The idea of terroir is controversial and ambiguous, to say the least. Some claim there is no terroir in California. Others that terroir equals limestone or gravel or clay. And there are those who believe it is all a marketing ploy to create scarcity that enable terroirists to charge high prices for their “artisanal” wines. We have our own opinions gained from years working with various vineyards and our feelings do not align with any of the three above. But, we will save them for a newsletter ten years from now when we can speak more authoritatively and knowledgeably from working closely, day in and day out, with fruit from our own vineyard.

We do know that most young vine wines, no matter where you grow them, tend to emphasize fruity over non-fruity characteristics. Why is that? Is the vine more focused on establishing a root system and trunk and thereby sends less energy toward reproduction in the form of flowers and grapes? Are the shallow roots unable to pull as many nutrients from the soil? Has the vine gathered less essence from its brief life in this plot of earth? The answers are unclear. Despite the relatively young age of our vines (now entering their 9th year), we have found a certain non-fruit, mineral character that shows up in the mid palate of all of our Peay Vineyard Estate wines, consistently from year to year, and also present in the wines made by wineries who buy Peay Vineyards fruit. Is that our terroir showing its form? We think so. For now, all we can say is this character has become more distinctive. In each successive vintage, taking into consideration all other factors including the vintage, our wines have become more complex and expressive.

We had an opportunity to see this development when we tasted all of our wines from 2001 to 2004 with Eric Asimov, a wine writer from The New York Times. What an experience to see how they had evolved with time in the bottle and also in style from one vintage to the next. Eric subsequently wrote a lovely, in-depth piece on the Sonoma Coast and was kind enough to highlight Peay Vineyards. You can find the article on our web site, if you missed it. Food & Wine magazine also felt the vineyard creates wine of note and recognized Peay Vineyards as one of the 10 Best Vineyards in an article in their December issue. We thank them for the honor and are committed to earning that reputation.

A few mailing list customers have asked about the winery construction. We thought it might be interesting to take a look at it so we posted a brief slide show of the winery construction process in the Our Wines section of our web site www.peayvineyards.com. You will also find a slide show in the Vineyard section of the site that follows a single vine throughout the growing season.

As for the growing season, this vintage may have produced our first classic vintage. To us the wines are elegant, balanced and enjoyable when young but have the structure to evolve and develop for years to come. In each issue of our newsletter we focus on one of our varieties in the articles and recipe. Since this is our first “real” release of Chardonnay, we welcome you to the Chardonnay issue. Thank you again for your interest in Peay Vineyards.

2004 PINOT NOIR ESTATE, SONOMA COAST

The 2004 Estate Pinot noir is a blend of 7th leaf selections/clones of 115 (29%), Pommard (29%), 667 (20%), 777 (12%), Swan (8%), and Calera (2%). Yes, this is the first year 777 has made it into the final blend. Yields were customarily very low at 2 tons per acre depending on the block and clone. The various lots were picked separately from August 28th
to September 24th. The clusters were hand sorted and destemmed, whole berry, in 1 and 3 ton open top fermenters. A 3-day cold soak was followed by a 14 to 21-day fermentation with punch downs only, no pump overs. The wine was raised for 11 months in 42% new French oak consisting of François Frères, Remond, Ermitage, Cadus, Marsannay and Damy barriques. The finished alcohol is 14.0% (13.98% for those who are sticklers).

In the 2004, the aromatic lift is intense and the fruit concentration deep, even more so than in the 2003 Estate Pinot noir. The nose is bright and feminine with cherry and cranberry notes highlighted by an Indian spice quality, perhaps, tamarind. The complexity of the nose continues to reveal itself with more time spent in the glass. The mouth feel is full with a cherry core accented by dried needles and brown spices, again with a hint of Indian spice, lead minerality, and a touch of sarsaparilla. The soft tannins are persistent and will soften with a few years in bottle. It is not a syrupy or jammy style of Pinot noir. The fruits are red not black. The acidity and relatively low alcohol keep the wine lively. There is elegance, balance, richness and pinosity without heaviness. Volume without weight, we like to say.

This wine can be enjoyed on release—especially for its aromatic qualities — yet is built to age for years, and will do so gracefully. If you drink a bottle on release—which we recommend so you can gauge the style and age-ability—we suggest you decant for at least 45 minutes or longer for the palate to integrate and broaden.

2004 CHARDONNAY ESTATE, SONOMA COAST  610 CASES

In the past we were not able to pick the various Chardonnay lots separately or select an assortment of coopers for aging. We made only two barrels. In 2004 we finally had all 5 acres of our estate vineyard for our own production. We picked the Chardonnay from August 30th through September 9th making several passes in the same rows and same vines to ensure even ripeness. On page three of this newsletter, Vanessa explains why this extreme degree of attention was spent and also catalogues the qualities of the clones in the 2004 and their contribution to the final blend. The fruit was whole cluster pressed and fermented with 100% indigenous yeast in in 38% new French oak consisting of François Frères, Chalufour, Remond and Damy barriques. The wine underwent 100% malo-lactic fermentation and was bottled 11 months from harvest unfined and unfiltered.

The nose is elegant, full and ripe with white fig, baked apple and pear focused by a lime and limestone core. The oak is well integrated without the overt characteristics of butter, vanilla, raw wood, or char common to California Chardonnay. A slight hint of hazelnut, brioche, grapefruit and kumquat develop in the nose and carry through on the palate as the wine opens. The wine is well structured with vivacity and mouth watering acidity. Almond, lime, and stone fruit linger in your mouth. The finish is very long.

You can drink the Chardonnay on release. It will also be interesting to see how it evolves over the next few years.

2004 ROUSSANNE/MARSANNE ESTATE, SONOMA COAST  90 CASES

The 2004 is a blend of 68% Roussanne and 32% Marsanne picked in the final week of September. The wine was co-fermented using only indigenous yeast in four neutral barrels and underwent 100% malo-lactic fermentation. The wine was raised for 11 months in neutral French oak barrels and was bottled unfined and unfiltered.

The Roussanne/Marsanne is vibrant and floral with notes of beeswax, honey, biscuit, jasmine, marzipan and pear. The mouth feel is smooth though the 2004 has less glycerin than the 2003 (as well as less alcohol.) The acidity is lively with an oily, chalky, mineral mid-palate. The finish is quite long. The result is a superbly balanced, harmonious and elegant blend that is drinking surprisingly well right now though it has the structure to age well.

2004 VIOGNIER ESTATE, SONOMA COAST  80 CASES

The 0.9 acre block of Condrieu and Geneva clone Viognier sits on the top of the knoll soaking up any available sun rays. In 2004 we picked the Viognier at the end of the heat wave on September 9th. The wine was whole cluster pressed and was fermented with 100% indigenous yeast for 11 months in four neutral oak barrels and underwent 100% malo-lactic fermentation. It was bottled unfined and unfiltered.

The Viognier was a little riper than in 2003 and, as far as fruit profile, has more in common with our 2002 Viognier. The nose expresses lifted floral notes with snap pea, raw coconut, cardamom, melon, and candied ginger aromas. The mouth feel is rich with crisp acidity and limestone minerality—the hallmark of our Viognier—that creates a certain vivacity on the tongue. The fruit progresses from pineapple and white peach to Asian pear and mandarin orange as it carries across the palate. As with most Viognier, we suggest you drink it on release to capture its complexity and charm.
Once when studying Viticulture and Enology at U.C. Davis, I interviewed for a scholarship from Gallo or some other large winery and was asked the question, “What variety of wine would you most like to make?” I was a little flummoxed because, so far, the interview was going very well. My previous response that I planned to study and travel in France the following academic year was met with the approving, “Hmmm’s”, “I sees…” and “ah, very goods.” With this question I was stumped. It had not occurred to me that I ever had to pick just one wine I wanted to make so I had not thought about it very much. I plum didn’t really know. I had not yet had my Pinot Epiphany nor heard the Siren Song of Syrah. But not having an answer was certain interview death so I thought quickly and recalled that the night before I had just tasted a vineyard designated Chardonnay, a 1987 Acacia Marina Vineyard. It was somewhat of a revelatory experience for me. Here was a wine that had a provenance from a single specific locale, a concept not entirely unknown to American wineries but certainly not a widespread practice. Because I was intrigued with this concept of single vineyard wine, I answered that I wanted to make Chardonnay “because it seemed to be a variety that held a lot of potential stylistically.” Uh-oh. Furrowed brows, pursed lips: not the answer they were seeking. I honestly cannot remember if they ended up giving me the scholarship because the stern group concluded that it was a decent answer after all or they thought it was just too weird of an answer and I must be an idiot savant.

Sometimes when I think of Chardonnay, that old Prince song (when he was actually known as Prince before he was the artist formally known as Prince) pops into my head, except that I unconsciously insert “Chardonnay” where “lover” ought to be:

“You need another Chardonnay like you need a hole in yo head…”

Or as my husband Nick always says, “Does the world really need another Chardonnay?” Maybe that’s what the humorless group that interviewed me prognosticated and viewed me as enologically unimaginative. I was downright dull; I may as well have said that I aspired to make vanilla ice cream. At the time, no one knew just how ubiquitous Chardonnay was going to become. Nor did I know that my answer to the interview question would be, in the end, somewhat prophetic and that I was indeed going to work with Chardonnay for the duration of my winemaking career.

My career started favorably enough, however, as I had the rare opportunity to work with the late Greg Upton who pioneered “Cuvée Sauvage” Chardonnay. My job was to monitor all the lots that made Cuvée Sauvage. This was a wine made with “wild” yeast, or rather, with juice that was not inoculated with commercially selected and industrially prepared yeast, the latter a common practice in winemaking then and now. I noticed that the Cuvée Sauvage lots had a certain texture that wasn’t quite the same as the regular lots of Chardonnay fermented with commercially selected yeast. But it wasn’t until I made wine at the veritable “House of Chardonnay”, Peter Michael Winery, where every lot of Chardonnay was vinified separately, each as an indigenous lot and also one that was inoculated, that I was truly able to distinguish what the indigenous fermentation lent to the character of the wine. By having this comparison of the two winemaking techniques for every single grape lot from every vineyard for five vintages I was able to get a good feel for defining what sort of Chardonnay fruit was most fitting for this sort of winemaking. The lots that were fermented with indigenous yeast were better integrated texturally and possessed a certain seamlessness on the palate. This was not the case for all of the lots, however. In some instances, the indigenous yeast wines were broader, not as vibrant as their inoculated counterparts. This was the reason that un-inoculated fermentation was not the protocol for all the Chardonnay lots. This incidence had a lot to do with the acidity of the grapes, or the lack thereof. With the Chardonnay grapes that we grow in the cool climate of our vineyard on the Sonoma Coast, the acidity is quite present and the broadening and smoothing element of the indigenous yeast lends a perfect counter-balance.

“Isn’t it rich? Aren’t we a pair…”

So, when I first tasted the Chardonnay grapes from our vineyard, I was really quite struck by the intensity of the flavors and I said to myself, “The world may not need another flabby, oaky, buttery Chardonnay but could really enjoy one made from these grapes!”

Continued on page 5
NOWHERE TO RUN, NOWHERE TO...HYDE?
- WINEGROWER NICK PEAY

It was by chance that I became a Chardonnay specialist. I showed up for the 1993 harvest at Newton Vineyards and on the first day winemaker John Kongsgaard assigned us our roles, “you, Merlot boy, you, Chardonnay boy.” Boy, did I get lucky, huh? Newton was only my third crush job and it followed a long hiatus at UC Davis where I was imbued with the chemistry and biology of wine but had not advanced any further in honing the skills of the craft. My own little personal intellectual renaissance had just about run its course: though I still found a scientific approach to wine interesting, I was ready to get back to acquiring the knowledge that has been accruing over the past century in the cellars of generations of artisans.

So from Cabernet Sauvignon and Sparkling crush jobs, and a dinner table that was graced with Graves rather than Bourgogne blanc, I came to Newton green but enthusiastic. Not that I hadn’t consumed my share of Chardonnay up to that point, only now I was paying closer attention. Fortunately, the ’93 harvest at Newton proved to be an immersion course. A perk at Newton was the daily seated white tablecloth lunch served by an in-house chef hired just for the harvest. Presiding over this feast was Sir Peter, who would pour wine from his impressive and sometimes obscure cellar. Does a 1972 Sterling Pinot Chardonnay sound curious? Early on, Californians called their Chardonnay such a name. On one occasion, one of Sir Peter’s guests poured a 1991 Lafon Meursault that proved to be deliciously reminiscent of the 1991 Newton Unfiltered. A little surreptitiously, John saved the last little bit and sent me to the lab to analyze it. Not terribly romantic to measure the pH after a fine meal and bottle of wine, is it? Alas.

John had gathered together an impressive collection of vineyard sources for Newton’s Chardonnay program. The room beneath Sir Peter’s rose garden became my domain, a cool, dark cellar of pyramid-stacked French oak barrels, some well-known cooperages, some quite esoteric. It was there that I learned the cellar craft of traditional Chardonnay making. It was also there that my curiosity about clones was piqued. I pestered John about the vineyard sites: how their climates varied, what clones were planted in each, what soils were predominant, and the average age of the vines. I observed the widely varying cluster morphology as we loaded the fruit into the press. And, as one must, I spent a lot of time tasting through the lots before and during their transformation from juice to wine.

John favored a selection called Old Wente, a field selection from pre-Prohibition days that traveled a multi-path route through various vineyards providing offspring that expressed a number of subtle variations with various names. Since this selection was virused, at one point someone brought it to the UC Davis Department of Foundation Plant Material Services to be heat-treated to create a series of clones. To heat-treat, cuttings from a single vine (so that they are genetically homogeneous) are planted in pots and subjected to wet heat for a period of days, sometimes forty or more. The vines that don’t die are tested for virus and, if found to be clean, are numbered and released for propagation. Vines removed from heat treatment after different lengths of time are assigned separate numbers. UCD 4 and UCD 5 are examples of two unequal heat treatments of the Old Wente selection. Because the vines, grapes and wines from the pre and post heat treatment are distinct, it is reasonable to expect that the difference main between them is the presence and absence of virus. There has been the suspicion, though, that the heat alters the plant genome as well as killing the virus, and this view is supported by the particulars of the plant material from different length heat treatments: if both 4 and 5 are rid of their virus, why are the vines and the wines made from them not the same?

We have a selection of Old Wente known as Hyde, named for the pioneering grower who identified individual plants with desirable characteristics in his block of Old Wente and propagated new blocks with this material. We know that every year the grape clusters will have tiny berries and that the wine will deliver a taut mineral backbone with a white peach infused fleshy breadth that fills the mid-palate. Our lightest yielding clone, sometimes painfully low, it’s definitely worth the extra cost and effort.

When growing wine grapes, the pace of learning is slow, it takes years, sometimes decades to understand what is happening in your little plot on a hill. As a result, following the latest fashion and trend is not a conducive environment for learning about the finest Chardonnay selection for your vineyard site. We may just discover that the best clone for our site comes from old material that has been passed around the state for a long time. As with most things, often a combination of the wisdom from previous generations combined with the advances of the new result in the ultimate expression.
The 2004 vintage started and ended abruptly with atypical warm fronts but, all in all, we had pretty good growing weather throughout the summer.

The most peculiar feature occurred in the spring, which started out with record high temperatures in the first two weeks of March. The young shoots pushed skyward far ahead of schedule. This brief weather trend came to an end and, as typical for us, sometime in the spring, cool weather settled in causing a temporary yellowing of the shoot tips, something we call "spring fever."

Cool, damp weather is not unusual for the months of March and April, but more often than not by the time flowering typically comes along at the end of May, the weather is mild and pleasant, suitable for good fruit set. As we were two to three weeks early, flowering took place while the weather was still a bit cool and damp and the flowers set under two tons to the acre. As a result, other than to balance the vines’ crop load and to drop lagging clusters at verasion, no fruit dropping (green harvesting) was necessary this year.

The rest of the summer was fairly normal - cool. There were not any unusual weather patterns or heat spikes, generally just the pattern of morning fog followed by a warm late morning sun tempered by cool afternoon ocean breezes.

Throughout August the fruit slowly approached perfect ripeness. As sometimes happen, a switch was thrown and we were hurled into frantic action. Around Labor Day, nine days of off shore heat blasted California and we picked the Pinot noir, Viognier, and Chardonnay flat out until the majority was in by September 9th. Though the fruit was perfect (no shriveling, good acidity, advanced phenologics, mature fruit flavors), the calendar was all wrong - we were two and a half weeks early! A few, small blocks of Pinot coasted through the heat wave and were harvested on September 24th around the same time as the bucket or two of Roussanne and Marsanne. The Syrah came along in early October, a few weeks after the Pinot, as is normal and as is normal at a much more relaxed pace. Except for a flat tractor tire on Labor Day, all in all, harvest went smoothly.

ANOTHERLOVERHOLEINYOHEAD

During the raising of the 2004 Chardonnay, I was very excited about the individual lots that make up the final 2004 Chardonnay blend. We grow five different clones of Chardonnay, each displaying its unique characteristic. As we monitored the ripeness of flavor in the various clonal blocks of Chardonnay, we noted that not only were there differences between the clones, but also that within certain clones, the clusters of the renewal canes, because of the way that they had flowered in the spring of that vintage, were not at the same ripeness as the other clusters in the same vine. So although it was more work and effort, we not only picked the clones separately, we made 2 passes through specific sections to pick certain clusters within the vine separately. It was important enough for us to do this to optimize the flavors of the grapes. This level of attention to detail is not just an indication of my unhealthy obsessive neurosis over when to harvest but, to me, is a reflection of a continuing and deepening understanding of how our vineyard grows, i.e. its quirks and patterns and what we need to do to work in harmony and benefit from our terroir. Although the clones display individual character, what they have in common is a pronounced minerality in the nose and on the palate which I think is the hallmark of the expression of our coastal vineyard. They each, however, lend an intriguing personality to the final blend. The Dijon 96 clone offers a fresh grapefruit and pear expression while the Robert Young clone provides a richer stone fruit character. The Dijon 95 clone lends a citrusy lime element while the Dijon 76 clone has a sort of spicy pear and fig note. The Hyde clone, as Nick describes in his column, contributes the mineral backbone to the blend.

Having worked with a lot of Chardonnay, I really feel that growing Chardonnay at our vineyard yields fruit that make distinctive wines with good acidity and with essence and purity. So having given you my mental wanderings about clones, terroir, indigenous yeast and what makes our wine distinct, I would like to introduce you to “The Wine Formally Known as Chardonnay”!
**A FEW POINTS OF INTEREST**

- We only make wine from our 48 acre hilltop vineyard located above a river gorge in the far northwestern 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 her position as winemaker at Peter Michael Winery in 2001 to dedicate her efforts to making Peay Vineyards’ wines.
- Nick, a UC Davis trained and veteran Santa Cruz mountains 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. We continue to experiment with less invasive, organic 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 result of our combined 39 years working in the wine industry. We started it from scratch and have dedicated our lives to it. Wine, and food, are our lives’ work and passions.

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<th>CRAFT WINEMAKER DINNER &amp; RESTAURANTS IN YOUR AREA—NYC</th>
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<tr>
<td>On March 7th, Craft restaurant is teaming up with winemaker Vanessa Wong for a winemaker dinner. Please call Craft for reservations. If you are interested in finding our wine in your State, check the web site for a list of restaurants. In this issue, we highlight our restaurants in New York.</td>
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**LA TOQUE**: **CRAB AND SCALLOP STEW IN A GOLDEN PUFF PASTRY**

We were pulling out all the stops. I was making a Chinese-style fish dish paired with a few excellent Austrian Rieslings. The red Rhônes and Pinot noirs would match perfectly with the stuffed and grilled rack of lamb. We had a couple of old Bordeaux for the cheese course. Now I needed a course for the crisp Chardonnays (a Meursault and a high acid Californian).

I started to think crab. It was Dungeness season on the West Coast and we had trays of crab available at $4.99/lb at the local Chinese market. As I handled the ling cod for the fish course a couple of beautiful scallops glistened at me. I bit. But it can’t be just a seafood stew! Hmm. How about puff pastry? It always silences a crowd when a dish covered in a puff pastry hits the table. The child in us can’t wait to peek inside. The rest of the ingredients just fell into place. This is not as difficult as it sounds because you can, ahem, mumble, buy the puff pastry dough. I recommend Dufour. It is excellent (widely available) and works in a pinch. For the purists, I suggest Julia Child’s basic puff pastry recipe. Show offs.

**Ingredients:**

1. Ask the fishmonger to remove and crack the claws and legs. Use the bottom pincer from one of the legs as a pick to remove the meat. For the body, turn the crab over so the white belly is facing up. At the bottom, pull the crab tab up and away from the bottom to remove the shell (the fishmonger may have done this for you.) Rinse the body cavity. Split the body in half. Then split each side of the body into four slices like a pie (corresponds to the 4 legs and splits very easily). Pick. Nibble. Drink champagne (or Peay Viognier!)

2. In a 5 qt sauce pan melt 1 1/2 tablespoons of butter. Add the fennel, leeks and shallots and sauté on medium heat for 10 minutes or until translucent and sweet. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

3. Add the ginger to the sauce pan and continue to sauté for 3 minutes. Add 3/4 cup white wine and continue for 5 minutes.

4. Add the coconut milk, cream, lemon grass, lemon juice, curry and nutmeg and reduce the heat to a simmer. Stir and monitor so it does not boil over.

5. In the meantime, remove one of the puff pastry dough from the fridge and unfold. Place on a counter covered with flour and roll out until it is big enough to make 4 lids for the ramekins. Use a bowl a little bigger than the ramekins to cut out the lids like a cookie cutter.

6. After 5-10 minutes taste the broth and remove the lemon grass stalks if the flavor is too pronounced. Add the salt and pepper and chives.

7. Place a large lump of crab meat and 6 scallop pieces in each ramekin until the meat almost fills the entire dish. Spoon the broth over the meat until it is 3/4 way up the side of the ramekin.

*The name of the dish refers to its appearance and is not affiliated with the excellent restaurant of the same name in Rutherford, CA.*
PEAY VINEYARDS ORDER FORM

WINE | ALLOCATION | BOTTLES | PRICE | TOTAL | DESIRED ADDITIONAL BOTTLES
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
2004 PINOT NOIR, ESTATE | 9 | 2004 CHARDONNAY, ESTATE | 9 | 2004 ROUSSANNE/MARSANNE, ESTATE | 3 | 2004 VIognier, ESTATE | 3

ORDERING: Your allocation is the maximum amount you may purchase in this release and is not guaranteed to you, so please order as soon as possible to be sure you get the wine you’d like (I hope to be able to have the technology to guarantee allocations next release). You can order online at www.peayvineyards.com by using your user name and password. Your user name is the email address you entered when signing up to the mailing list. The password was emailed to you the first time you used the online wine shop. If you have never used the online wine shop or lost your password, please go to the web site and enter the wine shop. Instructions will tell you how to receive a new password and order. You can, of course, fill out this order form and mail or fax it to:

Mail: 1117B S. Cloverdale Blvd #172, Cloverdale, CA 95425 Fax: 707-894-8723

SHIPPING: If your state is not listed below, please email Andy at andy@peayvineyards.com to discuss shipping options. We will begin shipping in early March.

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MAILING ADDRESS (TO CONFIRM RECORDS AND FOR CREDIT CARD):
NAME __________________________ STREET __________________________
CITY ___________________________ STATE ________________ ZIP _________ PHONE ____________

SHIPPING ADDRESS (NO P.O.S., PREFER BUSINESS):
NAME __________________________ STREET __________________________

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

Name on CC: ____________________________ CC#: ____________________________ Exp. Date: __________________________
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: ____________________________ Thank you.