



**FREEMARK  
ABBEY**

# KEY TO THE ABBEY

February 2003

## THE FREEMARK SCOOP

### THE STORY OF CABERNET BOSCHÉ

BY TIM BELL, WINEMAKER



their Cabernet Sauvignon wines before Freemark Abbey, especially their flagship bottling christened "Georges de Latour" after the winery's founder. Beaulieu's wines came to prominence under the hand of the remarkable winemaker and researcher André Tchelistcheff. It was Tchelistcheff who said, "It takes Rutherford dust to grow great Cabernet." The great Cabernet Bosché vineyards are located in that most special area of Napa Valley.

Continued on Page 4...

This past January, a few lucky souls attended a ten-year vertical tasting of our Cabernet Bosché here at Freemark Abbey, spanning the vintages 1989 through 1998. It was a pleasure to speak with several Club members I have met at other events, and it was of equal enjoyment to meet a few new friends. The best part about preparing for the tasting was the excuse it gave me to dive into the winery archives to brush up on my Bosché history. I knew the basics of the Bosché Estate story, of course, but reading the articles and notes collected over the years brought to life the personalities involved in recognizing and creating this wine. It was thrilling to share the sense of discovery and excitement those involved experienced when they realized these grapes were something special. For those not in attendance, I think the Cabernet Bosché story will prove to be of interest.

I am preaching to the choir when I tell you that Cabernet Bosché is the best-known wine at Freemark Abbey. The story of how it got that way stretches back to the late 1950's when a San Francisco lawyer named

John Bosché purchased the acreage and home that we know today as the Bosché Estate. The property is located on the west side of the Napa Valley, almost up against the foothills of the Mayacamas Range, in what has come to be known as the Rutherford viticultural district. The Nicaragua-born Bosché was looking for a summer home and had this land recommended to him by Walter Sullivan, who had family connections to the Beaulieu Vineyards winery. Information available states that there were grapes already planted on the property at the time, but does not tell us more than the fact that they were not varieties desirable for fine wine.

The vineyard was replanted in 1961 with the help of founding Freemark partner Frank "Laurie" Wood. Laurie's involvement should be no surprise, as he has had a hand in establishing so many of Napa Valley's top vineyards. Perhaps because of his connections at Beaulieu Vineyard, John Bosché sold his grapes to that winery. Beaulieu, like the Freemark Abbey property, is one of the grand old wineries of Napa. The former gained fame for

of each of our three 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon wines for an exclusive price of \$425.60 - that's a 30% discount off our regular retail prices! You'll receive a trio of wines that are perfect to save for those future special occasions or for drinking upon arrival.

This limited offer is available only through April 15. Don't miss out!

## SPECIAL OFFER

In this shipment, members of the *Cardinal Key Club* and *Josephine's Cellar Club* will receive our most recent release, the 1998 vintage of our acclaimed *Sycamore Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon*. This wine is a favorite with collectors, club members and staff!

All *Key to the Abbey* club members receive a 20% savings on any bottle purchase of this

lovely wine, or a 25% case discount on any purchase made before March 31.

As an added bonus for club members, we are offering this wine in a specially priced case selection paired with two of our other premium wines: the *1998 Cabernet Bosché* and the *1998 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon*.

*Key to the Abbey* wine club members will receive 4 bottles

### Inside this issue:

Ted's "Pick of the Month" 2

Wine Club Event Recap 2

Member Recipe Contest 2

News and Reviews 3

Event Calendar 3

Shipping News 4

Member's Lounge 4



Freemark Abbey's  
1997 Cabernet  
Bosché.  
"...a spectacular hit..."

## TED'S PICK OF THE MONTH

Freemark Abbey's Director of Winemaking, Ted Edwards, has been hand-crafting wine at Freemark Abbey since 1985. He is our resident expert and the best person to know which of our premium wines are drinking well right now!

As often as possible, Ted will share his opinion with us regarding which Freemark Abbey wine he feels is a great wine to enjoy today. While this will take a lot of tasting and hard work on Ted's part, we're sure that he's up for the job!

For the May 2003 club shipment, Ted's *Pick of the Month* is the 1997 Cabernet Bosché. Here is what Ted has to say about our most luxurious Cabernet Sauvignon.

"I have been in a wine tasting group for eighteen years. It is a couples group that always has five couples. Over the years we have weathered life's little changes: divorces, marriages, kids, retirements.... but, the group has managed to retain 3 original members, including myself.

Once a month the group meets, hosted by a different

couple in rotation. The format is that we taste wines blind, discuss them, and then the hosting couple brings on a Babbette's Feast!

At our recent Christmas get together, I brought the 1997 Cabernet Bosché. It was a spectacular hit with this discerning group! The wine is drinking in its prime! It is sooo supple, with richness and depth of aroma and flavor that draws you back to sniff your glass and drink.....and enjoy."

Pick up a bottle today and enjoy for yourself!

## WINE CLUB EVENT RECAP

### Holiday Open House

It was a very cold, rainy day but a number of die-hard club members braved the elements to sample our most current releases. Treats were prepared by *Wild & Free Catering* and a blazing fire was tended throughout the day. It was a perfect day to stay by the fire sipping our hand-crafted wines while indulging in yummy food. A big thanks to all members who joined us.

### Bosché 10 Year Vertical

Luckily, the rain held for the day for this first ever vertical tasting for our club members. Winemaker Tim Bell hosted an intimate group for this rare opportunity to enjoy ten consecutive vintages of our finest Cabernet Sauvignon. The '92 and the '94 were crowd favorites, but the '91 and '95 weren't far behind. This was a very successful event. Thank you to all members in attendance.

### Los Angeles Club Dinner

*Bistro 45* was spectacular! What a menu! Tiger shrimp in a coconut truffle butter; clay baked pork with a sage and mushroom broth; grilled ostrich with a shallot confit ; rack of lamb AND dessert. Each course was perfectly paired with one of our latest releases and thoroughly enjoyed by our lucky club members in attendance. This was an exquisite feast. Thank you *Bistro 45* and members!

### '98 Sycamore Release Party

The Napa Valley was busy this weekend and we thank all of you that fought the crowds and made it up Valley to visit us and treat yourself to our newest release-the 1998 *Sycamore Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon*. Guests snacked on a dazzling array of goodies prepared by *Wine Valley Catering* and a few lucky guests went home with bottles of the Sycamore signed by our winemakers.



Submit the winning recipe and win your favorite bottle of Freemark Abbey wine!

## MEMBER RECIPE CONTEST

It is not uncommon to find that those people who enjoy fine wine also enjoy great food. Each month in the *Key to the Abbey* we strive to provide you with a recipe that we think is perfectly paired with one of our premium wines.

This month, it's your turn! We're looking for you to create the perfect wine and food match. Submit an original recipe that you feel captures the magic that is created by the sublime pairing of fantastic food

and your favorite *Freemark Abbey* wine. The recipe may be as simple or as elaborate as you wish. The only criteria is that the recipe must be original and it must be served with, or include as an ingredient, any *Freemark Abbey* wine.

The winning submission will be printed in the May 2003 *Key to the Abbey* newsletter. In addition, the winning chef will receive a bottle of his or her highlighted *Freemark Abbey* wine. This is the perfect

opportunity to share with our club members your culinary prowess and originality.

Entries must be received by the Wine Club Coordinator on or before April 11, 2003 and may be submitted via fax, mail or email. Entries must include the Member's Name. Club Members must be active to win.

Remember, while our Sangiovese and frozen pizza may go very well together, that's not what we're looking for! Good luck!

## NEWS AND REVIEWS

What are people saying about our wines?

### 1992 Sycamore Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon

"A lush, feminine Cabernet. Rich and round. Aromas of cherry, currant, cedar and sandalwood. Well structured. Nice depth. Wonderful now and it will also hold for five to 10 years."

*The Press Democrat, December 04, 2002*

*Wine of the Week*

### 1999 Napa Valley Merlot

"... a pretty array of dark fruits-blackberry, wild berry and black cherry-with touches of anise, herb and bell pepper."

*Wine Spectator, September 30, 2002*

### 1999 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

"A mix of rustic earthiness and complex wild berry flavors ,this is sleek and elegant, well focused and balanced..."

*Wine Spectator, October 31, 2002*

"Very highly recommended. Fine herb/cherry and faint earth notes; wonderful texture with medium weight and superb structure."

*Dan Berger, On Wine, December 12, 2002*

### 1999 Edelwein Gold

"...perfectly balanced mouthful of ripe peaches, bananas and honey that brings to mind the expression "nectar of the Gods.""

*Boston Herald, November 06, 2002*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

It's a new year and time to plan your social calendar. Don't forget to include these Key to the Abbey wine club events in your future plans. If you have a suggestion for an event that you would like to see, please contact Darlyne.

- March 10, 2003** : Wine Club Dinner at Mel's Bar & Grill in Denver CO. 6:30 p.m.

Multi-course dinner with five wines, all inclusive. Members \$90/Non-members \$105.

Advance reservations required through the Wine Club. Limited seating available.
- March 29, 2003**: Sycamore Vineyards 10 Year Vertical Tasting

This is a formal sit-down tasting exploring the nuances of one of our premium Cabernets. Seating is limited to 40 people. \$35.00 for Members/\$45.00 for Non-members.

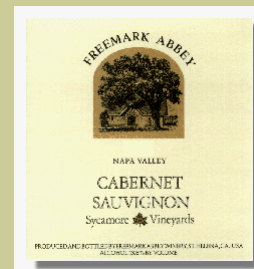
1pm-4pm at Freemark Abbey. Advance reservations required.
- April 2003 (date to be determined)**: Wine Club Dinner in Chicago IL
- May 05, 2003**: Key to the Abbey club selections begin shipping.
- May 17, 2003**: Our 2nd Annual Bud Break Party.

Join us as we kick-off Spring and the advent of a new growing season. Freemark Abbey wines will be paired with delicacies from some of Napa Valley's premiere restaurants.

\$35.00 for Members/\$45.00 for Non-members. Advance reservations required.
- June 05-08, 2003**: Napa Valley Wine Auction—stop in and see us!
- June 21, 2003**: Winemaker Dinner at Freemark Abbey

Celebrate our winemaking staff with an exquisitely prepared multi-course dinner complemented by Freemark Abbey wines. \$95 Members/\$115.00 Non-members.

6pm at Freemark Abbey. Advance reservations required.



### 1992 Sycamore Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon

A 10 year retrospective blind-tasting of selected Napa and Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignons was recently held by the Press-Democrat Newspaper. The panel of judges, composed of long time industry professionals, unanimously selected our 1992 Sycamore Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon as the best wine.



**Additional Key  
To The Abbey  
events may  
be added  
throughout the  
year...check our  
website for our  
updated event  
calendar**

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## WINE SHIPPING

**SHIPPING ADDRESS:** Remember-it's your responsibility to provide updated address, shipping and credit card information. *Freemark Abbey* will not be responsible for any costs associated with the reshipping of your Wine Club shipment due to a bad address. What are you waiting for? Get on the phone or email today if you need to update your information!

**SHIPPING STATES:** *Freemark Abbey* will ship wine to these states- AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, MA, MI, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, OR, TX, VA, WA, WI, WV. Restrictions may apply. Not all wines are available in all states. Shipping rates, dates and times vary. Please contact our Retail Staff to place an order or answer any questions that you may have. 800.963.9698 ext 241.

## MEMBER'S LOUNGE

**ON-LINE WINE ORDERS:** Prefer to handle your wine shopping on-line? Not a problem! Most members are eligible to order online and receive the Member Discount. Just log-on to our website and click into our *Member's Lounge*. Your unique login ID is your first name, last name and state abbreviation (all one word, no capitals) and your password is *freemark*. Once in the Lounge, you may purchase wines using your Member Discount. And as an added bonus for Members, you may find wines to purchase that are no longer available at the winery! Due to State legal restrictions, online shopping is not available to Members in all states. Valid only in CA, CO, HI, ID, IL, MO, ND, NE, NH, NM, NV, OR, WA, WI, WV. Further restrictions may apply. If you have any questions, contact our Wine Club Coordinator. 800.963.9698 ext 235.

## THE FREEMARK SCOOP (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

John Bosché had a deal with Beaulieu to keep some of the wine from his vineyard separate, and they bottled a small amount for his personal use. In 1968 they informed Bosché they would no longer continue this arrangement. Bosché sought another winery to produce his wine, and came to Freemark Abbey founding partner Chuck Carpy. Carpy agreed, and a solitary ton of grapes was delivered to the winery, enough to make three barrels. Brad Webb, another founding member of Freemark Abbey, and a legendary winemaker in his own right, recalled what vineyard manager Rich Duarte told him: "These are really good grapes. Take care of them." Said Brad later, "That was the best advice I ever received."

Webb also observed that "the difference between Bosché and a regular Napa Valley Cabernet is like Chinese food with soy sauce and without soy sauce." Freemark asked Bosché if they could purchase his grapes in the future, and a great relationship was forged.

That first year, three trial blends were made: one that was 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, another that included 10% Merlot, and a third made with 40% Merlot. (The Merlot grapes were not from Bosché

at the time, but that variety was added to the property's 23 acres of vineyard in the mid-70's.) The Bosché blend today generally contains 8-10% of that Merlot.

The first commercial vintage of the wine was in 1970. Chuck Carpy said they decided to name it "Cabernet Bosché" because it had a nice ring to it. With little-fanfare, in their typical low-key way, Freemark Abbey's founders had just made their winery one of the first to produce a vineyard-designated wine. By 1972, the winery was receiving every grape from the Bosché property. Over the years, the wine has become a benchmark for Rutherford Cabernet. I found in our archives that several wine writers had described Bosché the same way I have for years now: elegant. They affirm what I find in Cabernet Bosché: a wine full of flavor and individual style, but not out of balance in an over-ripe, overly tannic manner like some Cabernets.

Bosché's current vineyard manager, Gary Morisoli, once told me that more than fussing over clones (subtypes of a grape variety that have small but distinct genetic differences), what makes a good Cabernet grape is the dirt it's planted in. The Bosché Estate is planted in that loosely defined subsection of the Rutherford district known as the Rutherford Bench. It is an area of Napa Valley roughly 6 feet higher in elevation than the valley floor, formed years ago from an

alluvial fan that sloughed off the Mayacamas Mountains. The soil is deep gravelly loam, fairly uniform for up to six feet down. The vineyard is typically dry-farmed, owing to its naturally high water table which drops down later in the growing season. This lowering of the water table occurs about the time vines would receive less water in an irrigated vineyard, signaling them to concentrate their energy into ripening the fruit rather than continuing to grow leaves and shoots. It's the way to make a flavorful, ripe wine grape.

One of the distinct advantages Cabernet Bosché offers over many other Napa Cabernets is a proven track record. We know this wine ages well. Savoring the 1989 Bosché at our recent vertical tasting proved that, and that year was written off as a poor vintage.

I had to admit at the tasting that Cabernet Bosché is really one of the easiest wines to make. The grapes are so good that we don't have to try to coax them into being something more than they are naturally. That is one of the hallmarks of a top vineyard, and it is why we bottle Bosché by itself. It is a complete wine. The history and personalities involved make it even more satisfying.