
SPRING MOUNTAIN VINEYARD

NEWSLETTER

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SPRING-SUMMER 2005

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Assemblage
- Aunt Polly's Lamb Shanks
- Syrah CO-FERMENT
- People Are Talking
- Events & Tastings

View From the Vineyard

Spring Mountain springtime delights the eye with abundant color. Roses are bursting with vivid pastels as they climb up the palm trees and decorate our garden paths with velvety petals after a rain shower. Spring Mountain springtime delights the nose with heady scents of lilac, daphne and citrus trees in blossom.



Roses climbing palm trees in front of the Miravalle Victorian

In the vineyard, tender, bright green grape leaves and tiny clusters are forming on the vines. The vegetable garden delights us with the flavors of springtime past... freshly cut asparagus, juicy sweet strawberries, tangy sweet-sour kumquats and savory artichokes.

Something new is immediately evident around the winery and barn. We have torn out several acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc vines as part of a planned replant. Even the fallow ground, stark as it awaits new rootstock, has offered another gift this spring: arrowheads. Every walk through the dirt yields an abundance of century old shiny, black obsidian arrowheads. Their hard faceted surfaces catch the sunlight and are easily spotted and retrieved. This legacy from another time is a bittersweet reminder of Spring Mountain's past amid the magical promise of springtime.

Assemblage

An interview with winemaker Jac Cole.

Jac Cole has the big job of evaluating some 40 wines representing young estate grown red Bordeaux varieties from the 2004 harvest. His quest? To select the very best wines made from our vineyard and assemble them into an expression of the Spring Mountain Vineyard, namely Elivette.

The process is Assemblage and it happens every spring. It involves many structured evaluations; smelling, tasting, observing the obvious and the subtle, then blending to create a wine with elegance, complexity, and balance.

Have you ever wondered how a great wine achieves that lofty status? Aside from the work done in the vineyard, a winemaker works his magic on the new wines from a vintage in much the same way that an artist selects his medium and colors. I sat with Jac on a rainy morning in early May to ask him the why's and how's of blending a great wine.

Why is the assemblage so important at SMV?

Jac: Most of what we produce at the vineyard follows a Bordeaux model of blending Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot to create wines of concentration, complexity and elegance. We are blessed with 135 unique vineyard sites within the Spring

Mountain Vineyard. We have 70 sites planted to Cabernet Sauvignon alone, the heart of our Bordeaux style blends. The differences in soil, exposure and elevation offer many shaded variations in the character of the wines we make from each site. By making many different Cabernet lots each harvest we honor those variations in expression.

If we had a single vineyard, we would have only one choice of what to put in the bottle. At SMV, we have many choices. Putting the blends together is the joy and art of winemaking. It is also a critical and fundamental step in making the best wine. You can't un-blend a wine once it's blended.



Winemaker Jac Cole conducting assemblage trials

What is the process?

Jac: In February following each harvest, we take the first look at our wines. We sit down with all the Cabernets and select the wines that show the highest quality and the most concentrated and dynamic expression of the variety and of our unique terroir. Only a few Cabs make it into the assemblage.

Once the Cabernet foundation is built we take a look at the diverse lots of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. I look for the most vibrant and true expression of each varietal because those characteristics will add shading, layering and nuance to the wine without muddying it. Then it is the art of seasoning to support, to add nuance, and to enrich. The result of successful blending is a more complex wine.

What are your first impressions of the 2004 Elivette?

Jac: The 2004 Cabernets show great fruit expression, bright acidity and abundant tannins. Even at this youthful

stage, the tannins are becoming round and polished. The wines remain true to Elivette's concentrated, rich and elegant style.

At the Table

After the patio is scrubbed, the lawn furniture is placed, and the yard is bursting with color, it is time celebrate spring! And our newly released 2003 Syrah CO-FERMENT is reason enough to gather some friends for dinner. To bring you a spring recipe to complement Syrah CO-FERMENT, I dug into the archives and found a recipe published in my cookbook, [Dining In Napa Valley](#). The recipe was a signature dish served at the original French Laundry Restaurant in Yountville when it was owned by the Schmitt family in the 80s. Even then, the French Laundry was a valley favorite. I'm told that when Thomas Keller became the new owner of the French Laundry, he too, loved Sally Schmitt's lamb shanks. Actually, we must give credit to Sally's Aunt Polly, the true originator of the Braised Lamb Shanks. This recipe is a perfect choice for a spring dinner party since the lamb is a breeze to assemble, it braises for hours and improves with an hour's rest after cooking, giving you plenty of time to relax and enjoy your guests. We recently tested the dish with the 2003 CO-FERMENT. It was unanimous here at the winery...a big WOW!

Aunt Polly's Braised Lamb Shanks French Laundry circa 1984

- 6 medium lamb shanks
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 ½ cups onion
- 1 ½ cups carrot
- 1 ½ cups celery
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 4 T butter
- ½ cup olive oil
- 3 sprigs fresh mint
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 cups beef consommé
- 3 cups red wine
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Chopped parsley for garnish

1. Rub lamb shanks with lemon juice. Set aside.
2. Cut onions, carrots and celery into match stick sized pieces. Melt butter in sauté pan. Sauté onions and garlic until limp and translucent. Add carrots and celery and toss until hot and coated with butter. Salt and pepper to taste. Cover vegetables and set aside.

3. Heat olive oil in a heavy skillet until hot. Brown lamb shanks on all sides. Transfer shanks to a large covered casserole. Salt and pepper thoroughly. Cover shanks with vegetables. Place bay leaves and mint sprigs on top.
4. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Pour oil out of skillet. Add consommé and wine and bring to a boil. Continue to boil, reducing liquid volume by half. Pour over shanks. Cover and bake for 3 to 4 hours.
5. When shanks are very tender, pour the juices off into a large measuring cup. Skim fat. Season to taste with salt and pepper and pour juices back into casserole. Set covered casserole aside. An hour of rest will improve the lamb's flavor and texture.
6. Serve one lamb shank per person. Be gentle when moving the lamb shanks, they will be very tender and may want to break apart. Spoon vegetables and juices over top of each. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve with creamy polenta and fresh asparagus.

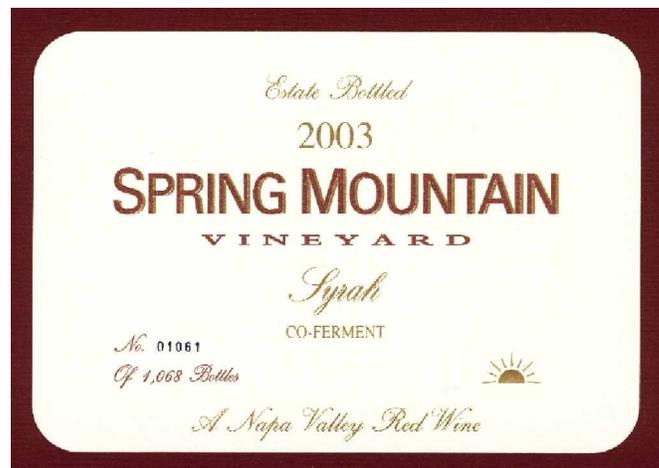


Aunt Polly's Lamb Shanks with Syrah CO-FERMENT

New Release

2003 Syrah CO-FERMENT

\$50



The 2003 vintage is the first release of our small production lot of Syrah co-fermented with Viognier. Co-fermentation is a winemaking technique practiced in some of the most exclusive wine producing regions in the world. The process of co-fermentation involves crushing and fermenting two or more different grape varieties in the same tank.

In France's Côte-Rotie region (specifically the sub-region Côte-Blonde) the white grape variety Viognier is fermented with the red variety Syrah. The Viognier is often blended with Syrah in this region to soften the wine and make it more complex. Early blending makes the best marriage of aromas and flavors, and co-fermenting is the epitome of early blending.

In the case of our 2003 Syrah CO-FERMENT, the result is a wine that embraces both the concentrated berry and meaty characters of the Syrah and the floral complexity of the Viognier. Aromas of rose petal and raspberry mingle with hints of exotic spices and black tea. Our 2003 Syrah CO-FERMENT is round, mouth filling and supple. The wine is a delightful combination of the two grape varieties and one of sublime integration.

A discount of 10% applies to orders of 6 or more bottles. Call 1-877-769-4637 to place an order. A 15% discount is extended to Wine Club Members. Please contact us for more information about joining our wine club.

People Are Talking

Elivette Reserve 2001 continues to receive much deserved praise (of course, we're a bit biased!). Most recently, the April issue of Town & Country magazine featured food expert Francine Maroukian calling the voluptuous wine "Ava Gardner in a glass." Great imagery!

Wine writer Dan Dunn of the New York Metro advises you to "Elivette yourself with Spring Mountain."

"Elivette is an exceptional product from one of the best growing seasons Northern California has had in many years."

Our 2001 Syrah was just awarded the Gold Star Award in *Santé's* May issue and described as being "full bodied, concentrated, full-blown style, with aromas of cooked dark fruit, violet, tar, tobacco, and alcohol preceding noticeable tannins and flavors of vanilla, earthy spice, black/tart cherries, and a pleasant stemminess on the palate; long finish." We hope you'll taste it for yourself!

Events & Tastings

Join us at these upcoming events!

June 2-4: 25th Auction Napa Valley, St. Helena, CA

July 21-23: 24th Annual Sun Valley Center for the Arts Wine Auction, Sun Valley, ID

Wine Club Members: please contact us if you didn't get your invitation for our June Afternoon Delight event! Looking forward to seeing you there.

If you're interested in our event schedule, please email us at office@springmtn.com.



Brian Hawkins leads a tour into the Miravalle Victorian

I hope you make Spring Mountain Vineyard part of your Napa Valley plans in 2005. We offer daily tours and tasting by appointment. You may contact the winery toll free at 877-769-4637 or locally at 707-967-4188. You may also email us at office@springmtn.com or go online at www.springmountainvineyard.com to make your appointment.

Immerse yourself in the gorgeous colors of spring and summer, and don't forget, wine pairs with just about everything!

Valli Ferrell



2805 Spring Mountain Road
Saint Helena, California 94574

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