

Page Mill Winery

The Stark family built their winery in their home on Page Mill Road in Palo Alto. They had lived there for ten years before they started digging the cellar under the house. **Richard E. Stark (RS)** is a native of the area, as is his wife **Alison (AS)**. He was born in San Mateo in 1931 and grew up in Palo Alto, attending grammar school with such as Fran Bennion and David Bruce. He then attended Stanford University where he received a degree in petroleum engineering. For many years he applied his education to technical work in the Silicon Valley before concentrating his full time to the winery. Alison was born in San Jose (1934) and graduated from San Jose State University.

The Stark family, parents and children, built the winery here before their first crush in 1976, the year when they got their bond. This family involvement in the operation comes down to the present. Today production averages about 2,000 cases per year.

These interviews took place at the Stark home. The first was spread over two days.

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March 17 and 21, 1994

CS: Tell me how you got into wine.

RS: I guess there were a whole lot of things that came together. I really had no great interest, or had much knowledge, about wine when I got started, or shortly before that. I had a brother-in-law who lived in Washington DC and was very into wine, and he kept trying to educate my palate whenever he'd come out here on vacation. He would sit us down for dinner with perhaps six wines in brown bags and we'd taste them. That would be in the early 1970s. In those days when we went to the mountains skiing we'd buy a jug of 99 cent red wine; that's where we were. My parents were basically non-drinkers.

As I said, my brother-in-law had a lot to do with getting me started. I remember one time he was out here for six weeks, and it seemed that every night he'd have us sit down taste wine. He introduced us to the wonderful Ridge Zinfandels.

AS: He was horrified that we knew nothing about wine, and that we didn't care.

CS: That is a little late for people your age to be getting started, especially if you end up devoting a good part of your life to wine production. But he wasn't introducing you to canned beets. You must have reacted in a very positive way.

RS: Yes. It was very interesting to me. I had no concept before that of all the differences that could be found in wine. It did appeal to me.

CS: So, does wine turn you on? Do you really like it?

RS: We love it. I can't say that it happened right at that point. It took time. I was working in the laser business then and I started taking a lot of trips to Europe on business. That could be two or three weeks at a time, and I had weekends free. So with the guys I was with, we started traveling through the wine country there. We were headquartered in Germany; at first I was mostly into the Rheingau and the Mosel. We found all these small, really wonderful little wineries. The people would be so gracious when we'd visit. And the wines were wonderful. I started buying them and began thinking about what a great life style this was. And I was also kind of looking for something else to do

with my life when I turned 45. I had an uncle who retired at 45 and traveled a lot, and I always admired that.

CS: Do you have a job now?

RS: I quit my job in 1976, flat out. But I wasn't entirely out of it. After I started the winery and got it going my old company came back and would hire me as a consultant, which I did for several years-- about two days a week. A few years later I was doing consulting for them sporadically and they once had me come in for four months. I realized that they were getting a lousy job done on their advertising program, and I told them I could do twice as good a job for half the cost. So two months later they gave me their advertising account. So a friend of mine, who was a graphics designer, and I ran an advertising business out of our homes for about four years. It was very lucrative, but it died about four years ago. But that was a fortunate time, since all four of my kids were in college then. So I did have other income from time to time, but I haven't had a steady job. So for the last few years, and intermittently earlier, the winery has been it.

CS: So let's get the winery started.

The Winery

RS: I was coming back from one of these trips in Europe and I was fascinated by the process of making wine, so I decided to make some wine. I got some grapes in 1975 and made four or five kinds of wine in very small amounts. I got the grapes from John Raffinella near Gilroy. And I bought some from Charles Kreck at Mill Creek in Sonoma. I put my white wine in a blind tasting with some other wines and my brother thought it was terrible, and he was right. So this first experience was not at all successful in terms of quality. But I was still fascinated by the process.

Then in the winter of 1975 I signed up for a course in the economics of the wine industry being given at San Francisco State by Chris Logiss.¹ In that course he had a lot of enthusiasm for the fact that at that time the quality wineries in California were being bought up by large corporations and that there was a real opportunity for small wineries dedicated to high quality in the industry. We tasted some of his wines, some of which were wonderful. In that course were several people who later went into the wine industry. Harry Rosangana, of Stony Ridge (Ruby Hill) in Livermore Valley, and Rachel Balyeat a Chiles Valley vineyardist. And there was also the fellow who bought the original Spring Mountain Winery and made it into St. Clement.²

CS: Did you later buy grapes from Harry?

RS: One year. He told me if I didn't like the wine he'd take it back. And I didn't like it so he took it back and gave me back my grape cost. That was highly unusual.

So I got all fired up about the possibilities of a small winery. Plus I was very unhappy in my career.

AS: He was traveling an awful lot.

RS: And my kids were just getting into high school and I was missing out on their lives. One year I went to Europe five times for two or three weeks at a shot. I was vice-president of the corporation but I didn't like the job. So in May of 1976 I quit my job at Spectra Physics. We were the first people in the laser business. And I helped take them from 20 employees to 2,000. People there thought I was crazy. But they gave me a going-away party and gave me a refractometer. Later a lot of them came around and said they really envied me, but I don't recall many of them ever quit.

¹ The founder of Livermore Valley Cellars (BW 4852) in 1978.

² William J. Casey.

CS: This is pretty close to vintage. What were you doing to get ready to be a vintner?

RS: I rented a little digging machine and we dug out the cellar under the house. This house was built in 1926 so it already had a small cellar. We moved here in 1966.

CS: This house is that old? It sure doesn't look it.

AS: When we moved in the bathtub emptied into the creek.

RS: My oldest son, Eric, and I spent 28 days pulling dirt out from under the house.

AS: He had to jack up the house with the van-jack. Our daughter moved out of her bedroom because she was sure that he was going to drop her bedroom into the hole. I thought he was, too.

RS: Then I had a guy come in and put in a concrete floor and concrete block walls. Chris Logiss was going to help me get started as a sort of consultant. He helped me get started. We borrowed his stemmer-crusher and press that first year. Then in 1977 I bought a brand new press and stemmer-crusher from Bob Ellsworth at the Complete Winemaker in St. Helena.

CS: What did you make the first year?

RS: My initial strategy was to make two reds and two whites. The logic so we would have enough wines to make it interesting for my potential customers to come to the winery and taste them. From the very beginning I wanted to have enough direct interaction as possible with as large a customer population as possible.

CS: That's aimed at making it more self-supporting by increasing profits through direct sales?

RS: Yes, that was the strategy from the beginning, to start making a profit within five years. I planned from the very beginning to hold tastings in the cellar, which I still do.

CS: That's very much a part of your public image today.

RS: The wines I picked the first year were Cabernet and Zin for the reds and Chardonnay and dry Chenin blanc for the whites. My contact for the whites was a fellow named Keene Dimick. I knew him in the laser business. He started the world's first gas chromatography company, Wilkins Instruments. Twenty years earlier I knew him when I was working at Varian. He ended up selling his company to Varian and buying this vineyard in Napa Valley. I got reacquainted and made Chardonnay from his vineyard for about 15 years. He was like a Thomas Edison of the 1980s. He was really a wonderful guy, with a vivid intellectual and creative mind. He was working for the US Food and Drug Administration as a chemist and was given the job of classifying the chemistry of the taste and smell of strawberries. He didn't invent the technique, but he thought it might work for him. So he made himself a gas chromatograph and figured out the strawberry. His colleagues wanted one of those devices for themselves and the demand grew and in a few years he had a \$50,000,000 company. His vineyard is on Redwood Road, just outside of Napa.

CS: So that's upper Brown's Valley.

RS: He sold all the rest of his grapes to Robert Mondavi, but he and I went through the vineyard and selected the area with the prime flavor and quality. For years that was known as "Dick's Block." I made his Chenin blanc for years, until the rains came one year and ruined the grapes. So I started looking for Sauvignon blanc, which I had decided probably should be my second white wine.

CS: That sounds like 1982.

RS: That's when I found Bob Miller and his French Camp vineyard down southeast of Paso Robles, near Shandon.

For the reds I had a good friend named Robin Smith who went to school with Völker Eisele's wife at UC Berkeley. She set me up to meet him in Chiles Valley. I felt as if I were trying to qualify to buy his grapes. He wanted to taste my wines. Then he was selling to Spring Mountain and Chappellet, but he agreed to sell me some Zinfandel and Cabernet. And I still make those wines from his grapes.

I also bought some Zinfandel that year out near Lodi, at Clements. But I don't recall how I made that connection. That was for a couple of years. I also made a Cabernet Sauvignon from the Salinas Valley, near Gonzales. You can see that I was sort of searching around for grapes that worked for me. That turned into a vegetable tasting wine. We called it our "pot roast" wine. I let it sit in the barrel for about three years and finally bottled it. It finally became drinkable after about six years. I still have some customers who come back and say how much they liked it. But I never liked it much.

CS: How much wine did you make that first year?

RS: I would guess maybe 300 cases.³

CS: How did you make the wines?

RS: Family and friends. I wrote down the names of everyone who helped me in my notebook here.

CS: You'll be selling the Chardonnay and Chenin blanc fairly soon. How did you sell it?

RS: We had just a little of each wine, and we just sort of got the word out. There would have only been 50-75 cases of each wine. We did sell some through the California Wine Merchant in San Francisco. And we also sold some after Bob Mullen gave a retailers tasting for the Santa Cruz Mountain winemakers. It was the first time I had ever exposed my wine to anyone in the professional marketing area. I'll never forget this fellow named Ralph Aufderheide, a very dour Teutonic type, who had a wine store in Santa Barbara. He tasted my 1976 Chardonnay and dumped it and walked away. At first I was crushed. Then he went around and tasted all the rest and he came back and said that he thought I had one of the best Chardonnays there and that he'd like to handle it. I was thrilled.

CS: That is a very good area to get Chardonnay grapes, there in Brown's Valley. You have almost all the positive aspects of the Carneros area there.

RS: Back in those days Mondavi was using his grapes from that vineyard as one of the five he put into his reserve Chardonnay. We made some really nice Chardonnays from that vineyard. The vineyard is still there and it's all contracted to Mondavi. Eventually I had decided that I wanted more citrus flavor in my Chardonnay, so I started exploring the Santa Barbara County area and discovered the Bien Nacido Vineyard near Santa Maria. That was about 1988. I like the additional fruit flavors I get from the southern vineyard. I also get Chardonnay from some local vineyards, right here, right down the road here. You can see one of them from the road. And there is another one put in by Elizabeth Garbett in 1980. In 1979 she asked me if she planted grapes that I would take them, and I agreed. She has an incredible green thumb, and is the president of the Western Horticultural Association. We get all her grapes and make between 150 and 200 cases a year. It's about an acre.

³ See below for more precise statistics for each vintage.

CS: That's a pretty good yield.

RS: The other one went in about six years ago. Gary Campi and Dennis McGinn own it. He had Devine Associates put the vineyards in. That's a company up in Saratoga that puts in small home vineyards for people. Gary Campy came over and asked me if I'd take the grapes, but I knew he was in the real estate business and I told him, "No, not if you farm them, but I will if you get a professional to farm them." So he got Eddie Devine to put them in and manage them. We've had three vintages of Campi Chardonnay. Duane Cronin gets the McGinn Chardonnay. These two vineyards are contiguous, so from the road you can't see where the separation is.

CS: Duane loves the fruit from that vineyard.

How long did you hold at this level of production?

RS: It grew a little bit every year. I kept experimenting with different vineyards and different locations. For example, in 1976 I learned that I didn't want any more Cabernet Sauvignon from the Salinas Valley.

CS: How about Livermore grapes from the Chris Logiss connection.

RS: I did buy grapes there in 1977. I got some Chardonnay from the old Ruby Hill vineyard, and frankly it was terrible. So I learned that I didn't want to make Chardonnay from Livermore. I also got some Chenin blanc from Chris Logiss's vineyard. And that was the last time I did that.

CS: Livermore is not Chenin blanc country.

RS: Also in 1977 I made a dry White Riesling from Monterey from Doug Meador's vineyard, Ventana. I made the Zinfandel from near Lodi again in 1977.

CS: How did those wines turn out?

RS: They were nice wines. They were soft and didn't age all that well, high pH, but initially they were wonderful wines-- big, fat and fruity. But that vineyard got bulldozed for a development. They were really old head-pruned vines. They were terrible to pick.

I also tried a Zin and Cab from a vineyard down near San Miguel owned by Ron Bergstrom. He was an absentee owner. The wines turned out pretty nice, but I eventually gave up on that. I stuck with Eisele's Cabernet and Zinfandel. But I was still experimenting.

CS: Let's stop here and talk about making wine. How have you changed from where you started, and where did you start?

Making Wine

RS: With Chardonnay I did try barrel fermentation early. And I also tried fermentation in an open tank. I didn't like that at all; I lost too much fruitiness. After that I decided to ferment Chardonnay in barrels to retain that fruitiness. Also with Sauvignon blanc. I did the Chenin blanc and White Riesling in stainless steel barrels. But I later learned that after I'd held a wine in stainless steel for a while I didn't like it so much. So I eventually gave up using those drums.

I try to use about 20-25% new barrels each year with the Chardonnay. I only use very old oak for the Sauvignon blanc. But being in barrels makes that wine nice and rich. I get my grapes for that wine from French Camp. That is really good fruit; it's a long term relationship. I don't like a very grassy character to Sauvignon blanc. One year I made a Napa wine but it came out hard and steely,

grassy. I want the warmer and drier climate for that grape. I think my Sauvignon blanc has become a sort of benchmark for a lot of people around here. This is the third year in a row I've sold out in six months. We are about to bottle our 1993. The 1992 is sold out. I have several restaurants that take it right up.

CS: Vineyard management has a lot to do with holding down weediness. Do you talk to these people and tell them what you want?

RS: Absolutely. And I use the same part of the vineyard every year. The guy who manages this vineyard manages that area for me to minimize the grassiness.

CS: How about these white wines on the lees?

RS: I've been leaving them on lees since very early. But I don't go in and stir them regularly. Probably because I'm lazy. But you do get a nice toastiness from the lees. Duane Cronin was tasting it here on Saturday and said he really liked it in the Chardonnay.

CS: Did you get into the skin contact thing with Chardonnays in the early years?

RS: Yes, I did. I experimented with it for Chardonnay. But the pH went too high. And the wine lost fruit and got flat. So I concluded very quickly that wasn't the way to go. Back then I learned a lot about making Chardonnay from Merry Edwards when she was at Mt. Eden.

I decided that I wanted the absolute minimum skin contact with my Chardonnay. Now I crush it and get it right into the press and squeeze the hell out of it. Then I crush the next batch. I add rice hulls when I press to get more yield. I also got that from Merry Edwards. For a while I did a double press. I'd take the pomace out, break it up and press it again. But I just do it once now, and get a pretty good yield.

CS: What number do you like to see, gallons per ton, after press?

RS: I never get more than about 135 gallons.

CS: Well, you may be squeezing pretty hard, but not as hard as most people. That's not so much. That's like home winemaking.

RS: I know. This year we're going down to Bien Nacido to talk with them about field crushing and pressing down there, and then hauling the juice back here in a tank. That should up our yield some.

CS: If you can get another 20 gallons at the end that's another 100 bottles of wine per ton. That can be serious money.

RS: I also made a wonderful dry Chenin blanc from St. Charles vineyard grapes. It was a great wine, but I only made it one year. That was in 1978, but I eventually settled on Sauvignon blanc as my second white wine.

CS: Those were Santa Cruz Mountain grapes, but you don't have a special drive to get them, do you?

RS: I'd like to use more vineyards in the area, but when I got started there were so few here, and they were all tied up. I just didn't have an in to them. I'd like to have more Santa Cruz Mountain grapes. But I don't have a special need to have them. I like my Cabernet from Chiles Valley and my Pinot noir from Bien Nacido.

Also in my whites I did some experiments with full malo-lactic fermentations. I decided that I

didn't like a full malo-lactic. When I started the style in vogue was to make big bodied, oaky wines. That's how you won gold medals back then. But after a year they'd be flat. But I think I'm sensitive to the lactic acid content in those wines. I can pick them right out and I didn't like that character very much. For years I made non-malo-lactic Chardonnays, unless the acid was too high. Then I'd put a part of it through ML. I still am bent that way. My Chardonnays tend to have higher acid than most, with no more than 10-20% malo-lactic.

CS: Do your reds go through?

RS: Yes, it's in the cellar. But with the whites it doesn't want to go by itself. Part of it is that the pH is so low to begin with.

CS: So, are you sort of prescribing a little early pick on those grapes at Bien Nacido?

RS: Yes, I talk to them about it. I remember when I was getting Napa Chardonnay from Dimick I'd ask him what Mondavi wanted the grapes picked at, and it would be up around 23.5-24.5° Brix. Then in a few years it was lower. And then lower yet. It eventually was 22-23°. Back in those years everyone was saying that the sugar to alcohol conversion ration was .55, but now we know it's more like .60.

CS: That can make quite a difference. Alcohol at .55 from sugar at 23 is 12.7%. But at .60 it's 13.8%. That's a real difference.

RS: So if you aren't careful you can end up with a really high alcohol Chardonnay. I made some pretty high back then, but I like to pick my Chardonnay at about 22-22.5°. I pick my Garbett Chardonnay in the 21s.

CS: Those numbers sound more like French white Burgundies. But, of course, they do it because they have to. That's the way things are going now here in California. That's all I hear today.

RS: Stylistically that's where I am. And if the acid is a little high I'll put a little bit through malo-lactic. I'll put a few barrels through and then blend it in with the rest. I mark the barrels and use the same ones in later years for ML. Then we sterile filter before we bottle. That's really necessary. One of my 1977s went through in the bottle and those wines were totally ruined-- cloudy and gassy, smelled bad and tasted bad.

That's when I learned that I had to take a course in wine micro-biology, which I did from Lisa Van de Water in St. Helena. That was an interesting course. There were only four of us in the class. And one of them was Warren Winiarski, whose Stags Leap Cabernet Sauvignon had already won that great 1976 Paris Spurrier tasting.

CS: He's always said he was a little surprised at that.

RS: And he was asking the same damn questions I was asking. So I thought, "By God, I've got a chance in this business." And I do have a technical background. I took a lot of chemistry at Stanford and I never thought I'd use it, but I did. And I kept going back to Davis in those early years to take short courses. I remember Ralph Kunkee telling us how to do ML tests, and we'd come back the next year and tell him what went right and wrong, like maybe we'd kill it a certain way. Over about three years, with all the feedback he got from the wineries, we finally figured out how to treat it right without killing the ML culture. We all learned together. I felt I was right there at the head of the learning process. When I started using the ML culture we didn't know what we know today about its being acid, temperature, and SO2 sensitive.

I've also experimented with yeasts.

CS: How about SO₂ at crush?

RS: I've come to the point where I add either none or maybe 15 ppm, if the grapes are a little scuzzy. I do like to inhibit the natural yeast for about 24 hours, since I allow my whites to settle in the tank before starting the fermentation. This gets some of the solids out of the whites that comes in from the vineyard on the grapes. So I crush it and press it into tanks and let it settle for 24 hours. Then I rack that into barrels. I don't want it to start fermentation then because that stirs up the solids and the dirt. For most of the red wines I don't add SO₂, unless they look a little moldy. Zinfandel can really be difficult, with bunches that have unripe berries, raisins, and there can always be mold hiding inside a bunch.

CS: Let's talk about red wines now.

RS: I developed my style preference for white wines just by making them and tasting them. When I started with reds I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I started making red wines, and since I don't like a lot of tannin and I like fruit character, and yet I like the wine rich, but without alcohol too high, so I guess I gravitated to a claret style. I don't squeeze the grapes really hard. I taste the press wine and when it starts to get heavily tannic I stop pressing. If there's too much tannin in the barrels I use egg whites to soften them some. And by not handling the reds very much-- I let them sit in the barrel for a year before the first racking-- I try to preserve the fruit. I use a lot of argon and CO₂ to keep oxygen off during the open tank fermentation. But I macerate the Cabernet Sauvignon for sometimes two weeks after fermentation and you have to protect the wine from oxidation.

CS: Did you do that early?

RS: Yes, pretty early, before it became popular.

CS: But why would you do that? On the surface the logic of the process suggests higher tannins.

RS: I knew George Vierra at Vichon in the Napa Valley. He came down here one time with Völker Eisele, since I was making wine from his Chiles Valley vineyard and he wanted to use Eisele grapes. So he wanted to taste all my Cabs to see what could be done with Völker's grapes. He was working at Robert Mondavi's then. I recall he brought me some 1974 Mondavi Reserve Cabernet.

So then he told me about this extended maceration idea. So I started reading about this several years later, but I had already been doing it for years.

CS: That was pretty brave back then.

RS: But I had taken Lanny Replogle's⁴ wine chemistry class at San Jose State. I got the highest grade in the class that year. That was a great course.

CS: I heard so much about it in the mid-1970s that I went down and audited it now and then. So you got his pitch on polyphenols and anthocyanins and all that. I was fascinated and still remember those sessions.

RS: I learned from that class that increased skin contact will actually turn a wine dark for a while and then lighter. And that relates to softer tannins.

CS: I remember that lecture, where he was comparing what was happening to getting the flash point when using phenolphthalein in titration.

⁴ Founder of Fenestra Winery (BW 4956) in the Livermore Valley, in 1976. A professor of chemistry at San Jose State University, for years he taught a class in wine chemistry which received full academic credit in the Chemistry Department.

RS: So when George Vierra told me this I already knew there was some inherent logic to the chemistry of the thing.

CS: Do you do it with Zins?

RS: No. If you keep it in contact with skins too long you just keep soaking up more sugar from the raisins and boost the alcohol too far. I had had early Zinfandels with alcohols up around 14.8%. They had plenty of fruit which masked some of the alcohol, but it was still too high. Now I like to pick the grapes around 22° and by the time its in the tank it's bounced at least one percent. Then I want to get them off the skins within six days.

CS: How about whole berries in the fermentation process?

RS: I tried it with Pinot noir, maybe 10-15%. At that time Jaimie Lewis, a Davis enology grad, was working for me. She was a best friend of my daughter in high school. I had told her she could work for me for a year after she graduated if she didn't get a super job some place else. She did. She lived with us here for a year. She went on to work as an assistant winemaker at Rutherford Hill and is at Domaine Chandon now. The reason I bring her name up is that she has a fabulous palate. She and I did the whole berry fermentation experiments with the early Pinot noir from Bien Nacido. (That was in 1985. That's my only Pinot noir source today.) And we couldn't tell enough difference to say that we should continue doing it. So I don't do it any more. But what I do do on all reds and whites-- I set the rollers on my stemmer-crusher so far apart that all I do is just break the skins.

CS: And when you do that you do get some whole berries that get through.

RS: And people ask me whether I throw some stems in. Well, my stemmer-crusher is so lousy that it automatically throws in about 5-10% stems.

I have to say a word here about Bien Nacido. The fruit is wonderful and the people there are so easy to work with. The first three years I made Pinot noir from the three different clones they have there. I didn't realize it at first, but one day I stopped by and there was no one in the office and I got a look at their vineyard planting map. So I found out that the two Pinot noirs I got the first two years were from two different clones. So the third year I made wine from the third clone. And then I started experimenting with a mixture of the three, with blending experiments before and after fermentation. So I finally came up with a 40-40-20 mix of the clones. They are such wonderful people they let me harvest the grapes in that ratio. One is the Pommard clone, one the Louis Martini, and the other is the Gamay Beaujolais. That's the one that gets the 20%.

CS: Do they have any others?

RS: They have just recently planted experimental batches of a few others. And I'll want to experiment with them myself. I think that the Pinot noir I make now is a little more complex because I use these three different clones. Not all the winemakers who use Bien Nacido grapes agree with me. We had a meeting there during the summer the last two years, with all the winemakers who use their Pinot noir. And several of them didn't agree with what I'm doing. But our Pinots are on the map now. I think they're very good.

CS: (While we were talking a retailer in Saratoga called up and ordered another two cases of the wine.)

Let's talk some more about Cab and Zin.

RS: I make it about the same every year now. I use open top tank fermenters. There is a ton-and-

a-half in each of the tanks. We punch down by hand. I made a little puncher that has little wings on it so that it brings the juice up over the cap. I try to punch five times a day, but it's usually less. We do the same with the Pinot noir.

CS: Do you extend the maceration on the Pinot noir.

RS: No, but in 1990 I went to the Pinot noir conference in Oregon and one of the hot Burgundy winemakers had just done an experiment in which he used "cold maceration," that is macerating the crushed grapes before fermentation letting it sit cold for three or four days before kicking off the yeast fermentation. So with my 1990 Pinot I did that. I let it sit for two or three days until I got nervous. That's probably the best Pinot I've ever made. So I do that now.

After fermentation I let the wine sit in tanks to settle and I'm trying to get them through malo-lactic in those tanks before they go into the barrels, so that I can add SO₂ in the barrel. I try to inoculate for ML when I'm about half way through the primary fermentation. But I can't always do that. So sometimes I have to inoculate after pressing. But all the reds go through one way or the other. To get them to go through in these tanks sometimes I've had to keep them there for as much as three weeks with an argon cap before they go through. Last year I let some Pinot noir go through ML in barrels. And I like that a lot better. I think I'm going to do that with all my reds in the future. So I guess I'm still learning.

CS: How much new oak?

RS: Not as much with the reds. I use some, but not much, on the Pinot noir and Cabernet. And I convert one and two year old Chardonnay barrels into red barrels. And the new oak comes in for the Chardonnay. For Zinfandel I use old oak, American and French. But I don't have many American left. I like the Zin flavor without any oak flavors. During the last few years I have been putting a little more new oak on the Cabernet. I do like that.

CS: If you don't use them for extracting flavor, why not keep them forever?

RS: The cellar will only take so many barrels and I have to keep moving in a few new French barrels.

CS: Do you fine all the reds?

RS: Not always. Only if I think they need it, out of balance in the barrel. That's only about 10-15% of the time. Then a light filtration before bottling.

CS: How are you sure you've made it through ML? Do you have an enologist, a lab, for that?

RS: I use the old mayonnaise jar and paper chromatography.

CS: You must be pretty confident.

RS: Well, I'll call one of the gals at Vinqury (an enology lab) and they'll ask if it's through ML and I say yes, they'll ask, "How do you know?" Then I'll say that there isn't a spot left on the paper, and she'll say that still it might not be through. So she scares people that way. And then people send it off for a complete assay.

CS: That's what I mean. Not many people feel they can depend on the mayonnaise jar any more. That's what I mean when I say you really seem confident.

RS: But when I know they still have six months in the barrel and nothing showing on the paper, I

am confident that it's through or will be before bottling.

CS: What do you send to the lab?

RS: I have them do pH and acid, but I do my own titrating at the crush. And I have them assess SO₂ levels. That can be hit or miss in the cellar. And I do that again before bottling, along with total acid and such to get a complete profile of the wine. And if I think there might be any brettanomyces I'll have them do a biological analysis.

CS: Have you ever had brett here?

RS: Oh, yes. At first I was horrified. But over the last few years we've learned to deal with it. You have to be careful and keep the right SO₂ levels.

CS: Like weeds. Keep it down, but you can't keep it out.

* * * * *

April 1, 1994

CS: Let's look at the first six vintages and relate them to the next five, when you have some significant changes in production.

Early Vintages

RS: In the early years, from 1976 to 1981, we were slowly building production and at that point we were successful in selling what we produced and I felt confident in increasing production. I was starting to make a lot more Dimick Chardonnay after 1981, from 5 tons to 18 tons in 1983.

CS: It looks as if that's where your growth is-- Chardonnay production. Were you just responding to what you perceived as market demand and your ability to sell more of this wine?

RS: That's right. We ended up with a lot of that Chardonnay from 1983 to 1985. In retrospect they were OK, but they weren't great wines. And I soon realized that our Chardonnay was getting old in the inventory. So by 1987 I really had cut back. But I felt uncomfortable telling Keane Dimick that I was cutting him off flat. But in 1988 I had to. It was just about that time that he died, perhaps in 1989. But during the last years when I was making that Chardonnay, some of my local friends, particularly Dennis Garcia at JJ&F Market in Palo Alto, that they liked the fruit character better from the Santa Barbara area. He kept encouraging me to try their grapes. So I did in 1988, just a ton of Bien Nacido Chardonnay. Somehow I screwed up that ton; I never bottled it. It got horribly oxidized, but I don't know how. But before it oxidized my brother-in-law and I were tasting it and we liked it a lot. So in 1990, when I thought we needed to make Chardonnay again-- we had finally sold our way through the 1985-1988 Chardonnays-- we started making Bien Nacido.

CS: I see you're up to almost 8 tons in 1993.

RS: Yes, I really like that a lot.

CS: So as these changes in production are taking place, how are your case totals changing?

RS: I get a very low yield in cases per ton of fruit crushed. I discovered that in some of my wines I was coming in with less than 100 gallons per ton. The most wine we ever bottled was 2,400 cases from the 1984 vintage when we had got crushed just under 60 tons.

CS: That is very low, close to 100 gallons per ton.

RS: In the last years our totals have been down and are now coming back up. But one year we had about 1,200 cases. I think that was the 1989 harvest. We did that because we had a lot of Cabernet in inventory-- you can see I was making up 10 and 12 tons of Völker Eisele Cabernet in the early eighties-- and the Chardonnay. I do like to sell it when its about five years old, but I was building up quite an inventory. Some of the Chardonnay inventory got so old that I ended up selling it at a terrific discount, to my local clientele.

CS: How were you selling back in those years?

RS: Ome and I, that's my wife's nickname, were doing all the direct selling. And we started our cellar tastings in the 1980s.

CS: The earliest record I have in my files is for a series of three in May, 1980.

Has anyone other than you sold your wine.

RS: Yes, from time to time brokers in other parts of the country will get in touch with us. Texas, New York and the Northeast.

CS: But this is a market reaching out to you.

RS: Right. And all those relations tend to fade away after a few years. Sometimes we'd sell a fair amount that way. Right now we have a broker on the East Coast, American Estates, which puts our wines in some high profile restaurants in New York City. You can buy our Cabernet at some of them for \$40 per bottle.

CS: What percentage of your production is sold that way?

RS: Until he left there, a fellow in Austin, Texas was selling up to 100 cases of our wine per year. I'd say now that the whole thing now runs a little under 100 cases per year. We also sell at least that much by UPS to people who discover us here and live outside the state and want to order wine.

CS: So that part of your production now makes up 8-9% of the total. What percentage goes directly to your retail customers through the tastings and mailing list, and such?

RS: That's about half of the rest.

CS: So the rest goes to your California market.

RS: Which is mostly within ten miles of here. Restaurants and wine shops.

CS: Do you get any wine into Southern California?

RS: We had a broker who sold for us in Southern California and he did a pretty good job for about a year and a half. But then he went to something else. And just now another guy has come out of the woodwork, and if he sells some, fine, but my attitude is that I'm not much interested. It has never amounted to much.

The wine we sell right around here comes from some pretty long established relationships.

CS: Do any of those restaurants sell wines, like your Cabernet, when it has a couple of more years on it?

RS: I like to sell them when they have some bottle age. We're selling the 1988 right now.

CS: That makes me think, one of the wines I found in my 1978 bin the other day was a 1978 Page Mill Cabernet. We'll be drinking it in the next couple of days.

RS: I had always hoped to make really good wine, and when I learned that that wine had won a gold medal at the Los Angeles County Fair I almost fainted.

CS: Has your rise in production since 1990 had any effect on your selling program?

RS: Not really. The big thing now is that we are just selling out faster on some wines. In the last two years we have sold out of our white wines in less than six months. And our Pinot noir is flying out the door.

CS: Let's talk about your tasting program. Did you always have this orderly institution in your mind?

RS: Back in 1976 I wanted to make two whites and two reds so that it would be interesting enough for people to come to the winery to taste. I'm not sure what my vision was back then, as to how it would work. But it was clear that we were not going to have a regular tasting room underneath our house in a residential area like this. So sometime back in 1980 we got this idea of having scheduled tastings. Then it developed as we went along. For a while we would have the series once a year and then it became clear that we could do them twice.

One time we took over a restaurant in Palo Alto and sent a mailer to our mailing list. They made some patés and such and we showed off our new releases. We did that for two years. But we didn't get enough orders at those tastings.

Now these are sit-down tastings. Reservations are required, since we can only seat forty people. We'll pour a wine and talk about it-- people will ask questions-- then we'll pour another. It takes a little over an hour. You can see from that schedule that we do it about 25 nights in a row. That's going to be a lot of people. And there are a couple of open tastings when people can just drop in. Over the years we've just pushed up the number of tastings. And there is no charge.

CS: Didn't you used to have little dinner as well?

RS: We have had a few dinners in the last few years. We had one last fall and in the spring where people paid up to \$60 for a tasting and wine pairing put on by a chef. They were smashing successes. But I've cut it back this year. They were a lot of fun, a lot of work, but we didn't sell much wine. So this year we're going to use the same chef and have him do finger food whose flavors go with the wines.

CS: Do you have any kind of a wine club, or an advanced tasting program?

RS: No, nothing like that. This approach is working pretty well.

CS: You mentioned your pro-bono tastings. Tell me about this aspect of your operations.

RS: I have learned over the years that little wineries are being approached continually by charities. So I decided to donate tastings for twenty people, in the cellar here, with the winemaker and hors

d'oeuvres. We donate it to about twenty local charities, but only in our market area. The charities come to me and I select the ones I want. The tasting is donated to a live auction. They'll get several hundred people to these auctions, people with plenty of money. Then my tasting for twenty people is auctioned off to the highest bidder. My tastings average probably \$500. The charity gets the \$500 and the person who made the bid can bring twenty of his friends here to the tasting. It's kind of a cocktail party. A couple of times we've donated a dinner, prepared by us with our wines, for eight people. One of those went for about \$1,200. I cooked the last dinner myself. This all is a continuing thing.

CS: So you do this about 20 times for charity, and then you do these two series of about 25 tastings each. Wow!

RS: An interesting fact about the tastings is that only about half of them get picked up. They are supposed to call us and arrange it, and often they don't. But when we do one of these tastings these are twenty brand new people, not people on our mailing list. And if the guy who bought it has enough money to spend \$500 his friends have some money too. So, my hope is that some of these people become customers. When we have one of these tastings we'll almost always sell several cases of wine that night. So we do quite a lot for local charities. And sometimes we get really good recognition. Several years ago the mayor of Palo Alto called me and said that he went to these auctions and that he kept seeing my name as a contributor. So he decided to serve my wine at one of the Chamber of Commerce dinners here.

CS: How long have you been doing this?

RS: At least ten years.

CS: Let's talk about your label.

RS: I have a close friend named Dean Smith who is a professional designer. When I started this winery he said that he was going to give me the design for our label as a gift. I wanted it to convey quality, it shouldn't be cluttered, and I wanted it to convey clearly what was in the bottle. So he came up with three designs and we picked the one that we currently use. I still get a lot of compliments on it. There are two poplar trees in the corner, which used to stand near the entrance to our driveway. They died and we've replaced them and the new trees are about half the size of the originals. We try to describe a little bit about the wine, on the side of the label. But I've deliberately stayed away from detailed chemistry. It's information they might be interested in while they are enjoying a bottle at the table.

CS: Let's talk about the people involved in making this place work. Do you hire anyone?

Workers

RS: Bottling is done with volunteers. We need about 15 people per day and we usually have to turn down a lot of people. Last year we had about 50 people call us. At crush we used to have volunteers help us, but I would spend too much time trying to train them and I was nervous that they might not do it right. So at that time I prefer to have only people who know what they are doing. Like last year we hired a Mexican fellow and a couple of his friends who came and worked about four or five days at crush. And once they have done it they really do a good job. Other people help from time to time. Once we had a couple of kids from New Zealand show up at the door and we offered them room and board to work at the crush. I've been going to the Himalayas lately and twice we've had Nepalese Sherpas come and stay with us. I recently got a letter from another Sherpa who is coming to the US again this summer and I wrote him back that we'd love to have him help with the crush again. We have a friend in Baja California whom we met sea kayaking, and he came up and helped. We've had

an eclectic group of people help us as live-in help.

CS: So the rest of the work is done by the family. How does that work?

RS: When I started, Eric, our oldest son, was 16 and he worked his tail off for us, he and our friend Evan Smith, Dean Smith's son. Sometimes they'd get home from high school, get into a truck and drive to Napa and pick up grapes, get back here at ten o'clock at night and get up for school the next morning. Tor, our second son, helped a lot. I recall he was our crush crew foreman one year. Our daughter, Inger, also helped from time to time. One year my wife was gone leading a trip to the South Pacific for a tour company. Inger said she'd come in and support the crush as my wife would have. That meant preparing food, keeping the telephone and mail going. And after two weeks she was tearing her hair wondering how my wife could have done all that. And for quite a few years Ome has done a lot of the sales activity. She is really good at that. It's easier for her to be fully enthusiastic about a wine I might think is somewhat less than perfect. She used to criticize me for my discussions of wines at the tastings when I'd say things about their being not quite what I would have liked them to be. But when I've lived with a wine for three years, that's hard to do. I think I'd have less trouble selling wine someone else made.

Now Dane, our youngest son, has decided to be in the winery.

CS: Where do all these Scandinavian names come from?

RS: We have a Swedish background. Stark isn't a Swedish name, but our great-great grandfather was a Johansson and there were so many that he changed his name.

As the children grew up they all helped, but none of them had any real interest in really being in the winery on a regular basis. Then Dane spent a year in France during his junior year in college. He was at the University of Bordeaux. That year in France convinced him that wine was an important fluid. So when he got back he went back to the University of Colorado for a quarter. One night he called me at two o'clock to tell me how he couldn't stand the fraternity mentality anymore. He had really grown in that year. So he asked me if he could take six months off and come work in the winery. My instant answer was YES.

So he came and worked here through the spring and went back and finished college. He came back here and got some restaurant jobs. Then he got a job as the wine buyer at Whole Foods Market in Palo Alto. After he did that for a while he told me he wanted to be in the winery. So he came in a year and a half ago.

CS: Are you generating enough bucks to keep everybody fed?

RS: Just barely. We are raising production.

CS: Is he the kind of fanatic who will keep it going?

RS: I hope so. I don't know the answer yet.

CS: This is a very rare thing. The entrepreneurial type who has gotten into these small wineries between 1970 and 1985 brings along a family of children who don't necessarily identify their lives with their parents' passion. It happens, but not much.

RS: And you have to be ready to do things yourself. You have to be handy, do your own repairs and such.

CS: It's funny. I'm the opposite. My boys are all handy and show me how to do things. Two of them own their own businesses and are very handy. One owns a bakery and is always fixing things.

RS: My dad owned a bakery in Palo Alto for years.

CS: That's right. Fran Bennion mentioned it in her interview, when she was telling me how you and she and David Bruce all went to the same elementary school in Palo Alto.

RS: What bakery does your son own?

CS: The Acme Bread Company. He's been very successful with it.

RS: Really! We love that bread.

Vintage 1993

CS: Now I want you to take me through the 1993 vintage.

RS: I didn't get any Eisele Chile Valley Zinfandel in 1993. He pulled out the vines and replaced them with Cabernet Sauvignon. And I didn't get any of his Cabernet because he wanted an exorbitant price. I had told him that I wanted a very small tonnage and he called me before harvest and said that this isn't a great vintage, anyway, so why don't we skip it this year.

I got this Fortuna Cabernet from a vineyard on the Rutherford bench. I got these grapes through a fellow who works for a vineyard management company. This is an attempt to find alternate Cabernet sources. I paid them less than half of what Eisele was asking.

CS: I don't understand how a Chiles Valley Cabernet can be asking that kind of money. What was he asking?

RS: \$2,500 per ton.

CS: That's ridiculous! That's like Martha's Vineyard.

RS: You can see why I'm looking for a good alternate source. This was a trial batch, 1.5 tons. Dane and I liked it, and I can get as much as I want this year, so I signed up for 3-4 tons. My fermenters work well at 1.5 tons. So I'll get three barrels from the 1993 trial.

I pushed up the tonnage on the French Camp Sauvignon blanc to almost 9 tons. We've been selling it out in 6 months and we really have that one grooved. We've developed a really good following for that wines, customers and restaurants.

We've been getting the Garbett Chardonnay every year, right down the road here. We get all of her grapes. She's had trouble with her vines and the yields have been up and down. Her soil at the top is about 8 inches deep. She has a drip system and has to irrigate some areas different than others.

CS: I can see, you got 6 tons in 1992 and 2 tons last year.

RS: Rachel Balyeat is our current Zinfandel source. That's in Chiles Valley. She's the woman I met at Chris Logiss's course in 1975.

Then we got over 9 tons of Pinot noir from Bien Nacido. I love that fruit. We have a steady relationship there.

CS: You call them and set it up?

RS: I've already called them this year. I told them I wanted 10 tons of Chardonnay and 10 of Pinot noir this year. And we're going to crush and press the whites down there this year, so my yields are

going to go up. Those to, and the Sauvignon blanc, we're going to make down there in Santa Maria this year.

CS: It will be interesting to see what you think happens to the quality. You may lose a little intensity of flavor.

RS: It could be. I'm going to have to be sure that the crush rollers are set well apart. This is going to take some real winemaking adjustments.

CS: It looks to me that you'll have well over 40 tons in 1994.

RS: Probably. Maybe 45.

CS: That should help pay for Dane's gasoline.

RS: It will be the same with the Chardonnay. We got 7.8 tons last year and we're selling out in six months, so we'll go up to 10 tons.

The Campi Chardonnay is from our local vineyard next to Garbett's. That will never produce more than 2 tons.

Last year we tried 3 tons of Merlot from Bien Nacido. This year I think we'll try another Napa vineyard. We just got their OK from them today for the Merlot. That's from Rutherford and should be a high quality Merlot.

So in about the middle of August we start getting the barrels out and cleaning them. I think barrel cleaning is terribly important. I keep them dry now. I used to keep them wet, but I once had a barrel turn so bad on me that I thought what had grown in it was going to attack me. I burn a sulfur stick in them now and keep them dry. So we have to soak them up and fix the leaks. Then I do an exhaustive hot water-soda ash washing to get the tartrates out. Then a citric acid rinse and fill them with cold water and 100 ppm of chlorine for 24 hours. Then three hot rinses. Dane and I do it all. It takes about a week and a half to do 100 barrels. It's a lot of work.

I rent a truck to haul the grapes. Last year we used refrigerated trucks for the whites. This year will be no problem since we are going to crush and press down there. And we are going to take barrels down and actually make the wine down there. They have a bonded facility there. We'll keep the barrels down there and actually bottle it there. We'll make the wine from the Napa grapes here.

CS: How does this new approach relate to the future? The Bien Nacido people own this bonded facility.

RS: Right. We'll have a small bonded area down there for our barrels. They have a general bond. So we'll make the wine there and our yields should go up substantially. So this gives us a way to expand in the future if we think this is a good deal. Perhaps eventually we could move all of Page Mill's production down there.

CS: So this facility isn't restricted to people using Bien Nacido grapes.

RS: No. I think there are four or five other small winery operations using it now. And Byron has some barrels there.

CS: This is like what the Rombauer Winery does in the Napa Valley. Cathy Corison has her corner and she makes the wine herself. There are several there who do that.

There is an awful lot of capital involved small premium production. Why should everyone have a super bladder press. It's not economically efficient.

RS: I couldn't come up with \$30,000 for one of those presses.

CS: And you, the winemaker, you have your own internal mental capital, which is the most important thing in producing good wine, if you have good grapes. That does not have to be diluted.

RS: It's a great concept. They have all these services available, and this doesn't cut quality. It enhances it. He even has a cellar master who will top barrels for you.

But to start out I'm taking down my own pumps. I'll sanitize everything myself. We'll do it all ourselves. We'll be driving down a lot.

We're going in that direction. Last year we bought three-quarters of our grapes from Bien Nacido and French Camp.

CS: And having a son who is really interested in it-- that's really helps.

RS: He really is into wine. We go to tastings together. He has a great palate. The unanswered question is whether he has the entrepreneurial drive to bring it off on his own.

When he started here two years ago I told him I wanted him to work for two years. But he could bale out any time he wanted. But toward the end of the two years I really wanted to know whether he wanted to go for it. So if he wanted to take this over in the long run we could start to figure out how to do it. So that's what we're doing.

The Wines of Page Mill Winery

1976 - 1993

<u>Variety</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Vineyard</u>	<u>Area</u>
1976			
Chardonnay	3.0	Dimick	Napa Valley
Zinfandel	1.2	Stith	Clements-Lodi
	2.0	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	2.0	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	<u>1.3</u>	Meador-Ventana	Monterey
total	9.5		

1977

Chardonnay	2.5	Dimick	Napa Valley
	3.0	Ruby Hill	Livermore Valley
Zinfandel	6.0	Stith	Clements-Lodi
	3.0	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	1.94	Bergstrom	San Miguel
Cabernet Sauvignon	2.27	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	2.0	Bergstrom	San Miguel
Chenin blanc	1.7	C. Lagiss	Livermore Valley
White Riesling	<u>2.0</u>	Meador-Ventana	Monterey
Total	24.4		

1978

Chardonnay	???	Dimick	Napa Valley
	2.2	Meador-Ventana	Monterey
Zinfandel	3.1	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	3.0	Ruby Hill (sold it back)	Livermore Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	2.3	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	3.8	Bergstrom	San Miguel
White Riesling	2.2	Meador-Ventana	Monterey
Chenin blanc	<u>2.0</u>	St. Charles	Santa Cruz Mts.
Total	18.6		

1979

Chardonnay	4.4	Dimick	Napa Valley
Zinfandel	4.5	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	4.4	Bergstrom	San Miguel
Cabernet Sauvignon	7.8	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Chenin blanc	<u>3.17</u>	Dimick	Napa Valley
Total	24.3		

1980

Chardonnay	4.4	Dimick	Napa Valley
Zinfandel	14.42	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	4.4	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Chenin blanc	<u>3.4</u>	Dimick	Napa Valley
Total	26.62		

1981

Chardonnay	5.54	Dimick	Napa Valley
Zinfandel	3.17	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	12.47	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	4.31	Shown	Rutherford
Chenin blanc	<u>2.53</u>	Dimick	Napa Valley
Total	28.02		

1982

Chardonnay	13.3	Dimick	Napa Valley
Zinfandel	2.7	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	4.59	Shown	Rutherford
Cabernet Sauvignon	12.5	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Sauvignon blanc	<u>6.17</u>	French Camp	Paso Robles
Total	39.26		

1983

Chardonnay	18.09	Dimick	Napa Valley
	2.3	Garbett	Los Altos Hills
Zinfandel	3.22	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	4.1	Balyeat	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	7.12	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Sauvignon blanc	6.47	French Camp	Paso Robles
	<u>6.08</u>	Pat Garvey (Flora Springs)	Rutherford
Total	47.38		

1984

Chardonnay	18.04	Dimick	Napa Valley
	2.5	Garbett	Los Altos Hills
Zinfandel	2.16	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	6.22	Balyeat	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	10.17	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Sauvignon blanc	10.85	French Camp	Paso Robles
	<u>9.83</u>	Garvey	Rutherford
Total	59.77		

1985

Chardonnay	15.8	Dimick	Napa Valley
	1.44	Buehlman	Portola Valley
	4.0	Garbett	Los Altos Hills
Zinfandel	2.18	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	6.1	Balyeat	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	7.8	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Sauvignon blanc	10.6	French Camp	Paso Robles
Pinot noir	<u>1.55</u>	Bien Nacido	Santa Maria
Total	49.47		

1986

Chardonnay	12.09	Dimick	Napa Valley
	6.4	Garbett	Los Altos Hills
Zinfandel	2.4	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	6.25	Balyeat	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	7.56	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
Sauvignon blanc	8.74	French Camp	Paso Robles
Pinot noir	<u>1.95</u>	Bien Nacido	Santa Maria
Total	45.39		

1987

Chardonnay	4.13
	4.4
Zinfandel	2.38
	3.56
Cabernet Sauvignon	5.92
Sauvignon blanc	3.94
Pinot noir	<u>2.92</u>
Total	27.25

Dimick
Garbett
V. Eisele
Balyeat
V. Eisele
French Camp
Bien Nacido

Napa Valley
Los Altos Hills
Chiles Valley
Chiles Valley
Chiles Valley
Paso Robles
Santa Maria

1988

Chardonnay	3.65
	1.04
Zinfandel	4.18
Cabernet Sauvignon	4.09
Pinot noir	<u>4.54</u>
Total	17.5

Garbett
Bien Nacido
V. Eisele
V. Eisele
Bien Nacido

Los Altos Hills
Santa Maria
Chiles Valley
Chiles Valley
Santa Maria

1989

Chardonnay	2.22
Zinfandel	1.99
Cabernet Sauvignon	5.96
	<u>8.54</u>
Total	18.71

Garbett
V. Eisele
V. Eisele
Bien Nacido

Los Altos Hills
Chiles Valley
Chiles Valley
Santa Maria

1990

Chardonnay	1.4
	2.82
Zinfandel	3.48
Cabernet Sauvignon	4.24
Sauvignon blanc	2.87
Pinot noir	<u>5.15</u>
Total	19.96

Garbett
Bien Nacido
V. Eisele
V. Eisele
French Camp
Bien Nacido

Los Altos Hills
Santa Maria
Chiles Valley
Chiles Valley
Paso Robles
Santa Maria

1991

Chardonnay	4.19
	1.09
	3.9
Zinfandel	0.81
Cabernet Sauvignon	8.43
Sauvignon blanc	4.56
Pinot noir	<u>3.66</u>
Total	26.64

Garbett
Campi
Bien Nacido
V. Eisele
V. Eisele
French Camp
Bien Nacido

Los Altos Hills
Los Altos Hills
Santa Maria
Chiles Valley
Chiles Valley
Paso Robles
Santa Maria

1992

Chardonnay	6.0	Garbett	Los Altos Hills
	1.9	Campi	Los Altos Hills
	5.3	Bien Nacido	Santa Maria
Zinfandel	1.12	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	4.5	Balyeat	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	4.46	V. Eisele	Chiles Valley
	2.9	French Camp	Paso Robles
Sauvignon blanc	5.4	French Camp	Paso Robles
Merlot	0.6	Balyeat	Chiles Valley
Pinot noir	<u>7.4</u>	Bien Nacido	Santa Maria
Total	39.58		

1993

Chardonnay	2.64	Garbett	Los Altos Hills
	1.9	Campi	Los Altos Hills
	7.8	Bien Nacido	Santa Maria
Zinfandel	3.7	Balyeat	Chiles Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5	Fortuna	Rutherford
Sauvignon blanc	8.6	French Camp	Paso Robles
Merlot	3.1	Bien Nacido	Santa Maria
Pinot noir	<u>9.6</u>	Bien Nacido	Santa Maria
Total	38.84		



Page Mill Winery

PAGE MILL WINERY SUPPORTS OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY
BY DONATING TO MANY LOCAL CHARITIES

CHARITABLE DONATIONS IN 1992 WERE MADE TO:

Albert J. Schultz Jewish Community Center
American Cancer Society
American Heart Association
Arbor Free Clinic
Auxiliary to Mission Hospice
Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Children's Health Council
Children's Hospital at Stanford, Ross Mosier Classic
Committee for Green Foothills
Community Association for Retarded
Environmental Traveling Companions
KUSP
Miramonte
Neighbors Abroad
Peninsula Center for the Blind
Senior Coordinating Council of the Palo Alto Area
Senior Day Health Program
Spark Foundation
Stanford Challenge for Charity
Stanford Womens Basketball Program
TheatreWorks
Westwind 4-H, Riding for the Handicapped

Dick and Orme Stark, Proprietors

13686 Page Mill Road
Los Altos Hills, California 94022
415 948-0958



Page Mill Winery

Spring Tastings, 1994

OPEN TASTING DAYS AT PAGE MILL WINERY: No reservations required. Just drop in. We will be tasting the wines listed below. Passport holders welcome.

Saturday, May 14 12 to 5 pm Saturday, June 4 12 to 5 pm

SIT DOWN TASTINGS: Reservations required. We can seat about 40 people each evening. Call 415/948-0958 for reservations.

MAY

Friday, May 6	6:30 pm	Wednesday, May 18*	6:30 pm
Saturday, May 7	6:30 pm	Thursday, May 19	6:30 pm
Tuesday, May 10	6:30 pm	Friday, May 20	6:30 pm
Wednesday, May 11*	6:30 pm	Saturday, May 21	6:30 pm
Thursday, May 12	6:30 pm	Tuesday, May 24	6:30 pm
Friday, May 13	6:30 pm	Wednesday, May 25	6:30 pm
Saturday, May 14	6:30 pm	Thursday, May 26	6:30 pm
Monday, May 16	6:30 pm	Friday, May 27	6:30 pm
Tuesday May 17	6:30 pm	Saturday, May 28	6:30 pm

JUNE

Wednesday, June 1	6:30 pm	Saturday, June 4	6:30 pm
Thursday, June 2	6:30 pm		

BE A BOTTLING VOLUNTEER!: Enjoy the glamorous exciting lifestyle of the winemaker for a day. Sign up to help with bottling on May 1st and/or 2nd. Call for information.

* **FOOD & WINE:** Once again we are ecstatic that Jean-Pierre Weingarten has consented to make the trek from Stinson Beach and tickle our tastebuds with taste sensations by pairing our wine with his creations. Finger food only this time! \$20 per person.

GOAT CHEESE TASTINGS: This year Johanne Christmas will present her goat cheeses at the two open tasting days, May 14 and June 4, and at the Passport tasting on April 23.

RAFT THE ROGUE RIVER WITH PAGE MILL WINERY: We'll be floating the Rogue May 20-22 and, of course, tasting some great wine in the evenings. The trip is presented by Outdoor Adventures. Call them at (800) 323-4234 or (415) 663-8300 for information.

PASSPORT TASTING DAYS: Most of the wineries of the Santa Cruz Mountains will be open for Passport holders on Saturday April 23, 1994 and Saturday July 23, 1994.

The Wines

1993 Sauvignon Blanc, French Camp Vineyard, San Luis Obispo County. Well, last year we again ran out of this wine in less than six months...this year we made twice as much and it's just as good. May it last the whole year. \$9.00 per bottle.

1993 Chardonnay, Elizabeth Garbett Vineyard, Santa Clara County. Once again a gem from our local cote d'or. Very small production this year so don't miss it! \$18.00 per bottle.

1992 Chardonnay, Bien Nacido Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley. This wine is coming into its own with firm acidity and citrus backbone surrounded by bright full fruit. \$14.00 per bottle.

1991 Pinot Noir, Bien Nacido Vineyard, Santa Barbara County. This is our seventh Pinot Noir from Bien Nacido. This vintage has the opulent fruit aromas and flavors typical of wines from this vineyard. Again, very little is left. \$18.00 per bottle.

1990 Zinfandel, V.&L. Elsele Vineyards, Napa Valley. Rich and soft, this wine is a reminder that not all Zinfandels have to be chewy to be good. \$10.00 per bottle.

1988 Cabernet Sauvignon, V.&L. Elsele Vineyard, Napa Valley. Classic California Cabernet Sauvignon. Robert Parker says our Cabernets are "Embarrassingly underpriced." \$18.00 per bottle.

- At the fine restaurants and retailers listed on the reverse side of this mailer.
- At the winery (anytime someone is home)—15% case discount.
- UPS Shipment, 10% case discount, plus shipping carton, plus UPS charges.

How To Purchase Page Mill Wines

13686 Page Mill Road
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022
415 948-0958


Page Mill wines may be purchased at these fine restaurants and wine shops.

RESTAURANTS

Booneville—Booneville Hotel
Campbell—Campbell House Restaurant
Los Altos—Los Altos Bar & Grill
Los Gatos—Café Marcella, Café Trio, Los Gatos Brewing Company
Menlo Park—Flea Street Café, Garden Grill, Late For The Train, Le Pot Au Feu
Mountain View—Chez TJ, Le Petit Bistro
Palo Alto—Blue Chalk Café, California Café, Empire Tap Room, Fanny & Alexander's, Hearts, Henry's, Higashi West, Il Fornaio, MacArthur Park, Nataraja, Nouveau Trattoria, Printer's Inc., Pro Bono Café, Saint Michael's Alley, Scott's Seafood, Talbott's, Theo's, University Club, Victoria Emmons
Portola Valley—Iberia, Ridgeside Café
San Francisco—Café Kati
Stinson Beach—Parkside Café
Woodside—Buck's, Mountain House, Skywood Chateau, Village Pub

WINE SHOPS

Los Altos—Draeger's, Jerry's Liquors, Rancho Bottle Shop
Menlo Park—Beltramo's, Draeger's, Safeway
Mountain View—Safeway, Terry's
Palo Alto—Century Liquors, JJ&F, Neiman Marcus, Oakville Grocery, Vin Vino Wine, Whole Foods Market
Portola Valley—John's Wines & Liquors
Redwood City—Lucky Market
San Francisco—Mr. Liquor
Saratoga—Gene's Quito Market, Kelley's Liquors
Woodside—Robert's of Woodside

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Don't miss our
Spring Tastings!