

Carol's Bunch

A WELCOME WET WINTER FOR CAROL SHELTON WINES

Winter Goodies for you!

Welcome to Winter 2016, a rainy return to normal water supplies in California, somewhat! Actually, the long-awaited “El Niño” has become so powerful and threatening that some folks are calling it “Darth Niño!” While we are SO grateful for the rain, we are hoping it stays slow and steady with a few sunny days in between to allow us to recoup ground water and fill our reservoirs. Our neediest vineyard is the Lopez Vineyard in southern California’s Cucamonga Valley, where the drought pushed the crop to such a low level that we did not get any fruit at all in 2015. Please send soggy thoughts their direction for us, ok?

Your February club shipment has some really special goodies! We have your usual bottle of *2013 Wild Thing Zin*, our perennial crowd-pleaser and the wine for which we are the most well-known. As for new releases, the new vintage of *2015 Wild Thing Rendezvous Rosé* gives you a teasing taste of Spring with its crisply dry, cranberry-watermelon delight, and the new release of *2013 Lingenfelder Zinfandel*, Carol’s “pretty lady,” is all dressed up in elegant berry fruit and delicate oak tones. Up next is the premier vintage of *2013 Old Vine Mancini Zinfandel* which made its tasting debut at last year’s Barrel Weekends and Barrel Futures sale. Infinitely complex, spicy and balanced, the Mancini Zin is a true field blend from the Mancini Vineyard in the Olivet Road region of the Russian River Valley. Planted in 1922, the slightly dwarfed, dry-farmed vineyard has approximately 80% Zinfandel vines with a rather large sprinkling of the usual old vine suspects like Carignane, Alicante Bouschet, Petite Sirah, Cinsault, Grande Noir, and several “mystery” vines, ones we are still trying to identify! The *2013 King Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon* is a showy new release, redolent of black cherry and chocolate, with what we call “great bones”—good tannin structure supporting a lushly round body—oops, let’s try not to get too sexy here! Last but never least, the new vintage of the *2013 Oat Valley Carignane* gets the spotlight in this newsletter, as we are featuring the vineyard in our Grower Feature on Pages 2-3.



Mancini Vineyard, Harvest 2013. Photo by Carol Shelton.

A big thank you to all of those who came to visit us during Winter Wineland weekend in January! It was a fantastic event, and it was great to have so many club members come to celebrate Winter with us. Carolyn, Debbie, Chris & Rob outdid themselves with decorating the cellar to look like a warm getaway from the chilly winter rains. Chef Greg Hallihan provided some delicious lentil soup that was perfect for the season and paired generously with the wines. We have many more events coming up, from the re-tooled ZAP “Zin Experience” in San Francisco on February 25-27, to **Barrel Tasting** in two back-to-back, three-day weekends in early March. At this event we will be offering “futures” sales at hefty discounts on the wines from barrels of the 2014 Reserves; even if you cannot come to taste them yourself, we will still offer them to you for purchase ...so watch for an email from us in early March, ok?

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If you want a peak into daily activities at Carol Shelton Wines, whether it is out in the vineyard, on the bottling line or blending up in the office, you can see our photographs on Instagram (@carolsheltonwines), Facebook (Carol Shelton Wines), and Twitter (@WildThingZin). We also now have a YouTube Channel where you can watch us in action. We would love it if you tag us in your posts when you are drinking our wines or sharing a Zinful moment with friends!

Cheers to a great 2016—Hope to see you soon!

Carol Shelton



Grower Feature:

OAT VALLEY VINEYARD

Coming home to Mama...

Carol first made wines from Oat Valley in 1996 while at Windsor Vineyards, and immediately she fell in love with the vineyard and its fruit. Carignane was long considered “just a blending grape” because of its naturally high acidity and chewy tannins, without having much of the juicy-jammy fruitiness that Zinfandel or Petite Sirah possess. No one was making Carignane as a single varietal bottling, but Carol thought the wine was too beautiful to blend. At the time it was a big risk, but Carol did produce an Oat Valley Carignane for Windsor that was so well-received, all 800 cases of it sold out in less than two months! In 2000, Carol started her own winery and no longer had access to Oat Valley Carignane because it was still under contract to Windsor Vineyards. The grapes were unavailable until a bountiful harvest in 2012—then a small amount of the fruit became available and Carol leapt at the opportunity to get her hands on it once again.



Brett Domenichelli, Crawford Cooley & Bob Cooley

Carignane has a rich history in America's wine industry, (see Carol's take on it on Page 7) where it is often part of a “field blend,” inter-planted amongst Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Alicante Bouschet. In cooler climates, Carignane does not get fully ripe so its best use is in blending or for Rosé wines, but warmer climates and older vines are able to produce more complex fruit, with softer tannin and a balanced yet bright acid structure that can make a lush & gorgeous wine. It is a real privilege for us to work with the Cooley family, who have owned Oat Valley Vineyard for over a century.

Very Old Vines

The Cooley family history in California starts in Oat Valley. Located in the far northwest end of Sonoma County's Alexander Valley AVA where the current Highways 128 and 101 meet, the rich farmland of Oat Valley was purchased by Charles Henry Cooley in 1872 after making money during the logging boom in Northern California. He wisely planted a vineyard on it, but, sadly, one small block is all that remains from the original vines he farmed for at least 50 years. His great-grandson Crawford Cooley (see photo) says that block looks the same now as it did when he was a child! While the *vineyard* may look the same, much in Sonoma County has changed over the years. Wineries now dominate the landscape, and while diverse agriculture remains, it isn't nearly as much as it was in the last century when prunes, hops, and dairies prevailed in Sonoma County. Farming methods have also changed much over the years, including the current trend of planting vineyards by single variety. According to Crawford: “In the old days, all wine was made in a blend because of how it was planted; in the middle of that vineyard was Zinfandel, on one side of the Zin was Carignane and on the other side was Petite Sirah. That was how everyone grew their grapes. We grew the fruit here in Sonoma County, and then aged it down in cooler San Francisco because we didn't have air conditioning.” Over the years, the Cooleys have put more of their acreage into vines, including those from which Carol makes her Carignane, which was planted in 1961. It is called Block #13 (isn't that a lucky number!) and it runs alongside the creek that bisects the property. All the blocks have drip irrigation, except for the head-trained block that Carol gets, which is called “dry-farmed”, meaning *not* irrigated. Dry-farming is both a very ancient and very modern concept of farming grapes. Originally farmers didn't irrigate grapes since they were a luxury crop; they only irrigated crops used directly for food because irrigation was labor intensive and costly. Crawford says it is interesting how farming trends have come full-circle. Vineyards used to be dry-farmed, then they were irrigated for ease of crop management, and now with water conservation and sustainability a state-wide focus, everyone wants to dry-farm again. In fact, Oat Valley Vineyard has now been Certified Sustainable.



Carol's Block at Oat Valley. Photo by Carol Shelton.



Carignane, Oat Valley Vineyard, 2013. Photo by Carol Shelton.

The Coolest Cooleys

A. Crawford Cooley is the current owner of the vineyard, he is a lively and sharp octogenarian who has been in the wine business for a long time, including owning and running Hacienda Winery for over fifteen years. In 1978 Crawford purchased Hacienda Winery from Frank Bartholomew, a wine industry legend who was first known for his decades of work with UPI, as a war reporter and eventually its president, and then became famous for his ownership of first Buena Vista Winery and then Hacienda Winery in southern Sonoma County. Frank was an old family friend and a great mentor to Crawford when he moved from owning just a vineyard to also owning a winery. As Crawford says “It was an interesting experience. I learned a lot about the wine business. Like the fact that wine does not sell itself. I spent a lot of time on the road throughout those years, traveling all over the United States - which is par for the course.” It is a course that Carol and Mitch are very familiar with, as they started Carol Shelton Wines in 2000 and have been on and off the road selling their wine ever since – and still are!

Between the vineyards, the winery, and a growing Cooley family, Crawford became very busy, very quickly. He sold Hacienda Winery in the mid-1990’s to focus on managing the family properties like his forefathers’ vineyard in

Oat Valley. Maintaining such a legacy takes generations of commitment, and the Cooley family has taken that commitment seriously for a *long* time.

Keeping Carignane

Of course, Carignane isn’t the only thing growing at Oat Valley Vineyard. They also grow Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel. The summer heat of Alexander Valley is optimal for red grapes, and on this particular vineyard there is also a downstream wind that offers natural frost protection during spring budbreak. When the surrounding area was settled in the late 19th century, they were planted largely to citrus because of this natural weather protection. They still celebrate that heritage with a Citrus Fair in Cloverdale every year, even though there are now ‘way more vineyards than orange groves in Alexander Valley. There are still a handful of century old orange trees along the edges of the Cooley’s vineyard, but with the amazing quality of Carignane coming from the vineyard we are certainly glad they made the fortuitous switch to grapes!

Oat Valley Vineyard has survived and thrived for decades – a miracle when so many vineyards have been ripped out and replanted all over California in the last few decades. It has survived because the Cooleys value their land and the impact it has on their community. While Crawford’s great-grandfather, his grandfather, and then his uncle farmed Oat Valley Vineyard themselves, Crawford took over management of all of the family land holdings, which boast not just Oat Valley, but other large properties within Sonoma County, including some in Rockpile.

With no time to farm Oat Valley himself, Crawford has relied on the Domenichelli family to tend the land. The current vineyard manager is Brett Domenichelli, who officially took over farming Oat

Valley from his father, Bill, in 2008, but has been working on this vineyard since he was 17 years old. Maintaining a vineyard of this size with varying blocks ranging in age from 120+ years old to new vines, Brett certainly has his work cut out for him. Brett and Crawford agree that the Carignane growing at Oat Valley is consistently of high quality. Over the years they have considered pulling it out because Carignane isn’t as profitable as other varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon or Zinfandel. Just when they were ready to pull it, winemakers like Carol started making some great wines with them, creating a demand and making it profitable again. And so, Oat Valley Vineyard Old Vine Carignane carries on. (Funny, that is how we teach people to pronounce it—“Carryin-on”!)



Carignane leaves, Harvest 2013. Photo by Carol Shelton.

Here are the details on this box of deliciousness, listed in suggested tasting order! The total tab for this shipment is **\$135.20**, before any applicable tax & shipping.

2015 *Wild Thing*[®] RENDEZVOUS ROSÉ

A rendezvous with friends is all the more delicious over a bottle of luscious chilled dry rosé, hence the name of our "Rendezvous Rosé." Created by bleeding half of the "pink" juice off of red Carignane grapes a full three days after crushing them, it is fermented cold like a white wine to retain every luscious drop of crisp strawberry fruitiness.

Organically Grown & Wild Yeast Fermented

Case Production: 1,347 cases

Aging Potential: 3-5 years

Composition: Price: \$15/\$12.00 Club **New Release**



Carol's Tasting Notes

Light cranberry color, juicy strawberry-watermelon fruit aromas, nice mineral, hint of pink grapefruit. Refreshingly crisp and dry. Great with almost any food, from sushi to salmon to BBQ!

2013 OLD VINE CARIGNANE Oat Valley Vineyard, Alexander Valley

Back to the future at last! Carol used the vibrant red Carignane from these 60+ year old vines at her long stint as winemaker at Windsor Vineyards, and now they have come "back home to mama!"

Sustainably Grown—

Case Production: 242 cases

Aging Potential: 8-10 years

Composition: 95.5% Carignane, 1.5% Petite Sirah, 1.5% Alicante Bouschet, 1.5% Mancini Zin

Price: \$24/\$19.20 Club **Double Gold from SF Chronicle!**



Carol's Tasting Notes

Wow—big smoky-caramel oakiness on a deep razzberry fruit core. Creamy in mouth, a bit of brown spices-nutmeg/cinnamon, with lively acidity, good depth of fruit without being jammy or overripe. Lingering razzberry-chocolate finish, great with pork tenderloin, strawberry salad or even grilled salmon!

2013 *Wild Thing*[®] Old Vine Zinfandel

A reprise look at our 2013 Wild Thing Zin, this was released to you in the Fall shipment. This is consistently our best-selling favorite in the tasting room, as well as in stores and restaurants. The wild yeast ferment makes it super creamy and boosts the wonderful berry fruit from our Mendocino grower, and the blend with Carignane and Petite Sirah fills in any "holes" in the flavor profile.

Organically Grown & Wild Yeast Fermented

Case Production: 11,475 cases

Aging Potential: 5-7 years

Composition: 80% old vine Zinfandel, 14% old vine Carignane, 5% Petite Sirah, 1% Alicante Bouschet—75% Mendocino County

Price: \$19/\$15.20 Club **6 Gold Medals, 90 Points & Best Buy from Wine Enthusiast Magazine!**



Carol's Tasting Notes

Aromas of black cherry, plum and raspberry fruit combine with a beautiful hint of vanilla-oak, smoothly textured in mouth, very creamy and round, the finish is long and has lush jammy fruit—this wine is dangerously good! Remember— you are what you drink

2013 LINGENFELDER Zinfandel

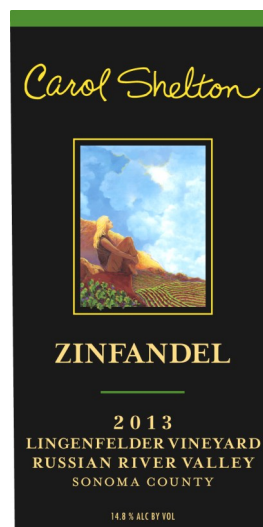
From 25-year-old vines on Woolsey Road in Russian River Valley, owner Mark Lingenfelder has some of the prettiest Zin fruit that we turn into a very elegant wine! Try this with BBQ or Tomato-sauced pasta, since its bright acidity will complement them well.

Case Production: 200 cases

Aging Potential: 10-15 years

Composition: 95.7% Zinfandel from Lingenfelder Vineyard in Russian River Valley, 4.3% Petite Sirah from Dry Creek Valley

Price: \$33/\$26.40 Club **New Release & 90 Points from Connoisseurs' Guide!**



Carol's Tasting Notes

A very elegant and pretty nose, full of ripe red currants and nicely layered oak.

Dusty vanilla-cocoa and slightly clove spice, touch of black pepper.

In mouth it shows creamy vanilla oak and delicate fruit, restrained well.

Nice weight to go with food, & good structure for aging.

2013 Mancini Zin, Old Vine

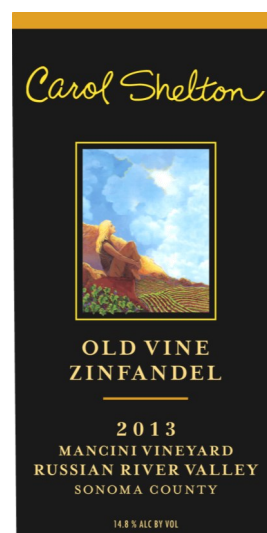
Mancini Vineyard was planted in 1922 in the old world method of mixed planting. There is Zinfandel, Carignane, Alicante Bouschet, Petite Sirah, Grand Noir, Grenache, Mataro, and other unidentified vines in this amazing old vineyard. A true field blend, Mancini Zin is as interesting and complex to taste as the vineyard itself!

Case Production: 258 cases

Aging Potential: 15+ years

Composition: Estimated 80% Zinfandel (remaining 20% is field-blend of Carignane, with Alicante Bouschet, Petite Sirah, Grand Noir, Grenache, Mataro, etc.)

Price: \$38/\$30.40 Club **First Release!**



Carol's Tasting Notes

Very complexly layered black fruits, deep and dark and brooding.

Freshly ground black pepper, augmented by full spice cupboard.

Cedary, creamy oak, a bit of vanilla, a touch of aromatic blueberry.

Rich in mouth, good structure for aging, a bit chewy in its youth.

2013 KING RIDGE RESERVE Cabernet Sauvignon King Ridge Vineyard, Sonoma Coast/Cazadero

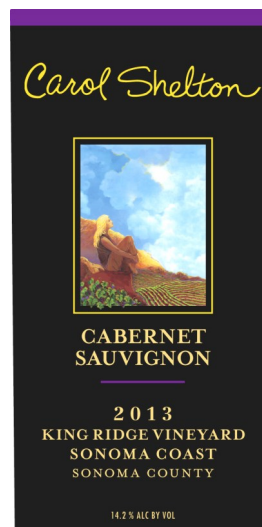
The high elevation of this vineyard (2000 feet in "coastal" west Sonoma County) gives it an elegant flavor profile, a bit similar to our wines from the Rockpile AVA. The vineyard faces several sheer granite rock outcroppings called The Devil's Ribs, which absorb all the sun's heat all day long and radiate it back to the vines slowly all night, allowing the fruit to get more evenly ripe earlier in the harvest season. It is graciously styled with black cherry-cassis fruit and a nice hint of tobacco and cedar-spice, with a long smooth finish.

Case Production: 222 cases

Aging Potential: 15+ years

Composition: 95.2% Cabernet Sauvignon from King Ridge Vineyard, 4.8% Petite Sirah from Rockpile.

Price: \$40/\$32 Club **New Release!**



Carol's Tasting Notes

Dark red in color. Black cherry-cola and cassis fruit, long and deep on nose and palate.

Cedary oak spice and warm pipe tobacco aromas, dark chocolate, vanilla at finish, smoothly structured tannins.

INTRODUCING a NEW WINE: Mancini Zin!

A truly OLD-vine field blend vineyard is a rare thing indeed, and Mancini fits the bill in every way. Planted in 1922 on the corner of Piner and Olivet Roads in the Russian River Valley, the vines are a crazy mélange of Zinfandel, a huge dose of Carignane and at least 30 other varieties! The land was cleared of its oak trees at the turn of the century by Luca and Maria Mancini who came from San Pellegrinetto in Tuscany. The Mancini and neighboring Pelletti families married—the most recent owner was nephew Harry Pelletti, who was raised on the ranch by his uncle Frank Mancini after his parents died when he was young. The grapevines came from cuttings taken from their neighbor's vineyards, a little at a time, which is how it got to be such a chaotic mix. Harry says the vines flourished because there is an underground "lake" or aquifer that supports them thru the deepest droughts with no irrigation.



Harvest crew in Mancini Vineyard, 2013. Photo by Carol



Mysterious Old Vine. Photo by Carol Shelton.

Most of the vines are low profile "bush" vines, similar to those found in our Monga Zin's Lopez Vineyard, planted in 1918. The flavors actually mimic those of Monga as well, in many ways; there is a fine earthy red fruit quality, lots of exotic spices in layer after layer, and a definite tang of dusty-tarry brush, almost like a sagebrush aromatic. It is so complex and bright in acidity that it will make a lot of different types of foods just sing!

Previously the fruit was farmed and vinified by Rod Berglund at Joseph Swan Vineyards, but Harry decided to change all that when his uncle died and he inherited the property. He tried to do it himself for a bit but the vines suffered until they were

rescued in 2013 by Vince Carvalho, a local renaissance man of sorts who poured into the vineyard all of his energy and considerable financial investment as well to bring the vines back to full vigor...or as full of a production as you can get from 80+ year old geezers! Crop level is estimated at about 1.8 ton/acre, completely dry-farmed and sustainable. Carol's block includes most of the Carignane in the vineyard, as well as some Alicante Bouschet (see photo), Petite Sirah, Grand Noir, Trousseau, Grenache, and who knows what else? In 2014 we even selected out the old-school white varieties, French Colombard, Palomino and Muscadelle, barrel fermented them and used them in the 2014 Wild Thing Chardonnay!

In short (yes, that was a pun on the vine height!) Mancini is a fantastic addition to our little stable of Zins, one of which we are quite proud. When you pull the cork, try to let it breathe a bit—show some respect for the old guys! It will reward you with layers of complex flavors that jump out of the glass and tantalize your palate. This is wine that will age almost as well as its vines have, so try to lay some down for a while, even 20 years!



Vince Carvalho with Alicante Vine, 2013. Photo by Carol Shelton.



Mark your calendars for these upcoming **EVENTS**:

February 25 – 27, 2016

Zinfandel Experience with ZAP. Different events all involving Zinfandel, in San Francisco over 3 days. Advance tickets online at www.ZinfandelExperience.com.

March 4-6 & March 11-13, 2016

39th Annual Barrel Tasting Weekend. 11:00 am – 4:00 pm each day. Advance tickets online Jan. 22- Feb. 29, 2016: \$50 Weekend, \$35 Sunday Only, \$5 Designated Driver. At the door: \$65 Weekend, \$45 Sunday ONLY, \$10 Designated Driver. <https://www.wineroad.com/events/barrel-tasting/>

Five Spice Duck Breast Salad with Pomegranate & Mango Serves 2. Pairs perfectly with 2013 Oat Valley Carignane! Substitute Chicken if you aren't a fan of duck.

Ingredients:

1 Large Duck Breast
1 teaspoon of Chinese Five Spice powder
1 Pomegranate—cut in half
3 green onions—trimmed & sliced
3-5 sprigs of fresh cilantro/coriander, pick leaves off of stems
Watercress—a few sprigs
1 ripe mango, peeled & cut into chunks
1/2 Lime—just the juice and zest
Sesame Oil to drizzle
Lettuce—use your favorite type (Spring Mix always works!)
Pinch of salt & pepper to taste



Instructions: Make a few parallel cuts into the fat on the duck breast so the fat will render out better.

Season the duck breast with salt and dust it with the Chinese Five Spice powder. Put in a medium-hot frying pan and brown it for 2½ minutes on one side, then flip and sauté on other side for 2½ minutes. Lots of fat should come out of the skin and the skin should be golden brown. Take the duck breast out of the pan and slice it thinly—the duck might still look raw in the middle but that's okay! Discard the fat from the pan and put the sliced duck back in and stir fry it for a few minutes, until thoroughly cooked and crispy. Set it aside to add to the salad later.

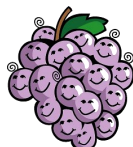
Mix the pomegranate seeds, green onions, cilantro, watercress, mango and crispy duck together. Dress with the lime juice and a drizzle of sesame oil. Season to taste.

Separate the lettuce leaves and arrange on your plates. Top with the dressed salad to serve & enjoy!

Carol Shelton WINES

Order Form

<u>Wines</u>	Retail Price	Wine Club	Quantity
Wild Thing Chardonnay 2014 *Special* *Gold Medal*	\$18	40% off— \$10.80	_____
Damiano Viognier 2014 *New Release*	\$20	30% off— \$14.00	_____
Coquille Blanc 2014 *New Release*	\$24	\$19.20	_____
Wild Thing Rendezvous Rosé 2014 *WE 90 Pts/3 Gold Medals*	\$15	\$12.00	_____
Wild Thing Rendezvous Rosé 2015 *New Release*	\$15	\$12.00	_____
Pinot Noir 2012 *Best of Show/6 Gold Medals/90 pts*	\$30	40% off— \$18.00	_____
Wild Thing Zin 2013 *WE 90 Pts Editor's Choice & 6 Gold Medals*	\$19	\$15.20	_____
Pizazz Zin 2013 *New Release*	\$19	\$15.20	_____
Oat Valley Carignane 2012 *Last Grab & Gold Medal*	\$28	30% off— \$19.60	_____
Lingenfelder Zin 2012 *Last Grab*	\$33	30% off— \$23.10	_____
Peaceland Zin 2013 *Double Gold & Gold Medal*	\$30	\$24.00	_____
Karma Zin 2012 *New Release*	\$30	\$24.00	_____
Rockpile Reserve Petite Sirah 2012 *4 Golds/Best of Class*	\$40	\$32.00	_____
Florence Petite Sirah 2012 *4 Gold Medals*	\$40	\$32.00	_____
Rockpile Reserve Cabernet 2011 *Last Grab & Double Gold*	\$50	40% off— \$30.00	_____
King Ridge Cabernet 2011 *Last Grab*	\$50	40% off— \$30.00	_____
<u>Dessert!</u>			
Black Magic 2014 "Late Harvest" (375 ml)	\$20	\$16.00	_____
<u>1.5L Magnum</u> Wild Thing Zin 2010 3 Gold's/89 Wine Spectator	\$80	\$64.00	_____
<u>(375ml)</u> "half bottles" Wild Thing Zin 2012	\$12	\$9.60	_____
<u>Wine Club Only</u>			
Oat Valley Carignane 2013 *Pre-Release & Double Gold*	\$28	\$22.40	_____
Mancini Zin 2013 *New Release*	\$38	\$30.04	_____
Rocky Reserve Zin 2013 *New Release*	\$35	\$28.00	_____
Lingenfelder Zin 2013 *New Release*	\$33	\$26.40	_____
King Ridge Cabernet 2013 *New Release*	\$50	\$40.00	_____
Rockpile Reserve Cabernet 2012 *Gold Medal*	\$50	\$40.00	_____
Napa Reserve Cabernet 2009 *94 pts Wine Enthusiast*	\$90	\$72.00	_____



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