

# Food, Wine & Spirits



## Frog's Tooth Vineyards

By Gary and Sue Grant

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

A few months ago I was joking with some friends that, because of the cooler summer and the late ripening of grapes, I would probably still be working on this year's harvest on Christmas. Guess what, it's nearly Christmas and I'm still working on this year's harvest! Guess the joke is on me...

I honestly thought that I would be snuggling up at home with a roaring fire in the fireplace, a good book, my dog Rascal by my side, relaxing with a glass or two of wine. (Such a lovely picture, a boy, his dog, and a glass of wine. What about me, the winery wife?). Okay, a fire, a book, my dog, a glass of wine and YOU, SUE, THE WONDER WIFE! (That's better, still would have been nice to be listed before the dog, though). Let's get back to the story...

I thought I would be done with harvest by now. However, Mother Nature did not cooperate. Fruit came in late; as a matter of fact, I received the last of my fruit around Thanksgiving. Fermentations were longer than usual due to the cooler climate.

Normally, a week to ten days fermenting in bins turned into 3 weeks or more in some cases. My last press load was just a few days ago. I still have wine in tank that needs to be barreled and wines in barrel that need to be racked.

It sounds fairly straightforward, press, barrel, and rack. But, for me as well as for other small wineries, it can be a complicated logistical problem. In a "normal" year, fruit comes in at varying intervals that allows for staggered pressing, barreling and racking. There is time between press loads to fill and empty holding tanks before the next press load.

However, when fruit harvest is delayed it seems like everything gets harvested at the same time leading to non-stop crushing and then fermenting. The cooler weather means that our outdoor bin fermentations take longer and, again, everything seems to come due at the same time. We have a limited amount of holding tanks so some fermenting musts get pressed to the holding tanks and some get pressed directly to barrel.

To rack the wines from the barrel requires that the barrels be emptied into a holding tank or into yet more barrels. It takes quite a balancing act to move wine from tank to barrel to free

up the tanks so that other wines can be moved from barrel to tank. Throw in the white wines that we ferment in stainless steel and another layer of complexity is added. (Sounds like quite the juggling act. Maybe you should be in the circus or get a job as a supply Sergeant. It seems like a lot of organization skills are needed. How come you can organize the winery but you can't get organized at home? Just sayin...) Don't go there, woman.

Anyway, it has been a challenge for me this year. With any luck I should be through the barreling and racking stage of my 2011 wines just before Santa makes his way down the chimney. (What makes you think Santa will be coming down the chimney with a roaring fire in the fireplace? Besides, I'm not sure where you fall on his naughty or nice list. As for me, NICE, OF COURSE!)

Sue and I were originally going to write this article on what we learned during the year. Since I'm still learning we thought it would be a good to kick off January 2012 with a retrospect of 2011. Believe me, we have lots of fodder to look at. For now, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May you all have a safe and sane holiday season.

Until next time, Gary and Sue. Drop us a line and let us know what's on your mind... [fromthevine@pacbell.net](mailto:fromthevine@pacbell.net) or to PO Box 897, Sutter Creek, CA 95685.

"Age is just a number. It's totally irrelevant unless, of course, you happen to be a bottle of wine." Joan Collins

## Chipolte Roasted Cocktail Nuts

Ina Garten, *The Barefoot Contessa*

14oz Roasted unsalted cashews  
7oz walnuts

7oz pecans  
1/2 cup whole almonds

Brush bottom of sheet pan with oil. Add 2 tbs oil to nuts, add 1/3 cup maple syrup, 1/4 cup brown sugar, 3 tbs fresh squeezed orange juice, 2 tbs chipolte powder, 2 tbs finely chopped fresh rosemary, and 2 tsp salt. Mix it all together.

Spread nut mixture out on the pan, leveling all. Roast in a 350 degree oven for 20 minutes, mix the nuts only once while cooking. Sprinkle with 2tbs finely chopped rosemary when out of the oven; taste for salt and add up to 2tsp salt if needed.

Mix it all up and serve in small bowls. This makes a spicy, sweet, smoky, and salty cocktail snack. It would also make very special holiday gifts, either stored in airtight decorative tins, or in colorful cellophane bags for hostess gifts. Of course, great on movie night also! Happy Holidays!



## Hovey Tempranillo awarded gold at international competition

Murphys, CA – When winemaker Chuck Hovey was asked to be a judge at the renowned Tempranillo al Mundo international wine competition, he felt it was one of his highest honors. Little did he know that when the results were announced in New York on November 16 that his own label, 2009 Hovey Tempranillo, Rollerri Cuvee, would win a gold medal, only one of two awarded to a winery in the United States.

Tempranillo al Mundo has held competitions all over the world, and this is the first time the event was held in the United States. More than 400 Tempranillos were entered in this prestigious competition, many from the famed Ribero del Duero region in Spain. Less than 40 gold medals were awarded. "I was humbled to receive this award," said Hovey (photo above, Right). "The competition was fierce. I believe Hovey was the smallest winery represented at the competition. This is also a great honor for the Sierra Foothill appellation."

Hovey Wine is based out of Murphys in the Sierra Foothill appellation of California in Calaveras County and produced in nearby Jamestown, Tuolumne County. Annual production is 1,200 cases. Hovey Wine is sold in retail outlets and served at such distinguished restaurants as The Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park. Currently there isn't a tasting room, but plans are in the works to open a tasting facility on Murphys iconic Main Street in the spring. Hovey Wine is also available on [hoveywine.com](http://hoveywine.com).

Chuck was one of the first winemakers to plant the Tempranillo varietal in Sierra Foothill soil since Prohibition, and hence, was one of the pioneers to bring this robust red wine back into the spotlight. He has been making Tempranillo from that same vineyard, Rollerri Vineyard in Murphys, for 13 years. During his 24-year tenure at Stevenot Winery in Murphys, Chuck took a trip with owner Barden Stevenot to Spain to find out how the most revered Tempranillo

winemakers crafted their wines. During that visit he brought some Tempranillo that he had produced when the Rollerri Vineyard was just starting to produce. "They couldn't believe that the wine was only two years old and from a three-year-old vine," said Bonnie Miller, who accompanied Chuck and Barden on the trip. "They started asking Chuck how he made such a fine Tempranillo."

In addition to Tempranillo, Chuck also produces award-winning Chardonnay, Barbera (which won the Chairman's Award at the 2011 Orange County State Fair), Zinfandel and Petite Sirah. All five wines were recently featured in Wine Enthusiast, a national monthly wine publication.

Chuck lives in Murphys with his wife and business partner, Jan, and son, Kyle, a Junior at Bret Harte High School. For more information, call (209) 588-9315 or (209) 601-8814. Visit online at [hoveywine.com](http://hoveywine.com)

## Season's Greetings

If you are out and about on these coming Fridays... Drop by and come relax and hear.... Herb Boxhorn with friends at Bella Grace Winery (located on Main Street, downtown Sutter Creek) Friday, Dec 16th and Friday, Dec 23rd, from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. Hope to see you there!

## Wine Spritzers

Mix a small amount of white wine, seltzer water, cranberry juice, and lime for a delicious, low-cal drink. Limiting your intake of alcohol cuts out a lot of calories and leads to better food choices. Plus, seltzer fills you up.

## Sacramento Children's

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