

EL DORADO
WINE GRAPE GROWERS ASSOCIATION

POST OFFICE BOX 454, CAMINO, CALIFORNIA 95709

1981

BATF
Washington, D.C. 20226

Re: American Viticultural Area

Dear Director:

In accordance with 27 CFR 4.25a (e) (2), the El Dorado Wine Grape Growers Association hereby petitions for the establishment of an American viticultural area to be named "El Dorado". In support of this petition we offer the appended evidence and descriptions.

There are currently 164 acres of producing winegrape vineyards in El Dorado. In addition, there are 252 acres planted, but not yet bearing, and many more are in the planning stages. Daily inquiries are made from prospective new growers investigating the suitability of this area for their vineyards.

El Dorado has within its boundaries six bonded wineries, ranging in size from 3000 gallon fermenting and storage capacity, to 30,000 gallons. Planning is underway for more wineries. These wineries all have vineyards, and, to be entitled to use the estate bottled designation, seek to have the area approved.

Although most of the El Dorado grapes are crushed by its own wineries, other wineries in California are marketing wines with the El Dorado County appellation, and therefore, also have an interest in the establishment of "El Dorado" as an American viticultural area. Some of the brands currently offering El Dorado wines are, Boeger, David Bruce, Ravenswood, Sierra Vista, Sutter Home, Stevenot, Shenandoah Vineyards, Amador Foothill Winery, Kenworthy, and Santino.

All of the wine grape growers, and winery owners, within the area are in support of this petition. To our knowledge, there is no opposition to this petition.

(b) (6)

FRANK HERBERT, PRESIDENT
El Dorado Wine Grape Growers Association

FH:s

PREFACE

Prior to the discovery of gold in what was later to be the State of California, the Sierra Foothills were very slightly populated, primarily with Indians and trappers or hunters. To support the rapid influx of population following the discovery of gold at Coloma, came the beginnings of agriculture. An important part of this was the growing of grapes: in the 1860's El Dorado County probably had more grape vines than Sonoma or Napa County. Wine from these grapes was very good and won prizes and awards. Interestingly, one of the most significant figures in viticulture in the later gold rush days, was James W. Marshall, himself, the discoverer of gold.

The diminishing population, as the gold played out, the scourge of phylloxera, and the Volstadt Act, all caused the grape/wine industry to virtually disappear by the end of World War II.

In the 1960's, however, renewed interest took place. Test plots were established. Advice and counsel was sought from the University of California. All signs indicated that certain areas of El Dorado County could again produce grapes that would make premium wines - encompassing most of the significant varieties.

The Boeger Winery in Placerville was started in 1973 at the site of the old Fossati winery. Boeger Wines, made from their own grapes and from a vineyard near Coloma, have consistently won awards and received favorable reviews from wine writers. The Sierra Vista Winery in Pleasant Valley was started in 1977, and it too has won awards and favorable reviews. Presently four more wineries have been bonded, and others are in various stages of development.

Vineyard growth has paralleled that of the wineries. From 11 acres in 1967, the area now has a total of 380, planted to 15 different varieties, including Chardonnay, Reisling, Gewürtztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc in whites, and Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petite Sirah, Syrah, and Zinfandel in the reds.

Because there are parts of El Dorado County where it is not possible to grow premium grapes, it would not be accurate to use the County as the designated area. We propose that only the smaller portion of the county where it has been established, both in the past and currently, that premium grapes can be grown, be given the appellation "El Dorado".

Following is the body of our evidence to support that position.

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SECTION ONE

EVIDENCE THAT THE NAME "EL DORADO" IS
LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY KNOWN TO REFER
TO THE PROPOSED VITICULTURAL AREA.

A selection of current newspaper, magazine and other articles is appended to this petition to show that "El Dorado" has been receiving local, state and national recognition for a number of years (Appendix A). Not all of the references are to the name "El Dorado" per se, but some are to towns within the proposed viticultural area, or to the general vicinity. Refer to Table I for a listing of areas described in Appendix A, a cross reference to the articles in which they appear, and the frequency of appearance. The three most frequently appearing names, in order, are: El Dorado County, Placerville and El Dorado, all of which are evidence that "El Dorado" is the appropriate name for the viticultural area.

Since Placerville is a city within the area, it is not appropriate for it to bear the name for the entire area. However, because it is known to be within the area, references to it, and public knowledge that it is a grape growing region are evidence in support of the petition.

El Dorado County is not the appropriate name because it denotes the political subdivision, all of which is not included in the region. However, references to the county are evidence that the El Dorado region is known, because almost all of the agricultural lands of the county are included within the boundaries. Refer to Section Two for elaboration of this point. It can be argued that the thousands of bottles of El Dorado County appellation wines which have reached consumers have spread the word via the labels that "El Dorado" is a region. In addition, the many wine newsletters, such as "California Grapevine", "Balzer's Private Guide to Food & Wine", "W.I.N.O. Newsletter", etc., which have not been included in Appendix A, have routinely reviewed El Dorado County wines and hence some portion of the readers are no doubt aware of the "El Dorado" region.

TABLE I
INDEX OF WINEGRAPE GROWING AREAS WITHIN "EL DORADO"
TO WHICH THE CURRENT ARTICLES (APPENDIX A) REFER

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ARTICLE NUMBER</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
Apple Hill	2,4,5,6,7,9,12,13,16	9
Camino	3,4,6,9	4
Coloma	1,3,6	3
"EL DORADO"	1,2,4,6,7,9,16,24,26	9
El Dorado County	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,13,15,16,18,19, 20,21,22,24,25	18
Fairplay	3	1
Foothill(s)	3,6,10,12,13	5
Gold Country	13,19,26	3

TABLE I (continued)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ARTICLE NUMBER</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
Gold Hill	1,3	2
Hangtown	7,11	2
Mother Lode	12,18,23,24,25	5
Oak Hill	4,6	2
Placerville	2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,16, 18,21,24,26	16
Pleasant Valley	6,9,12,21,24,26	6
Shingle Springs	3	1
Sierra Foothill(s)	9,19,20,22,23,25	6
Somerset	9,21	2

None of the other names in Table I is the appropriate name for the region, because they are either towns or sub-areas within it, or refer to the entire Mother Lode or Sierra Foothills. Because the re-emergence of this area as a premium grape growing region dates only to about 1970, there is some tentativeness as to naming evident in some of the articles. In fact, most contain more than one name. It is quite clear from the texts, however, that there is a consensus that there is a region as proposed, and that the name "El Dorado" pinpoints it -- it could not be interpreted to refer to any other area. Following are some highlights from the articles of Appendix A which are offered as evidence that the name "El Dorado" is known.

Local El Dorado County citizens were being made aware of the region through "THE GOLD MINE" which proclaimed in 1972 that "the new vineyards of El Dorado promise to set the county's name once again on the lips of connoisseurs of California's fine wines." (Article 1). In the 1973 SACRAMENTO BEE article headlined, "El Dorado Shows Budding Grape Wine Industry", the UC farm advisor was quoted "that since 1964 when a UC Davis viticulturalist indicated that El Dorado County would be an ideal spot to grow winegrapes, agricultural and farm specialists (there) have been attempting to cultivate the winegrape industry. They are apparently on the threshold of fulfilling that aim." (Article 2). In 1974, in the "COUNTRY LIFE" magazine section of THE SACRAMENTO BEE, the points were made that "in areas of Fairplay, Placerville, and Camino at elevations of between 2,000 and 3,000 feet... this county is known for its deep soil and climate beneficial to vineyards." (Article 3). In the September 1974, "GOLD MINE", the local business community was given a run down of several grape grower's activities to show that "the renaissance of the El Dorado County wine industry is for real". (Article 4). In a 1974 MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT article about the inclusion of a winery in the Apple Hill Growers Association, it was noted that it

"already has started producing wines such as gave El Dorado County an honored name in the wine world during pre-prohibition days. The winery has more than a 100-year history." (Article 5) In a 1976 article on "The foothills wine industry" appearing in the Business section of *THE SACRAMENTO UNION*, it was noted that "A steady increase in the demand for wine stimulated a statewide search for new growing areas capable of producing top quality wines and in 1965 the trial plantings began. Evaluations by the Department of Enology at Davis continued to provide positive evidence of the suitability of El Dorado County for producing dry wines of exceptionally fine quality." (Article 6) In a 1977 article about the potential for the viticultural area, in the "*CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN STATES GRAPE GROWER*" magazine, it was said that "Famous grape growing regions of the world often become known by the wines they produce ... And, of course, there's El Dorado County, which has brought forth Hangtown Red." (Article 7) Note the title on the photographic cover page for the October 14, 1978 "*CALIFORNIA LIFE*" section of *THE SACRAMENTO BEE*: "The Vintners of El Dorado" --- evidence of its recognition as a viticultural area. In the text of the story, it was said that "El Dorado County's wine industry, the oldest yet newest premium wine producing region in California, just won't die." (Article 9) In *THE WINE SPECTATOR*, a national publication, in his 1979 article "Head for the foothills!", Richard P. Watson advised his readers that "Wines from Placerville and Plymouth are beginning to show up (in markets) this may well be a new appellation region to watch." (Article 10) In the annual review of Cabernet Sauvignon in the "*CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA WINE*" the reviewers note the winemaking history associated with "areas near 'Hangtown' (Placerville)", and go on to say that the winery "seems destined to prove that there was viticultural merit in this mountain region". (Article 11) Robert Lawrence Balzer, the eminent wine connoisseur, wrote in his nationally syndicated column, "The Placerville locale, re-emerging as a fine wine area, especially for Zinfandel, has been bringing some fame to this foothill gold rush area ...". (Article 13) And also Jerry Mead, another nationally respected wine critic and columnist, wrote that the "wines carry a new appellation, El Dorado County, that should eventually earn a reputation the equal of such names as Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino and Amador". (Article 16) Note that the headline for Article 16 reads, "Superb Wines From El Dorado". More direct evidence of national recognition of "El Dorado" is the article in the *KANSAS CITY TIMES* featuring one of the areas wineries. (Article 18) In a March 1980 column from Carmel, California, it was reported about "a relatively new growing region, El Dorado County, an area in the Sierra Foothills in what used to be Gold Rush country ... you can look to hear a great deal about El Dorado County in coming years." (Article 19) In Mead's June 15, 1980, *SACRAMENTO BEE* column on award winning wines, he said that "the gold for (the) 1977 El Dorado County shows the promise of this emerging Sierra Foothills wine growing region is being fulfilled." (Article 20)

The fact that winning in the Orange County Fair Commercial Wine Competition brings recognition, on a national scale, to the El Dorado region is the subject of Article 21. In another article about the Orange County winners, Mead said in the July 6, 1980 *THE SACRAMENTO BEE* column, that the "1978 'El Dorado County' made a statement for this emerging Sierra foothill region". (Article 22) Harvey Steiman, in his July 23, 1980, *SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER* column, refers geographically to the new region, stating "the Zinfandel, from the Mother Lode Country in the Sierra foothills, has the typical berry-like aroma ..." (Article 23) It was noted in the August 15, 1980 *MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT* article that "the prize cup ranneth over for El Dorado County wines and grapes at the Amador County Fair wine judging last week, keeping flowing the recent recognition of the county's vineyard products." (Article 24) Harvey Steiman prefaced his *SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER* story about the 1980 Amador County Fair wine awards with a brief history about the Sierra foothills wine areas. (Article 25) In the September 11, 1980, "Breakaway" section of *THE SACRAMENTO UNION*, it was noted that "there are more than a dozen fine wineries which begin less than 50 miles east of here in historic Placerville ... These wineries are rapidly becoming famous for their rich and powerful Zinfandels." (Article 26)

In conclusion, the foregoing quotes were selected to show specifically that the proposed viticultural area is known locally, statewide, and nationally through the mass media and the wine press. The reader is requested to review Appendix A in its entirety where the evidence is overwhelming that "El Dorado" is known to refer to the proposed viticultural area.

SECTION TWO

HISTORICAL AND CURRENT EVIDENCE THAT THE PROPOSED
BOUNDARIES OF EL DORADO ARE AS SPECIFIED

BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of "El Dorado" have been drawn to include all known and potential premium grape growing areas within El Dorado County. Factors of soils, climate and terrain limit this to areas above 1200 feet elevation, and below 3500 feet. Because contour lines were extremely convoluted, range and township lines have been used to smooth the upper elevation boundary on the east, and the lower elevation on the west. The county lines form natural north-south boundaries -- the steep, craggy canyons of the North Fork of the American River on the north, and the South Fork of the Consumnes River on the south.

So that the proposed El Dorado Viticultural Area can be seen in its entirety on one map, the Map of El Dorado County (Quad Map Index) has been included in Appendix C. The areas highlighted in red are the titles of the applicable USGS maps. The areas to which the historical report (Appendix B) and the public record (Appendix A) refer are highlighted in yellow.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Historical data will show that El Dorado County has a long and well publicized history of grape growing. Public knowledge of El Dorado County as a region is evidence that the proposed boundaries are correct. This is obviously true in the case of the north and south boundaries which are identical to the county lines. In the case of the eastern boundary, it represents the upper limit of possible agricultural activity. It is general knowledge that the rocky, mountain terrain and climate of the Sierra Nevada Mountains limits farming to the lower elevations, so it is herein assumed that public knowledge of El Dorado County as a grape growing region also supports the eastern boundary as correct. The modern market for premium winegrape varieties, and the viticultural fact that such grapes are suited to cooler regions, are evidence which supports the western (1200 foot elevation) boundary. Even though there were some vineyards planted below the 1000 foot elevation in the historical record -- less than 10% of the total acreage in 1889 -- it does not contradict the assertion that the boundary should be drawn higher, on the basis of elevation. There are no current vineyards of premium grapes today planted below the 1200 foot elevation. It will be shown that almost every historical reference to grape growing areas in "El Dorado" falls within the proposed boundaries, which serves to reinforce them all as correct. Refer to Table II (page 6) for a list of those areas, and to Appendix C for their location on the map.

Mr. Charles L. Sullivan's report, "*HISTORIC WINEGROWING IN EL DORADO COUNTY*" is submitted as historical evidence that the proposed boundaries are correct, and is attached to this

petition as Appendix B. Not only does Mr. Sullivan offer a detailed account of acreage, growers, locations and economics of "El Dorado" grape growing, but also he documents it by references to periodicals and records, both historic and current, that show that the material was and is public knowledge. The fact that (1) virtually all of the areas he describes are within the proposed boundaries of "El Dorado", and (2) that references to El Dorado County itself can be assumed to establish the boundaries, as explained above, and, (3) that these areas have been publicized since 1855, all show that the proposed boundaries are correct.

CURRENT EVIDENCE

Numerous articles are appended to this petition which show that the public attention has been drawn to "El Dorado" for several years as a winegrape growing region (Appendix A). The specific areas referred to in the articles have been indexed in Table I and highlighted in yellow on the map. That they all fall within the proposed boundaries is current evidence that the boundaries are as specified in this petition. All references to the county of El Dorado reinforce the boundaries as well, because the boundaries take in all possible viticultural lands in the County except those below the 1200 foot elevation, where no premium winegrapes are planted.

TABLE II

INDEX OF AREAS TO WHICH THE SULLIVAN HISTORICAL REPORT REFERS

COLOMA
COULTERVILLE
DIAMOND SPRINGS
EL DORADO
EL DORADO COUNTY
EL DORADO DISTRICT
GARDEN VALLEY
GEORGETOWN
GOLD HILL
GREEN VALLEY
KELSEY
LATROBE
MICHIGAN FLAT
MUD SPRINGS
PLACERVILLE
SHINGLE SPRINGS
UNIONTOWN

SECTION THREE

EVIDENCE THAT THE GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF "EL DORADO"
PRODUCE GROWING CONDITIONS WHICH DISTINGUISH IT FROM
SURROUNDING AREAS.

CLIMATE OF THE EL DORADO REGION

The climatic conditions which distinguish "El Dorado" from surrounding areas will be presented in relation to the four seasons. One of the most important factors is not seasonal, however. Throughout the year, the evenings and nights are cooled by breezes which originate from the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the East.

WINTER

Winter temperatures fall to 20° to 35° at night and warm up to 40° to 60° Fahrenheit in the day. More than half of the annual precipitation falls in the months from December to March. Average annual rainfall ranges from 33 to 45 inches, varying with elevation. For every 300 foot rise in elevation, precipitation increases 3 to 4 inches. The higher average elevation of "El Dorado" as opposed to the lower foothill areas, and the Central Valley, guarantees it a more favorable growing climate as far as rainfall is concerned. The moisture-laden winter storms from the Pacific Ocean are carried across Central California by the prevailing west to east winds.

"The Coast Ranges catch some of the resulting rain, especially in the north, but there is no barrier at the Golden Gate and the heaviest precipitation occurs to the east and north of the gap as the air¹ ascends the gradual western slope of the Sierra."

The winter fog, so typical of California's Great Central Valley and the coastal valleys, rarely extends above the 1200 foot elevation in "El Dorado"

SPRING

Spring ^{or} temperatures occasionally fall below 30 Fahrenheit, but more often range from 30° to 45° Fahrenheit at night. Daytime temperatures warm up to 50° to 70° Fahrenheit, with late spring temperatures at times reaching 80° Fahrenheit. Approximately 20% of the annual precipitation falls in the months of April and May. In some years, when little rain falls during these months, the grapevines begin to use some of the available stored water.

SUMMER

Diurnal temperature variation is greater in "El Dorado" than in the other regions of California. Summer temperatures commonly fall to a minimum of 50° Fahrenheit at night, and rising often to 90° Fahrenheit during the day. Cool mountain breezes temper the influence of the great valley's hot air mass, and for every 300 feet rise in elevation, a temperature drop of 1° Fahrenheit occurs. Little or no rainfall occurs during June, July, August, or September except for a rare

¹ Sierra Nevada Natural History, Page 13

thunder shower created by the influence of the Sierra Nevada. Unlike many of California's wine regions, the influence of smog is almost nonexistent.

AUTUMN

An Indian summer is characteristic of autumn in "El Dorado", extending the growing season into October. Cooler nighttime temperatures of 35° to 50° Fahrenheit, with slightly cooler days in the 70° to 80° Fahrenheit range are typical. Little rainfall occurs until late October and November, insuring ideal maturation of the grapes and no problems associated with a wet harvest. Daily westerly breezes from the Sierra Nevada Mountains lower actual vine temperature below the ambient air temperature. The long warm days and cool nights ripen the grapes to an unexcelled quality with distinctive character apparent in the wines of "El Dorado".

SOILS OF THE EL DORADO REGION

The El Dorado region is on the western slope of the central Sierra Nevada. It is dominated by steeply dipping, faulted and folded metamorphic rocks that have been intruded by several types of igneous rocks. Overlying the bedrock in many places are mantels of river gravel and volcanic debris.

Parent material exerts one of the strongest influences on soil formation in this region. Most of the soils are on uplands, formed in place in material weathered from metamorphic rocks or andesitic conglomerate rock.

Typically, in the western part of "El Dorado" below 2000 foot elevation, the land is steep and angular, consisting of faulted and folded metamorphic rocks. Metamorphic rocks are generally not easily weathered -- they commonly form shallow gravelly soils that have many outcrops. The metamorphic rocks are fine-grained and form soils that have a surface texture of loam, and silt loam.

In the southern part of "El Dorado" in the 2000 to 3000 foot elevation range, the land typically consists of granitic rocks and is rounded and smooth with a basin-like appearance. Soils underlain by granitic rocks occupy places where the overlying rocks were stripped away and the Sierra Nevada batholith is exposed. The parent rock is weathered to a considerable depth, and the soils are 3½ to more than 5 feet deep. The weathered rocks contain many angular, coarse grains of sand, mainly quartz, that form soils that have a surface layer of coarse sandy loam. Typical vegetation in this region is Ponderosa Pine.

In the volcanic areas of land above the 2500 foot elevation throughout "El Dorado", the terrain is flat and smooth (Camino ridge). The andesitic conglomerate (volcanic mud flows) is deeply weathered, especially in the Aiken soils, because the material is porous and weathers easily. The andesite is moderately grained and forms soils that have a surface texture of loam and sandy loam.

Soils represent a cumulation of the effects of climate, geology and vegetation. The soil characteristics play an important role in the winegrape's productivity and quality. In "El Dorado", although the soils vary in texture and depth, their parent materials were all formed from common Magma materials of the great Sierra Batholith. This is in contrast to the lower foothill and the central valley regions, where the soils are sedimentary (transported materials of ocean sediments, stream deposits, etc.), and consist of a conglomerate of materials representing the changing erosive patterns of the geologic past. In contrast, "El Dorado" soils are residual (formed in place) and igneous in origin, and have the characteristics described in detail in the foregoing.

The significance to grape growing of the unique soils of "El Dorado" is that it differentiates it from neighboring areas in several ways. Some of the positive aspects which favor winegrape growing in "El Dorado" are:

1. The soils are acidic, having a pH range from 5.0 to 6.2, in contrast to the alkaline soils common throughout California.
2. Hardpans, claypans and restricting layers are uncommon.
3. Soil water drainage and infiltration rates are moderate to fast.
4. High water table conditions which are unfavorable to grape growing are near non-existent in "El Dorado", unlike the Central Valley.

In conclusion, it has been shown that both the climate and the soils of "El Dorado" are different from surrounding areas, and that these geographical features produce unique growing conditions which distinguish it from others.

SECTION FOUR

A NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF "EL DORADO"
BASED ON FEATURES WHICH CAN BE FOUND
ON THE U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY MAPS

BEGINNING at a point being the intersection of the North Fork of the American River and the Northerly line of Township 11 North, Range 8 East, M.D.M., thence, generally in a North-easterly direction along said North Fork of the American River which is also the El Dorado County Boundary, to the point of intersection of said river and the easterly line of Township 13 North, Range 11 East, M.D.M.; thence, Southerly along the township lines to the Northeasterly corner of Township 11 North, Range 11 East, M.D.M.; thence, Easterly along range lines to the Northeast corner of Township 11 North, Range 12 East, M.D.M.; thence Southerly along township lines to the Southeast corner of Township 11 North, Range 12 East, M.D.M.; thence, Easterly along range lines to the Northeasterly corner of Township 10 North, Range 13 East, M.D.M.; thence, Southerly along township lines along the Easterly line of Township 8 North, Township 9 North, and Township 10 North, all Range 13 East, M.D.M. to the point of intersecon with the South Fork of the Consumnes River; thence, in a Westerly direction along the South Fork of the Consumnes River, which is also the El Dorado County Boundary, to the point of intersection of said River and the Easterly line of Township 8 North, Range 10 East, M.D.M.; thence Northerly along township lines to the Northeast corner of Township 8 North, Range 10 East, M.D.M.; thence, Westerly along range lines to the Northeasterly corner of Township 8 North, Range 9 East, M.D.M.; thence, Northerly along township lines to the Northeast corner of Township 11 North, Range 9 East, M.D.M.; thence, Westerly along range lines to the point of beginning.

INDEX TO APPENDIX A - Articles

Art. No.	Date	Title of Article and Name of Publication	Page No.
1.	9/72	"New Wine In Old Vineyards", <i>The Gold Mine</i> , Placerville, CA	1
2.	2/23/73	"El Dorado Shows Budding Grape-Wine Industry, Hopes to Encourage Growth", <i>The Sacramento Bee</i> , Sacramento, CA	3
3.	8/1/74	'Wine Revival', "Country Life", <i>The Sacramento Bee</i> , Sacramento, CA	2
4.	9/74	"Old Dreams in New Bottles", <i>The Gold Mine</i> , Placerville, CA	4
5.	11/21/74	"Apple Hill Expands to Include Pioneer Winery on Carson Road", <i>The Mountain Democrat</i> , Placerville, CA	3
6.	11/14/76	'The Foothills Wine Industry', "Business", <i>The Sacramento Union</i> , Sacramento, CA	5,6
7.	9/77	"...And Now There's Hangtown Red", <i>California and Western States Grape-grower</i> , Fresno, CA	7,8
8.	9/29/78	"Reminiscing", <i>The Mountain Democrat</i> , Placerville CA	10
9.	10/14/78	'The Vintners of El Dorado...California's Oldest Yet Newest Wine Country', "California Life", <i>The Sacramento Bee</i> , Sacramento, CA	11
10.	4/1/79	"Head for the Foothills!", <i>The Wine Spectator</i> , San Diego, CA	9
11.	6/19/79	"Cabernet Sauvignon Annual Review", <i>Connoisseur's Guide to California Wine</i> , San Francisco, CA	13
12.	7/13/79	'Wineries Take Root in the Hills', "on the go/living", <i>The Modesto Bee</i> , Modesto, CA	14
13.	8/21/79	'Great wines from Gold Rush country', "The Wine Connoisseur", <i>The Times</i> , San Mateo, CA	13

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14.		'New wineries tugging for attention', "The Wine Connoisseur", <i>Rocky Mountain News</i> , Denver, Colo.	16
15.	9/19/79	'Via the Grapevine: New Wines', "Mead on Wine", <i>The Sacramento Bee</i> , Sacramento, CA	16
16.	9/30/79	'Superb Wines from El Dorado', "Mead on Wine", <i>The Sacramento Bee</i> , Sacramento, CA	15
17.	9/28/79	'What cheer -- new winery opens to praise', "Mead on Wine", <i>The Fresno Bee</i> , Fresno, CA	17
18.		'New brand truly shows promise', "Through the Grapevine", <i>The Kansas City Times</i> , Kansas City, Mo.	18
19.	3/80	"Best Buy Winery", <i>Key Paper</i> , Carmel, CA	17
20.	6/15/80	'Orange County Credibility', "Mead on Wine", <i>The Sacramento Bee</i> , Sacramento, CA	20
21.	6/20/80	"Boeger and Sierra Vista Wineries Win awards", <i>The Mountain Democrat</i> , Placerville, CA	19
22.	7/6/80	'Last But Not Least', "Mead on Wine", <i>The Sacramento Bee</i> , Sacramento, CA	20
23.	7/23/80	"Cabernet marathon", "Harvey Steiman/ On Wine", <i>The San Francisco Examiner</i> , San Francisco, CA	20
24.	8/15/80	"El Dorado County wines win awards", <i>The Mountain Democrat</i> , Placerville, CA	21
25.		'Look to the Sierra', "Harvey Steiman/ On Wine", <i>The San Francisco Examiner</i> ,* San Francisco, CA	22
26.	9/11/80	'The Gold Country Wineries', "Breakaway", <i>The Sacramento Union</i> , Sacramento, CA	23

* Chronicle

THE GOLD MINE

SEPTEMBER 1972

NEW WINE IN OLD VINEYARDS

From heavy on the vine and ready for the cut, the year's growth had now been planted, the welcome renaissance of the wine grape growing industry in El Dorado County's fertile foothills is gaining momentum. Almost unnoticed by the general public, the isolated beginnings of a few years ago have multiplied into what well may become an important agricultural development with economic and publicity values yet undreamed of. After languishing into extinction through the years of Prohibition, the new vineyards of El Dorado promise to set the county's name once again on the lips of consumers of California's fine wines.

And it's high time! Rainfall and climatic conditions have always been ideal here for the production of premium varieties, and many a European visitor has shaken his head in wonder that so advantage was being taken of these blessings. Now, with one vineyard shipping several growing and experimenting others preparing to plant, one winery in business and another in the planning stage, it seems fair to say that we're seeing the healthy signs of a new wine industry with a far greater potential than it had in the "old days".

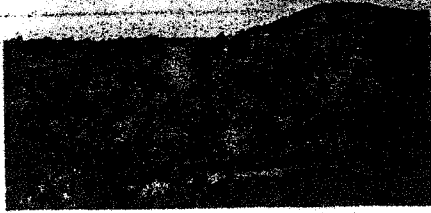
Concern For Highways Is Part of Chamber's Job

Months of work by the County Chamber's Highway Committee, under the chairmanship of Bill Coffey, have resulted in a carefully worked out set of recommendations to be submitted to the State Chamber of Commerce on September 11th at a luncheon meeting at Labor South which all chamber members are urged to attend.

In the meantime copies of the recommendations are being circulated throughout El Dorado County for suggestions and written approval from as many official agencies and organizations as possible. These endorsements will be presented at the September 11th meeting and will add the weight of consensus to the requests, according to chairman Coffey.

GOLD HILL VINEYARD

A gentleman who could say "I will do as I will" is John Henry of Colusa in the gold-mining industry operating in the County. Born in Yugoslavia, educated in Hungary and Germany, Henry has seen his dream of wine-making as a young political exile get during WWII. Rekindled when he came here to reach ten years ago, he established the Gold Hill Winery in 1969 and planted 50 acres the same year.



A veteran of the old school, Henry's interest is in the wine, he is growing the grapes from necessity. But as he goes on with his projects, he is saving his "Gold Hill" label for the fruit of his own harvest. In the meantime he is making all varieties of wines in his 3500 gallon winery and putting it out under the "Colusa Village Wines" label. Henry's faith is born of intimate knowledge of other wine-growing areas of the world, and he has backed it with long hours of hard work . . . in addition to teaching.

So the development is in many stages at present, scattered throughout the western end of the county at elevations from 1300 to 3000 feet. No longer a pipe dream, the rebirth of the wine grape industry in El Dorado County is a serious . . . and beautiful . . . business. One day we may be as famous for our "Vino de Oro" as we have been for gold of another kind.



PREPARING THE NURSERY BED

WINE (continued)
Pioneers in this contemporary saga, Marion and George Ritchie will be shipping their premium Barbera this month for the first year. Six years after planting 20 acres of them, El Dorado ranch to the choice red wine grape, the Ritchies have won the highest ratings from the University at Davis, and a first market for their crop.

After testing 17 additional varieties, they have chosen white Riesling and Pinot Noir as others best suited to their elevation and will be expanding their vineyards gradually with these.

The Ritchies have done it the hard way, from soil test to crop testing to the vineyard and on week ends to plant and irrigate, hand weeding and hoeing, and so on. The nursery beds are well watered through the first year of struggle and occasional drought. But Marion Ritchie, a member of the County, considered the first vineyard at this time and believed it could be done again. Starting with his deep commitment to the land has stood firm in good stead. It's a bitter time now in the Ritchie vineyard and the grapes hang heavy and full on the vines.



Old and new blend at Boeger's

A young man with a somewhat different dream, Greg Boeger recently purchased the Fossati ranch on Carson Road and plans to have his new winery ready to receive the crush of the Fall of '73. A graduate viticulturalist with a masters degree in agricultural economics from Davis, Boeger studied the area carefully before settling here to establish his winery and the vineyards which will eventually help to supply it.

Boeger is no stranger to wine making. As the younger son of a coastal wine-making family, he is experienced as well as educated in the art. His

architect is a specialist in winery design, and the plans call for building a 10,000 gallon capacity winery next year, capable of further expansion as time goes on.

Boeger will be planting 20 acres of grapes in the spring; Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, and Merlot in the red; Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, and Pinot Chardonnay in the white. But it will be three years before his own grapes are ready, so he will be looking closely at other vineyards in the county. In the meantime, he is busy harvesting his peach and plum crop, planning the winery, and putting down new roots of his own in the old ranch where the Fossati winery of 1858 still stands.

With roots already deep in both the county where he was born and the ranch that was his grandfather's, mechanical engineer Lloyd Walker returns each day to his new vineyard in the Oak Hill district. Five acres of Chenin Blanc . . . 2000 vines . . . are thriving after the first year in the rich soil of this gently rolling land. It will be two years before these vines produce a crop, but this spring Walker will plant



Test rows protected at Walker's

another 2000 of the same variety, continuing to plant five acres a year until he has forty. Farming is in his blood and his interest is entirely in the growing of the grapes.

Walker's 6-year old test plot contains 15 varieties which serve as a data base for the county. This spring the grapes will be tested at Davis and the results will mean much in the future of the county's reputation as a wine-grape area. A high rating will be the key to more rapid development, so the Chamber was happy to supply the nylon netting to protect the grapes from the birds who found the acre of precious experimental grapes an irresistible oasis. Deer have been a problem for Walker, too, and he has had to surround his vineyard with over a mile of 7-foot high fence to protect it. But, enthusiastic in spite of the difficulties, Walker watches over the young grapes and looks forward to devoting all of his time to the vineyards.

University of California farm advisor, Dick Bethell, has an experimental vineyard in Camino, and County Agricultural Commissioner, Ed Dellino, has a 6-year old test plot farther west on North Canyon Road. Both men are convinced of the great potential for wine grapes in the county.

Ken Kirk of El Dorado Hills has purchased the Hines Miller ranch in the Union Ridge area and will be planting 20 acres in the spring. Others are negotiating for land or planning to plant as the burgeoning grape industry gains adherents.

Wine Revival

Hopes Rise For Foothill Vineyards

PLACERVILLE — A sharp increase in the grape acreage and a new winery now ready for its first crush, brings optimism to agriculturalists that the wine industry is reviving in this foothill area.

"In one year the acreage of vineyards jumped from 34 to 120, and it now looks like the county is entering its third historical phase in the grape industry," Farm Adviser Dick Bethell explained.

In all seven ranchers planted a total of 86 acres of new grape stock in areas of Fairplay, Placerville and Camino at elevations of between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, where this county is known for its deep soil and climate beneficial to vineyards, the farm adviser said.

Although the bulk of those acres now planted will not be ready for a good harvest until the third year of growth, a \$100,000 winery already has been constructed and is awaiting its first "crush."

The Boeger Winery, operated by Greg Boeger, 31, sits on a hillside of the historic Elmo Fossati Ranch along Carson Road, where Boeger already has planted some wine grape stock and has plans to plant 12 additional acres this fall.

"I'll have my tasting room completed in about a month and about the same time I'll be ready to market a limited supply of my first wine crushed on another ranch I lease," Boeger explained.

The Boeger Winery has 4,300 gallons of various type wines aging in special imported French oak barrels, but the winery has a capacity of 50,000 gallons, with room for plant expansion.

Boeger soon will bottle 500 gallons of Johannesburg Reisling and 200 gallons of Chenin Blanc.

"I will have to wait another six months or so before bottling my supply of Zinfandel and another two years for my Cabernet Sauvignon," the young vintner said.

El Dorado County, according to both Bethell and Boeger, compares with the Napa County grape country in climate. "And this county has lower land values," Boeger declared.

Historically, this county already has had two significant periods where grapes and wine played an important role.

"The first came with the early 19th century miners who mined for gold

and on our rocky slopes. The miners were a hardy lot and wine was a needed commodity," Bethell explained.

Those areas of planting, probably containing mostly mission grapes, were spread in areas between here and the gold discovery site of Coloma. When the gold miners left for richer fields, so did the vintners, and the vineyards were left untended.

The second era for vineyards in this county was in the prohibition days. "Areas around Shingle Springs were planted with hardy grape stock and the fresh grapes were shipped eastward to a wide variety of buyers, who made their own private stock of wine."

"The more recent resurgence is due primarily to people changing their attitudes toward wines. Once people associated wines with 'winos' but today wines are being broadly accepted due to an increasing awareness of the good life," Bethell said.

Major plantings in El Dorado County include the Cabernet, Chenin Blanc, Zinfandel, Reisling and Chardonnay, the farm adviser noted.

"Over the next few years people will continue to demand good quality wines and this is an area able to produce them," Bethell added.

Boeger and Bethell have worked

closely, not only in the planting of good grape stock, but in projecting the future of the area's wine industry.

"This area, thanks to El Dorado Irrigation District, has an abundance of water for frost protection and irrigation. I've been here over two years already, and am looking forward to many more successful years," Boeger declared.

Boeger was schooled in agriculture at the University of California at Davis and holds a degree in agricultural economics. He has a background in the vineyard/vintner areas.

"While attending college I worked alongside my cousin in a winery in Napa County. I've always been interested in the making of wine," Boeger said.

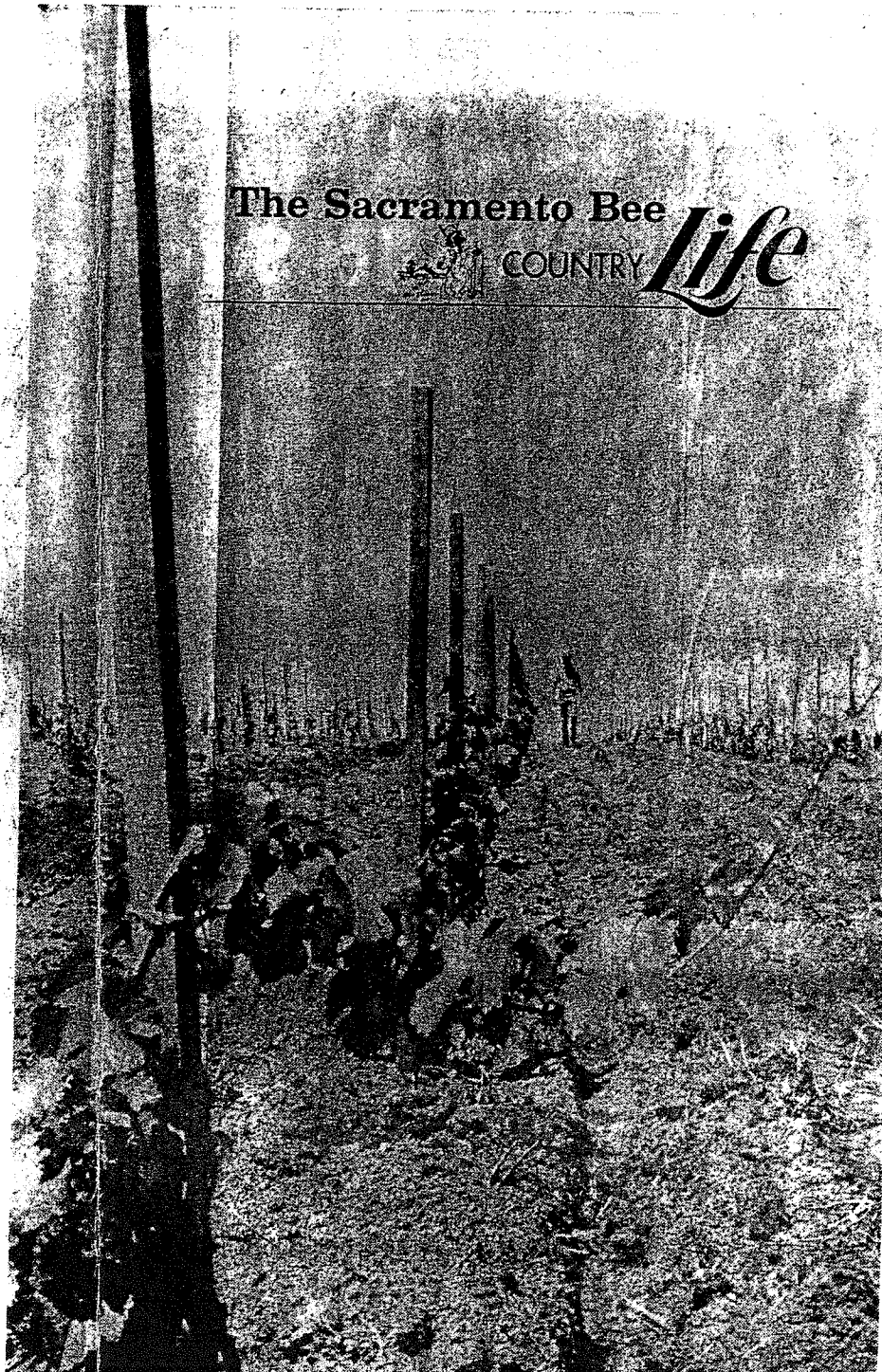
Boeger's winery was ready for its first crush nearly a year ago, but because certain equipment and some imported barrels failed to arrive in time, Boeger made his first El Dorado County "crush" at the Gold Hill Winery, which he leases.

So far, according to Boeger and Bethell, UCD testing of this area's wine grapes has proven "very exciting."

"There are some indications our wines will have a character all their own, mostly because of our mountain climate... we hope it's a favorable influence," Bethell said.



The Sacramento Bee
COUNTRY Life



El Dorado Shows Budding Grape-Wine Industry, Hopes To Encourage Growth

PLACERVILLE — The wine boom may spread to El Dorado County if the interest of 28 persons who toured vineyards and potential grape planting sites in the area continues.

Led by El Dorado County farm adviser Dick Bethel, agricultural commissioner Ed Delfino and UC Davis viticulturalist A. N. Kasimatis, the group toured the Apple Hill area, discussing climate, soils, how to plant and care for vineyards and species to plant.

Bethel noted he was pleased to see the large turnout of interested persons. Last year only six persons went on the tour, which is aimed not only at educating potential growers, but generating enthusiasm among them.

Site Is Shown

Budding vineyardists Dick Bush and Bill Brooks showed the group their 35-acre parcel of land expected to be planted with various types of vines this spring.

They said they will plant zinfandel, white reisling, chardonnay and cabernet type grapes on their land in the Apple Hill area, atop a slope which re-

ceives plenty of sun and which also drains water readily.

Bethel said that since 1964 when a UC Davis viticulturalist indicated that El Dorado County would be an ideal spot to grow wine grapes, agricultural and farm specialists here have been attempting to cultivate the wine grape industry. They are apparently on the threshold of fulfilling that aim.

Winery Planned

Not only are ranchers interested in planting wine grapes, but one rancher, Gregg Boeger, said in the next few months he will be starting construction on a winery to process initially 10,000 gallons of wine.

Boeger said he hopes to have his first "crush" next September.

There are some problems associated with planting wine grapes in the foothill ranges. One is protecting the young vines from being eaten by deer.

"Growers must build seven-foot deer fences around their vineyards," Bethel warned.

He said that depending on how much preparation for planting the land requires, cost per acre ranges between \$1,200 and \$2,000.

Kasimatis warned the potential growers to be careful of planting their stock too close to oak trees because plantings could suffer and die from oak root fungus, a disease prevalent among oaks.

"The ideal thing to do is dig out and burn oak tree stumps," Kasimatis explained.

Return On Crops

Kasimatis seemed pleased about the wine grape interest shown and said prices area ranchers receive for their crops should be more than received in Lodi, but probably below those paid for Napa Valley grapes.

He stated that overhead sprinkler systems are a proven system for good irrigation and proper frost protection. "It's more expensive, but the way to go," Kasimatis said.

It will be three or four years until good crops of commercial wine grapes are harvested.

Potential ranchers will have to make the choice for either irrigated or dry land farming. Protection from deer, frost, mildew and root insects are other concerns to be faced.

But if all goes well a harvest of between three and five tons of grapes an acre could be realized, Kasimatis told the group.

Bethel noted that vines are planted 500 to the acre from six to eight feet apart with 12-foot spaces between rows. Some fertilization may be required.

The US Soil Conservation District office here states it stands ready to aid potential grape growers with soil analysis reports, erosion studies and irrigation system planning.

Apple Hill expands to include pioneer winery on Carson road

CAMINO—The Apple Hill Growers association has voted to expand its territory from Camino to the west, right up to the city limits of Placerville.

The action will enable additional growers to become eligible for membership, and at the same time, add a winery of historical importance to the apple and pear growers and the producers of Christmas trees, and will increase the area for roadside sales of the famous apple pies, cakes, strudels and other goodies available to a hungry public.

The winter included by reason of the expansion, which necessitated a change in the association by laws, is the Boeger winery, 1709 Carson road, one of the few in El Dorado county, and just getting under way with a large new and modern winery. It already has started producing wines such as gave El Dorado county an

honored name in the wine world during pre-prohibition days.

The winery has more than a 100-year history. The land on which it is located was homesteaded by the Lombardo family in 1857, the winery started in 1872 by J. A. Fossati, who married into the family.

Although there is a new and modern winery constructed, the original old winery is still on the place and is used as a tasting room. This building is constructed of field stone, the walls more than two feet thick and the temperature stays at about 62 degrees, no matter what the outside mercury reads.

At one time, the surrounding hills were all planted to vineyard, but prohibition tolled the death knell of the winery,

and also to a distillery up the hill a short distance from the winery. The distillery will remain as a museum piece, but will not be operated. The Boegers, who are connected with a winery in Napa Valley above Rutherford to the west, say El Dorado county is capable of producing as fine wines as are made in Napa valley, and they intend to produce them.

Visitors are welcome now at the winery, as they are in the rest of Apple Hill.

Growers or other prospective members wishing more information about the new boundaries and by-laws may call the association president, Eugene Larsen, at Larsen's Apple Barn.

THE GOLD MINE

SEPTEMBER 1974

OLD DREAMS IN NEW BOTTLES

Two years ago, when we wrote the "New Wine in Old Vineyards" issue of the *GOLD MINE*, the rebirth of a wine industry in El Dorado County sounded like a pipe dream. The promise of wineries and vineyards to come, the account of the test plots, the hopeful growers, the acres of vines planted at various elevations by young men of faith and determination, the encouraging reports from UC-Davis, the dedication of the county agricultural commissioner and the farm advisor . . . it all sounded good, but surely it was a pipe dream.

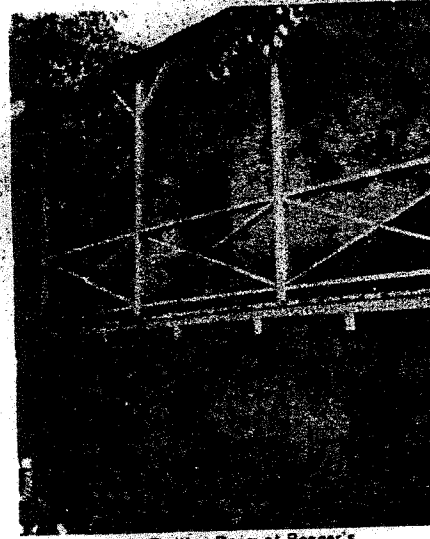
Well, the dream is coming true! The Boeger Winery is a \$100,000 reality, ready for its first crush this month; the acreage planted in vineyards has jumped from 34 to 120 in the last year; another winery will be built this year, and at least one other is being planned; the renaissance of the El Dorado County wine industry is for real.

Greg Boeger has not only built his promised 50,000 gallon capacity winery on the former Fossati Ranch on Carson Road, but has turned the old 1870 wine cellar into the new tasting room where he'll market a limited supply of his first wine made from El Dorado County grapes. More important to the young vintner, this month will see his first crush of some 5000 gallons of Johannesburg Reising and Chenin Blanc - the white wines he hopes will help to establish the Boeger Winery reputation.

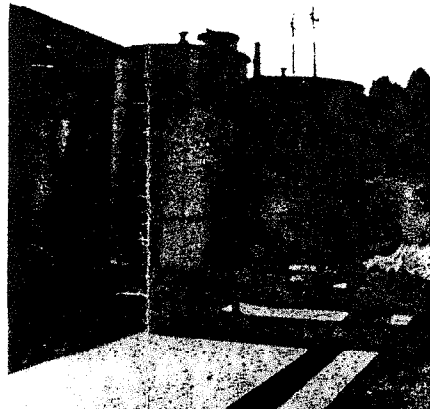
With 4,500 gallons of last year's wines almost ready for market, and his Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandels still aging in their special oak casks, Boeger is very definitely "in business." It will be a few more years before he can count on his own vineyards - the 10 acres he planted last year and the 12 acres he'll put in this winter - but, in the meantime, leasing other local vineyards and purchasing the crop from vineyardists who got a head start, Boeger is in production and making the dream come true.

Two years ago Lloyd Walker had five acres of one-year old Chenin Blanc doing well on his Oak Hill ranch; this year he's taking his first crop from 4200 of those vines, plus 1500 Zinfandel. Now he has twelve and a half acres in wine grapes and will plant more Zinfandel this winter, from cuttings of his own.

Continued - page 2



The Tasting Room at Boeger's



Shiny new for Boeger's Winery

OLD DREAMS IN NEW BOTTLES (continued)

The test plot on Walker's ranch is now 8 years old, and the 15 varieties growing there are constantly monitored for testing at Davis. Consistently high ratings for the county's varieties have been very encouraging, and the results of Walker's experiments with dry land farming of his vineyard have been outstanding.

A native of the county, Walker's interest is in the land and making the family ranch produce. His pride is in the grapes, many of which will meet their destiny at Boeger's winery.

Unlike Walker, at 2100 feet elevation in the South, or George Ritchie's established vineyard in El Dorado at 1500 feet toward the West, "Granite Hill Vineyards" is on the edge of the American River Canyon at about 2300 feet. Here on the former 91 acre Volk ranch on Mesquite Road, three young men from Sacramento have established their "claim" to a place in the county's future wine industry. "Granite Hill" is the result of combining expertise in land appraisal, marketing, and restaurant management in the persons of Tom Clark, Richard Dicklars, and Cary



The vines are high at Walker's

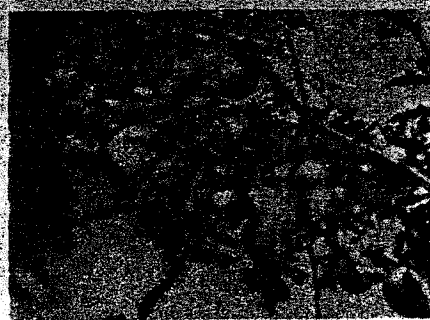
Willett, and the decision to invest it in El Dorado County.

Fifteen hundred vines were put in the ground this May in a one acre increase block. Already 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 feet high, these will be planted this winter; 23 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, on which they intend to concentrate; 4 acres of Merlot; and 9 acres of white and red varieties. Planning on a first harvest two years from now from this initial 30 acre effort, the Granite Hill triumvirate hopes eventually to plant 75 acres and have a winery of their own. Dreaming? Yes, but dreams based on a very visible reality!

Unwilling to wait until he can plant and harvest his own vineyard, Earl McGuire is approaching the building of his winery from the practical standpoint of using what he has until he can get what he wants. Engineer McGuire, an amateur and experimental vintner for a number of years, recently purchased the



The Granite Hill vineyard at Walker's



Apple Wine from Eldorado Vineyards

30 acre Dodd Ranch in Camino, at Carson Road and Highway 50, and will be using existing buildings to put in his winery this winter and spring. He will be making light bodied dessert wines first, from the fruit of his orchard. "Eldorado Vineyards" will produce apple wine on Apple Hill, as well as apricot, plum, loganberry, blackberry, and raspberry wines, plus the 5 varietal grape wines for which the county seems best suited.

McGuire expects to start small and have a potential for growth. More interested in wine making than in wine growing, he hopes to buy the majority of his grapes from other El Dorado county growers, planting only about 10 acres of his own. For Anne and Earl McGuire, Eldorado Vineyards will be the realization of a family dream - a family operation, starting from scratch, with a very practical approach.

When you hold them up to the light of reality, and let the ambition and energy shine through, see how much more possible the old dreams look in the new bottles?

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PLACERVILLE - DANCE TO "THE TRAIN", Fairgrounds	Sept. 1 & 8
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE - FIREMEN'S LABOR DAY BARBECUE	Sept. 2
DIAMOND SPRINGS - COUNTRY BAZAAR & PANCAKE BREAKFAST	Sept. 2
PLACERVILLE - STOCK CAR RACING, Fairgrounds	Sept. 7 & 14
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE - MISS SLT BEAUTY PAGEANT, Lakeland Village	Sept. 8
SHINGLE SPRINGS - JUBILEE, Community Center	Sept. 14
Western Dance, Saturday evening	Sept. 15
Old Fashioned Barbecue, Sunday	Sept. 17
POLLOCK PINES - COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEETING, Fifty Grand	Sept. 22
COLOMA - COLOMA LOTUS FIRE DEPARTMENT ANTIQUE FLEA MARKET	Sept. 22
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE - TAHOE GUN CLUB BARBECUE & SHOOT	Sept. 22
COLOMA - OLD FASHIONED MELODRAMA, Friday & Saturday evenings	Weekends
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE - KENNEL CLUB ALL-BREED FUN MATCH	Sept. 28
EL DORADO COUNTY - HEART FUND BENEFIT, CYCLATHON '74	Oct. 5

EL DORADO COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Foothills wine industry

Old dreams are being poured in new bottles

By HALMAR FORREST MOSER
Special to The Union

Appearing quietly and almost unheralded, the renaissance of the wine grape growing industry in the fertile Foothills of El Dorado County is a phenomenon not so much of agriculture as of lifestyle. It is not the seasoned pear and apple ranchers who have reinstated the vineyards of varietal wine grapes which once flourished here, but a new breed of viticulturalists whose passion to return to the land has prompted them and their families to invest a number of years of unrewarded work in the promise of a future way of life they consider worth the struggle.

Including a civil engineer, a metallurgical engineer, a mechanical engineer, an electrical engineer, an industrial designer, an educational counselor, and one agriculture economics major who minored in viticulture and enology . . . the one uncommon common-denominator among these relatively young men is that they have chosen this as a way of life preferable to their established professions: a family operation that will give them a lifestyle they cherish.

But for most of them, not yet, while the grapes develop for the required number of years before they can pick a crop for the wine crushing, most of these men work at their regular jobs and tend the vines on week-ends, in the evenings, on vacations . . . doing double duty. And wives with masters degrees in mathematics and liberal arts go into the vineyards with the children, to make up for the breadwinner's absence until the time when the vineyards can support them.

It takes a very special breed to put up with the uncertainty and the gamble, the grueling hours and the patient waiting. But as one of the engineers puts it, "When I know I'm going out to the vineyards, I wake up in the morning eager to get going. So it must be right for me."

Added to this high level of enthusiasm shared by each of the members of the El Dorado Grape Growers Association, is an equally high level of educational background and professional expertise in other fields that saves them from the pitfalls of rash investments and

unrealistic expectations. The El Dorado renaissance is no get-rich-quick scheme borne of the high grape prices of a few years ago. It has been based on thorough study and research conducted by the University of California Agriculture Extension Service, the El Dorado County agriculture department, and with the assistance of the University of California at Davis.

Test plots at various elevations determined the best varieties for the area, and when the reports from Davis came in on the first wines produced from these trial plantings . . . "Wine scores are very good" . . . and some of them were as high or higher than any in the state . . . that was the signal they had been waiting for. Now, five years later for some, the plantings are beginning to bear a marketable crop.

It isn't as though wine grape growing were new to El Dorado County. The wine industry developed here almost immediately after the discovery of gold at Coloma, and was firmly established as early as 1855. Even James Marshall, discoverer of the first gold, had a vineyard in Coloma that brought him a blue ribbon at the 1862 county fair! By 1898, 4,300 acres of the county were in vineyards and the wine and brandy industry flourished.

As the gold and the population dwindled in the early 1900s, many of the early vineyards were abandoned. And, although there was some rebirth in the 1920s when Prohibition and the accompanying demand for grapes for home wine stimulated some new interest, poor wine prices after the repeal of the Volstead Act and low grape prices after World War II forced the abandonment of the remaining vineyards until only a few acres remained by 1950.

But the American public began to appreciate fine table wines in the late '50s. A steady increase in the demand for wine stimulated a statewide search for new growing areas capable of producing top quality wines, and in 1965 the trial plantings began. Evaluations by the Department of Enology at Davis, continued to provide positive evidence of the suitability of El Dorado County for producing dry wines of exceptionally fine quality.

The planning and building of the Boeger Winery on

the old Fossati Ranch in Placerville acted as the needed catalyst. Growing up in a Napa wine-making family, Greg Boeger's study of viticulture and enology at Davis had convinced him that wine making was the life he wanted. But he and his wife Susan also wanted independence and an opportunity to indulge their interest in trout fishing, backpacking, and raising a family in the country they purchased 70 acres of apples, pears and plums, and the 1872 Fossati Winery which has become their tasting room.

Working the orchard and planting his vineyards, Boeger has 18 acres of grapes planted and is gradually increasing his vineyards. In 1973 he built a new 10,000-40,000 gallon winery and celebrated the first crush, making 5,000 gallons of Johannesburg Riesling, Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon from an older local vineyard he had leased. He has gradually increased both his production and storage capacity, holding his "reds" in their French oak casks two years before bottling. In honor of Placerville's colorful Gold Rush history, Boeger has developed a robust wine he calls "Hangtown Red", and a new "Hangtown Gold" is on the way for Christmas.

Lloyd and Claudia Walker and their four children picked their second crop of Chenin Blanc this year and sent it to the Boeger Winery. Four acres of their 20-acre vineyard produced 12 tons of this high quality varietal and 1,500 gallons of the delicate white wine. Lloyd is a mechanical engineer, working all day at Aerojet and taking care of his Oak Hill vineyard after he gets home to the 250-acre walnut and sheep ranch he purchased from his grandfather.

A graduate of Cal-Poly in San Luis Obispo, Lloyd always wanted to live and work on the ranch. At 38 he is willing to commute to his livelihood as engineer and come back to the 1913-built home which holds his dreams of the future. And work eight days a week to make them true!

For civil engineer Mick McGuire and his wife Jody establishing Eldorado Vineyards and getting their winery under way in the old apple packing shed at the Camino entrance to Apple Hill is only slightly less difficult, but at least Mick practices his engineering profession from an office in Placerville and can shuttle back and forth from drafting board to vineyard and winery during the day. Selling apples from a roadside stand and wine from the storage shed is not exactly what the McGuires prepared for at Stanford and Humboldt State, but creating Eldorado Vineyards is their dream of an enterprise the whole family can build together, their two small children included.

It will be five or six years before they can use their own plantings, but in the meantime Mick is making an apple wine from the product of his 30-acre orchard and intends to continue to make a few of the fruit and berry wines he began developing as a hobby a few years ago. By purchasing grapes from other local vineyards until their own vines have been in the ground the required number of years, Eldorado Vineyards has already produced its first crush of Chenin Blanc and Zinfandel, and their apple wine will be ready this Spring.

Although both their winery and its tasting room and 49er museum are in the early stages of development, the family-oriented recreation that is an important part of their plans is available now, with picnic areas in the orchard under the apple trees, and all of Apple Hill in full Fall foliage.

For the Brooks and Bush families, Madrona Vineyards is a partnership in which each family has taken a turn caring for the young 30-acre vineyard in Camino while professional demands took the other elsewhere. Again there is the recurring theme of long-held dreams of a family enterprise, and the unusual similarity of professions: Dick Bush is a metallurgical engineer; Bill Brooks an architect and engineer now with the U.S. Forest Service. On their 52 acres at 3,000 feet, Dick and Leslie Bush have built a home so they and their four children, 9 to 17, can tend the 30 acres of Cabernet, Merlot, Zinfandel, White Riesling, and Pinot Chardonnay. Bill and Shirley Brooks and their 7 and 9-year-olds come back whenever possible to help, having done their stint while the Bush family was in Africa. Eventually the Madrona Winery and tasting room will rise here, too, and their ton-an-acre first crop brought that dream a little closer.

Education counselor John Miranda is still bringing his wife and children to the foothills from the Bay area to farm the family's 15 acres of Cabernet and Chardonnay, but they are building a home near the vineyard in order to transplant themselves, as well.

Electrical engineer John McReedy and his mathematician wife are building a winery in Pleasant Valley to produce El Dorado Wines from these locally grown varietals. McReedy continues his work in Sacramento while his industrial designer brother-in-law, Doug Reeves, plants and tends their 5 acre vineyard and sister Enid serves as secretary to the grape growers association.

Different as their developments are in point of view, the pioneering individuals involved in this wine renaissance share a common bond of enthusiasm and cooperation that is refreshing if not downright startling in this blasé and dissatisfied world. Like the wine they make, the old dreams of selfreliance and independence, of families working together, of closeness to the land, are being poured into new bottles.

Business briefs

A new retirement plan

Wells Fargo has introduced a unique tax-deferred individual retirement account program for people with no employe retirement plan — the Golden Guarantee.

Its key feature is a guaranteed interest rate on deposits — currently 7.5 per cent — until an individual reaches age 60. This rate — the highest legal bank rate now paid on deposits — is compounded daily to an annual yield of 7.79 per cent.

Additional Golden Guarantee deposits in future years also will earn a guaranteed interest rate at the then-prevailing rate until the depositor reaches age 60. If interest rates have risen by the end of each six-year minimum withdrawal period, a depositor can take advantage of the higher rates by converting to the higher guaranteed rate. But if they go down, he can retain the original rate.

Golden Guarantee also is available to companies, associations and unions. An agreement to sponsor the service for its 18,000 members already has been signed by the California Nurses' Association.

Farm loans up

Bank of America's loans to farmers and ranchers in the Sacramento-North Mountain area increased 24.4 per cent during the first nine months of this year, according to Al Gilman, senior vice president in the region.

Gilman said the bank loaned \$105.4 million to agriculture in the area through September of this year compared with \$84.7 million through the same month last year.

Research decline

If the decline in research and development investment by the U.S. is not reversed, it could seriously affect the nation's economic leadership and our ability to provide the 18 million new jobs we must generate in the next 10 years, according to a General Electric executive.

Dr. Thomas A. Vanderslice, vice president and group executive of GE's Special Systems and Products Group, told the Executives Club of Chicago that at stake, in addition to the nation's ability to compete in the world marketplace, is the pace at which it can develop new advances in medicine, energy sources, materials and many other fields which are vital to American economic growth and its people.

For example, of some 500 major commercial technological innovations between 1953 and 1973, the U.S. led all other countries by a wide margin. The U.S. lead, however, declined from 82 per cent of innovations in the late

1950's to 55 per cent by the mid-1960's. The largest gains were recorded by Japan.

The Fed's new role

Consumers nationwide are finding help with their consumer credit problems at the Federal Reserve.

The Fed has recently announced a formal system for handling complaints on everything from the disclosure of interest rates on loans to mixed-up credit billings. Here in the West, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco maintains a Consumer Affairs Division aimed at making the life of consumers much easier when it comes to banking problems.

The Fed received over 1,400 complaints nationwide during the first six months of 1976. The largest number dealt with Truth in Lending and the Fair Credit Billing Acts, and concerned disclosure of interest rates on loans and procedures for handling credit-card billing errors.

Waddell elected

John S. Waddell of Sacramento, president of John Waddell, Accountants, has been elected to a three-year term on the governing council of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Firm acquired

E. E. Luhdorff Co., Inc., a major water development services company of Woodland and Moses Lake, Wash., has been acquired by and is now a division of Layne-Western Co., Inc., headquartered in Mission, Kan.

Branch manager

Rodney J. Sievers, assistant vice president of Gibraltar Savings, has been appointed branch manager of Gibraltar's Carmichael office at 6855 Fair Oaks Blvd., it was announced by John J. Goodwin, Jr., executive vice president.

Francis H. Arnone, president of Weinstock's, has announced the appointment of Cheryl Nido, currently divisional merchandise manager, to the newly created position of vice president general merchandise manager for soft goods for the Weinstock's stores.

Steel wages

Domestic steel producers paid their hourly employes \$1.36 more per hour in wages and other employment costs in August than they did on an hourly basis over the 12 months of 1975, the American Iron and Steel Institute has reported.



Built in 1872, the old Fossati winery now serves as the tasting room for the Boeger Winery, just east of Placerville in the picturesque Apple Hill district. The historic

cellar is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and visitors are welcome to tour the new winery and picnic under the ancient fig trees.



This 1886 photograph of the Fossati family at their winery shows how little the old stone tasting room has changed. The ranch remained in the Fossati family from

1856, when it was homesteaded, until purchased by the Boegers in 1972.

The Foothills wine industry

Old dreams are being poured in new bottles

By HALMAR FORREST MOSER
Special to The Union

Appearing quietly and almost unheralded, the renais-

unrealistic expectations. The El Dorado renaissance is no get-rich-quick scheme borne of the high grape prices of a few years ago. It has been based on thorough study and research conducted by the University of California

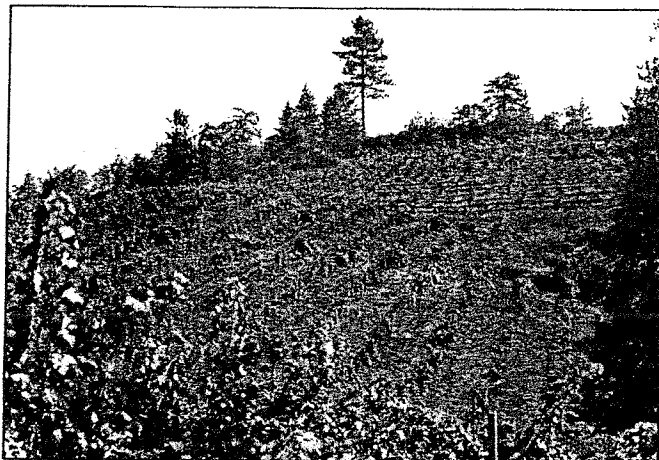
the old Fossati Ranch in Placerville acted as the needed catalyst. Growing up in a Napa wine-making family, Greg Boeger's study of viticulture and enology at Davis

Business

The Sacramento Union

C14— Sunday, November 14, 1976

7 ... And Now There's Hangtown Red



ALL OF the vineyards at the Boeger Winery and Vineyards operation in El Dorado County are located on hillsides similar to these. Greg Boeger, owner, thinks his 70 acre parcel might actually be worth a hundred if someone was to shake it out flat.

By Jerry Seper
Associate Editor

Famous grape growing regions of the world often become known by the wines they produce.

Such is the case with the Piedmont region of Italy, which is famous for Barbera, or the Medoc and Saint Emilion areas of France, from which Cabernet Sauvignon had its beginning, or the Rhine and Moselle valleys of Germany, where Johannisberg Riesling first was developed.

And, of course, there's El Dorado County, which has brought forth Hangtown Red.

Hangtown Red?

This relatively new wine is the work of Greg Boeger, owner of the Boeger Winery and Vineyards located east of Placerville, Calif. in the Apple Hill District of El Dorado County. It gets its name from Placerville, which was

known as "Hangtown" during the infamous Gold Rush Days of the late-1800's.

Hangtown Red is one of seven wines produced by Boeger, who also works as winemaker. The others include Johannisberg Riesling, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc.

One of the best sellers, however, is Hangtown Red. It is Boeger's answer to a local Burgundy; blended from Zinfandel, Carignane, Barbera, Ruby Cabernet, Petit Sirah and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes.

Many of the varieties come from Boeger's own vineyard, planted on the steep hillsides northeast of Placerville. The average elevation is about 2,300 feet. Other grapes are purchased from nearby vineyards.

Boeger, during a recent interview with *California and Western States Grape Grower*, said the wine industry in El Dorado County actually developed immediately following the discovery of gold at Coloma. Mining communities that sprung up overnight found themselves hard pressed for food and spirits and a lack of adequate transportation dictated a



EXAMINING BERRY development is Boeger Winery and Vineyards owner, manager, winemaker and chief tractor driver Greg Boeger. The operation is located in Placerville, Calif.

need to establish vineyards and wineries close to the patchwork settlements.

"Early El Dorado history shows that the wine industry firmly was established in the county as early as 1855. Of the 8,000 acres under cultivation, about 3,000 acres were in

vineyards. The wine industry continued to flourish throughout late 1880's with 4,300 acres recorded in 1898. Around the early 1900's general decline in county population caused many of these early vineyards to be abandoned," he said.

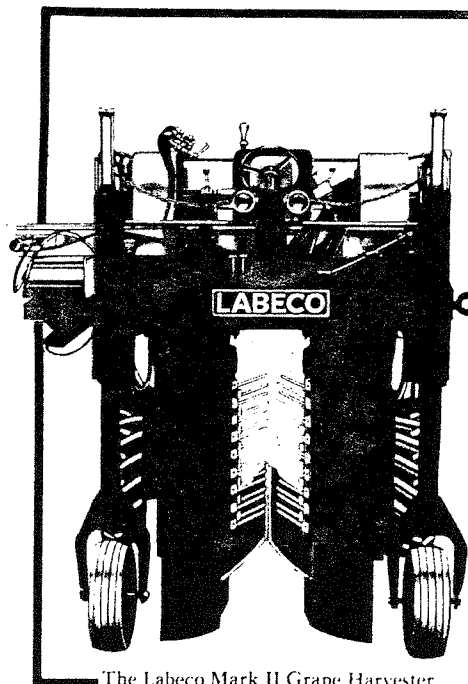
Boeger said that during the 1920 Prohibition and an accompanying demand for grapes for home winemaking stimulated the county wine industry. Historical data, he said, indicates the grape industry peaked during that time at about 5,400 acres.

"Poor wine prices after repeal Prohibition coupled with grape phylloxera forced a general decline of grape acreage during the 1930's. Low grape prices at the end of World War II forced the abandonment of the remaining vineyards, and only a few acres remained in the area by 1950," he said.

But Boeger, and others, believe there is a new trend coming and El Dorado County eventually will be a significant producer of quality grape varieties to be used in dry wines of exceptionally fine quality."

(Boeger has a tendency to talk li

Continued on page



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Manuel Padilla, Sanger, Ca. raisin grower and Medina Rep. Russel Berry discuss grapes in his Medina treated vineyard.

Manuel applied Medina at the rate of one gallon per acre by dripping it into his furrow irrigation water. Response was noted in about two weeks as the plants took on a healthier color. Bigger individual berries with larger and heavier bunches were also noted.

Last week, about 45 days before normal harvest, Manuel checked grape sugar content and found that it was already over 13 points and on all tests averaged more than two points over tests in check without Medina.

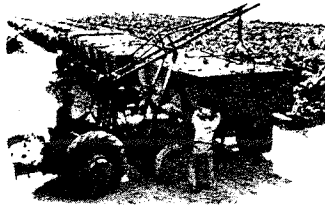
Manuel says, "Use Medina, grow a better crop", and Russel Berry notes a good time to get Medina on is following harvest — get the soil and vines in good shape for next winter and spring.



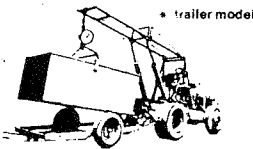
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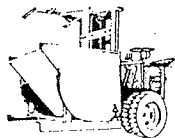
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HANGTOWN RED Continued from page 15

that since he also doubles as president of the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, but wine grape experts tend to agree there is a significant potential for the area. The University of California, Davis has been conducting trials in the area for several years and has found the area varieties to be of suitable quality.)

Boeger and his wife, Sue, bought into El Dorado County in 1972. They purchased 70 acres of land known as the Fossati Ranch and began planning the establishment of a vineyard. The ranch already had 20 acres of pears and five acres of apples and plums.

Because the average elevation of the ranch was 2,300 feet, Boeger decided to go with varieties he could expect to survive. These included Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon.

Boeger said he considered a number of options in selecting the current site for his winery and vineyard operation. These included climate, frost hazards, soil depth and slope, water needs and availability,

land costs and existing vegetation.

As far as climate is concerned, Boeger believes an understanding of the general topography of El Dorado County is necessary to see how this particular mountain climate influences grape growing and wine quality.

"The county is a series of long, gently sloping ridges with deep river canyons dividing them. This configuration results in a stable climate from year to year with warm sunny days and cool nights giving optimum sugar-acid ratios essential for the balance of a premium wine. The early growing season is cooler and bud break is later than comparable coastal grape regions," he said.

Boeger said mean temperatures in the El Dorado County area are warmer in July and August, but are cooler during the critical pre-harvest period of September and October.

"Coolness during the month prior to harvest is vital for production of the best vintage wines. For this reason, varieties that mature in late-September to mid-October are the most desirable for El Dorado County," he said.

Frost protection has not been a

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California Grape Grower

problem to Boeger, even though he is geared for that eventuality with overhead sprinklers. He said he only has had to use the sprinkler system one time since 1972 to guard against frost. The reason, he said, has been the fact that his vines are located in frost free areas — on ridge tops and near river canyons where air drainage serves to protect the vines.

The soil at the Boeger vineyard ranges from sandy to clay loam. It is porous and provides good drainage. It is rocky and is sprinkled with Live Oak, Digger Pine, Ponderosa Pine, toyon and poison oak.

Although rainfall figures for the area are high (ranging from 20 to 40 inches a year), Boeger's overhead sprinkler system is designed to give Boeger the option of frequent irrigations to hasten the growth of his young vines.

There have been problems to overcome, too. Boeger said he has had to install a deer fence around the entire perimeter of the property, keeping unwanted grape, pear, apple and plum nibblers at bay. Also, weeds have been a serious consideration, particularly in areas that once were orchards.

Boeger said he has used Roundup on three and four year old vines to control unwanted vegetation. Other areas have been subjected to frequent discings.

The Boeger winery was built in 1973, and the first crush was a year later. The winery consists of 6,000 square feet of space and currently has a 15,000-gallon cooperage area. Boeger thinks the winery will hold 40,000 gallons in cooperage when the operation is going full-bore.

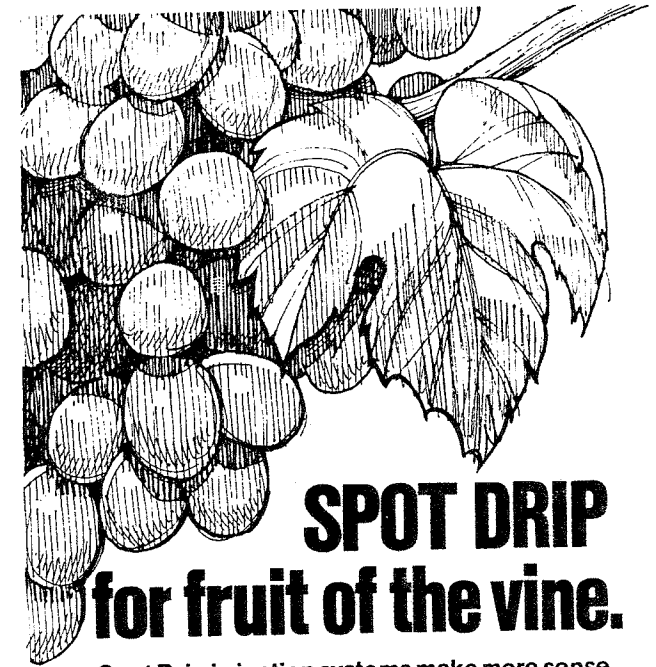
He has the familiar stainless steel tanks, American and French oak barrels and stainless steel water-jacketed fermenters.

Last season, the winery produced about 6,000 gallons of red and white wines. This year, Boeger expects to produce about 14,000 gallons. About 25 per cent of that effort will be aimed at Hangtown Red.

Originally, all the wines produced at the Boeger site were sold in the stone winery located at the base of the vineyard. The two-story structure was built in 1872 by the John Fossati family and is used today as a tasting room and visitor center.

What is Boeger's background? He used to do the state grape reporting statistics, and you know how that can drive you to drink — Hangtown Red, he hopes.

September 1977



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27

10 Head for the foothills!

by Richard P. Watson

Ever since Sutter Home staggered prestigious Napa by using Amador County grapes to produce an excellent Zinfandel some years ago, the popularity of wineries from the foothills has been increasing.

Small wineries producing for local consumption only have flourished there for decades, few labels ever getting west of Sacramento.

Slowly that is changing. Wines from Placerville and Plymouth are beginning to show up in peninsular and even Napa-Sonoma wine stores, and are beginning to appear in the Colorado, Chicago and New York markets.

Coming from vineyards between 1,000 and 3,500 feet, among beautifully rolling hills, this may well be a new appellation region to watch. It is not only Zinfandel — many other top line varieties are showing well.

In Placerville, Bigger Winery is the jewel. Long known for its Zinfandels, they are now producing Cabernet Sauvignon, Johannisberg Riesling and Chenin Blanc of high quality, as well as a Chardonnay I was not able to find. Their Hangtown Red, now vintage-dated, is good value always. Located slightly northeast of town, it is easy to find and pleasant to visit.

On the same road three miles to the east is Eldorado Vineyards. Intermixed with quality apple production, this one has a way to go before its wines even get to Sacramento. But such a setting!

Below town is Sierra Vista Winery which has recently released a fine Fumé Blanc. Hard to find; appointment essential.

A 30-minute drive down to Plymouth produces the other fine winery of the foothills region, Montevina. For a few years, known chiefly as a white Zinfandel producer (long before its popularity), they now produce *nouveaus* (both Cabernet and Zinfan-



Richard P. Watson

del), a small variety of whites (including a Mission grape wine of 15% alcohol, 12% sugar), some fine Cabernet Sauvignon and a gigantic Barbera (16%) in addition to the staple Zinfandel. This is a label to seek out, and it is rapidly attaining national distribution status.

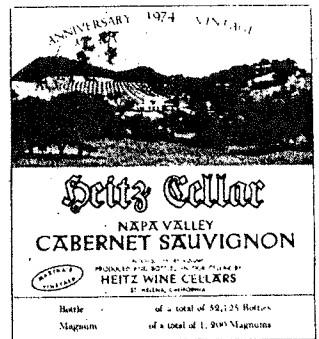
Close by in a winery apparently recovering from recent somnambulism is

Cosumnes River Vineyards. But don't look for them by that name for long; they plan to revert to an older label, Story Vineyard, to market their Zinfandels. There will soon be a nonvintage Zinfandel released chiefly from 1976 grapes that is excellent, and the 1977 is grand. Worth waiting for.

Above both is dependable D'Agostini, one of the oldest wineries in California. Distributed only in the state, they make a wide range of varieties and mostly generics. The estate bottled Zinfandel is best known, for good reason.

Two smaller wineries, Shenandoah Vineyards (Plymouth) and Argonaut Winery (Ione) are still local and especially hard to find. The latter has acquired a favorable local reaction to its Zinfandel; hopefully the former will improve on its recent Pinot Blanc release. If it doesn't, it will not get out of the Shenandoah Valley even to Sacramento.

The track record is there (in Zinfandel), the conditions seem right, elevation is excellent and the winemakers, many of them, seem to know what they are about. The scenery would alone justify the trip out east, but don't overlook the wines of this region next time skiing is bad.



Heitz having anniversary? He sez yes

by H. Parks Redwine II

Some of you may have already seen or heard of the latest release from Heitz Wine Cellars — the awaited 1974 Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. Better yet, some of you may have already tasted it.

For those of you who have done neither, you may be surprised by the wine's label. Don't look for the usual burgundy on buff colored label; instead look for a glossy color picture of the winery and surrounding area. The artist is listed as Richard Danskin.

The really intriguing feature, however, is not the change of label format, but the phrase "Anniversary 1974 Vintage" at the top of the new label. Anniversary of what? Certainly not Martha's Vineyard (wines or vineyard), and not of the building of the original winery.

I had to ask Joe Heitz, who said that it's the Heitz family way of celebrating the 10th anniversary of the family's outright ownership of the winery.

As for the wine within the bottles, according to a recent newsletter from Heitz Wine Cellars, the 1974 Martha's Vineyard "comes close to the peak" of perfection. Furthermore, it is the first newly released wine they've had to "significantly outscore not only the other fine wines... (compared) with it, but also... older vintages (of Heitz Cabernet Sauvignon wines)."

After 17 years, Heitz Wine Cellars is now a complete family operation. Besides Joe and his wife, Alice, there is son David (who is responsible for the 1974 vintage of Martha's Vineyard) and daughter Kathleen, now a full time Heitz Cellar staff member.

Italian wine sales gaining in America, stats declare

NEW YORK — Italy has captured 50.5% of all wines imported to the U.S. from throughout the world. The 12-month figures for 1978 reveal that Italy shipped 39,421,684 gallons of her red and white still table wines to the U.S., a gain of 35,237,954 gallons over her 1977 figures, according to Dr.

Lucio Caputo, Italian Trade Commissioner here.

With total wine brought to America from all countries at 78,020,159 gallons, Italy's share spills over the half-way point of 39,010,079 gallons by a good splash of 411,605 gallons.

Italy is approaching three times the exports of France and Germany. France trails Italy with 13,964,003 gallons, and Germany is still further back with 13,781,375 gallons. The fourth country in line is Portugal with 6,269,358 gallons.

Italy also leads in the shipment of sparkling wines, such as Asti Spumante, capturing 2,415,610 gallons, or 56.1% of the American import market in this category. France, long recognized as a leader in this area, shipped 1,600,334 gallons of Champagne and other sparkling wines here in 1978, or 37.2%, Caputo reports.

FINE WINE AUCTIONS

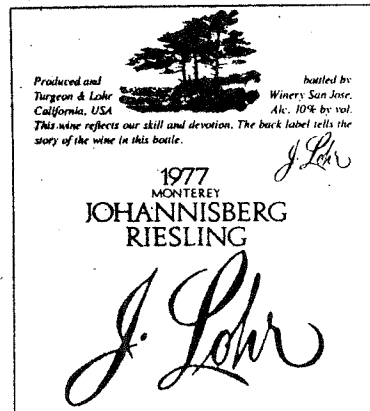
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Lombardo-Fossati house and winery about 1880

small holdings from Louis Bonissenet, Giovanni Perata and Thomas Ralph. He owned mining interests in the Smith's Flat mining district, one of the richest in the county.

John Lombardo's father was a career army officer and served in the Crimean war (1854-56). John had a private tutor in Italy and was quite well educated for the time, which proved to be truly an asset as people frequently came to him for advice. The ranch prospered and Lombardo furnished fruits and vegetables to hotels and grocers in the area. (The Ohio and Cary Houses were among his customers). He furnished sacramental wine to the catholic church for over 40 years and made a large variety of wines and brandies. The present distillery building was constructed about 1860.

John and his wife Candida

had one daughter, Sarah A. who married Nicola Fossati. Sarah remembered helping her parents to carry stones and build the house when she was six. She was born in 1866 so the house was built in about 1872. The winery is located in the same building, on the lower story. During the harvest, wagon loads of grapes were taken into the upper story and dumped into the crusher. John and Sarah had five children but one boy died in infancy. John A. was the eldest followed by the only girl, Angie, then Charles F. and Nicholas. At 16, John A. went to live with his grandparents who were getting old and needed his help. Later when John married Eleanor Ponaso he continued to work on the ranch. Five children were born: Esther, Elmo, Agnes, Peter and Jack. At one time John A. Fossati also had a winery in upper Placerville,

in the stone warehouse at the corner of Main and Broadway. The Heritage association would like to obtain copies of photos of this location and would appreciate hearing from residents who might have such pictures.

The ranch was willed to John A. upon the death of his mother and in turn, his son Elmo inherited the property upon the death of Eleanor Fossati, selling to the present owners in 1972. In this beautiful picture of the house and winery taken about 1880 it is interesting to note that someone, probably the photographer George D. Stewart of Sacramento, identifies it as "taken at Lombardo's Smithflat", although the ranch is now considered to be in

Placerville. John Lombardo is on the left, his daughter Sarah is next with her eldest son John A. in her arms. Candida Lombardo is next to her and others in the photograph have not been identified.

The portrait photo is of John Lombardo at about age 40 and the third picture, by Kathleen Todd of Placerville, shows the winery as it looks today. We appreciate the notes on the family history and the two photographs loaned by Elmo Fossati. It's fun to step back into the past once in awhile and those joining the Heritage and House Tour on Oct. 14 will have the privilege and pleasure of visiting this and many other places out of our illustrious gold rush past.

LOMBARDO-FOSSATI WINERY

By Jane Schlappi

The jointly-sponsored Heritage association-El Dorado county chamber of commerce fourth annual House and Heritage Tour will be held on Saturday Oct. 14. One of the points of interest will be the lovely old Lombardo-Fossati winery on Carson road, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Greg Boeger who have generously allowed the place to be on the tour since its beginning in 1975. The Boegers are carrying on the tradition of excellent wine and a hospitable welcome accorded visitors since its

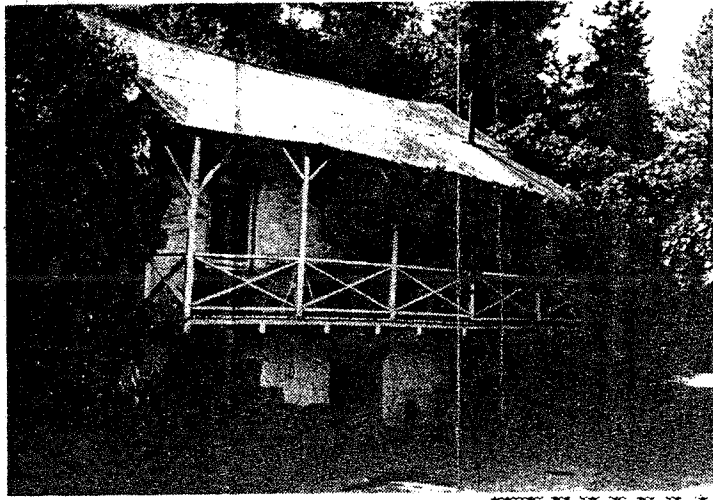
founding by G.N. Lombardo in the 1850's.

Giovanni Napoleon Lombardo was from Genoa, arriving in California in 1856 via Cape Horn at the age of 20. He toured the Calaveras Big Trees before going on to Placerville, having heard about the large stump of one of the trees which was used as a dance hall and the trunk of another which made a cabin for a family. (The Big Trees were being publicized in Europe almost as much as the gold fields after their discovery in about 1852). He

spent a week in San Andreas in a hotel built to accommodate tourists and went on to Placerville.

He realized by then that mining was not for him. At that time the Mountain Democrat was advising people the climate had been found especially well suited for fruits and vegetables. They were encouraging people to start raising them as there was such a great demand for fruits and vegetables for the miners and others in the area. According to family accounts, it was at this time that Lombardo homesteaded the ranch, planting vegetables, grapes and an orchard.

Early deeds and other official records show he added to his holdings by purchasing other parcels in the vicinity of "Dutch Mary Ravine" and the Carson Emigrant road, adjoining the home ranch. Lombardo bought the "French Garden" from Pierre Renaud in 1880, a parcel which had much earlier belonged to Buc Sauveur and Victor Boutilher. He also purchased



The winery today



John Lombardo

Foothill church

to meet at

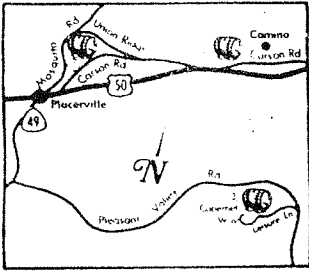
Rescue school

CAMERON PARK— The Foothill United Methodist church of Cameron Park will

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TEXT BY JIM ANDERSON, California Life Staff Writer • BEE PHOTOS BY ROBERT Q. JACOBS AND JIM ANDERSON

9



The Boeger Winery is located at 1709 Carson Road in Placerville. Take the Broadway ramp off Hwy. 50, go east on Broadway to Carson Road. Turn left over the freeway to the winery sign. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Phone: 622-8094. Eldorado Vineyards is in Camino. Take the Carson Road (Apple Hill) turnout in Camino and turn left. Phone: 644-3773. Sierra Vista Winery is located at the end of Leisure Lane off Pleasant Valley Road. Phone: 622-7721.

PLACERVILLE — It flourished and brought pleasure to the Gold Rush miners as they hunkered around their brush and mud lean-tos.

It flourished again during Prohibition in the 1920s and brought pleasure to the parched throats of the descendants of the miners — and others. And it's flourishing again today. And bringing pleasure.

El Dorado County's wine industry, the oldest yet newest premium wine producing region in California, just won't die. Agriculture first grew in El Dorado County during the Gold Rush to help supply the tens of thousands of miners swarming over the Sierra foothills. By 1855, 8,000 acres were under cultivation — 3,000 in vineyards. By 1898, vineyard acreage had increased to 4,300. A population decline around the turn of the century left many of these early vineyards abandoned.

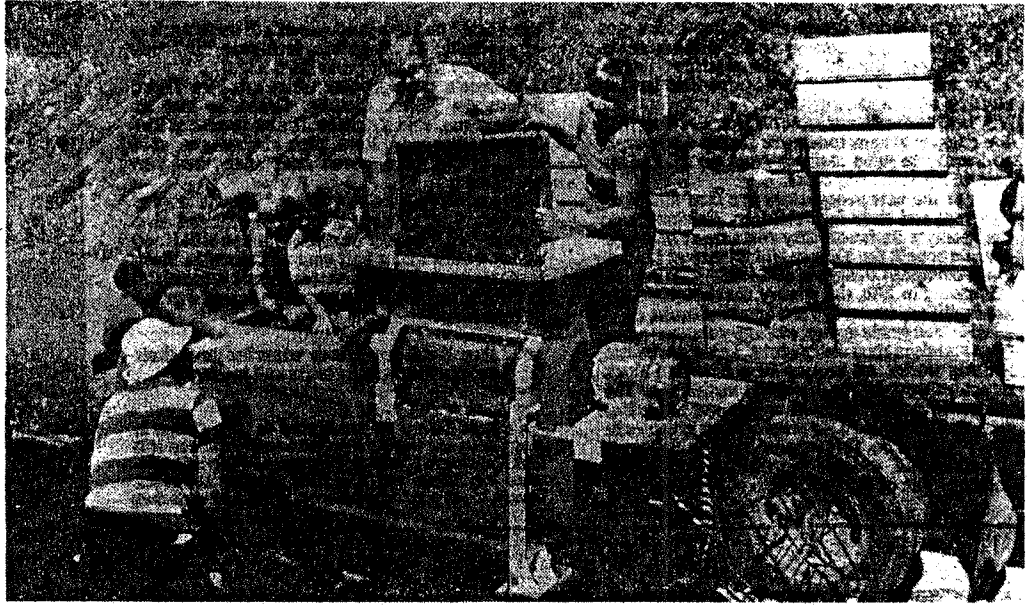
During Prohibition, the industry again sprang to life to supply thirsty home wine makers with grapes. Vineyard acreage peaked at about 5,000 acres, historical records show. The industry declined again with the repeal of Prohibition. By 1950 only a few "hobby" acres remained.

Then in the late 1950s wine started to grow in popularity. And that popularity has been growing ever since. Last year, Californians drank more than 89 million gallons of wine, 25 percent of all wine consumption in the United States.

And although miniscule compared to the giants of the Napa and San Joaquin Valleys, El Dorado's vineyard and wine industry is once again flourishing. There are 10 new vineyards in the county growing over 200 acres of grapes, mostly Zinfandel, Cabernet, Chenin Blanc, Reisling and Chardonnay. And there are three new wineries in the county — all small family operations — where eight years ago there were none.

This resurgence started in 1965 with several trial plantings. Grapes from these plantings continue to be evaluated by the enology department at the University of California at Davis.

Scores on our El Dorado County grapes are quite good," according to Greg Boeger, owner of the larger of the three wineries. "Our



The family that crushes together, stays together. Greg Boeger and his wife Sue place grapes in the crusher while sons, Alexis and Justin, "help." Grapes from the small El Dorado County vineyards are picked into small crates.



Sue and Greg Boeger sample wine on the balcony of their tasting room, a winery built in the 1870s. The "large" Boeger Winery produces 12,000 gallons of wine a year.



John and Barbara MacCready inspect the vineyard from which they will crush this year for the

first time. Last year the birds "harvested" all but three grapes.

climate," he says, "is better than Napa. We're higher and cooler and we don't have fog. The grapes always ripen well without mildew."

Boeger's Winery, located on Carson Road in Placerville, consists of 70 acres, 20 of which are in grapes, with the balance in pears, plums and some apples. And although all three El Dorado County wineries offer tasting, Boeger's is the only one with a tasting room.

The land Boeger owns was first homesteaded in 1857. In the 1870s it was the site of a winery and distillery. And it is the 100-year-old winery with its two-foot-thick stone walls that serves today as the tasting room.

Although Boeger has several employees helping with the harvesting and crushing, his is a family operation. On a typical day his two sons, Justin and Alexis, will be playing outside the tasting room while either Greg or his wife Sue are inside pouring wine for visitors.

Boeger bought his ranch in 1972 and since 1974 has done all his crushing

and bottling there. Production increased slowly the first couple of years until 1977 when he doubled his crush to 12,000 gallons.

About 50 percent of Boeger's wine is sold "directly out of the tasting room," he explains. The other half is sold by a broker to San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Boeger isn't entirely new to wine making. He was graduated from UCD with a major in agricultural economics and a minor in viticulture. And his grandfather, Anton Nichelini, opened a winery in St. Helena in 1883. Boeger has worked at the St. Helena winery with his cousin who still runs it today.

Eldorado Vineyards, owned by Mick and Jody McGuire, is located just a few miles up Carson Road in Apple Hill. McGuire, a former Placerville city manager, bought his ranch in 1974. "The previous owners had quite a roadside apple business going here when we bought the place," McGuire says.

The McGuires have planted seven

acres with Cabernet, Merlot and Chardonnay grapes, and this fall will plant Sauvignon Blanc and Napa Gamay.

"With the vineyard," McGuire says, "we hope to get up to where we're making between 10,000 and 15,000 gallons of wine a year. That's a nice family sized production, it seems to us. And our seven acres would take care of about two thirds of that."

"I'll always probably be a grape buyer. There's been a lot of Zinfandel grapes planted up here and they really do nicely. In fact Greg Boeger placed first with his Zinfandel in a wine tasting with 10 other wineries, including some in the Shenandoah Valley over in Amador County and some from the Napa Valley. So I figured I wouldn't plant Zinfandel because I'm sure they'll be available up here."

Right now McGuire's production is around 1,500 gallons a year. Three quarters of his wine sales are from his roadside apple stand, half of it during

Cont. on Page CL 6

Life

California's Oldest

Cont. from Page CL3

the fall apple season. The remaining quarter is wholesaled.

One surprising discovery McGuire has made is that his apple customers and his wine customers are quite different. "The apple buyers come in and they're interested in apples, forgot the wine. The wine customers come in for wine, forget the apples."

Sierra Vista Winery and Vineyards is the farthest out, geographically, of the three wineries. Owned by John and Barbara MacCready, the winery is located between Placerville and Somerset off Pleasant Valley Road. The MacCreadys bought their 86-acre ranch in 1972. They now have five acres planted in Cabernet Sauvignon.

"I've been making wine since 1967," MacCready explains. "I started with terry wine back in Ohio. Even then I wanted to have a vineyard and maybe a winery. So I tried about eight different varieties of the grapes available in Ohio and not a one of them turned

out a wine that was worth anything. So we started looking for a place in California, and here we are."

The MacCreadys got their winery license in 1977 and are crushing out of their vineyard for the first time this season. "Last year," Barbara explains, "the birds harvested all but three grapes from the vineyard."

This year the MacCreadys have an electric bird alarm that sounds off for about 20 seconds every two minutes. "An established vineyardist told us this always happens with your first crop," Barbara says. "Depending on your bird population, you have to produce as much as they'll eat plus as much as you want to crush."

So last year they bought grapes and crushed enough for 1,200 gallons. They hope to double that production this year. The five acres will be increased in size, MacCready explains, "but we want to get the winery going first. To try to do both at the same time would be very difficult. And the grapes are available from other El

Dorado County vineyards right now."

As befits the smallest of the three El Dorado County wineries, the MacCreadys' bottling operation is really a family affair. They put up one bottle at a time from a 50-gallon barrel. The MacCreadys' two young daughters help cork the bottles and Barbara applies the label. "It fits our operation very well," MacCready explains. "If I want to come home from my job in Sacramento and bottle a few cases after work I can. With this setup I'm not committed to hours of bottling."

The MacCreadys do offer wine tasting but, because they are "so far off the beaten path," they recommend calling first for an appointment.

So El Dorado County's wine industry is emerging for the third time. And growing. Boeger says he knows of at least two other wineries planned for the county soon; and "people are coming in all the time asking about operating vineyards and wineries."

John MacCready crushes at his Sierra Vista Winery. The smallest of the three El Dorado County wineries, their wine is "put up" one bottle at a time from a 50-gallon barrel.



The Vintners of El Dorado

GARDENING HOME IMPROVEMENT AND HOBBIES NEEDLES

R12

THE WINE CONNOISSEUR

Great wines from Gold Rush country



ROBERT LAWRENCE BALZER

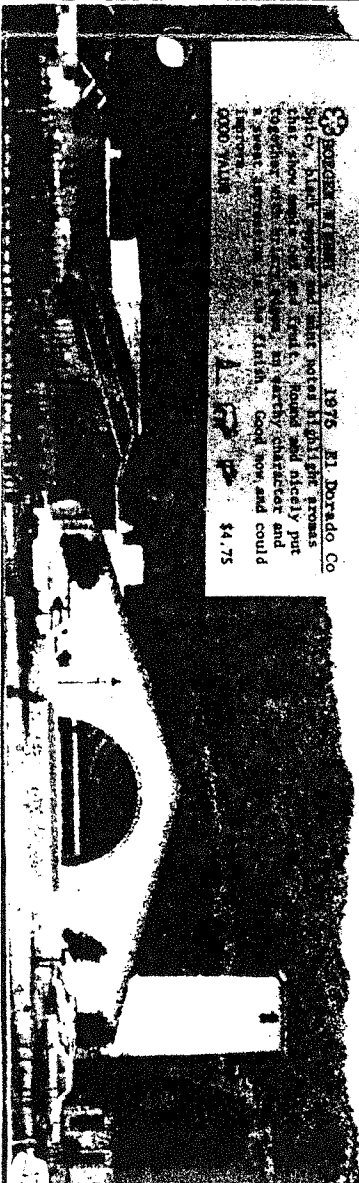
New wineries are springing up in California like mushrooms in a forest after a fire. Here are a dozen names which may be unfamiliar today but may have interesting significance tomorrow when scanning the bins of your wine merchant, or catching the shingle on the roadside when you're vacationing. In Napa, the Robert Keenan Winery, Cakebread Cellars, Vose Vineyards, Raymond Vineyard

& Cellars; in Sonoma County, Landmark, Clos du Bois, River Road Vineyards; in Monterey County, the Jekel Vineyard; and in the Paso Robles area, Estrella River Winery and Mastantuono Winery. No one can be expected to know them all, but to find its place in the sun, each will be tugging for attention and you may expect to hear more about some of these newcomers to the field.

Each has made more than a small investment. Gone are the days of the mom and pop winery when, with a few vines and a few barrels, you could be in the wine business. No more. Today, the arithmetic starts with five-figure sums, and before the first bottle arrives in the market, this capital-intensive endeavor is rounding out six-figure facts. For the visitor, it seems an idyllic life. For the realist involved in the day-to-day, season to season, year to year labor in field and cellar, those beautiful vineyard rows are no greener pasture. Unheralded and unannounced, we received recently two bottles of wine, a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Zinfandel, from a new winery with a completely unfamiliar name. We put them aside to see from their fledgling journey from their Placerville home in El Dorado County. After several days, when a wine-associated friend stopped by for lunch, we decided to pull the corks and give them a try. The Placerville

locale, re-emerging as a fine wine area, especially for Zinfandel, has been bringing some fame to this foothill gold-rush area, so our expectations were not without some hopes for fair wine. But the fragrance that rose from the glass of this Boeger 1977 El Dorado County Zinfandel (\$3.75) almost filled the room. It was as if a wine gentle with the most seductive ripe berry perfumes had been released from that bottle. It was several minutes before we even tasted the wine — it was almost enough just to inhale that wonderful Zinfandel fragrance. "Absolutely superb," my friend muttered as he put down the glass after his first sip. And he was right. I reached for the accompanying fact sheet about the wine. The grapes were grown, it said, in the Apple Hill district of El Dorado County at an elevation of 3,000 feet. Harvested at 26.3 Brix produced a bone dry wine with a 15.3 percent alcohol strength, but with a fresh raspberry character rather than any kind of prune or port taste nature which too often characterizes late-harvested Zinfandels. There were

750 cases produced. We don't need to tell you that the modest price makes this one of the best bargains around. If you find it, needless to say, take home by the case! The second wine, Boeger 1976 El Dorado County Cabernet Sauvignon (\$4.75), aged in small French oak barrels for two years, is equally drinkable right now, but there were only 200 cases produced. It drinks like a stylish French claret from one of the better classified vineyards. The wine is mellow, of fine ruby color, will hold with ever-increasing depth and complexity for the next four or five years, if you can keep away from it that long. The Boeger wines are available naturally, at the winery, a 45-minute drive from Sacramento, and select locations in the Los Angeles and San Francisco market, and a the Bell Wine Shop in Washington D.C. The winery address is 1701 Carson Rd., Placerville 95667. In our Wines & Vines directory we noticed that Greg Boeger was the winemaker at the 20-acre winery "Founded 1973." All that finesse: such a young winery? An early morning call the next day discov-



1976, El Dorado Co
 Cabernet Sauvignon
 4.75
 1977, El Dorado Co
 Zinfandel
 3.75

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CABERNET SAUVIGNON ANNUAL REVIEW

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WINE CONNOISSEURS' GUIDE to California Wine

this issue . . .

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 81

In this issue, we review 174 vintages dated and special lot Cabernet Sauvignons brought to market in the past year.

MERLOT 96

Merlot is fast outpacing its role as a blending grape for Cabernet. Tasting notes are provided on 34 varietally labeled wines.

THE OTHER GRAPES 96

We take a look at the other "Bordeaux" grapes, their importance in French blends and their possible future in California.

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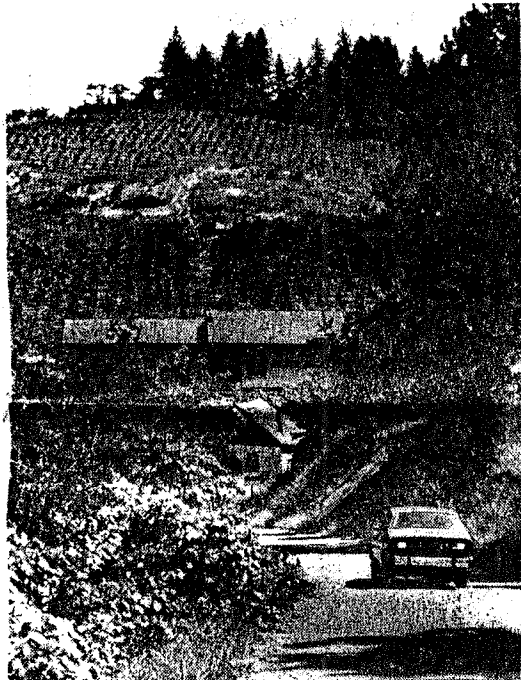
COMMENTARY 100

COVER PHOTO: The Cabernet Sauvignons produced at the Robert Mendocino Winery have been among California's best.

CLOSING DATE June 19, 1979

Tasting and research for this issue the current as of the closing date.

Volume 4 • Issue 5



On the way to Boeger Winery

Wineries take root in the hills

By John Berthelsen
McClatchy Newspapers Service

A trip to California's great wine valleys today may be more trouble than it's worth. The average visitor, when he can find gasoline for a drive to the Napa and Sonoma valleys, will face hordes of tourists run through wineries with machine-like precision by bored college students fed up to the teeth with explaining the difference between cabernet and zinfandel.

But there is a virtually unknown wine country in the Mother Lode. It is easy to take in the best wineries in a day, or stay for a weekend, spending the night in Jackson or Sutter Creek or Placerville or another Gold Rush town.

Vineyards stretch from Apple Hill above Placerville, across the foothills to the south and into the Shenandoah Valley, a lush area above Plymouth in Amador County where horses and cows graze in bell-deep grass and the roots of a major wine industry are beginning to spread over gently rolling hills. Wineries cover an even larger area, from Placerville to Columbia.

The Shenandoah Valley now supports three wineries, the best known being D'Agostini, a family operation that is one of the oldest continuously operating wineries in California. Two more wineries are scheduled to open this year.

You won't find moss-covered cool buildings or roccoco Rhenish castles where huge redwood casks give off that acrid, pungent smell often associated with wineries. Instead, there are converted garages and even wine aging under a hairdresser's shop.

But there are some absolutely stunning wines lying in casks in the foothills along Highway 49, many of them produced by relatively young vintners whose love for the grape changed their careers.

"I think (the valley) shows incredible potential to make wines of deep, fully rich quality," says Noel Engel, a Berkeley distributor who buys premium wines throughout California from small wineries to sell in New York and other areas.

"They are noted for big, gutsy wines with plenty of body and fruit, particularly the zinfandels. This is probably one of the finest areas in the world for zinfandels and sauvignon blanc. They have an incredible, deep fruity intensity that can't be matched anywhere else."

With some exceptions, the gold country industry is an infant. Throughout the entire foothills, according to El Dorado County Farm Advisor R. Howard Bethel, there are no more than 2,500 acres of grapes, compared to more than 100,000 acres of vineyards in the Napa Valley alone.

Wineries

Continued

Europe, Gott said. Montevina is easy to find, but like many others, Gott's operation is small. If you

On Steiner Road in the Shenandoah Valley is Shenandoah Vineyards, run by Leon Sobon and his family. Sobon was a Lockheed chemical engineer living in Los Altos when he got the urge to produce wine. He bought a 76-acre ranch, and his hilltop home offers a stunning view of the valley. He expanded the garage into a winery.

Sobon is producing a remarkable cabernet sauvignon, a wine with so much body it appears to be almost black, with a swirl of different tastes and scents. It hasn't been bottled yet. Sobon gives visitors a sample out of the keg and takes orders. It is almost sold out already.

Like many of the other wineries, Shenandoah has no formal tasting room. You're likely to swirl a glass in the Sobon living room. (Call 209-245-3698 for an appointment.)

The foothills winery with the most history is next up the road. There, Tulio D'Agostini presides over the tasting room of what may be the oldest winery in the West, founded in the 1850s by a Swiss named Adam Uhlinger.

The D'Agostini family took it over in 1911 and today produce 225,000 gallons of wine annually.

It smells, looks and feels right. Enormous redwood tanks march into the gloom inside the D'Agostini winery. (The winery, eight miles northeast of Plymouth on Shenandoah Road, is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Only groups need appointments; 209-24-6612.)

Engel's other favorite, Sierra Vista, is run by John and Barbara MacCready. It isn't that easy to find, but the wines are worth it; reds are deep in color and rich in taste.

The couple migrated to California from Ohio, where MacCready was a research engineer with a dream of making wine. Today, he works for the County of Sacramento while Barbara runs the vineyard and keeps the books.

It's a beginner's operation, in a garage next to the mobile home the couple moved to their property. MacCready selected the area because UC Davis oenologists indicated it was a prime wine grape region. (Sierra Vista is at the end of Leisure Lane off Pleasant Valley Road in Pleasant Valley; call 916-622-7221 for appointment.)

The next winery is Boeger, on Apple Hill above Placerville. Winemaking runs in the family of Greg and Susan Boeger. His mother is a member of the Nichellini winemaking family.

He went to the UC Davis viticultural school, considered the best in the world. The two moved to Placerville in 1972 and built a new winery on the site of one established in 1860 by a Genovese named John Lombardo.

Like the other wineries, Boeger is a pleasant place, run by friendly people whose interest in wine is personal and immediate. There's a tripwire laying on the road in front of the tasting room, like at a service station. When visitors arrive, a sign instructs them to jump on the wire to call the Goegers, who will drop by to arrange for a tasting. (No reservations are necessary; the winery is at 1709 Carson Road.)

There are many other wineries in the area, down as far as Columbia and Murphys, where Jim Riggs makes Chispa wine in the basement of his beauty shop.

If you're looking for a more complete list of wineries in the foothills and other areas of California, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to: The Wine Institute, 165 Post St., San Francisco, 94108. It publishes "California's Wine Wonderland," a tour guide with county-by-county maps and detailed road instructions.

(The writer is a member of The Sacramento Bee's capitol staff)

Nonetheless, 28 different wineries buy grapes from the foothill area, with about 80 percent zinfandels. But sauvignon blanc is also acquiring a reputation.

It's a good idea to call these wineries before motoring toward the mountains. If you don't, you're likely to find the vintner out on a tractor or working his fields. And there will be no one to pour your tasting sample.

But if you do call ahead, you will receive personalized service and a real appreciation of how wine is made and the love and sweat that go into it.

A recent tour, made at the height of the gas shortage (with no refueling problems), took tasters from Columbia in the south up Highway 49 to Placerville, during a two-day period.

Some of the wines were awful — spiced and spiked to appeal to skat



Mead on Wine

By Jerry D. Mead

Superb Wines From El Dorado

NEW WINERIES proliferate in California at about the same rate as new disco records, and have a seemingly similar success rate. 'Will it be a hit or a miss?' The popular musical question of the '50s seems perfectly suited to the many new labels that continue to appear in wine shops across the country.

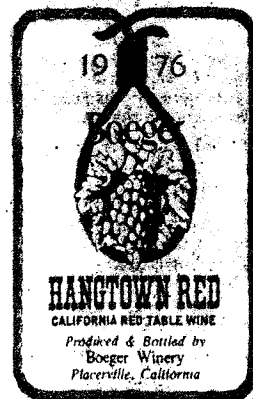
It is my job to try to keep up with new releases and new wineries, but the truth of the matter is that it just isn't possible.

I have a "grapevine," if you'll excuse the pun, that includes retailers, consumers, producers and even other wine journalists, and still I can't keep up with all the new wineries, much less all the new releases from long established producers.

Usually, when I taste a line of wines, I find one or two that are pretty special, several that are ordinary or average and a few that are either mediocre or miserable.

As a critic, I try to tell you about the best and the worst, ignoring the also-rans. It has always been my policy to tout readers on wines that I find exceptional, and warn them of wines that definitely should be avoided. Since I can't write about every wine I taste, the middle ground will have to take care of itself.

With that lengthy lead-in out of the way, I am about to tell you about the most exciting new line of wines I've tasted in a very long time. And I do mean the entire line (well, almost). Every wine I'm about to recommend is not only an



exceptional wine, it is an exceptional value.

BOEGER WINERY, in the Apple Hill district near Placerville, is exciting for more reasons than one. Not only are the wines generally superb, but they come from a new appellation, El Dorado County, that should eventually earn a reputation the equal of such names as Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, and Amador.

Operated by a husband and wife team, Greg and Susan Boeger, the winery's output is still small, about 6,000 gallons, but plans are already under way for expansion. Next year, they hope to produce 10,000 gallons, and they have both unplanted vineyard land and a winery building suited to enlarging.

Greg is a U.C. Davis graduate, and the winemaking chores are his



Greg and Susan Boeger, outside the historic stone building where, in the lower level, they offer tastings of their wines.

Susan heads the marketing effort for the winery. Greg, it seems, has winemaking in his blood, being the grandson of Anton Nichelini, founder of the Nichelini Winery in Napa County in the 19th century.

I wrote, in a previous column, of the 1977 Boeger Zinfandel, a delightful red wine possessed of that rare combination of fruit-berry Zinfandel character in tandem with the more complex flavors usually found in claret styles. It's an unbelievable buy at under \$4 the bottle.

The Boeger wine that most impresses me, though, is 1978 "El Dorado County" Sauvignon Blanc. Blended to 20 percent Semillon, and aged in oak cooperage, it is definitely not a light, fruity Fume style. Relatively austere, but not lacking in fruit, words like smokey, flinty, crisp and dry, come to mind. Two dozen oysters, please, and another bottle of this wine. Another bargain, this one priced in the \$5 range.

Boeger Chardonnay, you'll be pleased to hear, sells for about \$6, half

'The Boeger wines carry a new appellation, El Dorado County, that should eventually earn a reputation the equal of such names as Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino and Amador.'

the price of many of its peers. Fermented totally dry in small oak cooperage, and shows it! A lean, crisp, but very varietal wine, the finish is long with plenty of oak coming through. Gets even better when aerated for about 30 minutes, assuming you can wait that long.

THERE IS LITTLE POINT in discussing the 1976 Cabernet Sauvignon, as I understand it's already a sell-out. For future reference, though, the wine is very drinkable in its youth, sort of a St. Emilion of California. Watch for the 1977 to be released.

One of the best values of all is a proprietarily named red wine, a blend of a half dozen different red wine grapes. "Hangtown Red" sells for \$2.75, and is a blend of Carignane, Mataro, Petite Sirah, Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon and Ruby Cabernet. The Italian and Rhone varieties seem to predominate, and the wine comes off as a sort-of youthful, very drinkable Petite Sirah with a touch of spice and lots of fruit. Hard to beat as a daily accompaniment to pasta or burgers.

Why they call the generic white Chablis instead of "Hangtown White," I'll never figure out, but the under \$3 price tag combined with the blend that features Chenin Blanc, Grey Riesling, French Colombard and Semillon, makes for another outstanding value. Fruit aroma jumps out of the glass; there is more fruit in the flavor; pleasantly dry finish. It is the Semillon, I suspect, that caused my fellow tasters to imagine Chardonnay in the blend.

Boeger 1978 Chenin Blanc is one of the best in the state, but readers should be forewarned that it is not typical of what usually appears under that name. The touch of sweetness that is so common to the state's Chenin Blanc will not be found here. Fermented bone dry and aged for two months in new oak, this is more a poor man's Chardonnay than an afternoon sipper. If the price of Chardonnay has you unhappy, buy this wine by the case. Suggested retail is \$3.50.

AS AN OBSERVATION, not a complaint, really, the Chenin Blanc would be more appropriately packaged in a Burgundy bottle than in the tall Hock bottle in which it actually appears. The Hock shape promises sweetness that isn't there.

The only wine in the Boeger line with which I found fault was the 1978 Johannisberg Riesling. While the wine is sound and well made, it is finished totally dry and rather high in alcohol. As a result, there is a touch of bitterness to the finish, a common fault of Rieslings when finished dry, at least in California. Hopefully, the 1979 vintage will find the wine with a percent or two of residual sugar, and an equal drop in alcohol.

Sales of Boeger wines are currently restricted primarily to California, and mostly at the best specialty wine shops. That should change, with distribution expanding, possibly as early as spring 1980.

Those having trouble finding Boeger wines may write for information directly to the winery at: 1709 Carson Road, Placerville, Calif., 95667.

Via The Grapevine: New Wines

FIRST AGAIN — More than once, readers of this column have been notified of new premium wineries entering the market, allowing them to get on mailing lists for new releases. On several occasions it has provided rare opportunity to acquire very special wines.

Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyards and Long Vineyards, for example, were first written about here and both now have waiting lists a mile long. Finding a bottle of either of these at a retail outlet is virtually impossible. There simply isn't enough to go



Mead on Wine

By Jerry D. Mead

grapes to such premium producers as David Bruce, Ridge and Hoffman Mountain Ranch.

They grow only Zinfandel and Merlot, and current plans call for the

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS
DENVER, COLORADO

with a fresh raspberry character rather than any kind of prune or port taste nature which too often characterizes late-harvested Zinfandels.

There were 750 cases produced. We don't need to tell you that the modest price makes this one of the best bargains around. If you find it, needless to say, take it home by the case!

THE SECOND WINE, Boeger 1976 by El Dorado County Cabernet Sauvignon (\$4.75), aged in small French oak barrels for

The wine connoisseur

By Robert Lawrence Balzer

two years, is equally drinkable right now, but there were only 200 cases produced.

It drinks like a stylish French claret from one of the better classified vineyards. The wine is mellow, of fine ruby color, will hold with ever-increasing depth and complexity for the next four or five years, if you can keep away from it that long.

The Boeger wines are available, naturally, at the winery, a 45-minute drive from Sacramento, and in select locations in the Los Angeles and San Francisco market, and at the Bell Wine Shop in Washington, D.C. The winery address is 1709 Carson Road, Placerville, Calif. 95667. Telephone: (916) 622-8094.

In our Wines & Vines directory, we noticed that Greg Boeger was the winemaker at the 20-acre winery "Founded 1973." All that finesse in such a young winery?

An early morning call the next day discovered this to be no "beginner's luck." Greg Boeger's mother was Inez Nichelini of the famous Napa Valley wine family whose involvement in wine-making dates back to the 1890s.

Greg, 36, graduated in viticulture and enology from University of California at Davis. As we often say, "The time to take tarts is when they are passing!"

It's a privilege to be able to share such good news about good wines with you.

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to: Farview Farm Vineyard, Rt. 1, Box 40, Paso Robles, Calif. 93446.

IS CONSERVATION DEAD? I really enjoyed that period of time during California's recent drought when restaurants were conserving water by serving it only on request. No drippy, sweating glasses making little pools on the table, no chlorine smell wafting up to distract from food and wine, and I could feel good about doing my bit for conservation.

With all the talk about saving energy, I can't understand why restaurants have gone back to the automatic service of water. Not only are tons of water wasted, but unimaginable amounts of energy is wasted washing unused glasses. Not to speak of the energy involved in freezing the ice that most glasses contain, or the energy used to pump the water. It goes on and on.

Besides, from a practical viewpoint (the restaurant's), they would probably sell more wine, mineral water and other beverages, if they didn't provide water as a matter of course.

CAUTION — My next campaign may be to have warning labels placed on all water glasses, faucets, etc. Since FDA and ATF and a dozen other government agencies want to place warning labels on everything from wine to artificial sweeteners, the following seems only fair. Warning: Water can be dangerous to your health; people have been known to drown in the stuff. Anything that can rust metal can't be good for you. Can it?

ANOTHER RESTAURANT PROBLEM — A pax on the man that invents "instant potatoes." Is there anyone else out there who can do it better?

BEST BUY TIP — Just got the opportunity to taste the entire line of Boeger wines from El Dorado County. Each and every one, with the possible exception of the Gamay, Riesling, and Pinot, makes a statement about the potential of El Dorado County as a viticultural area. I'll do a full report in a future column, but in the meantime, feel free to buy anything bearing a Boeger label.

name at least a dozen times, and other reviewers had agreed that the name was the publication's single weakness.

"The San Diego Grapevine" began publication as a local kind of thing, not only reporting wine news and evaluating wines, but listing local merchants that carried the various wines mentioned. They soon dropped the merchant reports and outgrew the "home town" image, but never changed the name. Prospective subscribers avoided the newsletter because the San Diego name still said "local."

The new name is "California Grapevine," and even that is not totally descriptive, because the publication reviews all the wines of the world, even though there is heavy emphasis on the California product.

Published six times a year, each issue examines several wine types in depth, plus evaluations of numerous new releases, and list of "currently available" recommendations of each of the major varieties.

Sample copies are available to "Mead on Wine" readers by sending \$2 to: California Grapevine, P.O. Box 22152, San Diego 92122.

DID YOU KNOW? — According to the Distilled Spirits Council, better than 50 percent of the price of every bottle of spirits goes to taxes and fees. As a given example, a bottle selling for \$5.75 would contribute \$2.95 to taxes and fees, while the balance of \$2.80 would represent cost of product and profit at all levels of distribution. Now you know why that favorite licensed beverage is so expensive.

BLUSH — Mill Creek Vineyards first released a wine called "Cabernet Blush" three years ago, and filed for trademark rights to the name shortly thereafter. This unique name for their pleasant rose wine made from Cabernet Sauvignon grapes was suggested by this writer.

Now it seems, two other wineries like the name, too, and one of them, Ventana Vineyards, already has a Cabernet Blush on the market.

Mill Creek's attorney has notified Ventana's attorney of the trademark infringement. These things do happen, but this situation has caused more than its share of "blushing." Both winery's attorneys are members of the same San Francisco law firm.

WINERY INVITATION — Should you happen to be visiting the great Northwest during the next couple of weeks, keep in mind that tiny Hinzlerling Vineyards will be open to visitors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. between Sept. 22 and 30. Harvest will be in full swing, and several limited quantities

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Mom 'n' pop wineries gone

New wineries tugging for attention

NEW WINERIES ARE SPRINGING UP in California like mushrooms in a forest after a rain!

Here are a dozen names which may be unfamiliar today but may have interesting significance tomorrow, when scanning the bins of your wine merchant, or catching the shingle on the roadside when you're vacationing.

In Napa, the Robert Keenan Winery, Cakebread Cellars, Vose Vineyards, Raymond Vineyard & Cellars; in Sonoma County, Landmark, Clos du Bois, River Road Vineyards; in Monterey County, the Jekel Vineyard, and in the Paso Robles area, Estrella River Winery and Mastantuono Winery.

No one can be expected to know them all, but to find its place in the sun, each will be tugging for attention and you may expect to hear more about some of these newcomers to the field.

EACH HAS MADE MORE than a small investment. Gone are the days of the mom-and-pop winery, when, with a few vines and a few barrels, you could be in the wine business. No more. Today, the arithmetic starts with five-figure sums, and before the first bottle arrives in the market, this capital-intensive endeavor is rounding out six-figure facts.

For the visitor, it seems an idyllic life. For the realist involved in the day to day, season to season, year to year labors in field and cellar, those beautiful vineyard rows are no greener pasture.

Unheralded and unannounced, we received recently two bottles of wine, a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Zinfandel, from a new winery with a completely unfamiliar name.

We put them aside to rest from their jiggling journey from their Placerville home in El Dorado County.

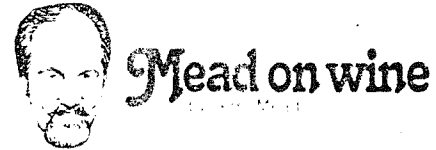
After several days, when a wine-associated friend stopped by for lunch, we decided to pull the corks and give them a try. The Placerville locale, re-emerging as a fine wine area, especially for Zinfandel, has been bringing some fame to this foothill gold rush area, so our expectations were not without some hopes for fair wine.

BUT THE FRAGRANCE that rose from the glass of this Boeger 1977 El Dorado County Zinfandel (\$3.75) almost filled the room. It was as if a wine genie with the most seductive ripe berry perfume had been released from that bottle.

It was several minutes before we even tasted the wine, it was almost enough just to inhale that wonderful Zinfandel fragrance.

"Absolutely superb!" my friend muttered as he put down the glass after his first sip. And he was right.

I reached for the accompanying fact sheet about the wine. The grapes were grown, it said, in the Apple Hill district of El Dorado County at an elevation of 3,000 feet. Harvested at 26.3 Brix produced a bone dry wine with a 15.3 percent alcohol strength, but



What cheer — new winery opens to praise

BEST BUY WINERY — New wineries proliferate in California at about the same rate as new disco records, and have a seemingly similar success rate. "Will it be a hit or a miss?", the popular musical question of the fifties, seems perfectly suited to the many new labels that continue to appear in wine shops across the country.

It is my job to try to keep up with new releases and new wineries, but the truth of the matter is that it just isn't possible.

I have a "grapevine," if you'll excuse the term, that includes retailers, consumers, producers and even other wine journalists, and still I can't keep up with all the new wineries, much less all the new releases from long established producers.

Usually, when I taste a new line of wines, I find one or two that are pretty special, several that are ordinary or average, and a few that are either mediocre or miserable.

As a critic, I try to tell you about the best and the worst, ignoring the also-rans. It has always been my policy to tout readers on wines that I find exceptional, and warn them of wines that should definitely be avoided. Since I can't write about every wine I taste, the middle ground will have to take care of itself.

With that lengthy lead-in out of the way, I am about to tell you about the most exciting new line of wines I've tasted in a very long time. And I do mean the entire line (well, almost). Every wine I'm about to recommend is not only an exceptional wine, it is an exceptional value.

BOEGER WINERY, in the Apple Hill district near Placerville, is exciting for more reasons than one. Not only are the wines generally superb, but they come from a new appellation, El Dorado County, that should eventually earn a reputation the equal of such names as Napa, Sono-

ma, Mendocino, and Amador.

Operated by a husband and wife team, Greg and Susan Boeger, the winery's output is still small, about 6,000 gallons, but plans are already under way for expansion. Next year, they hope to produce 10,000 gallons, and they have both unplanted vineyard land and a winery building suited to enlarging.

Boeger is a U.C. Davis graduate, and the winemaking chores are his. His wife heads up the marketing effort for the winery. Boeger, it seems, has winemaking in his blood, being the grandson of Anton Nichelini, founder of the Nichelini Winery in Napa County in the 19th century.

I wrote, in a previous column, of the 1977 Boeger zinfandel, a delightful red wine possessed of that rare combination of fruit-berry zinfandel character in tandem with the more complex flavors usually found in claret styles. It's an unbelievable buy at under \$4 the bottle.

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BEST BUY WINERY
Wines from the Boeger Winery may not have reached your local wine shop as yet, and in fact it may be a while before they do. I'm telling you about this small premium producer, anyway, and for several reasons.

One is that I am totally impressed with almost the entire line of wines, especially the small producer's Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Zinfandel, and a generic called "Hangtown Red." Every wine is bargain priced for its premium quality.

Another reason is that Boeger wines come from a relatively new growing region, El Dorado County, an area in the Sierra foothills, what used to be Gold Rush country. Other wineries are starting up there, and you can look to hear a great deal about El Dorado County in coming years.

And finally, in 1980 sales will be up 10 percent from 1979. In other words, the market should mean increased distribution. You'd want to be among the first to try the wines when they become available.

The Boeger wine that most impresses me, though, is 1978 "El Dorado County" sauvignon blanc. Blended to 20 percent semillon, and aged in oak cooperage, it is definitely not a light, fruity fume style. Relatively austere, but not lacking in fruit, words like smokey, flinty, crisp and dry, come to mind. Two dozen oysters, please and another bottle of this wine. Another bargain, this one priced in the \$5 range.

Boeger chardonnay, you'll be pleased to hear, sells for about \$6, half the price of many of its peers. Fermented totally dry in small oak cooperage, and shows it! A lean, crisp, but very varietal wine, the finish is long with plenty of oak coming through. Gets even better when aerated for about 30 minutes, assuming you can wait that long.

There is little point to discussing the 1976 cabernet sauvignon, as I understand it's already a sell-out. For future reference, though, the

wine is very drinkable in its youth, sort of a St. Emilion of California. Watch for the 1977 to be released.

One of the best values of all is a proprietarily named red wine, a blend of a half dozen different red wine grapes. "Hangtown Red" sells for \$2.75, and is a blend of carignane, mataro, petite sirah, barbera, cabernet sauvignon and ruby cabernet. The Italian and Rhone varieties seem to predominate, and the wine comes off as a sort-of youthful, very drinkable petite sirah with a touch of spice and lots of fruit. Hard to beat as a daily accompaniment to pasta or burgers.

Why they call the generic white chablis instead of "Hangtown White," I'll never figure out, but the under-\$3 price tag combined with the blend that features chenin blanc, grey riesling, French colombar and semillon, makes for another outstanding value. Fruit aroma jumps out of the glass; there is more fruit in the flavor; pleasantly dry finish. It is the semillon, I suspect, that caused my fellow tasters to imagine chardonnay in the blend.

Boeger 1978 Chenin Blanc is the best the state, but readers should be forewarned that it is not typical of what usually appears under that name. The touch of sweetness that is so common to the state's chenin blancs will not be found here. Fermented bone dry and aged for two months in new oak, this is more a poor man's chardonnay than an af-

ternoon sipper. If the price of chardonnay has you unhappy, buy the wine by the case. Suggested retail \$3.50.

As an observation, not a complaint, really, the chenin blanc will be more appropriately packaged in a burgundy bottle than in the tall hock bottle in which it actually appears. The hock shape promises sweetness that isn't there.

The only wine in the Boeger line with which I found fault was the 1977 Johannisberg riesling. While the wine is sound and well made, it is finished totally dry and rather high in alcohol. As a result, there is a touch of bitterness to the finish, a common fault of rieslings when finished dry, at least in California. Hopefully, the 1979 vintage will find the wine with a percent or two of residual sugar, and an equal drop in alcohol.

Sales of Boeger wines are currently restricted primarily to California, and mostly at the best specialty wine shops. That should change, with distribution expanding, possibly as early as spring 1980.

Those having trouble finding Boeger wines may write for information directly to the winery at: 1709 Carson Rd., Placerville, Calif., 95667.

only the first forbidden fruit

THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

New brand truly shows promise

By Jack Matchette

A man named Marshall discovered gold in the Sierra Foothills in 1849. As much as he would have liked to have kept the discovery a secret, he was soon joined by thousands hoping to make their fortune in life from what came to be known as the Mother Lode.

This area of fast-made fortunes was in the foothills east of Sacramento. Towns like Amador City, Fiddlers Green, Placerville and Auburn soon were swollen with prospectors. Before the Gold Rush, they were small sleepy towns nestled in the first hills that led to the High Sierras. The valleys and ridges twisted and turned, some rising sharply, others offering small areas of gentle slopes.

After the lucky few departed with their gold, many were left with the grim task of once again having to work for a living. Because most of the prospectors were farmers, they turned to the land and one of the best crops was grapes, along with other fruits such as apples and pears.

In 1860 El Dorado County, east of Sacramento, had more vineyards than Sonoma or Napa, and by 1890 more than 100 wineries were operating in the four counties that made up the Mother Lode. Prohibition brought an end to the foothill wineries, and grape growing moved to the better regions that produced higher yields and had terrain that was easier to work.

As the wine business picked up in the late 1920s, the large producers needed more land. Napa and Sonoma ground was becoming scarce and very expensive. But, the big corporations were not interested in the Sierra Foothills because the land was too rugged for large, open vineyards.

However, the University of California at Davis did extensive testing and found the red volcanic soil and foothill climate ideal for growing Zinfandel. The alcohol levels were higher, and the fruit intensely greater than grapes grown in any other region.

By the mid-1970s, El Dorado County had only 174 acres of vineyards, and it was only in the last couple of years that enough wine was released to test the quality. One which has come through with flying colors is the Boeger winery in Placerville, about 45 miles east of Sacramento.

Owned by a small operation run by Greg and Susan Boeger, a married couple in their mid-30s, Greg is trained in viticulture and enology and does the wine making. Susan takes care of the business end.

In 1972, they were looking for a winery location. El Dorado County with its lower prices and smaller areas appealed to the Boegers, and they purchased a pear ranch, which had been a winery at the turn of the century. They continued farming pears for the income, and planted 10 acres of



Tom Dolphens/Staff

foods are made for experiments in cooking

MY KITCHEN

While fried bread may sound like a party. One of the best ways to prepare it is by rolling refrigerated bread dough in flour and frying it in a little hot oil and sprinkling them with fresh sweet basil. And English Mince on wine sauce have an unusual and delicious combination. For dinner, that's neither difficult to prepare or to serve," she said. Pointing out that curry is just a blend of spices, such as cayenne, cumin, ginger and cinnamon, Mrs. Ba-

she says, the list of other curries and rice that she likes to make.

Curry, she says, doesn't have to be complicated. It can be made in a matter of minutes. She says she always checks with Mrs. Baeger's recipe. Most people are pretty adventurous, they usually say they'll try anything once. "The main thing don't stop at Indian meals. They also like to prepare and serve Chinese meals, Mexican foods and German dinners. Mexican dinners are often the most

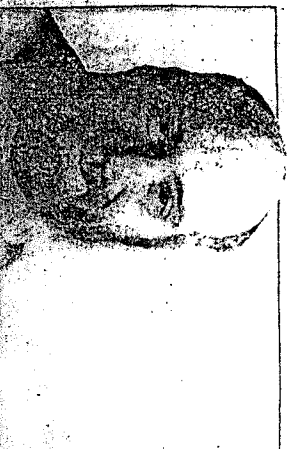
interesting, so they save these for times when just a few friends are coming over. Green enchiladas are an exception. They can be prepared in a matter of minutes in the day or the day

and then just before serving. The Boegers, who have lived in Johnson County for 10 years, have enjoyed remodeling and refurbishing the English Tudor home they bought in Westwood eight years ago. They closed in the screened porch to make a reading and plant room, and they gutted and remodeled the kitchen several years ago.

The kitchen, which is small but efficient, features walls of oak-stained oak and authentic Mexican tiles that make it an inviting place to eat or just

SEE COOKING, Page C-2, Col. 1
SEE VINEYARD, Page C-4, Col. 1

Harvey Steiman/on Wine



Cabernet marathon

It was a marathon of sorts, but not the kind of marathon you would expect. It was a marathon of wine, and only two hours to sample the wines, promising of being "an hour and a half" or so. There was no way to taste them all, and the only way of knowing what you were missing was to sample a few. Steve had two of the Cabernet Sauvignon prizes, the highest collection of Cabernet's ever assembled on one place for public tasting. I checked to sample it, of 1977, for red wine. Steve had two of the Cabernet Sauvignon prizes, the highest collection of Cabernet's ever assembled on one place for public tasting. I checked to sample it, of 1977, for red wine. Steve had two of the Cabernet Sauvignon prizes, the highest collection of Cabernet's ever assembled on one place for public tasting. I checked to sample it, of 1977, for red wine.

The Cabernet comes from Carlsberg region, some 15 miles south of Sacramento on the river. In 1977, the Cabernet Sauvignon was the state's second best. This is a full bodied wine, soft and drinkable and with an intense advantage. The Cabernet comes from Carlsberg region, some 15 miles south of Sacramento on the river. In 1977, the Cabernet Sauvignon was the state's second best. This is a full bodied wine, soft and drinkable and with an intense advantage.

The Cioe du Merle is made from grapes produced in a 45 year-old vineyard of the different grape varieties on a hillside overlooking the Russian River in Sonoma County. All the varieties are harvested together. This produces an automatic blend with a unique aroma and flavor. The style is rich and mouthfilling. The winery is in South San Francisco. Not surprisingly, the best Cabernet came from familiar wineries, although several of the new wineries offered respectable alternatives. The Robert Mondavi 1975 Reserve Cabernet was the best. At \$24, however, it is not that much better than the other fine Cabernets at roughly one-fourth to one-third the price, such as the Bergeret 1977. Ralph's Valley (Sonoma County) is a wine of depth showing the maturity of a vineyard planted in the early 1800s, before the big spurt of planting in 1930-70. It has appealing fruit, characterful rather than baroque. At \$7.50 it offers a price-value ratio.



Mead on Wine

by Jerry D. Mead

Lost But Not Least

THIS IS THE last in a series of columns detailing winners from the Orange County Fair Commercial Wine Competition, the annual judging of wine made by professional winemakers. The competition is a major event in the wine world, and the winners are highly respected. The competition is a major event in the wine world, and the winners are highly respected.

Several prizes are of top quality. The gold medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery. The silver medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery. The bronze medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery. The gold medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery.

All the Sauvignon (white) wines were judged by a single panel. The silver medal prize is a 1977 Sauvignon Blanc from the Bergeret winery. The bronze medal prize is a 1977 Sauvignon Blanc from the Bergeret winery. The gold medal prize is a 1977 Sauvignon Blanc from the Bergeret winery.

The second gold medal went to Franciscan 1979 "California" Pinot Blanc, and in this case the California experts had really means "Tennessee" as the back label will tell you. When wine maker Justin Meyer was asked to guess which of his many wines won a gold medal, he said, "I don't know."



Mead on Wine

by Jerry D. Mead

Orange County Credibility

IN OUR YEARS THE Orange County Fair Commercial Wine Competition has become one of the most highly respected judging events. More California wine producers are participating in the competition than in any other wine competition. The high credibility factor has been established by a number of years.

All judges are professional, and winners are of top quality. The gold medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery. The silver medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery. The bronze medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery.

Without attempt is made to enter every commercial wine from the category, some of the best are included. The gold medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery. The silver medal prize is a 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bergeret winery.

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Boeger and Sierra Vista Wineries win awards

Two El Dorado County wineries have received medals in the 1980 Orange County Fair commercial wine competition. Boeger Winery, run by Greg and Susan Boeger, were notified by Jerry

Mead, syndicated wine columnist and chairman of the panel of judges of the competition, that they had

won a gold medal for their 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon out of a field of 50 entries, and a bronze medal for their 1978 Zinfandel.

John and Barbara MacCready of Sierra Vista Winery, Pleasant Valley, received the same kind of notification—although a bit delayed. When they should have received word of their gold medal for their 1978 Zinfandel they were still in Orange County and didn't receive word for a couple of days until they had answered phone messages.

The Orange County Fair is one of the most important competitions for California wineries, with the results of the judging expected to be published in virtually all of the wine newsletters in the country, according to Boeger.

The awards received by Boeger and Sierra Vista wineries will bring national recognition to El Dorado County as a premium grape-growing region, a goal the local grapegrowers have been striving for, Boeger said.

There are approximately 200 acres of producing vineyards in El Dorado County today, and 10 to 12 new growers have added another 100 acres this year, according to Dick Bethel, County Farm Advisor.

The Boegers settled in Placerville in 1972, planted vineyards, and built their winery which will be producing 10,000 cases of wine per year by 1981. They

crushed the equivalent of 7,000 cases last year.

"We are so proud that we're getting recognition for El Dorado County as a premium wine growing region," said Boeger.

The MacCready's were "delighted to win the gold medal for our 1978 Zinfandel because this is just our second crush."

Sierra Vista began producing wine in 1977 and is a small winery in Pleasant Valley. John said most of the grapes used for his prize winning Zinfandel were grown in the Herbert Vineyards in Somerset.

Sierra Vista produces 2,500 cases per year and will continue at the same level until a permanent winery is built. "I feel we have more control over our wine by remaining small," said MacCready.

The wines from Sierra Vista almost didn't make to the fair for judging. The first shipment was returned to the MacCready's just prior to deadline all smashed. They rushed off a new shipment and it arrived just under the deadline.

"I want to produce a wine that is considered a premium wine and I'm looking for the best wines for the area," MacCready said. "We're considering cabernet, sauvignon blanc and sirah. We have a one-acre test plot of sirah which should do very well up here." The sirah is a Burgandy France type grape.

MacCready is president of the El Dorado Wine Grape Growers this year. "One of the things we're trying to do this year is establish a pest and cultural area," said MacCready. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for a vita management program and to get recognition from the



GREG AND SUSAN BOEGER sample their Cabernet Sauvignon wine in their 1872 historic wine cellar.



JOHN AND BARBARA MAC CREADY of Sierra Vista Winery stand in one of their vineyards in Pleasant Valley. Democrat photo

At Amador County Fair

El Dorado County wines win awards

By HAL SILLIMAN
Staff writer

The prize cup ranneth over for El Dorado County wines and grapes at the Amador County Fair wine judging last week, keeping flowing the recent recognition of the county's vineyard products.

Two wineries, Boeger and Sierra Vista, and one vineyard, Madrona,

had wines which were highly acclaimed by panels of "prestigious" judges who sipped and sniffed the various vintages on display at the county fair. The judging and wine tasting were part of Amador County's salute to "Gold and Wines," this year's fair theme.

The contest attracted 21 wineries from the Mother Lode, including

Amador, El Dorado and Calaveras counties. This was the first year that the Amador County Fair sponsored such an event.

Sierra Vista, already honored this summer when its 1978 Zinfandel took a gold at the Orange County Fair, received the only gold award given for white zinfandels with its 1979 Zinfandel Blanc.

"The judges felt it was much better than all the other white zinfandels so they only gave one gold award," said Barbara MacCready, who with her husband, John owns and operates Sierra Vista Winery.

MacCready attributes the "fruity" characteristic of El Dorado County zinfandel grapes for the reason the gold award was given by the eight judges.

A different set of judges scrutinized each variety of wine. The judges handling the white zinfandels were a "prestigious panel," MacCready said, and included author Leon Adams, known as the "Father of California Wines," and other wine writers.

The MacCready's winery and vineyards, located in Pleasant Valley was also honored with a silver award for its 1978 Late Harvest Zinfandel.

Sierra Vista began producing wine

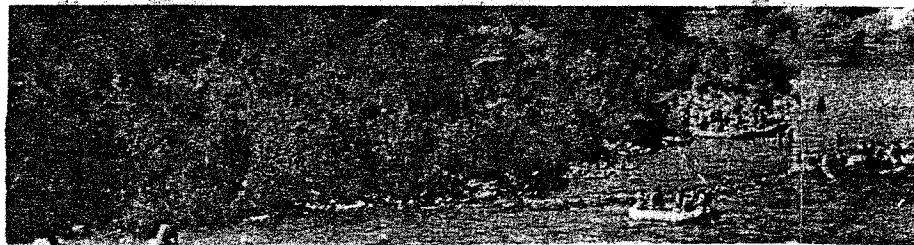
in 1977. Its 1979 Zinfandel Blanc is sold locally in Cameron Park and Pleasant Valley, but is also distributed to the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

Boeger Winery, situated east of Placerville, was given a gold medal for its 1979 Sierra Blanc. Like Sierra Vista, this winery also picked up prizes at the Orange County Fair

early this summer. Its 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon took a gold and its 1978 Zinfandel, a bronze.

The winery, owned by Greg and Susan Boeger, also received bronze medals for its 1979 Chardonnay, 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon and 1977 Hangtown Red in the Amador

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WINES

judging.

The Amador and Orange county fair contests "are the first two competitions we have entered," said Susan Boeger. "We have received lots of good reviews in the past year..."

Judging at the Amador County Fair was done on the Danish system, Boeger explained, where several wines of the same type are able to win gold awards if they score enough points. At a similar contest in Los Angeles, the Boegers' 1978 Char-

donnay was ranked third out of 81 Chardonnays in the state.

"We have been selling wines since 1974 and trying to bring the recognition that this county produces as good grapes as any other wine growing region," Boeger said. "...The more medals we get, the more recognition we get. Soon people will be looking to El Dorado County for fine wines."

The Madrona Winery in Camino grew grapes that were sold and crushed into the 1979 Chardonnay

which was the grand prize winner in the Amador contest. The wine was vinted by Stevenot Winery of Murphy's in Calaveras County.

Stevenot Winery purchased grapes from Richard and Leslie Bush, owners and operators of the Madrona Winery. The Bush's established their vineyard in 1973 and grow five types of grapes and are now adding a winery.

"We're in the process of building our own winery right now," said

Leslie Bush. "We hope to have it ready by this harvest."

Both Boeger and Sierra Vista received praise earlier this summer at the 1980 Orange County Fair commercial wine competition, one of the most important showcases for wineries in California.

Results of the Orange County contest are expected to be published in virtually all the wine newsletters in the country, according to the Boegers.

Harvey Steiman / On Wine



Look to the Sierra

Only a few vineyards punctuate the landscape of the Sierra foothills east of Sacramento, in what has come to be known as the Mother Lode country. In between the abandoned gold mines are also a few wineries. To date, neither the vineyards nor the wineries have made the splash that the Gold Rush brought to this region. But give them time, give them time.

Vines have been cultivated here since before the Gold Rush. In fact, many was the Gold Rush miner, his stake petering out, who planted vines to make wine and keep body and soul together. There was even a time — around 1860 — when El Dorado County alone had more vineyards than either Napa or Sonoma.

But except for a few Amador County Zinfandels, serious wine drinkers only recently have recognized the possibilities. The region is beginning to make a name for itself. The appellations of Amador, Sierra and El Dorado Counties, the Shenandoah Valley and the hamlets of Plymouth and Fiddletown are becoming increasingly familiar to Zinfandel drinkers.

Sutter Home Winery in the Napa Valley was the first to exploit the character of Amador Zinfandels — intense berry aromas and flavors, high alcohol, wines of power. Sacramento vintner Darrell Corti recognized the potential in the late 1960s, having tasted a Zinfandel made by home winemaker Charles Myers (who now owns Harbor Winery). It had been made from grapes grown at the then-unknown Deaver Vineyard in the Shenandoah Valley near Plymouth. Corti had Sutter Home make some wine for his stores from the Deaver Vineyard. That wine, and subsequent vintages, put Amador County on the map.

Wineries with names like Montevina, Shenandoah, Boeger, Stevenot and Sierra Vista have joined the pioneers actually producing wines in the Mother Lode. The oldest existing pioneer is d'Agostini, founded 1846 (and still going strong). And now it's more than Zinfandel. Excellent Cabernets, Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blancs and Muscats are being grown in the Sierra Foothills.

With virtually all the vineyard land in Napa County

planted, very little suitable land left in Sonoma, the search is on for new places to grow fine grapes for fine wine. U.S. wine consumption is rising, so the thirst is there. The question is where the grapes will come from. The jury is still out on Monterey. The Edna Valley in San Luis Obispo and the Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara look promising. To that list one must add the Sierra Foothills.

This year, Amador County took a big step toward carving its place as a wine producer when it held its first extensive competition. Any wine made from Mother Lode grapes, including those made by wineries elsewhere in the state, was eligible. As one of 20 judges who worked their way through the nearly five dozen wines, I can attest to the quality.

I must note, however, that the organizers of this competition were a bit generous with medals. Nearly two of every three wines entered won awards, a rate more than double that of most other competitions around the state. (Judges did not make the final decisions on the awards; the event's organizers "interpreted" our rankings.)

The big winner was Montevina, one of the area's modern pioneers, which opened shop in 1973. (Most of the action has taken place since 1975.) Winemaker Cary Gott reaped 10 medals, including golds for its 1978 Zinfandel, 1979 Sauvignon Blanc, 1978 Barbera and nonvintage Mission red. Montevina also picked up silver medals for its 1978 Montino Zinfandel (lighter than the regular vintage wine), 1978 Cabernet Sauvignon, 1979 White Zinfandel and White Cabernet.

The Sauvignon Blanc and Barbera are prime examples of what can be done in the Shenandoah Valley. They are the equal of better wines produced in better-known coastal regions. They also represent good value, being priced under \$5.

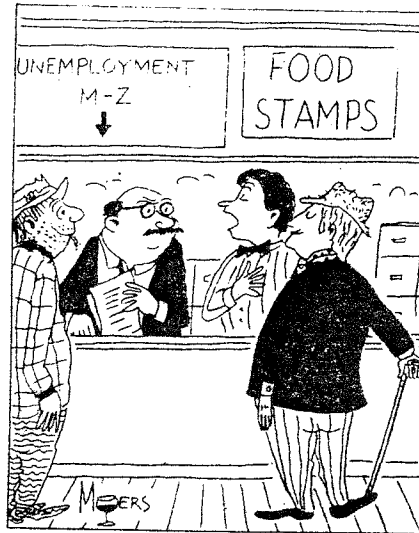
Another big winner was Shenandoah Vineyards, a relative newcomer (1977), which picked up seven medals. It won three gold medals — for a Zinfandel port, a 1978 Cabernet Sauvignon and a lovely Black Muscat. All three are superb wines. The Cabernet has depth and elegance, characteristics missing in many Amador reds. The port is a stunner, rich, complex and subtly balanced. The Muscat is a sweet red wine, spicy and flowery-perfumey, a unique wine in California.

Boeger, a winery in neighboring El Dorado County, earned five medals for its Amador-appellation wines, including a gold for its generic white wine, 1979 Sierra Blanc.

The Grand Award went to fledgling Stevenot Winery, a Calaveras County winery just now releasing its first vintage. It won for its Amador-appellation 1979 Chardonnay, a wine with considerable fruit and appealing balance of oak. It is not a wine to compare with the giants of the North and Central Coasts, but it's an eye-opener from an area never known for Chardonnay. Stevenot also won a gold medal for its Chenin Blanc, a stocky tart wine with that green-fruit aroma typical of the variety, and a silver for its White Riesling.

Sutter Home, the winery that started it all, picked up a gold medal for its 1978 Zinfandel, and deservedly so. I find it to be the best Amador Zinfandel I've had produced since 1972. The intervening wines have been disappointing, beset with a variety of off odors and flavors. This one is a winner, harkening back to the rich, intense

The wine set



'This gentleman wishes to be directed to our Wine Stamp window.'

Zinfandels of the early 1970s. (Sutter Home, incidentally, also makes a lovely, light Zinfandel from El Dorado County grapes, so labeled.)

For the record, here are all the medal winners from the 1980 Amador County Fair:

Zinfandel (regular): Gold — 1978 Montevina, 1978 Argonaut, 1977 Geyser Peak, 1978 Sutter Home, 1978 Ahern. Silver — 1977 Veedercrest, 1977 Richard Cary, 1978 Montevina Montino. Bronze — 1978 Shenandoah.

Zinfandel (late harvest): Gold — 1978 Carneros Creek. Silver — 1977 Argonaut, 1978 Sierra Vista. Bronze — 1978 Shenandoah.

Zinfandel (sweet): Gold — Shenandoah Zinfandel Port (n.v.). No silver or bronze.

Cabernet Sauvignon: Gold — 1978 Shenandoah.

Silver — 1978 Montevina. **Bronze** — 1977 Boeger.

Mission: Gold — Montevina (n.v.). No silver. **Bronze** — 1977 Shenandoah.

Other reds: Gold — Shenandoah Black Muscat (n.v. sweet), 1978 Montevina Barbera. No silver. **Bronze** — 1978 Montevina Ruby Cabernet, 1977 Boeger Hangtown Red, 1979 Montevina Nieve Zinfandel.

Rose: Gold — 1978 Ebbettsville. No silver or bronze.

White Zinfandel: Gold — 1978 Sierra Vista. Silver — 1979 Montevina. 1978 Shenandoah. **Bronze** — 1979 Beauval.

Sauvignon Blanc: Gold — 1978 Montevina. No silver or bronze.

Chenin Blanc: Gold — 1979 Stevenot. No silver or bronze.

Chardonnay (Grand Award): 1979 Stevenot. No silver. **Bronze** — 1979 Boeger.

White Riesling: No gold. **Silver** — 1979 Stevenot. **Bronze** — 1979 Boeger.

Other white: Gold — 1978 Sutter Home. Silver — 1978 Montevina. Bronze — 1978 Shenandoah.

BREAKAWAY

Six-year-old Lexi Boeger, left, and her brother Justin, 7, frolic in the family's El Dorado County vineyard.

The Gold Country wineries

By BRYON PETERSON
Special to Breakaway

If you enjoy touring wineries and testing their wares, but do not have the time to get up to the Napa Valley, here is a good solution. There are more than a dozen fine wineries which begin less than 50 miles east of here in historic Placerville.

Recently I chose eight of those wineries at random and made a one-day driving tour of the "gold country" wineries. These wineries are rapidly becoming famous for their rich and powerful Zinfandels. The Zinfandel grape seems to be perfectly matched for the climate in this reborn wine region.

Most of the wineries in El Dorado and Amador counties are tiny and ask that you phone ahead to be sure someone will be there to show you around and share their tasteful creations.

I began the tour in Placerville at the Boeger winery, a large winery compared to most in the area. Here they have a cute tasting room and regular visiting hours. They are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and are located at 1709 Carson Road. To get there, take Highway 50 east into Placerville and exit at the Smith Flat offramp. Go back under the freeway and then turn right on Carson Road. Drive about one mile to the winery. If you go there in the near future, you may still purchase fresh pears at a good price.

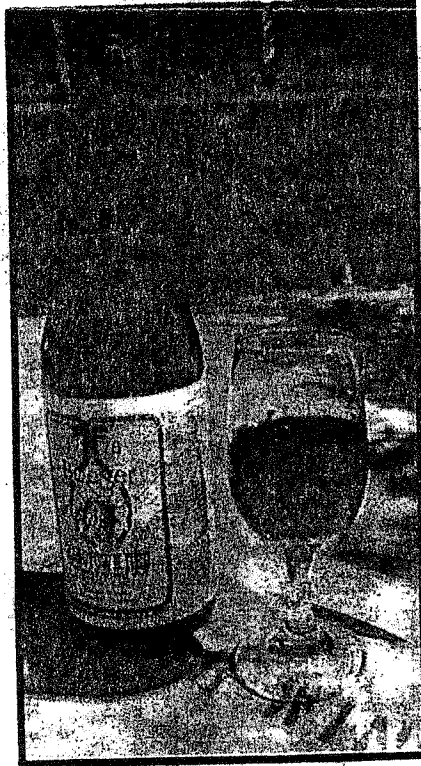
After visiting Boeger you may wish to stop in Placerville for an early lunch where there are dozens of good restaurants. I would suggest the Tortilla Flats at 564 Main St. for good Mexican food, where if you are not starving, one meal will serve two people adequately for lunch.

The Sierra Vista winery (45 Cabernet Way, Placerville, 622-7221) is nearer Pleasant Valley than Placerville and should be your next stop. Be sure to call ahead because this is a very small winery. John McCready, owner-winemaker, will be glad to share his wines with you and perhaps show you his vineyards, a short hike away.

To get to Sierra Vista, take the Missouri Flat Road exit from Highway 50 west of Placerville. Proceed south on Missouri Flat Road until it dead ends, then make a left turn on Pleasant Valley Road. Stay on that road for about 10 miles until you get to the town of Pleasant Valley, where you should turn right on Leisure Lane next to a Union 76 station. Follow Leisure Lane until it ends in a dirt road. Follow the dirt road on your far right up to the winery.

After Sierra Vista, follow Pleasant Valley Road west

to Highway 49 and then 49 south to Plymouth, where most of the Amador County wineries are located. To get to the Plymouth wineries, turn left at Moreno's market onto Shenandoah Road. As you approach a Y in the road, stay on the right side (Shenandoah School Road) and drive about a mile up to the Montevina winery where they make a wide variety of powerful red wines. Be sure to call ahead for an appointment at (209) 245-6942.



Hangtown Red is a Boeger specialty.

From there it is a quick drive east to the tiny Shehendoah vineyards, Box 23, Steiner Road, (209) 245-3698. They are specializing in sweet dessert wines such as Zinfandel Port, Black Muscat and Late Harvest wines.

Back on Shenandoah Road, if you travel directly east for about tow miles you will arrive at the De Agostini winery. They are open for visits every day from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except major holidays. The winery is so old that it has been declared an historical landmark.

Next, let's travel south on Highway 49 to Amador City, where the Amador winery has a tiny tasting room usually open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The tasting room is located at the corner of Main and O'Neil streets and you will find signs in the town directing you. Although the wines there are unlike those of surrounding wineries (Amador Winery makes only generic wines), the quaint tasting room is worth seeing.

There are many restaurants in Amador City and farther south in Sutter Creek where, incidently, is the next winery. To get to the Stone Ridge winery, proceed south on Highway 49 through Sutter Creek to the four-way stop sign. Turn left on Ridge Road and drive about two miles to the winery. It is on the south side of the road marked by a small wine barrel at the entrance. It is a beautiful little home winery surrounded by Ruby Cabernet vineyards. It is open Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., but call ahead if you wish to visit any other time (209) 223-1761.

Now stop by a phone booth and call the Argonaut Winery in Lone to see if you may pay a visit. To get there, drive north on Highway 49 to the Highway 124 junction north of Drytown. Travel southwest on 124 to Willow Creek Road, where you will make a right turn. Stay on this road for about three miles until you reach a huge windmill on your left and follow the next little dirt road on your left to the first dwelling. That is the home of Harly Hardy, one of the winery's owners. He will show you around if you called ahead, but may ask you to leave if you did not. (209) 274-4106.

There are many other wineries in Amador County and several in Calaveras County which you may wish to visit another time. A good book listing them is "Wine your Way through California" by Ray Godfrey, Godfrey Publishing Co., 4679 N. Edenfield Ave., Covina, Calif. 91722, \$3. There is also a good map of the area you can purchase in local bookstores: "Gold Map, Guide to the Mother Lode and Old Sacramento," published by Compass Maps, Modesto. It sells for around \$2.

APPENDIX B

HISTORIC WINEGROWING
in
EL DORADO COUNTY

by

Charles L. Sullivan
Los Gatos, California

April 1980

HISTORIC WINE GROWING IN EL DORADO COUNTY

Although wine growing in California was fairly widespread in the coastal areas during the Spanish and Mexican periods prior to the American conquest, it was the discovery of gold in 1948 that actually brought viticulture and eventually winemaking to the Sierra foothills area. Foremost among the counties in which these activities developed in the 1850's was El Dorado County. In fact, so important did wine growing become in the 1860's and the early 1870's that some experts thought the county would eventually become as important as the most developed of the coastal counties. Actually, El Dorado County probably had more grapevines in 1860 than did Sonoma or Napa Counties. Disease and transportation problems, followed by Prohibition, precluded "El Dorado" reaching these heights, but for decades the area was counted among the most important in California wine growing.

The first grape vines here were probably planted near Coloma, south of Rescue, on Sweetwater Creek, perhaps as early as 1849, by a man named Stevens, 32 vines in all. These were expanded and in five years a German from Saxe-Weimer, Jacob Zentgraf, bought the property and by 1857 was producing about 2000 gallons of wine per year. In 1859, Zentgraf had built a little distillery and was selling his wines in Pennsylvania through his cousin in Johnstown, John Schiffhauser. The Zentgraf Winery was in production until the 1890's, when it burned down, but the walls were still standing in the 1960's.¹ This winery was typical of winemaking operations in El Dorado County during the last half of the 19th century.

In 1855, the *California Farmer* reported about 3000 vines in the county, mostly Missions, but in the next few years as the placer mines gave out and the inhabitants looked about for profitable agricultural activities, many more vines were planted.² By 1857, A. T. Taylor had 1650 vines near Placerville. B. F. McCormack was also an important grower, as were C. W. Robertson and Charles L. Ingalsbee near Coloma.³ By the end of the decade these tentative beginnings had expanded so that in the 1860 census about 800 acres of grapevines could be counted.

¹ Ernest P. Peninou and Sidney S. Greenleaf. *A Directory of California Wine Growers and Wine Makers in 1860*. Berkeley, 1960. According to a report in the *Sacramento Record* 1874, the first vines in the Coloma area were planted in 1852.

² *California Farmer*, November 9, 1855.

³ *Alta California*, July 9, 1857.

In the Coloma area by far the most important grower was Martin Alhoff. He and Robert Chalmers had built a hotel in Coloma in 1852 and had planted a vineyard, mostly to Catawba grapes to produce wine for the place. In 1860, Alhoff built a winery with lava rock from Granite Hill. He committed suicide in 1867 and Chalmers married his widow. Alhoff won awards for his white wines at the State Fair in 1860, 1861, and 1862. The Transactions of the State Agricultural Society also show prizes for red wines and brandies. It was thought for some years during the 1860's that his successes with Catawba and Isabella grapes for making white wines might indicate those eastern native hybrids as varieties best for winemaking in the cooler northern counties of California.

There were others in the Coloma area, Peter Calyer, Robert Clark, Charles Graves and Conrad Eitzell, all with good vineyards. Near Placerville, G. W. Foster was the chief grower. John L. Knight had a vineyard near Diamond Springs as did Ekin Smith. J. M. Woods was⁴ located around Mud Spring, as were several other small holders.

By 1863 there were 772,000 vines in El Dorado County, almost all in the foothills between the elevations of 1000 and 2800 feet. One of the most important of the winegrowers was located at Coloma, famed not for his viticulture, but from the fact that he had been the man who first discovered gold in 1848. He was James W. Marshall, who now spent his time growing vines and serving the area as a nurseryman. He spent the rest of his life here in this activity. By the 1870's, he had 75 varieties in his collection and had imported vines and cuttings from the east coast and from Europe to supply vineyardists in the area.

In 1866, the *Alta California* ran an article extolling El Dorado County as "undoubtedly the leading county in the Sierra wine business." This respected defender of the state's wine industry predicted that someday it might surpass even Sonoma County. The *Alta* was particularly impressed by the 30 acre spread of M. Foster at Placerville and the several vineyards around Diamond Springs, particularly those of E. M. Strout, D. Brooke and M. Snyder. H. B. Newell had a good 10 acre vineyard at Gold Hill. And the⁵ El Dorado Wine Company at El Dorado also had 10 acres in vines.

By now there were almost one and a half million vines in the county and the wine product was well over 200,000 gallons. There were also about 7000 gallons of brandy.

The next year at El Dorado the firm of Jackson and Weatherwax headed by C. T. Jackson, was making good enough wine to be able

⁴ See Peninou's analysis of the 1860 census reports.

⁵ *Alta California*, May 6, 1866

to establish a short lived depot in Chicago. In 1867, the Diamond Springs district alone made 50,000 gallons of wine. The El Dorado Wine Company, just up the road, was making over 20,000 gallons.⁶

The planting of the late 1860's came into full production in the early 1870's. By now a fairly large amount of the county's grape production was going down to the Sacramento Valley to be made into wine by the larger wineries there. Also, a large part of the production went into brandy making. There were no less than 40 commercial distilleries in the county in 1871, mostly small operations. Still, planting continued for a couple of years and although growers complained about prices and markets, there was no talk of pulling up El Dorado vineyards as there was in some of the wine growing areas in the Central Valley and coastal valleys.

By then the Robert Chalmers operation at Coloma had become the dominant wine interest in the area and certainly the most colorful.⁷ In 1871, the *Pacific Rural Press* ran an article praising his "mammoth wine cellars" three stories high. He now had 85 acres of vines and also bought widely in the Coloma area, making about 40,000 gallons of wine that season and 15,000 gallons of brandy. His winery capacity was listed as 60,000 gallons. He also made several types of fruit wine.⁸

Within three years his vineyard had expanded to 110 acres. His wines and his famed Catawba bitters had found an eastern market and in 1878, he built his famed Vineyard House Hotel in Coloma, an imposing structure that is still standing. By the end of the decade his position in the local industry is best indicated by the results of the competition at the El Dorado Agricultural Association's tenth annual fair in Placerville. Chalmers won awards for the best red, white and sweet wines, and for the best port and sherry. He won special awards for his Angelica, Burgundy, Green Hungarian, sweet Muscat and for his flavored brandies and cordials.⁹ C. G. Carpenter of Diamond Springs was also developing a good reputation as was Philip Kramp of the same district. In that same year, he won awards for the best brandy and the best sparkling wines.

⁶ *Alta California*, December 7, 1867; August 19, 1867;
California Farmer, May 28, 1867

⁷ For a remarkable story of this man and his wife see "The Coloma Ghosts", *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 15, 1971.

⁸ *Pacific Rural Press*, November 11, 1871

⁹ Transactions of the California State Agricultural Society, Sacramento, 1880.

Later in the 1870's another analysis of wine growing in the area appeared, this time in the *Sacramento Record*, titled "Viniculture in the Foothills." The mining camp at Coloma was dead, but the vineyards and orchards were in full bloom.¹⁰ Chalmers was listed as the predominant element in the Coloma area, with 14 others listed as having vineyards of at least five acres of vines. Around Gold Hill, Mr. Veerkamp had 40 acres in vines; there were nine other growers there of note. Michigan Flat had five important vineyardists, George Williams the largest, with 25 acres. And around Uniontown, there were nine growers with ten acres or more. There were a total of 666 acres of wine grapes in these districts. There were also about 100 acres around Coulterville, 15 at Garden Valley, 20 around Kelsey, and 30 at Georgetown.

The *Record's* article cited a problem that would grow in the next fifteen years. Growers needed another large winery or two for their grapes. Chalmers could not take enough and the other few small ones still left a surplus that had to be hauled down into the Sacramento Valley or made up into brandy right there.

The decade of the 1880's opened with the establishment of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners, a body that took a special interest in each wine growing area of the state. The entire area of the Sierra foothills was termed the El Dorado District, a clear indication of the continuing importance of that county. George G. Blanchard, the District's first commissioner, indicated in 1881 that there were 1150 acres of wine grapes in the county producing about 2500 tons of grapes per year, a relatively low yield for these days, indicating the amount of dry farming taking place in the vineyards of the foothill area. There were sixteen grape varieties listed, with the old Mission grape still in first place, but with some varieties of a better sort, particularly the Zinfandel and the White Riesling. He noted that the planting boom was now over and the phylloxera had been found in the county. The next year the county's wine product was about 230,000 gallons with about 20,000 gallons of brandy.¹¹

In 1884, the *San Francisco Merchant* listed the growers and winemakers in the county. There were now 11 growers in the Coloma area with the Chalmers Winery and that of E. D. Endries, the chief producers. There were 14 growers around Diamond

¹⁰Transactions of the California State Agricultural Society, Sacramento, 1875, pp. 334-337, copying the article from the *Sacramento Record*.

¹¹First Annual Report of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners, Sacramento, 1881, pp. 29-30.

Springs. C. B. Carpenter had a good winery there, but the Kramp Brothers Winery had taken the lead in the district and would soon pass up the Chalmers operation as it declined after his tragic death. James R. Skinner was the chief winemaker in Green Valley. There were still seven growers around Placerville and three at Gold Hill.¹²

The number of wine grapes here grew in the 1880's, following the pattern of the rest of the state and by 1888 the State Board of Equalization reported 1715 acres of grape vines. From this point on there was little growth in the county's viticultural product or acreage. Each year, more and more grapes went down to the Sacramento Valley to be made up into wine and brandy. The tradition of high quality in El Dorado continued, but gradually little wine or brandy was made save for local consumption. In 1890, only 60,000 gallons were produced.

After the turn of the century, there was some planting of wine grapes in El Dorado County, as was the case in most of the state. A regular planting boom was taking place in the larger established areas, since wine grape prices had stabilized and were advancing while the industry itself had ended a period of horrible cutthroat competition. Nevertheless, not much wine was made in the county except to slake the thirst of local folk. Most grapes were still being exported to the valley. In 1908, the county had a high for that period of 1770 acres of wine grapes. But as Prohibition approached, the vineyard acreage declined steadily. By 1922, there were only about 500 acres of wine grapes in the county. Much of the production now went into the barrels of local people who converted the local product into homemade wine. Most of the vineyards still in production were concentrated around Placerville, Shingle Springs, Latrobe and Georgetown.¹³ Prohibition brought many interesting legal and illegal activities to the Sierra foothills.

Toward the end of the dry years there were still about 600 acres of wine grapes in the county, with John A. Winkelmann of Placerville the leading wine grower.¹⁴ But viticulture declined steadily in the 1930's. By 1936, there were only 339 acres of wine grapes in the county and no wineries in operation.¹⁵

After World War II, there was a residual acreage of wine grapes in El Dorado County. But only 74 acres could be counted in

¹² *San Francisco Merchant*, November 21, 1884.

¹³ *Wines & Vines*, May, 1922.

¹⁴ *Wines & Vines*, September, 1930; June, 1932. See also Idwal Jones, *Vines in the Sun*, New York, 1949, pp. 193-201.

¹⁵ *Wines & Vines*, September, 1936.

1954 and this total declined steadily until there were but 11 in 1966. From then on the total increased gradually to 33 in 1971 and jumped to 134 in 1974. In 1978 there were 190 acres of the following varieties:¹⁶

Zinfandel	59	Chenin Blanc	22
Cabernet Sauvignon	44	Chardonnay	15
Barbera	19	White Riesling	8
Merlot	5	Semillon	5
Petite Sirah (Durif)	3	Sauvignon Blanc	7
Mission	1	Gewürztraminer	1
		Grey Riesling	1

16

For recent developments in El Dorado County See Leon Adams, *The Wines of America*, New Yor, 1978, pp. 421-425; *Redwood Rancher*, February, 1973, p. 14; *California Grape Grower*, September, 1977, p. 14; *Vintage Magazine*, October 1979, p.52.