

**Subject:** Orangewood Wines Newsletter - Volume 3, Issue 28 – June 22nd, 2009  
**Sent:** Monday, June 22, 2009, 10:43 AM

## Introduction

The votes are in and they have been counted. Orangewood Wines will be transitioning to use the tag line “Small Wineries, Great Wines”.

## Box Score

New Restaurants:	2
New Retail/Wine Bar Outlets:	1
New Sales People:	0
New Wineries	1

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## New Restaurants

### [Buffalo Pointe Restaurant](#)

437 West Route 66  
Williams, AZ 86046  
(800) 973-6210

### [Pasto Cucina Italiana](#)

19 East Aspen Avenue ·  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
(928) 779-1937

## New Retail/Wine Bar Outlets

### [Uptown Billiards](#)

114 North Leroux Street,  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
(928) 773-0551

## **New Winery**

### **Riverbench**

Riverbench Vineyard was established in 1973, when its first Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes were planted on the property. For years since then, some of the most renowned wineries in Santa Barbara County have purchased Riverbench fruit for their own wines. Over time Riverbench has become a prominent name for high quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in the Santa Maria Valley.

In 2004 a group of local families purchased the property. Wine drinkers themselves, the owners quickly became enamored with the wine industry and decided to start producing their own wine label using small quantities of their exceptional fruit. Riverbench Winery was born.

Chuck Ortman is their consulting winemaker.

## **Wine Varietal of the Month – Merlot**

Merlot, the varietal much maligned in the movie “Sideways”, is one of the five Bordeaux varieties. Bordeaux varieties are so called because they are the ones permitted in the great French wines from Bordeaux. (The other four are Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec – but you know that.) Merlot was formerly used primarily as a blending grape, its softness offsetting the sometimes harsh Cabernet Sauvignon. Then it became a popular grape in its own right as more people began drinking wine and liked the easy drinking that came with its softness. When a market trend emerges it takes several years for wineries to re-graft their vines and get a new wine to market. Not all the efforts were successful and a lot of mediocre Merlot appeared on the market. I was taking a Merlot around a few years ago and Tom Hamilton at *phoenixwine* said “another weak flabby Merlot?” No, I said, try it. After he found the sample to be worthy he started complaining about the price. There is no pleasing Tom!

Ask your trusted wine supplier to recommend a good Merlot with structure. Take it home; make sure that it is not too warm. Phoenix room temperatures are too warm, so pop it in the fridge for half an hour. Now it is ready for whatever you have in mind. It is a perfectly good wine to drink without accompaniment but will also pair very nicely with non-spicy dishes. I think of good Merlot like a good Cabernet Sauvignon – in fact, I once opened and served a Merlot instead of a Cab by mistake – no one noticed. I sometimes slip one into a blind tasting of Cabernet Sauvignons at our staff tastings...

Incidentally, the revered wine in the “Sideways” movie was Château Cheval Blanc, a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc. It was an inside joke. The Merlot producers were not amused.

Orangewood Wines carries several stunning Merlots:

- Praxis (Alexander Valley, CA),
- Barlow Vineyards (Calistoga, CA)
- Kestrel Vintners (Yakima Valley, WA).
- Culley Collection (Waiheke Island, New Zealand)
- Jenke Vineyards (Barossa Valley, Australia)

## **Rambling**

Our backyard in Cave Creek has been the site of several birds' nests. One pair of Cardinals decided that our Bougainvillea was a good site. For my taste their orange-red colouring clashes with the purple-red of the bush. I guess feng shui is not important to some species.

As mentioned in the introduction we have selected the tag line “Small Wineries, Great Wines”. All of the tag lines suggested and the additional ones proposed can be viewed as ambiguous if viewed in the wrong context. As our primary customers are restaurants and fine wine stores they know we are distributors so for them there is no confusion. I also liked this particular tagline because the cadence is a little different. Laurie is going to send a case of wine to the winner with the message “Thanks, Dad”. I want to thank all of you for taking the time to give us your thoughts and opinions.

The Rambler rambles on...

From all of us at Orangewood Wines,

Richard (newsletter writer), Laurie (editor) and Jim Wallace (another editor)  
Orangewood Wines