sixty people here three different times during the day to have lunch on our patio. The other places they just toured. Unfortunately, at one time we had

about a hundred people here as two of the groups sort of got squished together. But it worked out well. We weren't directly involved, of course. It was a PTA function and I think that we'll be doing more and more of that sort of thing. We think it's good for business, and these are limited to charities we're interested in and believe in. And we sell a little wine and get more people for our mailing list.

CS: Did the PTA do OK?

RM: They said they made close to \$10,000.

You know, we do an enormous number of those things, but, as you might say, off campus. There are loads of groups who have events and they want to serve wine.

CS: But as a winery your size, how can you respond to so many things like that?

RM: Well, we often sell them the wine at half price. That might not cover my cost, but it brought in some revenue. And any thing I believe in strongly I like to help. But surprisingly, most of them are willing to do it at half price. But we really limit ourselves geographically. I won't go north of Burlingame or south of Palo Alto, except for an industry function.

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November 3, 1992

Woodside in the Seventies

CS: Let's go back to narrative history and look at the winery after Groetzinger leaves in the late sixties.

RM: We remained very static in terms of size and scope of operation and products, virtually through the seventies because I had thrust on me all the work that formerly two had done, or better two now were doing what four had done. We did our best to hold our own. We had a modest amount of Chardonnay, a small amount of Pinot noir, and the Cabernet Sauvignon from the La Questa vineyards. We maintained that level of 6-700 gallons per year up to the late seventies.

In 1978 we had a somewhat significant change in personnel, although it goes back almost to the beginning of the seventies.

Mark Smith came to work for us in 1970 or 1971, when he was twelve years old. We had complained to his parents that we hadn't had much luck with the high school boys' being dependable. So we had a phone call the next day from Mark. He said he'd heard we needed someone to work in the vineyard and that he'd like the job. I was impressed that he was interested enough to call, and, even though we had never hired anyone that young before, we put him to work watering new vines, doing minor hoeing, the kind of chores a young boy could do. And he just stayed with us, working weekends and summertime, through grade school and on through high school. He got more and more interested in wine and when he graduated from high school he made the decision to go on to UC Davis to study viticulture. He was able to pay for most of his first two years at Davis with money he'd saved in the six or seven years he'd worked here.

When he graduated from Davis his first job was assistant winemaker at Rancho Sisquoc, near Santa Maria. This was in the early years there and it wasn't a very challenging job. So Mark came

back up here one weekend and said he had very little to do on weekends and wondered if he could come up and do some more serious work in the winery. I told him he could be even more serious and be the winemaker. So, he was here for two years, 1978 and 1979. He was here at least two weekends a month. Then he got a full time job with Grgich Hills in Napa as the assistant to the assistant winemaker and worked up to assistant. He was there for several years on a number of jobs, but he knew that Mike Grgich was always going to be winemaker there so he looked around and got a job with Girard Winery, just across the Valley.

CS: How did his presence here for those two vintages affect your operation?

RM: It affected it dramatically, since he was the first person here with a formal education in winemaking making the decisions. Before then it was shoot-from-the-hip or call Davis, if it was really a tough problem. He really upgraded a lot of our standards. Sanitation improved dramatically. Our winemaking techniques were now a lot more sophisticated. He was able to do all sorts of tests we had never performed before. He also had a good palate, and that also helped upgrade quality. But we didn't increase our volume much. It may have gone up another 200 gallons a year, but not very much. We held at close to a thousand gallons on up into the early eighties.

The Eighties

CS: Let's go into the eighties, what you call the "Bruce Hart years."

RM: Bruce probably had more influence on the winery than anyone before or since, with the exception of our professional winemakers. As an amateur he very influential, very serious and a great lover of wine. He came here first as one of our neighbors and fellow church member, first to help with the harvest, and later he'd come up on weekends just to help out as a volunteer. Soon he became really interested in the operation and wanted to help more. He also had some darn good ideas on improving our wine quality. It was also about this time that we began to "inherit" additional vineyards here in Woodside. I think we had control of six or eight by then. People would plant a little vineyard, hoping to make wine at home, and after a couple of unsuccessful vintages they call us up and ask if we'd like to take care of this plot of Zinfandel or Cabernet and take the grapes.

Bruce had an excellent palate, much better than mine. So I finally suggested that he take over as winemaker. So he took over the full responsibility, from about 1980 to 1985. We just loved working with him, but he never liked to give advice or tell us what to do. But he knew exactly what he wanted, and his favorite expression was, "well, if I owned this winery, here is what I would do." That became a favorite quote around here.

It was really a great disappointment in 1985 when he announced that he'd made a major expansion in the printing business that he owned and that he'd have to curtail his winemaking activities here. Despite my pleas he insisted that he'd have to be spending lots of his Saturdays and Sundays at the plant. He promised to help when he could, but he made it clear that it would be just a fraction of what it had been.

CS: Had he actually been an employee, or was he a true amateur, doing what he loved for the fun of it?

RM: No, this was his hobby. All he ever got out of it was some wine and a lot of satisfaction. And there is no question, during those years there was a further upgrading of our wine quality. He took all of Mark Smith's information and built on it. And he was an avid student, read everything he could get his hands on.

CS: What were the concrete factors that upgraded the wine from 1978 to 1985. You mentioned

sanitation.

RM: Yes. We got into temperature control of fermentation with a very modest piece of refrigeration equipment that we used on our Chardonnays. Just things like taking better care of the barrels were important. We had lost whole barrels of wine because something had gone wrong with the barrel itself. We now were able to spend more time taking care of them.

CS: So it isn't just new ideas; it's also having another person with more time to spend on such things.

RM: It became more of a business and less of a hobby. Just having someone with a conscience about such things made me more conscientious.

CS: Right. It's like a master teacher having a good student teacher. The older one pays more attention.

RM: Bruce was definitely a conscience for the whole operation.

Well, when Bruce came up with this announcement, there was no way I could talk him out of it. So we sat down and decided our options. We decided we'd either cut the winery back, go back to the seventies, or expand and hire somebody to make wine. Our gallonage at that point was between 1,000 and 1,200.

So we talked about getting a winemaker. Bruce, in doing all this wine work in these years had developed a number of connections and sources. One of them was Wine and the People in Berkeley. He had gotten to know Frank Churchill, their winemaker. So we went over one noon and had lunch with Frank and proposed that he come down and work for us on weekends. It did appeal to him, but looking back, it probably wouldn't have worked for long. Nobody really can keep working seven days a week for very long. But anyway we started up on that basis. Then he came up with the news that Wine and the People was moving up to Napa and get out of the winemaking business, just sell winemaking equipment and such.²³ In effect his job was going to disappear. We said we could keep him busy more than two days a week, but not full time. So he decided to further his education, and the first two years he worked here he went to UC Davis two days a week. When he finished at Davis we had inherited another vineyard or two, and had even bought a tractor, so we made it a full time job, if he would do vineyard work as well. He didn't have much experience in the vineyard, but he took a couple of courses, and it worked out well during the last three years he was here, which would have been 1988-1991.

CS: So who was the winemaker in 1986 and 1987?

RM: Frank was; he just wasn't full time yet. I had happily given up that job to Mark Smith. It was wonderful to have such knowledgeable people making the decisions. And I was still traveling for Armstrong.

CS: What year did you finally retire from Armstrong?

RM: January, 1989.

Frank stayed here for five years and did lots to upgrade the operation. Of course, we had to expand to raise more revenue to pay for him. At the same time we hired Richard Valencia, who has been working for us for seven years. He works around the house and the vineyard, and helps with lots of the heavy work in the winery. That job has grown to the point where he has an assistant most of

²³ For the Wine and the People story see: *Oakland Tribune*, 2/22/78; *Vintage Magazine*, 12/1/80.

the time.

CS: So that's the work crew I see here now.

RM: Yes, and the main reason we need these two is that we have so many vineyards to operate now. We have about 15 acres now, which isn't so much, but it's 15 acres on 15 different sites.

CS: So when the new vineyards come into production you'll be looking at about 25 tons of grapes. What's the gallonage right now?

RM: We've peaked at about 4700 gallons for the last two years.

CS: Does that include the Ventana grapes?

RM: Yes.

CS: How many gallons did you buy down there this season?

RM: About 1,100 gallons.

CS: So from the Woodside vineyards you're getting around 3700 gallons. How much do you get per acre here?

RM: We have quite a range. This one here produces less than a ton per acre. Some of the more prolific ones are up to two tons or two and a half tons.

CS: How does the gallonage from Ventana divide up?

RM: We got 600 gallons of Chardonnay and 250 gallons each of Gewürztraminer and Pinot noir.

CS: I just did some dividing and it looks as if now you're about a 2,000 case winery.

RM: Just shy of that. And then we sell 4-500 cases of Champagne. We usually make six or seven pickups per year over there.

CS: Well, we got to this from talking about the rise in production from Frank Churchill's working here full time. What else happened during these years? This has been a revolutionary change in your operation.

RM: Yes, and that's when we really started getting serious about the Ventana grapes. When Bruce was here we were taking just about 2-300 gallons per year. It was just to supplement the Woodside Chardonnay. We took a jump right then to the 600 gallon level on Chardonnay. We also inherited the Christensen vineyard at about that time. This is when we started to get some Zinfandel. It tended to overcrop but it was fine, since we were making Zinfandel blanc out of most of it. Now we're thinning, sometimes as much as a third of the crop.

Another important factor from those days came into play when Frank asked why we didn't have any French oak. I told him I'm sort of a "buy America type," and that included barrels. But he told me that if we wanted to make really good Chardonnay, and probably Pinot noir, we'd have to have some French barrels. So we did purchase French oak during the second year that Frank was here. And it was no question that it did upgrade the quality of our Chardonnay and Pinot noir by at least 25%. It made a believer out of me. Now our normal practice is to keep a barrel for three years, and then shave it and use it for another three years. Then we may keep it around or not, as an inert container.

Things were really different now, since there was somebody in the winery every day of the week. Now when something needed to be done on a Wednesday there was somebody here to do it on that day. Now when things were being done it was exactly when it should be done, not when it was convenient.

CS: Was Frank able to be as much an enologist as Smith had been?

RM: Frank had more to work with than Mark had. We started buying lab equipment, like a pH meter, and equipment to titrate for acid.

Recent Operations

CS: With this new production, where are you putting it? Where is the physical capacity to handle this new production? You're up to 3,000 gallons now, which is almost five times as much as you were producing a few years earlier.

RM: First, you should come down in the winery and see what we've done.

CS: I haven't been there for at least three or four years.

RM: We are putting barrels in places we never dreamed we could put barrels. We never had had a fork lift, because our place was too small, so that in former years once you put something down it was there forever if it had wine in it. So now we have a palate jack. If we can get something off the ground an inch we can move it around now.

CS: So you are making 2,000 cases of wine in a space where before you were making three or four hundred.

RM: Right. Another thing we did was to start storing our finished wine off the premises. Typically we bottled about six times per year, perhaps 150 cases at a time. When a lot of wine became ready we'd bottle it and spaced it out that way intentionally. Then we would store the bottles in bins in the winery. Now we have the "Bottling Room" come in twice a year and we do much more. They're one of those bottling lines that will come in and do the job for you. They usually come in in January and June. Then we were ending up with 700 cases of wine, finished, labeled and we had to do something with it. So that is when we started to store it in the Wine Warehouse down in San Jose. Right now we have about 800 cases down there. In addition to that when we built the guest house in 1985 we included at the far side of the car port a room that is 8x24 feet that accommodates about 800 cases, and it's refrigerated. So we now store about 90% of our finished wine in other places than in the winery and that's what has given us so much more space. Many of the bins we had bottles in were converted into barrel racks.

CS: That's what I haven't seen.

RM: So other than putting in a thousand gallon stainless steel tank, which would be more space efficient, there is really no way we can expand the operation beyond what we have now.

CS: But, where do you keep the French Colombard. Don't you have some stainless steel to keep that in?

RM: No, we age it in oak. We sometimes leave it in an old Dairy King stainless steel tank on wheels. We use that for fermenting, and sometimes we'll leave the Colombard in there for a month or two after

fermenting before we put it in barrels. But typically it does get into an old barrel eventually.

CS: Does the guest house actually relate to the winery operation?

RM: Well, technically we rent it.

CS: Did you lose any vineyard when you put it in?

RM: Yes, but we actually gained. The lower part of the vineyard where we built that house is very heavily shaded and when we replanted the rest of the vineyard we didn't replant that. We kept the old vines that we down there and most years we didn't even pick those grapes; just let the birds have them. When we built the house we had to take out about 150 vines, but then we replanted everything below the guest house with another 100 new Chardonnay vines. They were good vines that would mature their crop early and didn't need quite as much sun.

CS: So actually you upgraded the quality of the estate Chardonnay. That's what we're hearing from Napa now and the type B phylloxera. They're ripping up the old vines but putting in better clones and spacing them better. The result, they say, will be better wine.

So this brings us to the end of the Churchill years. How does the next transition take place?

RM: Frank probably stayed here longer than he should have, in terms of his professional growth. Obviously a 1,500 case winery isn't too great a challenge. We talked about his leaving a couple of years before he did, because I thought that when I retired from Armstrong I'd be spending more time in the winery, and that I wouldn't need a full time winemaker. I suggested that he might want to be looking around. As it turned out when I got within six months of retirement I changed my mind and he'd decided that he was going to leave, which was the right thing, anyway. So some friends put him in touch with a gentleman who owned about eighty acres of grapes up around Healdsburg and who had decided to start up his own winery. Frank fit right in there. It's called Armida, named for this fellow's grandmother.²⁴ He has them up to about 10,000 cases now and they're on the rise. We keep in touch.

At that time we realized that we did want a full time winemaker and when Frank decided to leave we started advertising. But all my best leads came from the wineries around here. Brian Caselden was recommended to me by Tom Mudd of Cinnabar Winery, where he was working at the time.²⁵ He had a bunch of part time jobs down in that area. He had had a full time seasonal job previously at Mirassou.

When he started we weren't sure if it would be full time. But it soon was. He has always lived in Saratoga and has worked in vineyards there for years. His background is really practical viticulture. He was taking care of several small vineyards down there, one for Katherine Kennedy.

CS: I'll bet he was doing the Knight Smith place, that little vineyard across Pierce Road from Mrs. Kennedy's place.

RM: Yes, that's it.²⁶ And he also helped up at Peter Martin Ray's place, and at Mt. Eden. I think he also worked for David Bruce for a while.

The thing that weighted our decision in his favor came as part of a trip to Europe. We were in a castle in Germany. I was in the lobby and the operator called out, "Is Mr. Mullen in the lobby?" I thought it was some kind of an emergency. But it was Brian. He said he'd heard we were looking for a winemaker and that he'd really like to have that job. So I called him the day we got back. We had four

²⁴ Bonded Winery 1717, at 2201 Westside Road, near Healdsburg. See *Wine Spectator*, 1/31/92.

²⁵ Cinnabar Winery, BW 5333, is located in Saratoga above Congress Springs Road. Tom Mudd has a small vineyard in Woodside on Fox Hollow Road, which he developed before starting his 30,000 gallon operation to the south.

²⁶ See Knight Smith interview.

other candidates we'd talked to. But we went with him. I really am amazed how strong he is technically. He really knows his stuff. Actually, he has no academic background. It's all practical.

My challenge to him when we hired him was to have as little fall-off as possible in quality. Right now I think he may be making better wine than Frank did.

CS: So, this brings us down to the present. Now, with all this new production have you had to modify your approach to marketing?

RM: Actually, in the last couple of years we've been restricting our marketing. We're selling out of almost everything. Right now all we have to sell is a couple hundred cases of Ventana Chardonnay and about thirty cases of Woodside Pinot noir. Cabernet and Zin are gone.

We always had a series of spring and fall tastings. And then we started the barrel tastings. That takes up most of the slack.

CS: Geographically you're staying right here on the peninsula.

RM: The only retail store we sell at is at Roberts here in Woodside. I also have a Safeway store down in Menlo Park; the manager is a real fanatic about local wines. Other than that I sell to about a dozen restaurants between Burlingame and Palo Alto. That's my market.

We'll have to do some expanding when this production uptick kicks in. We'll have another thousand gallons to sell soon. And we need that to bring up revenue to at least break even.

CS: So when we're talking about the 4,700 gallons now, we're talking about a new level of production which hasn't really come on the market. At this level you can probably make a profit. You need to find a couple more Safeways and restaurants.

RM: From a marketing point of view I think restaurants beat the heck out of retail stores. A little place around the corner here is probably my best customer right now. It's a rare week that goes by when she doesn't call me and ask for a couple of cases of Chardonnay.

CS: It's understandable. They are selling your wine on a person-to-person basis and if they like your wine and actually sell it, a restaurant can be great. If the place has sixty wines on the list and they play you-choose, you don't have a personal salesperson working for you every day.

RM: She has seven or eight wines in there and three of them are mine.

CS: And she's selling a bottle of Woodside wine in her own town.

Do you have any idea in the future of going, let's say, to 10,000 gallons?

RM: We can't do it. We're restricted by the town of Woodside now to our last year's production level. That established the benchmark that we're supposed to live with.

Local Politics

CS: Let's talk about Woodside wineries and local government recently.

RM: Two years ago- I'll get you the articles I've cut out- a fellow named Jerry Anderson, who has about an acre and a half of grapes up Woodside Road, had been working as a home winemaker and actually producing his wine the last couple of years down at Cinnabar. He discovered, as we did years ago, that his acre and a half produced more grapes and wine than he could drink on his own. So he

applied to the Town for a license to produce commercial wine here. He was surprised when the Town said NO. He noted that there were already two wineries in town. But they said they'd been here a long time, and they were set up under more of an agricultural permit than a winemaking permit. They weren't sure they wanted to expand wineries in town, so they decided to look into it.

They made a very extensive, and I'm sure very expensive, study of the whole thing and they came up with a rule that was very restrictive. It allows you to produce 1,000 gallons per year, sell no more than 2,000, store no more than 2,000 on the premises, only open to the public a certain number of days, only allows the bottling truck twice a year-- everything was strictly limited.

Duane Cronin and I got quite interested in this, since we didn't think it was a good idea to have such restrictive legislation aimed at small wineries, even if they let us stay on. We could just see the neo-prohibitionists coming down the road.

CS: Were you grandfathered in under the new rules?

RM: The way it finally worked out, we were. But we wanted to get the rule passed in such a way as to recognize the viability of small wineries here. The bulk of the town was in favor of this. The only problem we had was from one of Cronin's neighbors and three or four of Anderson's neighbors, who were very strong against it. They really raised a big fuss. They about quadrupled the number of hearings we had to have on this thing. But we had letters and petitions in our favor and we just swamped them with people who said that Woodside Vineyards and Cronin are great for the community. We made a pretty strong case.

CS: You worked with Cronin on this?

RM: Oh yes. The opponents raised every possible objection. We had to take Brian down to counter the objection about the "dangerous" chemicals we used in the winery. But it was a not-in-my-backyard type of opposition. Even the people who opposed Anderson said they thought Woodside and Cronin were fine. But we don't want one in our backyard.

So the ruling passed, but even when they passed it they made specific regulations for Cronin and us. I had written a proposal to them that called for any existing winery to be allowed to continue to operate on the same level of production that had existed in 1991. And they passed it. So we got busy and made a lot of extra wine last year.

CS: What does Cronin make now?

RM: About 5,000 gallons.

CS: I had no idea he was up that high.

RM: Anderson still doesn't have his operation going because it turns out that the area where they built had certain covenants and restrictions on land-use that prohibit operating a business out of your home. One neighbor is suing him under these restrictions. So he decided again this year not to make his wine at home. I don't know how it's going to come out.

Looking to the Future

CS: Let me ask you to close out this great series we've done by looking into the future. I know that isn't good history, but your ideas are history. What do you think Woodside Vineyards will be twenty or thirty years down the line. You and Polly don't have any kids, but kids don't usually take over anyway; they go do something else.

RM: There are a couple of possible scenarios. First, I had always felt that this place was not a saleable commodity. And I still don't, to the extent that I don't think I can sell Woodside Vineyards to someone who will operate it as a business. But I did get an understanding on this and got the Town lawyer to put it in writing- it's in the minutes of the last meeting of this Anderson flap. It's that we do have a saleable commodity in that we can sell the house and winery to another party who will be allowed to continue to operate the winery.

CS: In other words it's sort of an easement that follows the land, like PG&E.

RM: That is probably the most likely thing to happen. Now that's one of the things that we think makes the property more valuable than it might be as just a piece of land. Who knows, another kook like Mullen might come along in ten or fifteen years and think, Wow, I can have my own little winery and vineyard.

CS: I've written a couple of articles on this subject, looking back at the enthusiastic entrepreneurs of the 1880s and 1890s and what happened to their little wineries between 1900 and 1915. I think it's a similar historical situation to what's going to be happening ten to thirty years from now when all these little life style wineries, literally hundreds of them since the 1970s, no longer are in the hands of their original owners.²⁷

RM: I've also discussed this with Brian. I don't think I'm going to lose interest, but primarily for health reasons, perhaps, if I decide I don't want to do it anymore, I might be able to turn it over to him. I don't know if I can keep him around ten years on that hope. That's my other scenario, but I think it's more likely to be the former. I think in a few years, like Frank, he's going to want to move on to something bigger and better than a break-even operation. I hope that it continues in one form or another.

CS: These little vineyards appearing up in the hills around here, that's a good sign for the future. It's a sign of permanence. It takes a lot more foresight and patience and stability to plant a vineyard than to plant a row of onions or a bed of tomatoes.

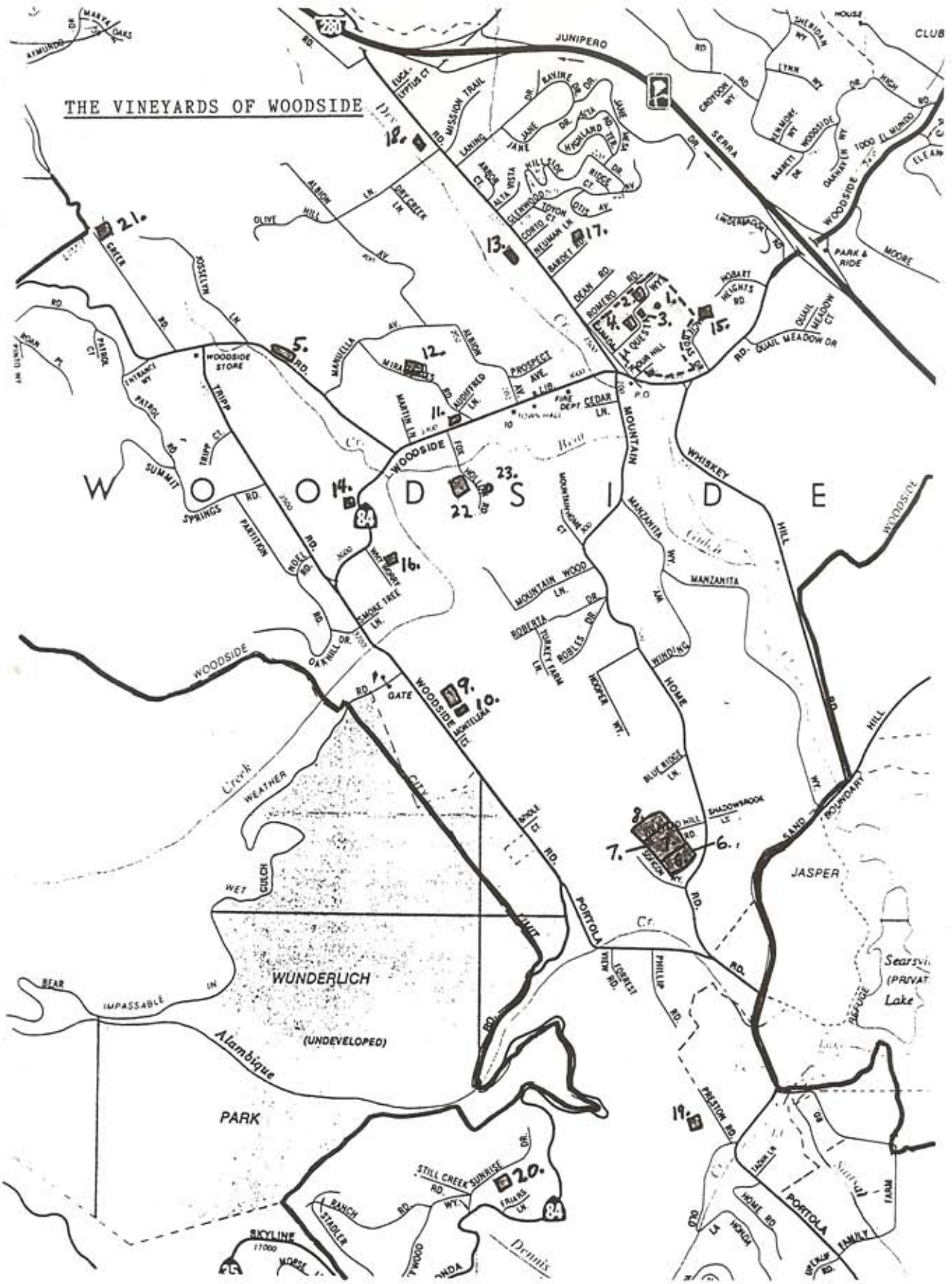
RM: People like the Walshes and the Browns just planted this year. I told them I expect to be around and stay in business. But I'll be seventy years old before we drink the first wine off those vineyards.

CS: I think we'll both still be around, pulling corks.

RM: Right. We both know what red wine does for your health.

* * * * *

²⁷ *Vinifera Wine Growers Journal* (15:3), 176; *Bulletin of the Medical Friends of Wine*, 9/1/84.



THE VINEYARDS OF WOODSIDE

WOODSIDE

WUNDERLICH
(UNDEVELOPED)

PARK

SKYLINE 11000

STILL CREEK SUNRISE 20.

FRANKS LN 84

Drum's

Sears & Roebuck
(Private Lake)

CLUB

THE MARINE OAKS
ATMUNDO

AN UNIV. ROAD

WOODSIDE STORE

W

BEAR

IMPASSABLE LN

Alambique

RANCH STADLER

WOOD

WANDA

WOODSIDE

WOODSIDE

WOODSIDE

LOCK LUFFUS CT

MISSION TRAIL

LANING

ALBION LN

DEERBRIK LN

OLIVE HILL

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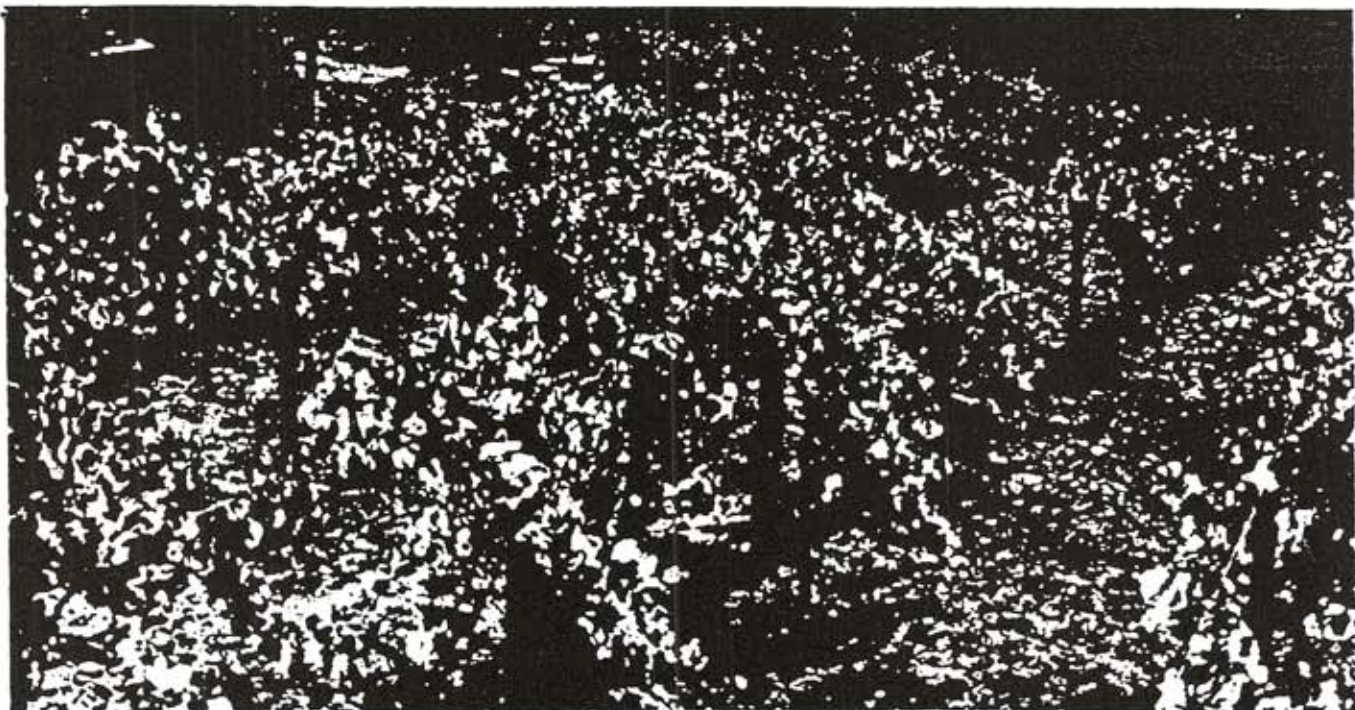


Photo courtesy of
Woodside Vineyards

La Peninsula,
Summer, 1980.
Published by
San Mateo County
Historical Assn.

A HISTORY OF WOODSIDE WINERIES

by Janet Loustaunou

Woodside today has two small wineries within its boundaries, both producing premium wines. But there is possibly less wine being produced now than there was a century ago. For several years over the last hundred, many acres of this area were devoted to producing wines. "Wine production reached its peak on the Peninsula about 1890. In that year nearly 800 acres were planted in grapes in San Mateo County alone. The production began receding and in 1936 only 54 acres of the 800 remained in the county. By 1945 this acreage had fallen to 39 acres with a yield of barely 100 tons of grapes."

By early in the second half of the 19th century much of the virgin timber had been removed from the hills in and around Woodside. Some of the land was left to second growth trees and underbrush. In some of the area row crops were planted to make money and to stabilize the soil. The terrain and the soil were well suited for vineyards. Grapes for both table use and wine use were extensively planted. "The valley and its slopes bristled with vineyards after 1875. The San Francisco Peninsula never became a major wine producing area, although its product was of an excellent quality. By the turn of the century there were about 1,000 acres of commercial vineyards in the present Woodside, Searsville, and Portola Valley area."

The first notable quantity of wine grapes was planted and raised in the early 1850's by Count Agostin Haraszthy. He owned two 320-acre parcels in the vicinity of Crystal Springs. "In the cleared land, before the end of March,

1854, he planted 30 acres of grapes." Many varieties were planted, as he was experimenting to determine which variety would be suitable for this locality. "So to New York and Europe he sent orders for many different kinds of vinifera cuttings, and he obtained others by exchanging with rival nurseries in California." (Since he had visited the vineyards of Luis Vignes at Los Angeles in 1850, it is assumed that this is one of the rival nurseries from which he obtained cuttings.)

Among the varieties he planted was Zinfandel, said to be imported from Haraszthy's native Hungary. "Haraszthy was probably responsible for developing the mysterious zinfandel grape, which is grown almost exclusively in California. It is believed that he wanted to acquire the German Zierfandler, a white grape, but the vine when it arrived bore little resemblance to the vine that he had ordered." Zinfandel, "the mysterious grape which Haraszthy may have brought from Hungary, . . . has never actually been traced or found there."

His experimental planting showed, however, that the grapes would not ripen in the Crystal Springs area. "He had found that the cool moisture of the fogs, rising from the ocean and rolling down the mountain's eastern slope prevented his grapes from ripening properly." In 1861 he began selling his vineyard north of the Doran Bridge near Crystal Springs Canyon and turning his attention to Sonoma.

San Mateo Historical Society

A few years later, south of Haraszthy's Crystal Springs vineyards, several wineries were in operation on the Cañada de Raimundo tract. "Cañada de Raymundo, the most fertile spot in the county. It comprises a beautiful valley between five and six miles long, and about two miles wide. There are about 500 acres of vines in this valley, which are embodied in six vineyards."¹⁰ These vineyards were located on both sides of Cañada Road. Farthest north along Cañada Road, on the west side, was land owned by G.B. Cevasco, an Italian living in San Francisco. This land was leased by a Portuguese, John Cunha. His vineyard consisted of 30 acres.¹¹ To the south of his vineyard, on the same side of the road, the adjoining property was owned by B. Frapoli of San Francisco who had a 40-acre vineyard. 25 acres of vineyard were on the adjacent property to the south. The San Mateo Times-Gazette of May, 1885, credits Capt. Bruno with ownership, while two years later the same property is ascribed to Mr. Hamann of San Francisco and Mrs. Bruno of New York.

"The fourth vineyard belongs to Charles Scalmanini of San Francisco; it is the largest of the Italian vineyards, having now 75 acres in vines."¹² His Capella winery was housed in a building which "stood on a hillside southwest of Cañada Road until 1936, when it was removed."¹³ C. Scalmanini is listed "in the Winegrowers Register of 1889 as the owner of 82 acres of grapes from which he made three kinds of wine: Zinfandel, Burgundy, and Malvoisie."¹⁴ This winery closed sometime in the first decade of the 20th century. The Spring Valley Water Company took over the property and "in 1908 . . . it closed all its land in the watershed to commercial farming."¹⁵

The largest vineyard in this area was owned by Billings and Sickert, a Salt Lake City company. They bought the Blinn property (on the east side of Cañada Road and to the south of Scalmanini's land) at \$40 an acre. The report of this sale was noted in the San Mateo County Times-Gazette on October 2, 1886. The same paper had reported on May 23, 1885, however, that 200 acres had been planted by Billings and Sickert during the previous winter. "The vines are set 7' — 9' apart and about 800 to the acre. The entire ranch contains 400 acres and the remaining 200 will be planted as soon as possible."¹⁶ Their wine was produced in Woodside, but it was shipped in bulk to their plant at Ben Lomond for aging and bottling.¹⁷

The sixth vineyard referred to in the Cañada de Raymundo valley belonged to Louis Altschul. His 200-acre farm directly across from the Billings and Sickert property extended along the western side of Cañada Road to Woodside Road. The Times-Gazette of May 23, 1885 credits him with a ten-acre vineyard and includes him among those having wine vineyards on Cañada Road. The same paper reported on June 18, 1887: "Then comes the long farm of Louis Altschul, on which four acres of table-grape vines have been growing for three years." Although others with wine grapes in the area are mentioned in this report, there is no note of wine grapes on his property.

Most of the wineries in Woodside sold their wine in bulk — to the consumer by the barrel or jug or to wine firms in San Francisco and elsewhere. One notable exception was the La Questa winery which bottled and sold its wines under its own label.

The Woodside winery most recognized for its excellence in its day was Emmet Hawkins Rixford's La Questa Winery. In 1883 he "purchased 40 acres on the southern boundary of Rancho de las Pulgas on the crest of the foothills just west of the present commercial area of Woodside."¹⁸

E.H. Rixford was a serious viti- and viniculturist. "He had always admired Chateau Margaux wine, so before planting his vineyards he had visited at Chateau Margaux to ascertain exactly the proportions of varieties there planted, and followed those proportions in every respect."¹⁹ He planted cabernet sauvignon, merlot, malbec, and verdot grapes, "precisely as at Chateau Margaux."²⁰ Seventeen of his forty acres were planted with grapes in 1884, many of the vines having been imported from France. "By 1892 many of these acres were bearing, there being 7000 vines, grafted on resistant stock, made up of both table and wine grapes."²¹

He seriously studied the problems associated with growing premium grapes and producing vintage wines. His involvement and experience in these areas lead him to write *The Wine Press and the Cellar*, a highly regarded work. "Emmett Rixford's La Questa Vineyard, . . . grew some of the most prized of all California Cabernets."²² In contrast to most of the other Woodside wineries he bottled and labeled his own wine. The La Questa Cabernet Sauvignon won a "silver medal at the Lewis and Clark Centennial 1905 Exposition and a gold medal at the Pacific-Panama International 1915 Exposition."²³ Another one of his La Questa vintages "won a medal in Paris at an international exhibition."²⁴

During Prohibition he continued to harvest his grapes. The grapes were sold to local residents who used them to make their own wine. "In actuality, the Rixfords cleared more from the sale of grapes in this manner than they previously had by making them into wine."²⁵

E.H. Rixford died in 1928, 5 years before Prohibition was repealed. After its repeal, however, the winery was reopened by his sons, Halsey and Allan. It was the only winery in the county to reopen.²⁶ Its continued operation was short-lived, however, as the La Questa property was sold to be subdivided in 1945.²⁷ The winery closed that same year; "it was the last producing winery in the county."²⁸

But the original vines continued to grow and the vineyard continued to supply area wine makers with premium grapes. In the late 1940's Martin Ray purchased twelve puncheons from the Rixfords — all they had at the time. Some of the wine in these casks was ten years old. Gemelo Winery in Mountain View bottled these puncheons for Martin Ray because they couldn't be transported up the hilly terrain at Ray's Saratoga winery. Martin Ray used the La Montana label on some of this supply.²⁹

During the period from 1946-1949 Martin Ray obtained all his grapes from the Rixford vineyard. He actually farmed the property, starting by cutting back the vines in June, 1946. The grapes that year were very small and produced a powerful wine as the ratio of seeds and skins to juice was very high. Ray's 1947 Cabernet Sauvignon was



*Photo courtesy of
Woodside Vineyards*

made from 100% Rixford grapes, which yielded a "magnificent vintage."¹¹ "The 1948 was lovely — slightly lighter."¹² And the 1949 was a blend of 50% 1946 Rixford and 50% Napa (Martin Stelling). Even today most of Martin Ray's cabernet sauvignon vines are cuttings he obtained from La Questa. At his vineyard in Saratoga the vines are clearly labeled Rixford.

The vines at the La Questa site continued to produce premium grapes. "The remaining three acres of grapes of La Questa produce Cabernet grapes bought by Mullen's."¹³

Back when Rixford started his winery others in the Woodside area were also growing grapes and making wines. "The first vineyard seen on entering the lovely

village site of Woodside is that of J.K.G. Winkler, the village blacksmith, who owns one of the prettiest places in the country."¹⁴ He started his 13-acre vineyard in 1882 and by 1887 he had a reputation for producing choice claret . . . "Louis Winkler celebrated his 24th birthday on Friday . . . at his father's residence. A pleasant evening was spent in dancing and the inner man was soothed with some of Mr. Winkler's choicest claret."¹⁵

Dr. R.O. Tripp "also produced wine which he bottled and dispensed over the counter of his Woodside store."¹⁶ From his 5-acre vineyard he made wines which he bottled and labeled "San Mateo County Pioneer Brand."¹⁷

On the western side of the Old County Road, south of Bear Gulch Road, was the property of S.L. Jones, a San

Francisco auctioneer. The grapes produced on his 40-acre vineyard in 1884 "were made into raisins by an artificial drying process, but the coming season's crop will be used for wine."¹⁴

On the eastern side of Old County Road, directly across from the S.L. Jones property, was the ranch of John A. Hooper, purchased in 1881¹⁵ from Col. E.M. Burr. Hooper planted European cuttings, mostly zinfandel and some cabernet sauvignon. In 1884 the vineyard consisted of four acres. "The four bearing acres yielded . . . 14½ tons of grapes. The grapes when pressed produced 2,200 gallons of wine of excellent quality, which found an immediate sale in the San Francisco market. Mr. Hooper has a large ranch¹⁶ and intends to devote considerable time and capital to the culture of grapes on it."¹⁷

And he did exactly that. By 1885 the vineyard was 30 acres. By 1888 he had constructed a 25' by 50' two-story winery on his property.¹⁸

In 1956 Hooper's grandson and his wife, Jack and Barbara McKee, moved to the property. They had a 5-acre vineyard, ⅓ planted with zinfandel and ⅔ planted with cabernet sauvignon. The following year they made their first wines for family use. They continued to tend the vines, pick grapes, crush and produce wines until 1977 when the vineyard property was sold.¹⁹

"About ½-mile south of Hooper's vineyard, in the vicinity of Searsville, is that of Judge Preston, a San Francisco attorney. This vineyard like Mr. Jones' is planted on the mountain side. It contains about 65 acres of 2-3 years growth, producing but a small crop thus far."²⁰

In 1887 E.F. Preston built a winery on his property. It was located slightly west of Portola Road, on the north side of Old La Honda Road,²¹ "on land originally owned by Dennis Martin."²² The winery was designed by architect James Tannahill, who also designed the Hooper winery. "The 50' by 100' winery was "so constructed that teams could drive up to the third story to unload grapes and up to the second story to unload boxes, bottles, and casks or to take away wine."²³

Preston's property actually contained two vineyards, one around the winery and one just below the new La Honda Road. From the vineyards' output Preston produced and bottled his Portola Wines, which according to one report in 1889 in the Times-Gazette "was the best three-year old claret in the State."²⁴ In the early 1890's according to Frank Fromhertz,²⁵ "some plant disease swept through the Searsville area starting at the Preston place and destroyed all vineyards in the area."

Preston died in 1905. No wine was produced in 1906 and none thereafter at his winery. The property was sold in 1912 by the Prestons to the Schillings. They remodeled the winery for other purposes. It has since burned down.²⁶

The disease referred to by Fromhertz was Phylloxera. Phylloxera did raise havoc with the Woodside wine industry around the turn of the century. A few of the wineries did recover from the effects of this disease — only to be closed again by "the second kiss of death, Prohibi-

tion."²⁷ These two events were major contributors to the demise of the flourishing Woodside wineries. After repeal of Prohibition the value of real estate in the area and the development of the Napa-Sonoma area²⁸ mitigated against the industry's re-establishment in Woodside.

During the last two decades, however, three wineries have been started and bonded in Woodside. Two of these are in very active operation today. And the wines produced by these small wineries are receiving critical acclaim as premium vintages.

The Nepenthe winery was started in 1967 by its owner and operator, George Burtness. On his one-acre vineyard in Portola Valley he grew cabernet, pinot noir, and chardonnay grapes. He also purchased grapes from other nearby vineyards. "He recently made a Cabernet Sauvignon, neither fined or filtered, which had more of that grape's powerful flavor than any commercial wine I have ever tasted from either California or Bordeaux."²⁹

The winery was moved in 1975 to Skywood Acres in Woodside. No grapes were grown here. From December '75 — December '76, George bottled at his Woodside winery using grapes he grew in Portola Valley and those he purchased.³⁰

Of the two wineries in operation today, Woodside Vineyards is the oldest; it was founded in Woodside in 1963. The winery is located on King's Mountain Road with a three acre vineyard adjacent to it. Woodside Vineyards is owned and operated by Polly and Bob Mullen.³¹

"There is one semi-pro winemaker in the region with something like a classical sense of style . . . Robert Mullen. He draws grapes from five vineyards with a total acreage of seven. A small corner of the vines are on the sainted ground of the original E.H. Rixford estate, La Questa. There are a very few bottles of La Questa Cabernet Sauvignon to be had, but . . . they are the ones most fairly priced and most likely worth the search."³²

The other present-day winery is Sherrill Cellars. The Sherrills started their winery in Woodside in 1973. They buy their grapes from various vineyards, mostly from the Central Coast region. Crushing, bottling, and aging is done at the winery in Woodside. They produce Petite Sirah, Riesling, Chardonnay, Zinfandel, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Their aim is to produce quality wines that people can enjoy with food.

This coming summer they are planning to move the winery to Page Mill Road and Skyline Boulevard. This property is 24 acres with about ten of it suitable for vines. The concentration this year will be on relocating the winery. Next year they plan to plant the vines: chardonnay and maybe zinfandel and cabernet.³³

This description of Woodside wineries is not complete; there are missing parts. The data available supports the details presented but various sources suggest that there were more wineries in Woodside during the past 100 years. The loose ends are given in a collection of quotes. These are included in an effort to stimulate and focus further research.

"On the place of Michael Byrne adjoining the Sickert and Billings vineyard, an acre and a half of vines have been set out. Chris Beck, next south of Mr. Byrne, has only a few vines out as yet, but expects to set out a small vineyard."¹⁴

"In the vicinity of Woodside, a village situated about six miles from Redwood City, . . . no small attention is being given to viticulture. Among the vineyards deserving mention are those of J.K.G. Winkler, thirteen acres; B. Halliburton, nine acres; Chris Johnson, sixteen acres; L. Blanchard, eight acres; Dr. R.O. Tripp, five acres; . . . William Halsey, five acres; William Haaker, six acres."¹⁵

James Jepson owned property along Old County Road in the vicinity of Bear Gulch according to the official San Mateo County map of 1894. He had a "little vineyard of 2½ acres; the vines are three years old. The Chris Johnson place, across the road from Mr. Jepson's, has just been purchased by F.G. Lane of San Francisco. Fifteen acres are in 14-year old vines."¹⁶

"Dr. Tripp planted vineyards, at what date is not known, but probably it was about the same time that Domenico Grosso made his plantings only a few miles to the south."¹⁷

The Jackling estate was located on Mountain Home Road before the turn of the century.¹⁸ Daniel Jackling, the copper king, grew cabernet grapes. He started to make wine but wanted to have a better cabernet sauvignon so he sold his grapes to Martin Ray in the late 1940's. He also gave some cuttings to Martin Ray which are still producing grapes at his Saratoga vineyard.¹⁹

And a vineyard and winery were located on thirteen acres at Skywood during the 1930's, according to George Burtness.

"Other vineyards in this neighborhood (of Preston's vineyard) are those of Martinez and Marco, which contain 24 acres, Hugh Kelley, ten acres; Mr. Alexander, eight acres; Maurice Doyle, seven acres; John Rogers, five acres."²⁰

FOOTNOTES

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- 2 Regnery, Dorothy; unpublished manuscript; 1978.
- 3 Frederickson, Paul; "The Authentic Haraszthy Story"; *Wines and Vines*, 1948; page 4.
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 Richards, Gilbert; *Crossroads*; G. Richards Publication; Woodside, Cal.; 1973; page 106.
- 6 Waugh, Alec; *Wines and Spirits*; Time-Life; N.Y.; page 124.
- 7 Simon, Andre; *Wines of the World*; McGraw-Hill; N.Y.; 1969; page 691.
- 8 Frederickson, Paul; "The Authentic Haraszthy Story"; *Wines and Vines*; 1947; page 5.
- 9 *Wines and Vines of California*; Bancroft; S.F.; 1889; page 401.
- 10 San Mateo County Times Gazette; Redwood City; May 23, 1885.
- 11 Official Map of San Mateo County, August, 1894.
- 12 The San Mateo County Times-Gazette; Redwood City, Calif.; May 23, 1885.
- 13 Times-Gazette; June 18, 1887.
- 14 *Wines and Vines of California*; Bancroft; S.F.; 1889; page 401.
- 15 *ibid.*
- 16 Redwood City Tribune; Redwood City, Calif., August 14, 1949.
- 17 The San Mateo Times-Gazette; Redwood City, Calif.; May 23, 1885.
- 18 Richards; pages 107-108.
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- 20 Ray, Martin; *Basic Information on Cabernet Sauvignon*; paper dated February 16, 1952.
- 21 *ibid.*
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- 23 Adams, Leon; *The Wines of America*; Houghton Mifflin; Boston; 1973; page 255.
- 24 Regnery, Dorothy
- 25 Richards, Gilbert; page 108.
- 26 Regnery, Dorothy.
- 27 *ibid.*
- 28 *ibid.*
29. Redwood City Tribune; Redwood City, Calif.; August 14, 1949.
- 30 Mrs. Martin Ray; Personal Interview; Saratoga, Calif.; March 30, 1978.

- 31 *ibid.*
- 32 *ibid.*
- 33 Adams, Leon; page 255.
- 34 San Mateo County Times-Gazette; June 18, 1887.
- 35 Times-Gazette; February 19, 1887.
- 36 Tompkins, Gregory; page 55.
- 37 Richards, Gilbert; page 106.
- 38 Times Gazette; May 23, 1885.
- 39 McKee, Barbara; Personal Interview; Woodside, Calif., March 29, 1978.
- 40 258 acres shown on the official San Mateo County map, August 1894.
- 41 Times-Gazette; May 23, 1885.
- 42 Times-Gazette; January 1, 1888.
- 43 Barbara McKee.
- 44 Times-Gazette; May 23, 1885.
- 45 Country Almanac; Woodside, Calif.; November 5, 1968, vol. IV, no. 10.
- 46 Richards, Gilbert; page 106.
- 47 Dorothy Regnery; Personal Interview; Portola Valley, Calif.; March 29, 1978.
- 48 Richards, Gilbert; page 106.
- 49 Regnery, Dorothy; her interview with Frank Fromhertz, a former resident on the Preston property.
- 50 Redwood City Tribune; August 14, 1949.
- 51 Sherrill, Nat; Personal Interview; March 23, 1978.
- 52 Richards, Gilbert; page 108.
- 53 Adams, Leon; page 255.
- 54 Burtness, George; Personal Interview; March 23, 1978.
- 55 Mullen, Polly; Personal Interview; March 29, 1978.
- 56 Thompson, Bob and Johnson, Hugh; *California Wine Book*; Wm. Morrow and Co., Inc., N.Y.; 1976; page 114.
- 57 Sherrill, Nat; Personal Interview; March 23, 1978.
- 58 Times-Gazette; June 18, 1887.
- 59 Times-Gazette; May 23, 1885.
- 60 Times-Gazette; June 18, 1887.
- 61 Redwood City Tribune; February 15, 1962.
- 62 McKee, Barbara
- 63 Ray, Mrs. Martin
- 64 Times-Gazette; May 23, 1885.

Woodside Vineyards

The following eighteen vineyards supply grapes to Woodside Vineyards. The number next to each can be found on the accompanying map to locate them.

1. The original E. H. Rixford Winery (now a private residence) on La Questa. The approximate extent of the original vineyard is shaded and outlined by -----.
2. Mary Loveless
3. Henry and Alexia Moore
4. Tom Peters and Kate Abbe
5. Robert and Polly Mullen (Woodside Vineyards winery and vineyard today).
6. Ray and Marion Christensen
7. Ned and Robin Quist-Gates
8. Bill and Geri Walsh
9. Richard and Blanche DeLucchi
10. Rob Salomon
11. Michael and Gail Eastling
12. Leslie Hsu and Rick Lenon
13. Charles Keenan
14. Bob and Marge Noack
15. William Smith
16. John and Judy Bretschneider
17. Reno Taini
18. Bill and Heidi Brown

Other vineyards inside Woodside

19. Duane Cronin
20. Jerry Anderson
21. James Flood
22. Fox Hollow (Tom Mudd)
23. Walt and Tina Dreyer

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San Mateo Times: 8/24/1972, 3/19/1977, 10/27/1980.

San Jose Times: 6/12/1887, 1/4/1888, 11/15/1910.

Wines & Vines: 4/1928 (Rixford obituary), 1/1935, 3/1937, 1/1939.

The Vineyards of Woodside

Proprietor	Year Planted	Acres	# of vines	Varieties	1992 tonnage	Map number
Christensen	1884 ¹	2.0	1200	CabS & Zin	Cab=.85, Zin=.88	6
DeLucchi	1975	1.0	600	CabS & FrCol	FrCol=2.47, CabS=.70	9
Eastling	1974	.5	235	Char & PN	Char=.71, PN=.53	11
Hsu/Lenon	1965	1.0	500	Char	Char=2.84	12
Keenan	1975	.5	250	CabS	CabS=1.09 (1991)	13
Loveless	1883 ²	.5	300	CabS	CabS=.94	2
Moore	1970 ³	.25	180	CabS	CabS=.18	3
Mullen	1920s ⁴	2.0	800	Char & PN	Char=.82, PN=.73	5
Noack	1963 ⁵	.75	749	Char	Char=1.03	14
Peters/Abbe	1883 ⁶	.5	400	CabS	CabS=1.28	4
Quist-Gates	1884 ⁷	2.0	1200	Char & Zin	Char=1.16, Zin=2.33	7
Smith ⁸	1974	.75	350	CabS	CabS=.50	15
Bretschneider	1992	.25	200	PN	-----	16
Brown	1992	.75	400	Char	-----	18
Salomon	1992	.25	200	Char	-----	10
Walsh	1992	1.0	700	Char & PN	-----	8
Taini	1992	.1	90	Char	-----	17
Totals:		14.1	8354		19.04 tons	

¹ First planted by John A. Hooper, the vineyard eventually grew to 30 acres. The restoration began in the late 1970s.

² Part of the original La Questa Vineyard of E. H. Rixford and restored in the 1960s, some vines dating from ca. 1905. Robert Groetzinger sold his home and vineyard to Lee and Mary Loveless in 1972.

³ Part of the original La Questa Vineyard and replanted without any of the old vines.

⁴ Planted in the 1920s and replanted in the 1960s.

⁵ Originally planted to Chenin blanc and grafted to Chardonnay in 1982.

⁶ See note 2.

⁷ See note 1.

⁸ Originally planted by Joe Quilici. See interview and the origins of Woodside Vineyards.

