



INTENSE RED WINE CLUB



Panza Syrah Stags' Leap

Napa Valley 2005 \$24.99

Pretense Petite Sirah

Solano County 2009 \$20.99

Both of these wines are second labels of Quixote Winery in the Stags' Leap district in southern Napa off of Silverado Trail. Carl Doumani was one of the founding fathers of the Stags' Leap AVA back in 1969 along with Warren Winiarski. Carl founded Stags' Leap Winery. Warren started Stag's Leap Cellars. The two battled for YEARS over the stupid apostrophe and where it was placed. Both rose to fame with their amazing wines – both eventually sold the wineries to large corporations. Quixote was the portion of vineyard that Carl retained from the sale and started making great Cabernet and Petite Sirah. Massimo's brother (our winemaker), Mario, was the winemaker for a spell at Quixote. Mario made this Panza Syrah (which sells for \$40 on their website). Carl had the famous artist, philosopher, architect, and environmentalist, Friedensreich Hundertwasser, design the winery. Absolutely cutting edge and receiving off the charts reviews world-wide for the resulting design, Hundertwasser had several rules he stuck to building the winery: 1) no straight lines, 2) all roofs were planted with grass and trees, 3) every roof has a turret to elevate Man's sense of himself, and 4) color is king.

You folks MUST see this place next time you are in the Valley (make an appointment). Panza was named after Don Quixote's squire, Sancho Panza, in the famous Cervantes novel. Some say the greatest work of literature ever written. In fact, "quixotic" has been ensconced in western philosophy as: "the foolishly impractical pursuit of ideals, typically marked with rash and lofty romantic ideals". Thus comes forth Carl's reason for naming his winery Quixote. Every bottle of Panza, Quixote, and Pretense has a screw top. This decision was made I believe when Carl made some Oregon Pinot Noir with a partner and EVERY bottle showed "cork taint". No more corks. It is said that there is 1 bottle in every case of wine – worldwide, that has the cork disease TCA present, a mold spore from the cork bark oak tree that ruins the wine. Why sell a product that has a closure that would ruin the product that is largely believed to be present in 15% of all wines made? Many wines hide the cork taint and most people can't detect it so that number really could be much much higher. The research has been surprisingly positive as to the aging of wine and screw top closures, plus you needn't store the wines on their sides to give contact with the wine and the cork to keep it from drying out and crumbling when opened. The Panza Syrah is a major score for the Club, not only that you are paying almost 50% off the retail price, but because it is a awesome wine that has been aged perfectly and is peaking right now.

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Dried lavender, thyme, and roasted meat on the nose. Blueberry, bacon, pencil lead, black pepper and coffee on the palate. BIG wine, serve with some MEAT. The Pretense Petite was grown in the Suisun Valley, a cool growing region. This is a brute, very masculine wine that is black in the glass and stains your teeth purple. Roasted meat and herbs on the nose, blueberry, plum pudding and cocoa come up as well. Full bodied and tannic, with black cherry, black pepper, earth, tobacco, and leather on the palate. Bigger wine, serve with some BIG MEAT dishes like pot roast, or BBQ'd ribs.

Downing Family Vineyards Zinfandel

Napa Valley 2008 19.99

It was a sad day in Napa when I was presented this wine at these prices.... Downing was shutting down production. I bought every bottle available, all of the remaining inventory. In this economy, people that really don't need the money from wine sales are closing up because the sales cycle is so brutal. Why kill yourself to make great wine and then struggle to sell it? Oakville in Napa Valley is well known for it's spectacular Cabernet Sauvignons and many of the icons of the Valley come from vineyards in the appellation. Zinfandel is virtually unknown there with only about a dozen or so acres in production. Their 2008 vintage marks the third harvest from the new H&H vineyard which is located several hundred yards from the original Pelissa vineyard right across the Opus One property.

It is located on the northeast corner of Yount Mill Road and Highway 29 in Oakville. It is farmed by the Pelissa family. It was completely replanted in 2001 with identical rootstock (St. George) and Zinfandel clone (White Barn Ranch). The H&H Zinfandel vineyard is California (CCOF) certified organically farmed, a very difficult and demanding certification to achieve and maintain. This Zinfandel is an elegant, well balanced wine that comes from some previously serious reviews. Robert Parker wrote that the Downing 1999 Fly by Night Zinfandel was "made in the style of a classified growth Bordeaux.(90 points)". Decanter magazine rated their 2001 Fly by Night Zinfandel as one of the ten best at the 2004 ZAP tasting in San Francisco. Winemaker Randy Mason (Mason Cellars) brings 30 plus years of experience to the table. Elegant and juicy, this Zin has balance and finesse. Plums, blackberries, and spice on the nose, cherry, briar, chocolate, and black pepper on the palate. Not over the top, perfect food wine with a refined meal of Leg of Lamb, or a Turkey thigh.

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Dead Man's Hand Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley 2009 \$24.99

The famous "Aces and Eights" hand of black suits that was pried from the cold fingers of Wild Bill Hickok in Deadwood South Dakota in the late 1800's after he was shot dead are featured on this very cool label. The wine is pretty cool too. A cuvee from many of Napa's finest vineyards, this ripe and fruity Cab has a beautiful nose of currant, blackberry jam, and anise. Nicely dark in the glass, the fruit pops out on the initial waft with intense black fruits of plums, blueberry, and currant. Tobacco, black olive, black cherry, and black pepper come forth on the front palate with licorice and coffee bean coming later then leading into the long rich and fruity finish. Medium tannins. Great served with grilled Buffalo.

Edward Sellars "Vertigo" Rhone Blend

Paso Robles 2006 \$24.99

Ed and I have been doing business for sometime now. Many of his wines have been featured in the Club over the years. Lately he has been scoring in the 90's from Robert Parker on some of his premier wines – and well deserved. He chose great vineyard sites, planted the proper Rhone varietals to those sites, and developed an understanding of how best to extract the optimum flavors for his wines. I always enjoy visiting with him over the Hospice du Rhone every May in Paso. A true entrepreneur, Ed started and sold many businesses before getting the wine bug in the late 90's when he purchased his vineyard in Paso. This is a blend of 70% Grenache, 18% Mourvedre, and 12% Syrah. I love this wine, perfectly balanced, spot lining the fruit and the terroir. Smoky, with blackberry pie and mineral on the nose. A lush mouthfeel that leads into blueberry, smoked meat, slate, and freshly turned earth on the palate. The finish is pronounced with gushes of black fruit and black pepper, with a firm tannic backbone. Have with grilled pork tenderloin stuffed with figs.

MoniClaire Zinfandel

Dry Creek Valley 2007 \$18.99

Named after Peter Smiderle's 2 daughters, Monica and Claire, this wine is one of my favorites Zins tasted in the entire last year at Wine Garage. Farmed from head-pruned Zinfandel vines off of Lytton Springs Road (can you say Ridge Vineyards anyone?), this wine is bright yet extracted. With over a hundred years of family winemaking behind him, Peter really knows his vines and earth. Tannic backbone leads into deliciously ripe fruit on the palate. Cranberry, raspberry, currant jam, fig, and dusty blackberry bramble all are evident after enjoying the aroma of black fruit and cocoa. The tannin exhibited means that this wine will age gracefully for several years to come. I had this wine with prosciutto and figs with some dry Monterey Jack cheese and it was heaven in a glass.

