

PEAY VINEYARDS

FALL 2005

Issue 6



We eagerly await the upcoming harvest. Now that we have planted the new blocks and put the finishing touches on the winery, all the pieces are in place for us to look to the future. Our first four vintages have been a great period of discovery as we notice distinct and important characteristics in our vineyard. The terroir is already evident in our wines—elegance, minerality and refreshing acidity—and it will be interesting to follow their expressions as the vines age.

We have an impressive new vintage of Syrah available. Vanessa's notes are below. This is the last time we will make only one Syrah from our vineyard as Vanessa has discovered two very interesting cuvées that will debut with the 2004 release in the fall of 2006. The 2003 is an assemblage of all our current clones and blocks. It is a complex, powerful and collectible wine that will drink well for years.

2003 SYRAH, ESTATE

575 CASES

The 2003 Peay Vineyards Estate Syrah, Sonoma Coast builds on the strength of the 2002. It is more floral and fruit forward than the 2002 and possesses the meaty, mineral and black pepper components that are the hallmark of our cool climate Syrah. The nose opens with fresh, rich red currants and cured meats with hints of white pepper, fennel seed, cardamom and musk. Under this initial impression aromas of grilled meats mingle with deeper blackberry notes. On the palate the luscious, sweet fruit and sanguine flavors are framed by soft, elegant tannins and medium acidity. The long finish lingers with essences of black tea, red fruits, and spice.

Our Syrah needs time in the cellar to reach its fullest potential. We suggest you decant for at least 1-2 hours if you choose to drink it now and perhaps try your next bottle in a few years. We suspect it will age well for at least a decade.

PURCHASING YOUR WINE ONLINE

This is the first time you will be able to purchase your allocation online at our **Wine Shop** at www.peayvineyards.com. You can still order your wine by fax or mail. When you enter the Wine Shop, please click on Returning Customer (even if you have never purchased from us.) Your user name is the email address given to us when you joined the mailing list. If you did not give us an email address, you will need to email me at andy@peayvineyards.com and I will enter your email in the account records (do not sign up as a new customer or all of your account info will be voided). After entering your user name, click on "I forgot my password." A new, encrypted password will be sent to that email address. Once you have entered the password, please go to the Account section on the left bar and confirm all of your records to be sure they are accurate. Also, change your password to one you will remember. If you have any problems with the process, please contact me. Allocations are based on your length of time on the mailing list and the amount of wine you have purchased from us in the past. We attempt to be as fair as possible. If you would like more wine than allocated, you can always contact us and we will see what we can do.

And, lastly, if you have been on our mailing list for more than two years and you haven't purchased any wine directly from us, shame on you! Just kidding. To make room for folks who want to be on the mailing list we will shift you to an inactive list and this will be the last newsletter you will receive. This will forfeit your allocation. You can always read about the wines and what is happening out on the coast at our web site.

Thank you for your interest in our wines.

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GOING LONG ON SIDWAYS AND BONGO FOR MONDOVINO

- Winemaker Vanessa Wong

This past year seemed to be the year of the wine movie. Not since the criminally bad “A Walk In The Clouds” - featuring Matrix bad boy, Keanu Reeves in the role of vintner, uh, dude - have we had wine as a topic in cinema. I, incidentally, was working at Mount Veeder Winery when the “A Walk in the Clouds” film crew showed up for their non-Hollywood vineyard shots. Since it was May there was nary a grape to be found for the harvest scenes. Not to worry, over-educated future directors hung fake, plastic grapes on the vines. They were at least a pretty good mimic of Flame Seedless to my eye, anyhow. When they were finished filming, however, they left all the plastic clusters out there on the vines. Our vineyard crew “picked” boxes and boxes of the stuff and brought them back to the winery and left them with me at the lab. What the pickers must have thought. I said to myself, “Great, what do I do with them now? Get some Chianti flasks and open a pizza parlour?” So if you wonder why it cost them \$20 million to make that film consider the props budget (well, that, or the cost for Keanu’s acting coach).

Assessments of film merit aside, my main criticism with movies featuring a somewhat obscure subject such as wine is that the filmmaker, in an effort to make the subject more accessible - even cinematically thrilling - simplifies matters so that the film is riddled with errors or becomes just plain ridiculous. So with not just one but two movies featuring wine this year, and me being a wine “expert”, people have asked me my opinion on the two films, “Sideways” and “Mondovino”. Well, I’m no Ebert but here’s what I think.

In “Sideways” a struggling novelist and oenophile, Miles, played by Paul Giamatti, takes his best friend and groom-to-be, Jack, on a vinous bachelor party and send-off tour of the Santa Ynez wine country. Jack’s insatiable need to sow some wild oats before his wedding day leads them into double-dates with a saucy tasting room worker, or self described “pour girl”, and a recently divorced waitress and part time viticulture student, Maya, with whom Miles discovers a kindred spirit in his love for wine and, possibly, a little hope for love in his own failed romantic life.

At first I didn’t like “Sideways.” It was not particularly enjoyable watching pathetic men behaving badly for 2 hours. If the movie had been about two women on a road trip, would the characters have been filled with so much regret and self-loathing. Then, however, I remembered “Thelma and Louise.” Although they weren’t despicable wretches like Miles and Jack, it didn’t end so cheerily for them now did it? But I realized that it probably isn’t so important that the protagonists are likeable but that they are believable. Giamatti pulls off a convincing performance as the depressed and bitter wreck who finds his only enjoyment in life through wine. The real star of the film, however, is Pinot noir and, although it has a non-speaking role, it shines. Scenes of bottles with estimable names flash by quickly on the screen providing gleeful cameos for the wine cognoscenti, stunning vistas of vineyards, and close-up, slo-mo shots of Pinot noir vines that would make John Woo proud (or Fellini, take your pick). What really struck me is an exchange between Miles and Maya where they share what it is they love about wine. Though his words serve as a metaphor for the vulnerability in his own character, Miles, in a manner, gives Pinot noir its own voice as he expounds on his favorite grape variety:

It’s a hard grape to grow...thin skinned, temperamental ...Pinot needs constant care and attention and, in fact, can only grow in specific tucked-away corners of the world. And only the most patient and nurturing growers can do it really, can tap into Pinot’s most fragile, delicate qualities. Only when someone has taken the time to truly understand its potential can Pinot be coaxed into its fullest expression. And when that happens, its flavors are the most haunting and brilliant, and subtle and thrilling and ancient on the planet...

And Maya, in turn, says:

I do like to think about the life of a wine, how it’s a living thing. I like to think about what was going on the year the grapes were growing, how the sun was shining that summer, or if it rained...what the weather was like. I think about all those people who tended the grapes...I love how a wine continues to evolve, how every time I open a bottle it’s going to taste different than if I had opened it on any other day. Because a bottle of wine is actually alive—it’s constantly evolving...And it tastes so @\$%! good.

To achieve such tonal authenticity, the director, Alexander Payne, must have interviewed a few winemakers and wine enthusiasts. I have never seen wine so accurately portrayed in a major motion picture. So, although it is difficult for me to sympathize with the Miles character since he is such a sad sack, I eventually recognized his humanity through his musings on wine. Spoken like a true winemaker!

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN SONOMA COAST

- Winegrower Nick Peay

As you may have learned in previous newsletters, our search for vineyard land came to a fortuitous conclusion when we discovered an old farmstead for sale out here on the northern tip of the Sonoma Coast. How did it come to be that there were a few old farmsteads sprinkled on hilltops amongst a sea of conifers out here on the edge of the Pacific?

The story of the early days of coastal Sonoma County could begin sometime after man crossed the land bridge across the Bering Strait, migrating south to fish and trap this area. Or even further back to the Pliocene epoch when the inland sea floor gradually rose up into the air. But I will take up the story at the latter half of the turn of the nineteenth century at the time of "The Loggers" as described in the Time/Life Old West series. You remember the volumes bound in faux hand-chiseled leather? I loved reading those on the couch as a boy.

The redwoods along the Pacific Coast were an amazing resource: raw material of incredible dimensions. One old photo shows four couples square dancing to the tune called by a fiddler, all nine of them fitting on the stump of a very large felled redwood. Removal of the first growth behemoths proceeded up and down the California coast assisted by pocket schooners that plied the coastal waters like today's semis on our highways. They left a few standing to keep watch. We have two on the property over 100 feet tall. Eight people holding hands barely encircle the biggest. The countryside was so open after the giants were cleared out that the river far below our hilltop is named the Wheatfield Fork, though wheat was planted for farm stock rather hay for livestock. The wood tannins from the bark of tanoak trees were in great demand for use in tanning leather. On the cleared hilltops, apples and sheep were farmed for commerce and row crops for subsistence. Annapolis was a boomtown with over 6,000 residents fueled in part by the US Army's demand for dried apples until the crash of 1919-1920.

The 1919-1920 economic collapse was agricultural in origin, resulting in a great exodus from our section of the coast and a consolidation of land holdings: 5,000 people had left Annapolis township by 1920, and most of their land was purchased by timber companies who had deep enough pockets to ride out economic downturns. Little did anyone suspect such a long-lasting downturn. Timber company rail lines fell into disuse and mills sat idle or were scrapped for parts. Salmon and deer multiplied and became staples in the local diet again. The Annapolis area was pretty quiet until after WWII, when the nation's economy emerged from the Depression and began to gather steam. The lumber mills started up again and resumed local economic importance.

By that time, of course, the interior of Sonoma County had become much more accessible to the markets of San Francisco. The railroads had already arisen to replace the schooner before the crash of '20, though a ferry ride across the San Francisco Bay was still required. Back then it took two days of travel along the northern coast to reach Duncan's Mills and the terminus of the rail line which could take you to the ferry docks on the bay. After 1945 and a lot of WPA road and bridge building, apple farming in Annapolis couldn't compete with farming in the interior. Today sheep are still raised around our parts at two neighbors' ranches. I have been told that wool prices have declined steadily since the 20's, but meat prices are reasonable. Timber remains the main source of economic activity and just barely at that. Mills have closed as the cost of logging has escalated as loggers abide by new regulations (a little late in most cases but welcome). A few vineyards have cropped up, though not many, as it is very hilly on the coast and zoning favors timber production. Annapolis' population hovers around 75 people. The "town" is a postage-sized post office and a school. It takes 45 minutes to reach the nearest store.

So what about our little hill top? Around 1900 Claus Petersen purchased this parcel from a Captain Sunberg, a schooner pilot who probably staked his claim to this parcel under the Timber and Mining Claims Act, not dissimilar to the Homestead Act of 1862. To stake a claim you surveyed your land, made some improvements, paid a ridiculously small fee, and the land was yours. Claus had daughters and at least one son, Pete, who stayed on, farming for a living until 1953 when he went to seek work for Pacific Gas & Electric. Pete's sons Mark and Dwight tell me the family continued to farm apples and raise sheep, just fewer head. The lambing barn was pulled down in 1957 for fear it would fall down. Apparently, their fears were misplaced, as the sturdy structure, built without a single nail, proved difficult to pull down. I still have a pile of timbers from that barn, one hundred years after they were milled, still resisting their return to earth. Split redwood picket fencing dating back to the early years parceled up the open fields into paddocks until I ripped most of it out to plant vineyards. We use the extra rails to repair the remaining fence. A picture of one of them is on our label. The compound where the lambing barn stood still has some fence on two sides and is quite picturesque, covered as it is with lichen moss.

Were grapes ever tried out here in the first part of the 20th century? Thus far, my research has not revealed anything conclusive. You can see vines crawling over the fence next to our one-room post office, surely dating from the mid 20th century. In comparison to our viticultural forbearers in Europe, we west coast grape growers are recently arrived interlopers, still looking for the best ground. It should come as no surprise then that we are only now closing in on suitable terroir. Our search for plantable acreage on the new frontier, the cutting edge of cool climate viticulture, was also a search for agricultural or formerly agricultural open space. The particular history of this far away site drew us here. It was the right place at the right time.



THE 2003 VINTAGE

The Quick Story: The majority of the 2003 growing season was slightly cooler than normal leading us to think we might harvest the Syrah during the very short and chilly days of November. During September, however, a small heat wave followed by a larger heat wave accelerated the tail end of the growing process such that harvest dates were quite typical with all of the blocks of Syrah in the winery by the 24th of October.

The Finer Details: The previous winter rains had filled the reservoir by early February, rainfall totaling 63" for the year - just about average for us. Budbreak was a tad tardy, starting in the third week of March instead of the second, and, mercifully, there were no frost events, though none are really expected this close to the coast, elevated as we are. I guess we're just gun-shy after the freak arctic blast that we received in 2001. Spring and early summer were generally free of blazing heat spells, so shoot thinning proceeded at an almost leisurely pace.

After more normal warming periods in June and predominantly mild weather in July, rain appeared in the first days of September after a cool-to-pleasant August. This moisture brought with it a little unease about the potential for rot in our pinot blocks. Yet, the Syrah had so far to go with sugar development that we were concerned about running out of ripening weather.

Fortunately, a switch was thrown in mid-September and warm sunny days arrived causing us to sharpen our picking knives and head full-tilt into harvest. The heat spell did not adversely affect us as we live on the vineyard and sample the fruit every day so no dehydration, spike in sugar, or drop in acid catches us off guard. Our crew is also full time so we can pick multiple small lots within a block to ensure ideal ripeness. On a typical day our crew of seven workers wakes with us at the pre-crack of dawn and by 9 a.m. we are usually finished with the pick and out sampling the remaining blocks.

The heat spell broke in late September and, as a result, the Syrah looked and tasted like it would ripen after all. October allowed us worry-free ripening, and the last Syrah came in on the 24th.

GOING LONG ON SIDEWAYS AND BONGO FOR MONDOVINO

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The second wine film of the year was the highly controversial yet amusing documentary "Mondovino". Filmmaker, Jon Nossiter, takes an Errol Morris/Michael Moore approach to reveal the true nature of people: simply point the camera at people and let the film roll, soon enough they will say something illuminating. The film is a globe-trotting, expansive journey to many of the world's wine regions linked by interviews with wine importers, winemaking consultants, critics, retailers, writers, and small and mega-sized wine producers. He does not simply record and report, though. This is a movie and he is a director. With some careful and deliberate editing, Nossiter puts forth his case: the state of modern wine is increasingly dictated by a form of globalization where market forces drive both large multinational wineries as well as smaller, endorsement-seeking producers to produce a certain homogeneous style of wine regardless of the fruit's provenance. The driving forces behind the movement towards this paradigm, the director posits, are the dominance of a certain powerful wine critic – and his preferred style(s) of wine – and the far reaching influence of a globally sought-after wine consultant who, the film argues, advocates a conforming aesthetic which supersedes individuality and distinctiveness of origin. They defend their roles as merely improving wine quality and consistency. The director wants the audience to recognize that not only are diversity of style based on expression of terroir disappearing but so is the notion of personal taste. As a result the filmmaker doesn't hide his bias towards the smaller, artisan wine producers. Neither does he hesitate to shine some light on the contrarian, contradictory, hypocritical and even envious sides to personalities that either resist or cave into this internationally imposed style. Nossiter contrasts the views of the small, mostly European wineries against the large, mostly American conglomerates as a battle of politics, culture and tradition. It may be biased and, at times, unfair. But there may be essences of truth threaded throughout the film. And, it is amusing.

Hmm, but what about the small, artisan producer from the U.S whose goal is to grow grapes and make wines that express their terroir, that exhibit their sense of place? Take Peay Vineyards, for example. Our style of vineyard and winery was not exhibited in Mondovino (American, small, artisan). We believe that our wines display the minerality in the nose and in the palate which is the hallmark of the expression of our coastal vineyard. The wines are distinctive and possess a bright acidity with an essence and purity of fruit. But wait, if the camera was turned on me, who knows what kind of babble might spew forth from my lips? I might be classified as a "terroir-ist" for my ideals or called an "indiginista" for my proclivity to fermentations using indigenous yeasts as I gather up the rebel forces against bland wine! Oh my, we better make sure the film is not rolling! Although, I must point out that I had one brief nano-second of a "cameo" in the film. But it definitely had less air time than any dog or goldfish. So, film buffs can try to spot me but you are more likely to find me roving around the vineyard, poised on top of a barrel in the winery or settling down in front of a delectable meal and glass of wine with Nick and Andy.

So, Hooray to Hollywood and Salud to Mondovino for their attempts to bring the cares of the wine world to the world at large. What's next, Michael Broadbent as Agent 007?



A FEW POINTS OF INTEREST

- We only make wine from our 48 acre, cool climate, hilltop vineyard located in the far north-western corner of the Sonoma Coast, 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean at Sea Ranch.
- We grow 33 acres of Pinot noir, 8 acres of Syrah, 5 acres of Chardonnay, 0.9 acres of Viognier, 0.4 acres of Roussanne and 0.2 acres of Marsanne.
- We sell fruit to 3 wineries including Williams Selyem Winery.
- Winemaker Vanessa Wong left Peter Michael Winery in 2001 to dedicate her efforts to making Peay Vineyards' wines.
- Nick, a UC Davis trained and veteran Santa Cruz Mtns. winemaker, is the vineyard manager and works side-by-side with our full-time crew.
- Though we are not certified organic, we make every effort to grow our fruit using codified sustainable vineyard practices with the addition of miniscule amounts of non-organic inputs. We continue to experiment with less invasive and environmentally friendly alternatives and convert our cultural practices when substitutes are deemed successful.
- The vineyard and winery are not a family heritage, they are the culmination of our 39 years working in the wine industry. We started it all from scratch and have dedicated our lives to it. Wine, and food, are our lives' work and passion.

WANT TO TRY OUR WINES AT A LOCAL RESTAURANT?

If you need a night away from the stove but do not want to go without a bottle of Peay Vineyards wine, here is a list of restaurants that pour at least one of our wines. In each newsletter, we will highlight a city's restaurants that offer our wines. This issue, the city of San Francisco.

A16	Indigo
Bacar	Jack Falstaff
Boulevard	Jardinière
Campton Place	Masa's
Delfina	Michael Mina Restaurant
Farallon	Plump Jack Café
Fifth Floor	Quince
Garibaldi's	Rubicon
Gary Danko	Tartare (renamed George)
Greens	The Ritz-Carlton Dining Room

YOUR LAST STUFFING RECIPE

After preparing this stuffing for Thanksgiving dinner —or on any occasion considering how wonderful whole roasted turkeys can be — you will experience the joy of preparing something truly wonderful mixed with the odd disappointment that you will never be able to experiment with stuffing again. This is your last stuffing as it is simply the best one you will ever make. Truly.

In the fall, we gather at the vineyard and attempt to use every culinary trick in our respective arsenals to out do one another during our four day Thanksgiving holiday (Vanessa, Nick, our mother, and me. Dad reads and chops wood). Oh, of course we come armed with heavenly white truffles, fat foie gras, and a cornucopia of mushrooms of every type, often foraged that day from our woods. We gather the freshest vegetables and the most succulent cuts of meat and for four days we cook, eat and drink non-stop. The only two dishes that have not varied in our yearly gathering are the turkey—and she is on shaky ground as goose and other fowl may shove her aside—and this stuffing. The recipe is adapted from Alfred Portale's cookbook, *The Gotham Bar and Grill*.

MASHED POTATO, SAUSAGE, AND CHANTERELLE STUFFING

Ingredients:

3 pounds Idaho or russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks

1 cup sour cream

12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter

1 1/4 cups thinly sliced shallots

4 garlic cloves, minced

2 1/2 pounds fresh chanterelle mushrooms, thinly sliced (can use other like trumpets, though not too strong a variety like shiitake)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 1/2 pounds sweet Italian sausage, casings removed

1 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1/2 cup chopped fresh chives

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme

1 1/4 teaspoons ground juniper berries (use a spice or coffee grinder. Wipe grinder first with dry paper towel)

Coarse salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste

Serves 12

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of slightly salted water to boil over high heat. Add the potatoes and cook until tender. 20-25 minutes. Drain well and return to the empty pot.

2. Stir the potatoes over medium heat until the excess moisture is evaporated and they seem somewhat drier, about 2 minutes. Pass through a potato ricer into a large bowl or mash with a potato masher. Mix in the sour cream and 8 tablespoons of the butter (1 stick).
3. In a large sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the remaining butter over medium-low heat. Add the shallots and garlic and cook until softened. Add to the potatoes.
4. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter in the sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms give off their liquid, it evaporates and they begin to brown, about 10-15 minutes. Add to the potatoes.
5. Heat the oil in the sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and cook breaking up chunks with a wooden spoon until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Add to the potatoes.
6. Add the parsley, chives, thyme, rosemary, and juniper berries, and season with salt and pepper to taste. The stuffing is best freshly prepared. Do not stuff the turkey until you are ready to roast.



PEAY VINEYARDS ORDER FORM

WINE	# OF BOTTLES	MAILING LIST PRICE	TOTAL
2003 SYRAH, ESTATE		\$45	
		TAX (SEE TABLE)	
		SHIPPING (SEE TABLE)	
		TOTAL	

MAILING ADDRESS (TO CONFIRM RECORDS):

NAME _____ STREET _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

SHIPPING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT) NO P.O.S. PREFER BUSINESS:

NAME _____ STREET _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____

GROUND

2 DAY

TAXES

BOTTLES	CA, OR	CO, ID, NM, NV, WA	CT, DC, FL, GA, IA, IL, MN, MO, ND, NH, OH*, SC, TX, VA, WI, WV	NY
2	15	15	17	24
3	15	16	20	31
4	17	19	23	37
5	18	21	28	39
6	20	23	29	42
7	21	25	31	50
8	23	26	37	52
9	24	28	38	54
10	26	29	41	57
11	28	32	44	59
12	30	33	47	64

CA, OR	CO, ID, NM, NV, WA	CT, DC, FL, GA, IA, IL, MN, MO, ND, NH, OH*, SC, TX, VA, WI, WV	AK, HI
19	20	24	35
22	25	31	43
27	30	36	53
29	33	39	56
30	36	42	59
34	38	50	66
35	41	51	72
36	42	54	76
40	44	57	81
41	46	59	86
44	48	64	88

GA, VA	6.50%
OH*, SC	7.00%
CA	7.75%
ND, NH, NV	8.00%
CT, FL, HI, NY, TX	TBD

*Until the Ohio legislature determines how to control direct shipping, you will need to call me and I will fax you the direct shipper permit document.

Shipping: We changed shipping fulfillment companies. This will, hopefully, lead to less hassle and cost for you though it may exclude a few customers from receiving wine DIRECTLY FROM US in their state. If you are one of the excluded, we do apologize. Please call us to discuss shipping options. We may be able to use a third party shipper that can legally ship to you. If you live in NY, TX, FL, and OH, your legislatures are still working on policies regarding direct shipping so these prices are guidelines, please call us and we will see what the latest information is for shipping to you We will begin shipping in late October/early November.

Ordering: Please fill out this order form and fax or mail it to us. You can also order your allocation at our web site. Instructions are on the front page of this newsletter. **We can not accept orders by phone or email.** Please be sure the address you provide is able to receive wine by mail. Though it is not required, if possible, please order in increments of 3 for ease of shipping.

Mail: Peay Vineyards, 1117B S. Cloverdale Blvd. #172, Cloverdale, CA 95425

Fax: 707-894-8723

Phone: 707-894-8720

Email: andy@peayvineyards.com

How to Pay: We prefer checks but we also accept MasterCard, Discover and Visa. No corporate credit cards or AMEX, please.

Name on CC: _____ **CC#:** _____ **Exp. Date:** _____

Billing Address for CC (if different than mailing): _____

3 Digit Credit Card Verification Code (on back of card): _____ **Signature:** _____

Our wine can be sold and delivered only to people who are at least 21 years of age. In placing your order and **signing below**, you represent to us that you are at least 21 years old and that the person to whom delivery will be made is at least 21 years old. When the wine is delivered, the person receiving the wine will be required to prove that he/she is 21 years old. **Signature:** _____

