

Subject: *Orangewood Wines Newsletter - Volume 3, Issue 8 – April 29th, 2007*

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Introduction

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7353 E Indian School Road,
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(480) 308-1100

[Intermezzo](#)

5350 E Broadway Blvd # 128
Tucson, AZ 85711
(520) 748-8100

New Sales People

Jim had been breaking into and developing accounts in Prescott, Jerome, Cottonwood, Sedona and the north valley for over 3 years. At tax time he gave a hard look at the costs and benefits and decided it was time to retire - again. Thank you, Jim, for your help. Meanwhile, I will be covering the Northern Arizona accounts and looking for someone to take over. If you know someone who might be interested.

Rambling

This month I took a ramble to California. I needed to visit a couple of wineries, return some wine and do my stupid thing for the month. I asked for volunteers to help with the drive, but everyone else was smarter than I was.

I started off before 5 AM on a Friday morning, getting through Phoenix before the freeways clogged up. I was out of range of the local NPR station before getting to the California border, but I had brought a stack of CDs. This was the stack that had accumulated on top of the home CD player over the last year or so because I had not put them back in their cases after playing them. I inserted the first CDs and worked my way through the stack. Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd were first up with a *Girl from Ipanema*. Next, Django Reinhart, whose music seems dated and reminiscent of old black and white movies. Eric Clapton's *Unplugged* version of Leila continues to baffle me – I just can't relate it to the original. The Pretenders had me going back to Ohio, but the Moody Blues have a much richer sound. Kris Kristofferson's lyrics include "I watched small kid cussing at a can he was kicking". The Meridian Arts Ensemble's CD is appropriately called "Smart went Crazy", at least the crazy part. Count Basie and his orchestra finally board A-Train for me. Garrick Olsen's rendition of Chopin's Preludes reminds me that I should really spend some time at the piano again.

I have reached E Minor and [Buttonwood Farm Winery](#) in Solvang. This is a recent addition to our portfolio and is a key reason for the drive. I have visited every winery we represent except this one. I met with Sherrill, who is a friend of our sales consultant, Beth. She tasted me on their Rosé and drove me around their wines and winery. She told me about their emphasis on sustainable winemaking and gave me two bucket hats that Laurie and I will wear on our hike down the Grand Canyon (but that's another story). Sherrill also told me that they have a new winemaker, Karen Steinwachs. Karen had been helping at wineries and with wine making for several years, most recently assisting Kathy Joseph at Fiddlehead Cellars in the Santa Rita Hills. The previous winemaker, Michael Brown, had become too busy since his own winery appeared in the movie Sideways.

Talking of Sideways, [Blackjack Ranch Vineyards and Winery](#) was less than 2 miles away, so I stopped by to try their 2004 Harmonie. I brought 2 bottles back to see what the Arizonans think.

Back on the road again I continued with Chopin. Franz Ferdinand was the next CD and I think someone must have left this CD in the player - perhaps Marshal and Julie? Leo Kottke, of whom it was asked "Who are those guys," was the next CD - bought because we saw him in concert.

I pulled off the road at Paso Robles. I had skipped the recommended Santa Barbara taco stand because the line was too long, but just off Route 101, there was a little Mexican Restaurant. The food was wonderful and authentic. I discovered a new indicator of authenticity - the Tecate was priced as a domestic beer.

Continuing North on 101, The Eagles are always worth the time if just for their Mercedes Benz pun. Frank Sinatra from his 50th Birthday party shows his class from the brim to the dregs. Rod Stewart, also Unplugged, has a song that I remember a college mate singing incessantly 40 years ago – something about Shorty cutting across. Darren Motamedy includes percussion by The Eccentric Gourmet himself – Phill Christian. The last CD was Peter Gabriel who had a couple of wonderful videos on MTV at the time – so long ago. Why aren't songs and videos like that still being produced?

On Saturday I drove up to [Frank Family Vineyards](#) to collect a case of champagne, available only at the tasting room on Larkmead Lane at the north end of Napa Valley. We gave a bottle to each of our top restaurants and wine stores as a thank you. The tasting room is always such a hoot, Dennis was holding forth to a group from Scottsdale.

On the second pass through the CDs I was listening again to the Pretenders as it started to rain on my way to the [Boeger Winery](#) in Placerville. Their tasting room was like Paddington station at rush hour, despite the rain. I planned to head south on Route 49 – named after the Forty-niners – but within a couple of miles someone had managed to flip his Jeep on its side. He remained inside waiting for help. After half an hour of getting wet and feeling helpless, I went back to Boeger where they graciously invited bedraggled me to a dinner that Justin Boeger and Carl Keinert were hosting for the Vino Volo managers. Vino Volo is a new company that is setting wine lounges in airports where fine wine and light fare are available to passengers. The dinner was catered magnificently by David Bagley of the Sequoia restaurant in Placerville, with wine pairings of many of the Boeger Wines.

On Sunday I successfully completed the drive down Route 49. With hardly any traffic I was able to dawdle my way south as the sun shone through the still wet trees and hedges. A little mist hung in the hollows and I saw cows and horses, goats and even a turkey. My destination was [Young's Vineyard](#) where we met to talk about their 2005 vintage. They are sold out of the 2004 but I still have some. Part of my mission was replenishing their library which they sold in a moment of exuberance. Negotiations on my allocations completed, I headed back to Phoenix for a beer (12 hours later). All in a weekends work.

In UK they used to have a TV program called the Old Grey Whistle Test. So what tune did this old grey find himself whistling the day after listening to 16 CDs three times each during my drive: Moody Blues "It's more the way that you mean it when you tell me what will be."

Finally, to follow up on our Grand Canyon trip, we hiked down from the South Rim with 18 other people and 24 bottles of wine for a couple of days at Phantom Ranch. While not planned, one of the days was my birthday. It was also the day that Floyd Brooks died. Floyd and his partner, Debbie, were the reason we moved to Cave Creek. We will miss Floyd, a gentleman and a cowboy.

From all of us at Orangewood Wines

Richard (newsletter writer) and Laurie (editor)
Orangewood Wines