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# Hannah Nicole

## *wineyards*

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## *Monthly Newsletter*

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[www.hnvwines.com](http://www.hnvwines.com)

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### *Happenings at HNV!*

Vintners everywhere are now beginning to evaluate their 2009 Grape Crop. Will it be a bumper crop, a small crop, a year of distinction? Here at Hannah Nicole, we don't have to look far to see what's coming down the pike.

The 2009 season is already taking shape. We will harvest our first crop of Petit Sirah, Mourvedre and Grenache. These are all Rhone varietals that will be blended with our Syrah to create a Rhone Blend (much like our Meritage, Bordeaux Blend), in addition to Single Varietal Petit Sirah, Mourvedre & Grenache wines that will only be sold at the Winery. As you drive through the vineyards, you can clearly see the fruit has taken shape. We've already done our leaf pulling, this exposes the fruit to sunlight and promotes ripening. It also helps to keep away the ruin of grapes, mildew!

Our fruit quality looks excellent this year. The canopy (shoots & leaves) have taken shape and are beginning to stop growing. This is a normal process that takes place and allows the energy from the vines to focus on berry production instead of leaf production. This results in wines with better character, color, and flavors.

For HNV, the most important distinction is that we will crush grapes for the first time in our new facility. What does this mean? Is it just a change in geography, a small move North from Madera? Or, is there something bigger than that?

Owning and operating your own winery means control. Control of when we harvest our grapes, how we crush our grapes, how long we cold soak, the type of fermentation, the temperature during fermentation and more. Why are these things important? Here's a recap of a few conversations we have had with many of you regarding our vineyard and winery practices:

#### **How do you know when to pick your grapes?**

In past years, we go into the vineyard and take samples to see how the fruit is coming along. We usually pick about 50 pounds when we think the grapes are ready. We then check the acidity, the PH and the sugar (brix).

We also taste the grapes and look at other things such as the color of the skins, the color of the stems (they should be a dark brown and be very hard) and the texture of the skins (some grapes like Syrah should be kind of shriveled before we pick them). At this point, in the past, we would pick about 25 tons of grapes and take them to the winery. John (our Winemaker) would then crush and process the grapes. He'd say things like, "they could have used another week or 10 days" or "These would have been perfect at 25 Brix instead of 26.5 brix". Realistically, our Winemaker will never be happy, but we now have a recipe that will give him a few less excuses! In our new facility, the first part of it, the picking and testing, will be about the same. When it comes time to pick, we'll pick about 4 tons instead of 25 tons. Then, John will process the grapes and cast his opinion on their quality. If he thinks they're ready, we'll pick the rest! If not, and he thinks they need another week or 10 days, we'll wait.

#### **What is cold soaking and why does it make a difference?**

Cold soaking is something we do to get the color from the skins into the juice (also called must). Cold soaking requires lots of energy! Why? Because cold soaking means that we have to keep the fermentation tanks at about 50 degrees so that the grapes won't begin to ferment. This is the best way to get all of the color out of the skins and into the wine, which gives us a darker, and more full bodied wine. In the past, we've cold soaked all of our red wines about 2 – 3 days. Now, 10 days, 20 days or even 30 days is not out of the question! Whatever it takes to get the result we want.

We also have new systems, such as an inert gas system. This system puts a blanket of Nitrogen, Argon and Carbon Dioxide over the wine while it is fermenting. We all know what happens when wine is exposed to oxygen, it begins to spoil. This system keeps the oxygen off the wine because these gases are heavier than oxygen and therefore protect the wine. In the past, we've needed to use a common preservative called SO<sub>2</sub> to protect the wine. While SO<sub>2</sub> protects the wine, it also bleaches some of the redness out of the wine. It is almost counter-productive to all of the other things we do to make our wines darker and more full bodied.

So, what does all this hullabaloo mean? It means that we can have more influence in the outcome of our wines than we did in the past. We feel we have always made distinctive wines of good quality. We hope that our new facility will take us to the next level.

*Neil & Glenda Cohn, Proprietors*



# Fresh Seafood Pasta

*Recepe Courtesy of Emeril Lagasse*

**Serve with Hannah Nicole 2007 Viognier**

## Preparation

Serves 4 - 6

In a large saute pan, over medium heat, add the oil. When the oil is hot, add the shallots and garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Saute for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, and saute for 1 minute. Add the mussels and shrimp. Season with salt and pepper. Saute for 2 minutes. Add the wine, bring to a simmer and cover, cook until the shells open, about 4 to 6 minutes. Add the crabmeat and green onions. Season with salt and pepper. Saute for 1 minute. Add the pasta, toss and continue cooking until the pasta is heated through, about 1 minute. Toss the pasta with the cheese and basil. Spoon into the serving dish. Garnish with a drizzle of truffle oil.

## Ingredients

tablespoons olive oil  
1 cup minced shallots  
2 teaspoons chopped garlic  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
2 cups chopped tomatoes, peeled and seeded  
1 pound fresh mussels, scrubbed  
1 pound rock shrimp, peeled  
2 cups dry white wine  
1 pound lump crabmeat, picked over for cartridge  
1/2 cup chopped green onions, green part only  
1 pound penne pasta, cooked until tender  
4 ounces freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese  
1/4 cup chiffonade fresh basil leaves  
Drizzle white truffle oil



# Perfect Char-Grilled Filet Mignon

Serve With Hannah Nicole 2005 Meritage

Recipe courtesy Paula Deen

## Ingredients

**1 (8-ounce) bottle zesty Italian salad dressing**  
**2 beef tenderloin fillets, 1 1/2 -2 inches thick**  
**2 slices bacon**  
**2 tablespoons steak sauce (recommended: Lea and Perrins Steak Sauce)**  
**2 teaspoons water**

## Directions

Pour the salad dressing into a shallow pan, place the steaks in the pan and let them marinate for 3 to 4 hours. Prepare a fire in a charcoal grill. Wrap a strip of bacon around each steak, securing it with a toothpick or kitchen twine. Grill the steaks over hot coals for about 8 minutes per side (5 minutes per side for rare). Baste with a mixture of steak sauce and water. For perfect steaks, turn them only once.

# *Wines of the Month*



***Reserve Club***  
*Our Monthly 2 Bottle Club*  
*Includes two of our*  
*Award Winning Wines*  
*2005 Meritage*  
*2007 Viognier*



***Reserve Club***  
***Reds Only***  
*If you are a Member of our*  
*Reds Only Club, You'll receive*  
*our Award Winning*  
*2005 Cabernet Sauvignon*

*Tasting Notes for all wines available at <http://www.hnvwines.com/winelist.html>*

*Awards Received in 2009 SF Chronicle Wine Competition & 2009 LA County Wine Competition*

# *An early curtain call from Tinsel Town!*

Hannah Nicole regularly enters wine competitions. Why? Because it lets us know what the Wine Industry Professionals think of our wines. Each competition is just a snapshot, as they only get a quick introduction to our wines. The wines are opened and left in the bottle, usually the tasting is blind. Any medal we receive is a welcomed surprise. More than one medal is a bonus. Multiple medals just give us goosebumps!

Drum roll please.....



Los Angeles County Wine Competition Results....

## Hannah Nicole Wins 7 Medals!

2007 Le Melange Rose	Silver Medal
2007 Late Harvest Viognier	Silver Medal
2007 Viognier	Silver Medal
2005 Meritage	Bronze Medal
2005 Cabernet Sauvignon	Bronze Medal
2005 Merlot	Bronze Medal
2005 Sauvignon Blanc	Bronze Medal

What does it take to win medals? How many of you have heard of the 100 Point Scale used by Robert Parker (The Wine Advocate) and Wine Spectator? While competitions vary, the following point system is usually a safe bet:

86 – 87 Points	Bronze Medal
88 – 90 Points	Silver Medal
91+ Points	Gold Medal

The 100 Point Scale, published by Wine Spectator in their Wine Spectator Magazine's Buying Guide, describes the following point levels:

95-100 Points	Classic: A great wine
90-94 Points	Outstanding: a wine of superior character and style
85-89 Points	Very good: a wine with special qualities
80-84 Points	Good: a solid, well-made wine

Hannah Nicole is thrilled every time we receive a medal. This is a slap on the back from the wine judges and they're saying, "Nice Job, this is a well made wine and you should be congratulated".

In most major competitions, something in the range of 50% of the wines entered will receive a medal. About 10% will receive a gold medal, 20% will receive silver medals and 20% will receive bronze medals. No other medals are awarded. Many people think that there is only one gold, one silver and one bronze for each category. This is not the case. Each category awards Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals based on the scores of each wine entered. For each Class, all of the Top Medal Winners are then tasted to determine which wine is to receive Best in Class.

Here at Hannah Nicole, we are proud of our accomplishments in our short lifetime. We hope that you enjoy drinking our wines as much as we enjoy producing them.

Cheers!  
Neil & Glenda Cohn, Proprietors