

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

A Visit with the Smith Brothers on Spring Mountain

Posted on May 10, 2009 by joe

<http://www.winecountrygetaways.com/napablog/smith-madrone-a-visit-with-the-smith-brothers-on-spring-mt/>

Smith-Madrone –

It all started in 1971 when the Smith Brothers purchased land on Spring Mountain to begin their amazing story of making wine in the Napa Valley. We visited last week in the midst of bottling and an unexpected rainfall. The winery was abuzz with activity, but both Charlie and Stu took time to chat with us about their winemaking adventures high atop Spring Mountain. We have been traveling to the Napa Valley since 1966 and we divide the Napa Valley into two distinct eras, the old and the new is the simplest way to express it. Well, Charlie and Stu represent the old Napa Valley. You won't find a fancy tasting room or barrel room, or any merchandise for sale. The only thing you will find is just pure, honest, old-fashioned conversation and a passion for making good wine. Yes, Smith-Madrone represents the good old days of the Napa Valley.

The flagship wine is the Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2004 is the current vintage and the 2005 will spend about a year in the bottle before release. The 2004 Cabernet is a delicious wine with great berry aromas and lots of mouth structure. The tannins are light and this wine makes an excellent choice for all red meat dishes. The price for this wine is \$45. It is the lowest price point that we know of for any estate Spring Mountain Cabernet.

Critics Challenge 2009 Results

by Robert Whitley, May 27, 2009

Final results of the 2009 Critics Challenge International Wine Competition.

Critics Platinum 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District

Smith-Madrone Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 - Best California Cabernet Sauvignon Under \$40

<http://www.bestcoverly.com/smith-madrone-napa-valley-cabernet-sauvignon-2004>

Why it's a best pick:

Savory, not sweetie is the key here. This wine isn't about big fruit and explosive aromas. This wine about being so laid-back it has nothing to prove, thanks to Mother Nature. The vines are dry farmed, forcing the roots to grow deep into the volcanic soil to find water. The nose is heady with earth and tobacco. Prosciutto and sea-salt chocolate swirl on the palate. This Cab also offers a nice balance of dryness, acidity and good tannins that will hold its own without upstaging dinner. All in all, this is a fantastic wine at a fantastic price coming from an artisanal winery in high-rent Napa.

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Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

Food & Wine Magazine

December 2008, Napa Valley Classic Cabernets

by Ray Isle

<http://www.foodandwine.com/articles/napa-valley-classic-cabernets>

The oldest names in Napa produce some of its greatest Cabernet Sauvignons. Here are...instant classics..Smith-Madrone may be more well-known for its aromatic dry Riesling than its Cabernet, which is odd, since the Cabernet is so good. It's rich with currant and black cherry fruit, held together by savory, spicy tannins.

drinknectar

April 7, 2010

<http://drinknectar.com/2010/04/07/episode-53-smith-madrone-winery/>

Episode #53 Smith-Madrone Winery

4 Rated Wines, Wine Reviews

7 Comments

Big wine, small lot, Napa vineyards, small price. Looking at the Smith brothers, you might mistake them for iron workers in Pittsburgh or mine workers in West Virginia. One sip of their wine and there is no mistaking that Stuart and Charles Smith are definitely wine makers!



Planted in 1971 Smith-Madrone Vineyards sits on 200 acres of steep hillside on top of Spring Mountain in Napa Valley. The vineyards consist of 13 acres of Chardonnay, 13 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and 7 acres of Riesling. With less than 5000 cases of wine made each year, attention to detail stands out with these wines. Brothers, Charles Smith (the winemaker) – former school teacher and international croquet player – and Stu Smith (vineyard manager) – graduate of enology and viticulture from U.C. Davis, make wine that showcases the beauty of their vineyard.

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

In doing research for this review, two things stood out:

- 1) The reference to wine bloggers in the tasting notes. (Joe from www.1winedude.com was referenced in the recent Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon release notes)
- 2) This quote: “Let me make an analogy with the “Wizard of Oz” to the wine business. Like the Scarecrow, the wine industry is mindlessly making wines to achieve some vaunted number, thus the resulting wines, like the Tin Man, have no heart. I can only hope that the Cowardly Lion will find his courage and roar his defiance and independence by making wines of balance, complexity and nuance. The witch would be (wine critic) Robert Parker because he’s the cause of all this stuff.”

The NectarView

2004 Smith Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon

The Stuff: 82% Cab , 8% Merlot, 10% Cab Franc; 22 months in American oak, 2164 cases, 13.9% abv

The Swirl: Dark inky plum with some brilliant bright purple undertones. Nice ruby colors toward the edges, opaque.

The Sniff: The hills are alive with bright cherry fruit, earthy evergreen trees and smoky tobacco. A bouquet that causes you to get lost in time, forgetting the final stages of sip and spit.

The Sip: The flavor profile was slightly off balance with a good earthiness on the front end but a hollow mid-palate that lacked the fruit. The finish did show off cedar chocolate covered cherry finish with good tannin structure. The wine could show very well in 3-5 years.

The Score: At \$45, I can score this a 3 (out of 5). The sour burnt cherry and hollow mid-palate lowered the score a bit at this price range.

Wine and Spirits 90 points; No 2004 Cellar Tracker reviews

<http://twitter.com/1WineDudeReview/statuses/6912193155>

A cadre of awesome players. Starring: Cassis & pencil lead. With Specail Guest: Mr. earth!

<http://nosetoglass.blogspot.com/search?q=smith-madrone>

NoseToGlass.com

by Don Colman, Friday, July 24, 2009

Wine Reviews & Information for Everyday People

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

Understand a Wine Snob

The wine which I grabbed was a 2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon (\$45). Smith-Madrone is a quaint winery in Napa producing approximately 1000 cases of each of their different varietals. When looking at the wine it appears flawless. The wine is a very deep purple and is perfectly clear. It is also a very aromatic with plenty of dried fruit scents, combined with cherries and undertones of oak. It has a complex smell that keeps

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

your nose active the entire bottle.

As always the taste is critical. It is a full bodied, dry wine that is very smooth and full of tannins. They have made a beautiful Cabernet Sauvignon which, in a fine restaurant, could easily sell for \$125-150 per bottle. It is a wine which will appeal to the masses – as it is very smooth and easy to drink – yet complex enough to keep even the most discriminating wine connoisseur coming back for more. The best part, it has already started to age and is ready to drink right away!

Try matching this wine with a simple but elegant meal. It would pair beautifully with most traditional Sunday night dinners (turkey, chicken, roast beef, etc.) I would keep it away from spicy or creamy dishes, as you do not want to over power this gorgeous wine. My suggestion, surprise your loved one and make an everyday day meal into a special occasion. Isn't that what wine should be really about?

www.Vintuba.com

by Chris Oggenfuss, podcast October 2009:

Developing aromas of earth, dried herbs, tobacco leaves, black cherry, black olive, blackberry compote and some old world charm (aka funk). The tannins are medium plus and gripping. Flavors of black cherry, milk chocolate, plums and creme de cassis are elegantly balanced by very good acidity. The finish is both very long and complex. This wine would benefit from 5 to 10 years of additional cellaring to better integrate the tannins.



The Wine Enthusiast

September 2009

93 points. This is the opposite of those gooey, cult-style wines grown down on the Valley benches and floor. It's pure mountain in the tannins, acidity and dryness, with below 14% alcohol. It's a food wine, with cassis, cedar and mineral flavors. Should age well for a decade. [Steve Heimoff]

Wine & Spirits Magazine

August 2009

90 points, Best Buy, Plump currant flavors give this cabernet a rich profile. Yet it seems to grow more impacted with air, becoming increasingly blunt with in-your-face mountain power. This needs at least five years for the structure to relent and the pure fruit to come forward.

Wine Talk

by Robert Whitley

Price Is No Judge in a Wine Competition, May 27, 2009

As usual, the annual Critics Challenge International Wine Competition — staged in San Diego over the Memorial Day weekend — spit out a fair number of surprises. I was pleased to see a few personal favorites emerge victorious, especially Smith-

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

Madrone's 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Spring Mountain District with a platinum. Smith-Madrone could easily fetch higher prices for its highly regarded mountain cabernet, but owner Stu and Charlie Smith are sticklers about keeping their prices affordable even though they live in the high-rent Napa Valley.

Annapolis Gazette: Wine, etc.

by Tom Marquardt & Patrick Darr, July 15, 2009

Medium body, floral and cedar nose with forward dark berry flavors. Very delicious wine from Spring Mountain near St. Helena.

Men's Journal

Mountaintop vineyards yield complex, full-bodied reds

by Daniel Duane, December 2008

....So if you like your juice the way you like your peaks — big, complex, and demanding, filling you with a lust for life — look for these examples from upslope. From high on Spring Mountain, overlooking Napa Valley, this California wine has a berry-briar complexity and a dark-chocolate finish.

San Jose Mercury News

by Laurie Daniel, May 26, 2009

Good values in red wines

A wine that's a good value isn't necessarily cheap. But it should offer quality that's equivalent to wines that are priced much higher. I've tasted several wines in recent weeks that offer just that. Even a run-of-the-mill Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon can easily cost \$75 or \$100. But there are well-made, even distinctive Napa cabs that cost much less than that. Case in point: Smith-Madrone Vineyards has been in business for 35 years atop Spring Mountain. The cabs have tremendous depth and concentration, but they don't hit you over the head with super-ripe fruit. The 2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon is dense and dark, with rich black fruit, notes of mocha, cedar and spice, and firm but approachable tannins.

St. Helena Star

Wine Of The Week

by Stefan Blicher, July 2, 2009

“Old School.” While it might sound like a title of a Jeff Warren column, and it is the title of a pretty hilarious Will Ferrell movie — to a jaded old wine merchant it means big, chewy, back-in-the-day-styled red wines. I’m talking about Mayacamas, Diamond Creek, Dunn, Heitz ... wines like those. Red wines that put hair on your chest and make you feel like going moose hunting or bungee jumping, anything potentially dangerous and somewhat foolhardy that makes your heart pound. From the first sip of Charlie and Stu Smith’s 2004 Cabernet, this was what I was thinking. This gutsy, slightly wild Spring Mountain Cabernet from 33-year-old vines grabbed me right away and as I dug into it, it had me thinking about pepper steak. Dark and potent-looking in the glass, it has classic

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

mountain cab aromas of black cherries, cassis, a little dried herb, crushed rocks — I know that sounds weird, but try to imagine the flavor of dust from crushed rocks in your mouth — and dark cocoa powder. And it follows through in the mouth as you hope: intense, powerful but not too grippy, with sturdy structure and good balance. Its finish is long and what I would call rich, broad, chewy and satisfying. Just good solid old school in the best way. And check this out: this outperforming cab has a great price and one that the Smiths should be commended for keeping realistic. Bonus: this sucker will age for decades, so put some away for your kids' cellar, too!

Dan Berger's Vintage Experiences: The Weekly Wine Commentary

Volume XIV, Issue 16 May 28, 2009

Exceptional: A throwback to an earlier era when Cabernets smelled like the variety! With air, the wine shows an earthy, forest-y depth and the mid-palate and finish are what you expect in a wine made to lay down for a few years. May be missed by the scorers who are looking for more oak, extract and alcohol. This wine has only 13.9% alcohol.

OffTheVineMagazine.com

July 29, 2009

Had a chance to taste this outstanding mountain Cabernet from Charles and Stuart Smith. Powerful, and yet understated, the wine truly expresses its unique terroir. Great soft fruit with notes of wild black cherry, violets and cigar box. Fine grained sweet tannins lend to the appeal. The wine was aged for 22 months in new American oak cooperage and was bottled unfined and unfiltered. It is a steal in today's marketplace.

Slashfood blog

June 15, 2009

Four Great Grilling Wines - Wine of the Week

Cabernet Sauvignon, the king of reds, is a great upscale splurge for that prime cut of steak or grilled lamb you're impressing Dad with. Try the 2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet from Napa Valley's Spring Mountain, a rich, powerful, balanced Cab from Napa without the traditional Napa price tag or the high alcohol (the Smith-Madrone clocks in at just 13.9 percent).

ProfessorBainbridge.com

August 13, 2009

<http://www.professorbainbridge.com/professorbainbridgecom/2009/08/smithmadrone-spring-mountain-district-cabernet-sauvignon-napa-valley-2004.html>

Smith-Madrone Spring Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley) 2004:

The wine offered up a sweet bouquet of dark berries, oak, and herbs, along with a whiff of bell pepper. The attack has good forward fruit, bracing acidity, and fairly firm

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

tannins. It needs some time in the cellar to soften and evolve, but has a lot of promise for the future. Grade: A-

Slate

DRINK: What To Drink on Thanksgiving

Glorious American cabernets

By Mike Steinberger

November 20, 2009

<http://www.slate.com/id/2236309/>

Smith-Madrone Vineyards and Winery, located in Napa's Spring Mountain District, is the best California winery that you've never heard of, turning out exemplary cabernets, chardonnays and rieslings. With its purity of fruit and impeccable balance, the 2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon is a radical and thoroughly toothsome departure from your garden-variety Napa cab. It is also a bargain, a word not often heard along Highway 29.

Michael Steinberger is Slate.com's wine columnist. His latest book, *Au Revoir To All That*, is about the rise, fall and future of French cuisine. Steinberger has also contributed to publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *The Wine Spectator*, *The World of Fine Wine*, *Sommelier Journal* and *Food &*

Wine Magazine

<http://norcalwingman.com/2010/09/13/2004-smith-madrone-napa-valley-spring-mountain-district-cabernet-sauvignon/>

2004 Smith-Madrone, Napa Valley – Spring Mountain District, Cabernet Sauvignon

After my terrible September 2nd experience in China, my hopeless and fruitless search for a #Cabernet worth drinking, I was exceptionally excited to be home, knowing that I had many options for good red wine drinking. I recently received a sample set from a winery in St. Helena including a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Chardonnay. Now, I have had a recent change of opinion on Napa Valley Cab and was super stoked to be provided a cab for sample, needless to say one of the better samples I've yet to receive in my wine blogging experiment. I hope (yet am open to admit) this cab can only be better than the screwed up wine I had in China.

Let us begin:

2004 Smith-Madrone, Napa Valley – Spring Mountain District, Cabernet Sauvignon

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

2004 Smith-Madrone, Napa Valley, Cabernet Sauvignon

The Nose: Cassis and Black Licorice are all over this nose! Cedar and spice are hanging around and making themselves known.

The Taste: The taste is not disappointing. Everything represented in the nose is represented with some extras. Black Cherry and more spice are present; mostly black pepper.

The Mouth Feel: Velvety kick off (it is football season now) with big chewy tannins kicking in mid-palate and following through all the way down to the finish.

The Color: Inky and deep dark ruby-garnet, looks very youthful for a 2004!

The Nitty Gritty -

Varietal Content: Cabernet Sauvignon 82%, Merlot 8% & Cabernet franc 11%

Time in oak: 22 months in new American oak barrels

Alcohol: 13.9% Unfined and unfiltered

Cost: \$45 per 750ml Bottle, discounts for multi-bottle purchase on Smith-Madrone website <http://www.smithmadrone.com/order.htm>



Cellar Tracker: 90.7 Avg. Score - The Verdict: This is exactly the wine I needed on September 2nd for #Cabernet day. Alas, it was here in California and I was 6000 Miles away in China. I have to say though, this Cabernet Sauvignon really reminds me more of a Sonoma County Cab, rather than a Napa wine. This has great “old world style” not that big Napa fruit bomb, it has great structure and complexity. This wine was good with my filet mignon but I would say is better on its own, with nothing but glass to pair with! Go find this wine and get some, its a value at the price point (for a Napa Cab).

2004 Smith-Madrone, Napa Valley, Cabernet Sauvignon

<http://www.drinkbetterwine.com>

2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon

Stu and Charles Smith have struck gold again atop Spring Mountain. 2004 is shaping up to be great year for Napa Cabernet, with many winemakers very impressed with their offerings. Smith Madrone is no different. All the tell tale signs of this Cabernet are present upon first contact - cassis and cherry aromas with a generous and full body supported by firm tannin and well integrated oak. The wine rounded out a bit more after the bottle was open for an hour and a longer, more pronounced finish was evident. More

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

accessible at an early age than previous vintages, the 2004 Smith Madrone will still age gracefully for a minimum of 10 years, but who really wants to wait that long?

Whom You Know

<http://www.whomyouknow.com/2010/08/champagne-wishes-smith-madrone-cabernet.html>

Whom You Know highly recommends the Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon 2004~! Remember, it's not who you know, it's Whom You Know, and we do know Stu Smith. Recently on his Manhattan excursion, he invited Peachy Deegan to Ma Peche (How thoughtfully creative! You non-francophiles, that loosely translates to "My Peach") where she first sampled the 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon and was impressed with the unsurpassed quality of this outstanding American wine. On purpose, we run this review on a Monday because this wine will cheer you up! Not only is Stu Smith an excellent winemaker, but also he demonstrates a remarkable American spirit. Since Peachy was impressed, the Champagne Wishes panel put this to the test, and they say:

“Our Champagne Wishes panel comments on the Cabernet Sauvignon 2004: Smith Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 is everything it is billed as plus much more. This wine is very smooth and full on the palate, with an aroma that tickles the nose and complements the taste. At first whiff you get the fruity cherry smell with hints of lavender and even dark chocolate. This is truly a treat for your senses; even the color is vibrant and adds to the whole Cabernet Sauvignon experience. I don't know enough about wine to know whether it's the red rocky volcanic soil or the cooler mountain temperatures that give this grape such a great flavor, but whatever it is – it works. Smith Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 is “Estate Bottled” which means 100 percent of the grapes used were grown in the winery's own vineyards or came from vineyards controlled by the winery. For the buyer, that means Smith Madrone has complete control over the whole process which turns out a top notch wine. Of course I like to drink wine in social setting, but I especially love wine at meal time when I get the opportunity to play with pairings and try to find just the right wine to go with the meal. The right wine can make a ho-hum meal much better, and it adds a bit of sophistication to your dinner table. Tonight I grilled up some steaks with some veggies and potatoes wedges drizzled with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. The Smith Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 was the perfect match for the char grilled steak. We enjoyed the wine so much that we opened bottle #2 long after the meal was over.

Smith Madrone Cabernet's dark ruby red color is beautiful. The great smell of plum really rises from the wine. When you taste this wine you can feel the soft and silky flavors on your tongue. It's a bold but yet very light wine. This wine dances in your mouth. I love matching this wine with a nice stake or a spicy dish. I also like it when my red wines are slightly chilled. I feel like doing so really brings out the taste of the wine. My husband loves reds - I prefer whites. After trying this Cabernet well I have to be honest, I changed my mind. I made a wonderful stake dinner for a few of our friends and they were blown away by the wine. Everyone asked me what we were drinking and

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

wanted more. I mean to be honest we like to stick with our usual wines. This was a new one so we chanced it and fell in love. Sometime you have to take the risk to see if you'll be surprised and if you're wondering yes we were. The wine really brought out the taste of the stake and coated your mouth in a subtle manner. It was a new unfamiliar taste that we all couldn't get enough of. We will definitely buy more of this wine. I will be taking many bottles as gifts to family and friends. I will also buy many and host them to everyone when they come over. It's a must buy and trust me you should be buying!

This Cab from Smith-Madrone is one of their best yet. The sub-appellation spring mountain district of Napa Valley produces some very fine wines. Grown on the top of spring mountain (1900 foot elevation). With 21 months in American Oak barrels. an early harvest of 2004 began on September 7th. This very dark purple Cabernet Sauvignon opens with a fragrant red currant, spicy blueberry aroma with hint of ash, crushed violets



and red cedar. Also, it has an attractive spicy boysenberry bouquet with hints of menthol and black pepper. On the palate, this wine is medium bodied, soft and warm, very well balanced, smooth, harmonious, and elegant. As a result of a centuries old farming technique of "dry farming". The grape produces an intense flavor and structure. The flavor profile is a blend of red raspberry and black cherry with notes of menthol and coffee, delicious blueberry and a touch of spicy black pepper. With a grape blend of 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, & 10% Cabernet Franc. The most distinct flavor is an appealing blend of black cherry and blackberry with notes of menthol mixed in, giving this wine a soft, enticing character. The finish is very dry. The tannins show some excellent length and are nicely prolonged. This wine would go particularly well with roast duck, your favorite meatballs, or a nice thick grilled ribeye. I paired this Cab with a NY strip steak right off the grill. Perfection. There were 2,161 cases produced. 13.9% alcohol content, unfinned and unfiltered. You can expect some sediment to form in the bottle as it ages. Very drinkable now and will age well for many years to come. Enjoy.

This Cabernet is a must try in this beautiful BBQ season! It blends perfectly with a freshly cooked steak. This is fruit driven. It shows a pure and intense expression of flavor that is very unique. It is richly flavored with a wonderful long finish. This is not too fruity nor over the top. The blend is just divine. This cabernet is so elegant and refined. I absolutely thought it tasted phenomenal. There is enough power for the long haul. I am absolutely positive this will stand up for many more years to come, if you can bear to store it. The aroma channels plum and blackberry. I also tried this Cabernet with cheese and it was just fantastic. The wine has a great ruby tone. There is no sip and spit

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

with this one, you will just want to savor the flavor. I felt there was a slight hint of chocolate on the finish. I would highly recommend this one. It would make for the perfect hostess gift at that next BBQ. Feel free to stock up on this one, like I said it will last for many years to come. Enjoy!!

www.spinthebottleny.com

My Interview with Stu Smith of Smith-Madrone

Submitted by [sasha](#), February 24, 2010

<http://www.spinthebottleny.com/spin-the-blog/my-interview-with-stu-smith-of-smith-madrone>

It's a wine writing cliché to compare the style of a wine to the character of the person who made it. But in the case of Smith-Madrone, it's true. Like his wines, winemaker Stu Smith is a Northern California original — direct, approachable, down-to-earth, and, yes, a real straight-shooter. (This is a much more interesting photo than the usual staged “winemaker lovingly cradling a bunch of grapes shot” don't you think?) Here are some highlights from our recent conversation, after I had a chance to taste some of their recent releases:



Q. I really loved the 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon. How would you define the style of your Cabernet Sauvignon? It seems like you have a more restrained style than a lot of other California Cabernet Sauvignons.

I like the 2004. It's unfinned, unfiltered and done with American oak. I believe there are four hallmarks of wine quality. The first obligation of wine is to give pleasure. After that, wine should have varietal character. [Meaning it should represent the typical qualities of the variety or varieties it's made from.] Third, a wine should have balance. The fourth one, which is so hard to get hold of, that's what Charlie [brother and winemaking partner Charlie Smith] and I call “sense of place.” There should be something that's interesting and different about the wine. That's what we call a sense of place. It's also our goal get the vintage into the glass. Whatever that vintage is imparting, we want that in the glass.

There are two styles of California Cabernet Sauvignon I don't like: first is the low acid style. They're impossible to drink. I simply can't drink them. The second is what I call the high maturity, Parker wine. Those wines can be very seductive. But once you hone in on the singularity of the wine, you realize there's no complexity, there's just a prune or raisin flavor. Once you home in on that, that's all you can taste.

I think there's more bad wine being made today that ever before in California. There's a lack of education for some of these winemakers who are self-taught. They don't understand the basics of winemaking, the importance of clarity and consistency. But I do

Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

think what goes on here on Spring Mountain is a wonderful thing. Many, if not most, of us are small and family-operated. People are very passionate about what they do. It takes a certain kind of person who would want to go into the mountains and put up with the heartache and the hard work that we do. But there's nothing that's quite as much fun.

Terroirists.net

August 4, 2010

<http://terroirists.net/tag/cabernet-sauvignon/>

Smith-Madrone and a Lesson in Seduction

Has old-school become the new new-school? Perhaps that doesn't make any sense, but it's something I realized on a tour of Smith-Madrone yesterday. A few ounces of 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon was poured into my glass, and over the next few minutes I began to understand why people go berserk over Napa cabernet. Mondovino became the subject at hand, in a manner of which I don't recall. There is a scene in Burgundy where an old vigneron is bashing high alcohol, "new world" wines — claiming they seduce immediately but don't leave a lasting impression, much like topless dancers (that part isn't in the movie).

The Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon is not one of those wines. The alcohol reads 13.9%, and the wine is beautifully balanced and exactly what cabernet should be. I don't know what the professionals have scored this wine, but it doesn't matter; it's not a fruit bomb, but it is fully ripe and highly seducing, just not immediately. They sent me out with a bottle which I was looking forward to cellaring, but to make a long story short it was consumed that night at a restaurant in St Helena and very much enjoyed by all. R.I.P., sexy Cabernet; you are already missed.



Smith-Madrone 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon

gabesview.com

Posted by Gabe on May 10, 2010

<http://gabesview.com/2010/05/10/visiting-smith-madrone-winery-on-spring-mountain/>
Visiting Smith-Madrone Winery on Spring Mountain

Tasting through the wines was as much of a revelation as the vineyard tour. Between current vintages, prior vintages and barrel samples we were fortunate enough to taste a few examples of each of their three releases. The Cabernets were simply a knockout. Of the ones we sampled the 2004 was probably my favorite. I have found that when they're well made, wines that emanate from mountain fruit often show off a pure and intense expression of flavor that is unique. This was the case with the Smith-Madrone Cabernets. They are fruit driven and intense without being fruity and over the top. They are powerful and at the same time elegant and refined. I enjoyed all three varietals quite a bit as they are well made, correct expressions of the grape in question.



Mountain Wine: Wines From California's High Elevation Vineyards

Alan Boehmer, Apr 28, 2010

<http://www.suite101.com/content/mountain-wine-a231282>

Do High Elevation Vineyards Enjoy Particular Distinctions? It's a fact. High elevation vineyards above California's Napa Valley produce wines strikingly different from lower elevation sites. Smith-Madrone has remained in family control since its inception in 1971. The winery was built by hand from stone and lumber obtained from the property. It is an artisanal enterprise that offers three products: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, and Riesling.

2004 Smith-Madrone Napa Valley Spring Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon; 13.9% alc., \$45 Estate Bottled.

A signature mountain Cabernet: deeply extracted, lean, terroir-driven. Plum and blackberry nose with a note of dried thyme and flavors reminiscent of a Brunello di Montalcino. Richly flavored with a long finish, but won't upstage your char-broiled steak. Recommended.