

MIKE SULLIVAN, BENOVIA WINEMAKER

The art and science of winemaking

We believe that wine results from the blending of art and science. In the winemaking process, the winemaker is faced with hundreds of decisions every year. He/she must carefully listen to what is happening with nature—how it is impacting the grapes—and then craft a response to transform the grapes into a wine you will love to experience.

In this edition, our winemaker, Mike Sullivan, shares his rhyme and reason and describes his approach to the art and science—the poetry—of winemaking. We hope his views give you some insight into how Benovia's wines are bred, born, and bottled.

2008 Fall Release

The long-awaited single vineyard Pinot Noirs and Zinfandel are now ready. Many of you who have been to the winery and tasted these wines know that they are not only delicious, but premier examples of what Pinot Noir and Zinfandel can be in this region of California. We know you will thoroughly enjoy these wines. Each has its own distinctive personality, and speaks eloquently of the vineyard from which it comes. Please see the tasting notes in the back.



CONSTRUCTION ON THE NEW VINEYARD



NEW ENTRANCE TO THE WINERY

Lots of changes at the winery



An example of the science (and technology) of creating exceptional wines, our new bottling line allows us to bottle when the wine is ready. With this latest addition to our process, we bring momentum, efficiency, and precision together. Now we control all the variables in the bottling process.

Creating a vineyard is always a time of change. Things must be moved and improved, re-thought and re-arranged. Sometimes it feels and looks like a construction zone, but the end product, a world-class Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyard (and yes, a little Viognier), will be well worth the effort. Here's what we have been up to.

Work has begun on the 40-acre parcel adjacent to the winery. We are installing extensive French drains that will ensure good drainage of the property. After that, the vineyard

development starts and will culminate this year with installation of the trellising system. Root stock goes in next year, and the following year we will graft onto the root stock the clones of Pinot Noir we plan to use. The Chardonnay will go in next, already grafted and ready to grow.

Our property near Freestone is also coming along nicely. The old and dying apple trees have been removed, and we are ready to begin the soil preparation and trellising. Next year root stock, and the following year the clones will be grafted.

We Have Changed Our Curbside Appeal

First impressions make lasting impressions, so we have remodeled the entrance to our property to let our customers and visitors know they are warmly welcomed, deeply appreciated, and fondly remembered.

Please Join Us!

**WINERY OPEN HOUSE,
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15**

Come to our first open house and wine pick-up on Saturday, November 15 from 11AM-3PM. You will have the opportunity to taste the single vineyard Pinot Noirs as well as the Zinfandel, plus a few barrels from the excellent 2007 vintage. If you haven't been to the winery, it will give you a chance to see where we live (during the day anyway), and you can view all of the changes and development going on at our newly acquired property next to the winery. We'll also provide delicious hors d'oeuvres as well.

Please RSVP to:
rsvp@BenoviaWinery.com



MARTAELLA® VINEYARD PLANTING



MARTAELLA® VINEYARD POST-PLANTING

Mike Sullivan shares his vision, views, and values—



At Benovia Winery, we embrace a winemaking philosophy that says *'exceptional vineyard sites produce wines with remarkable personality and extraordinary character'*.

We strive to achieve balance between innovation and tradition. Our wish is to showcase the uniqueness of our estate vineyards and explore the diverse expression of Pinot Noir throughout the Russian River Valley and Northern California.

Our wines are hand-crafted, and we will always maintain a high level of personal involvement in farming wines with a sense of place.

Transformation of an Artisan Winery

Purchased in May of 2005, we began transforming our facility in the heart of the Russian River Valley, replacing all of the processing equipment to accommodate a gentle handling of the grapes with the desire of producing world-class wines.

One of the most critical pieces of equipment is the sorting table, and we purchased two: one for the grape-sorting prior to destemming and one for sorting berries after the destemmer.

Having the two sorting tables allows for greater control and vastly improved wine quality.

We also spared no expense in purchasing two presses: a small basket press for red wines and a tank press for white wines. The basket press is very gentle for pressing Pinot Noir skins after fermentation, and the tank press is perfect for Chardonnay.

We installed state-of-the-art refrigeration and heating systems in the barrel rooms, and purchased small 2-ton fermentors, allowing us to keep each micro-lot separate.

Most small wineries in California utilize mobile bottling trucks. When you outsource bottling to a mobile line, you must schedule the truck months or a year in advance. As a winemaker, it is difficult to know when a wine will be ready to bottle so far in advance.



PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT AND CARE

his truths—about the art and science of winemaking

In 2008, we purchased a new bottling line. Now we don't outsource any aspect of our winemaking, providing greater control of the process and quality.

It All Starts in the Vineyard

In the vineyard, our philosophy is attentiveness with each vineyard block to promote uniformly ripe and complex flavors.

Our viticulturist, Daniel Roberts, Ph.D., applies integrated winegrowing philosophy specifically to “develop vineyards with minimum harm to the soil and environment, and create excellent wines”.

'Dr. Dirt', as he is affectionately known, is a guiding force in our efforts to farm our vineyards for maximum quality.

We utilize the newest equipment in precision farming but often prefer to use our instinct and experience rather than the latest trend.

We farm our vineyards using sustainable farming practices and establish permanent cover crop to preserve topsoil.

At harvest time, the decision to pick is critical to the wines overall balance and character. I make many trips to each vineyard, tasting the grapes until I know they have achieved the flavor I am looking for.

When the Grapes Arrive at the Winery

In the winery, our process begins with careful and attentive hand labor. The typical harvest starts at the beginning of September and spans into October.

After hand harvesting at night, or early morning, we inspect each cluster prior to destemming. A second conveyor allows us to inspect each berry after destemming. This two-tiered sorting technique allows for more precise flavors and aromas in our wines.

The fruit is then transferred to small, open-top fermentors by gravity, trying to retain as many whole berries as possible. We feel

Continued on the next page



ONE OF TWO SORTING TABLES



FRUIT TRANSFERRED TO FERMENTORS

“Winemaking is about the journey and not the destination . . .”

MIKE SULLIVAN, BENOVIA WINEMAKER

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strongly that open top fermentation and hand punchdowns are an important part of producing Pinot Noir's with power and finesse.

After a pre-fermentation maceration of 5–8 days, we allow the indigenous yeast to complete fermentation and encourage a very long, slow malolactic fermentation.

After fermentation we choose to intervene as little as possible but employ a full knowledge of fermentation science to enhance quality.

Our Pinot Noirs are typically aged in French oak barrels from 14–16 months.

Chardonnay grapes are picked into small one-quarter-ton bins; hand-sorted and transferred by belt directly to the press.

After whole cluster pressing, our chardonnay juice is collected, settled overnight, and transferred into French oak barrels in our cellars to ferment at a cool temperature for approximately 4–6 weeks.

We inoculate for malolactic fermentation, and stir the lees weekly until malolactic fermentation is done. The weekly stirring helps the malolactic fermentation, integrates the new oak, and builds body and structure in the wine.

All of our vineyard lots are fermented and barrel-aged separately, providing us with the ability to gain knowledge and make assessments of our various clones and vine ages before making our blends.

We age our wines in French oak barrels from select Burgundy coopers that have been air dried for a minimum of three years. Our desire is that the oak serves as a compliment to the fruit and not a dominate flavor of the wine.

I like to describe winemaking as an optimization trail, in which we are continually trying new things to improve quality and learn more about our vineyards.

What I love about winemaking is that perfection is unattainable.

Winemaking is about the journey and not the destination.

I hope you follow us on our journey to produce exceptional, world-class wines!

—Mike Sullivan, Benovia Winemaker



2008 FALL RELEASE

Benovia fall release 2008 tasting notes

2006 Pinot Noir

COHN VINEYARD,
SONOMA COUNTY

Limited

The Cohn Vineyard is a 34-year-old Pinot Noir vineyard, one of the oldest in California. It has a long and prestigious lineage going back to some of the great Pinot Noir crafters of the last 20 years, including Williams Selyem and Kosta Browne. It is now exclusively an estate property of Benovia.

This flagship wine from our most prestigious estate vineyard is dominated by intense black cherry and raspberry aromas with layers of spice. Year after year this site's hallmark is an ethereally-floral quality, fine tannins, and a long, complex finish. Yields from 2006 were 1.1 tons per acre.

2006 Bella Una Pinot Noir

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

Very limited

For many months we referred to this wine as the "proprietary blend" because we had such a difficult time finding a name that was not already taken. We asked our customers to help us create a name.

The one we chose was suggested by Chris Adamson and Angelyn Bayless of Phoenix, Arizona. Bella Una means "beautiful together" in Latin. Because this wine is a blend of two vineyards, we thought the name was perfect. Thanks Chris and Angelyn.

Rich and seductive aromas of baking spice and vine-ripened blackberry introduce this powerful and intense Pinot Noir. On the palate the wine's juicy mouthfeel is supported by centered acidity building with fruit through the mid-palate to the fine grain tannins on the finish. An intriguing blend of power and restraint, this Pinot Noir is both savory and delicately sweet.

2006 Pinot Noir

SAVOY VINEYARD,
ANDERSON VALLEY

Limited

Located north of Philo, Rich Savoy has been farming Pinot Noir from this vineyard in the Anderson Valley for 20 years. We vinify 5 clones of Pinot Noir (Calera, Dijon 113, 115, Martini 13, and Pommard) separately and select only the best barrels for our single vineyard wine. This wine offers dark and complex blackberry, with mineral and orange peel

notes. It tends to be earthier than the Russian River or Sonoma Coast wines. It is massively structured and will be the slowest to evolve, offering great reward with 6–8 years of patience.

Rated 90 by Josh Raynolds of the *International Wine Cellar*, "Finishes with exotic Asian spice, cherry flavors, and very good persistence."

2006 Zinfandel

SONOMA COUNTY

Limited

This wine also comes from the 34-year-old Cohn Vineyard. It exhibits lively aromas of boysenberry and vine-ripened blackberries, followed by Provencal herbs and fresh-cracked white pepper. This powerhouse Zinfandel has enormous richness and a tremendously long finish.

Rated 90+ by Josh Raynolds of the *International Wine Cellar*. "Firm and chewy with deep, sweet, and dark berry flavors complemented by cola and rooty sassafras. Finishes with good lift and with chewy bitter cherry and blackberry qualities. This will reward patience."



COHN VINEYARD



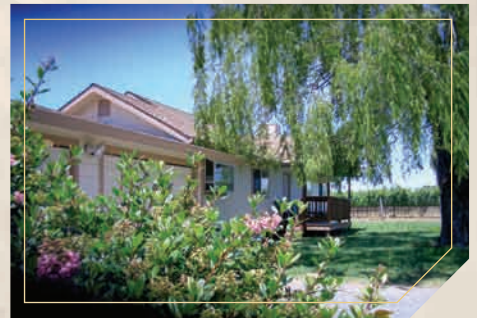
COHN VINEYARD OLD VINE

Vineyard Hideaway

TO INQUIRE ABOUT AVAILABILITY, PLEASE E-MAIL
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At Benovia Winery, we have the perfect setting for your wine country vacation. Discover the joy of sipping wine while looking over prized Russian River Valley vineyards. Enjoy the inviting, relaxing, and warm ambience of our winery cottage.

Feel the stress melt away while sitting in our hot tub spa under the stars, or start your day there. You will love the peaceful, country feel of our location, and yet the cottage is just five-minutes from famous restaurants and wineries.



Cohn Vineyard update

You might notice on your bottle of Pinot Noir from the Cohn Vineyard that the appellation is Sonoma County and not Russian River Valley.

For decades, grapes from the Cohn Vineyard were thought to be in the Russian River Valley American Viticulture Area (AVA). It was recently discovered that the Cohn Vineyard property lies just outside the northern boundary of the Russian River Valley AVA.

An AVA is an American Viticultural Area, recognized by the federal government.

How might this happen? In checking the history behind the Russian River Valley AVA, it was discovered that Mill Creek was originally proposed to be the northern boundary line. This was about one-half mile north of the Cohn Vineyard and would have included the vineyard. Last minute changes to the boundary prior to its approval moved the boundary to Felta Creek. This excluded the Cohn Vineyard by a few

hundred yards. Such are the quirks of history, geography, and AVA designations.

Rest assured that the wine comes from the same highly-acclaimed Cohn Vineyard used in the past by some of our most esteemed winemaking colleagues. The label change is simply to correct a prior, commonly held, but mistaken perception.

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