



OAKVILLE, CALIFORNIA

SPRING 2002

Nickel & Nickel Construction Update

Construction of the new Nickel & Nickel winery in Oakville seems to be moving at lightning speed. Just six months ago, the project consisted of a 30,000 square-foot hole in the ground. That “hole” has now become the underground barrel cellar and is



The footprint of the Nickel & Nickel cellar, photographed in July 2001.

completely enclosed with a floor, walls and a ceiling supported by a series of groin-arch columns running throughout. The columns separate the space into individual, temperature-controlled bays where the barrels will be kept. The bays can be individually heated or cooled, depending on the particular needs of the wines.



A crane positions a 4-ton plank into the ceiling of the Nickel & Nickel barrel cellar.

Winemaker Darice Spinelli has been busy ordering tanks, fermenters, barrels and other equipment that she will need for the first crush at the winery, which is set for harvest 2002. One of

two presses has already been installed in the cellar.

Next steps call for assembly of the fermentation buildings, which will be at ground level, above the cellar. A photo gallery chronicling the winery construction is available at <http://www.nickelandnickel.com>. Check it out!



THE PRESS BOX

The latest news & notes from the media.

- Far Niente -

Bon Appetit, April 2002

“Top 10”

1998 Far Niente Cabernet Sauvignon

“Sophisticated with near-Socratic depth and fabulous balance.”

— Anthony Dias Blue

Copley News Service, February 25, 2002

2000 Far Niente Chardonnay

“Far Niente eschews the heavy handed style of winemaking typical in California chardonnay circles and that's apparent with this exceptionally well balanced, elegant wine. It has been my experience that Far Niente Chardonnay is one of the handful of California chards that improve with age. Rating: 93.”

— Robert Whitley

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- 2002 Culinary Convergence Series
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- Dolce Finishes 2001 Harvest in Record Time

- Dolce -

**Wine Enthusiast, Best of Year 2001
"Top 100 Wines of the Year"**

1998 Dolce

"Ripe hay, vanilla, and apricot mark the nose; deep orange flavors with cinnamon spice notes and a very smooth mouthfeel are the already promising attributes of this infant."

93 points

American Way Magazine, 2001

1998 Dolce

"It's certainly the most remarkable dessert wine made in California."

– Anthony Dias Blue

- Nickel & Nickel -

**Wine Enthusiast, Best of Year 2001
1998 Nickel & Nickel Stelling**

Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

"Smoky toast and earth tones offer an enticing aromatic entrée to this silky textured wine. It's marked by elegant and balanced Bing cherry, blackberry, raspberry, spice, herb and cedar notes. Long on the finish."

91 points

Wine & Spirits, February 2002

1998 Nickel & Nickel Stelling

Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

"...offers a delicate scent of violets running through supple black cherry fruit. Those elements set a high tone for the darker, chewy pitch of the tannin to ground. Give those tannins time to soften, and they'll bring their own vineyard expression to enrich the length of the fruit."

92 points

Personality Profile

*While the wines from Far Niente, Dolce and Nickel & Nickel have earned widespread recognition, the people who make the wines are working hard, often behind the scenes. In an effort to introduce our team of star talent, the Far Niente Family eNewsletter presents the "Personality Profile." Our first feature focuses on Far Niente Winemaker **Stephanie Putnam**.*

A San Francisco native, Stephanie Putnam did not originally set her sights on making wine at Far Niente. Rather, she envisioned a career in law enforcement, as an FBI agent. But as luck would have it, she now spends her time interpreting the laws of viticulture and other natural sciences as winemaker of the Napa Valley estate.



Stephanie Putnam

Armed with a degree in Fermentation Science from the University of California, Davis, Putnam joined the cellar team at Napa's Hess Collection winery in 1991. She worked her way through the production department, serving as enologist and assistant winemaker before being appointed winemaker in 1997.

As winemaker, Putnam managed the Hess Collection and Hess Select labels, producing estate Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah for the winery. She helped produce a wine that was named number three in the world by some of the industry's leading critics. She also served as consultant to the winery's South American partners, guiding them to craft wines suitable for the United States market.

In the spring of 2001, Putnam was appointed winemaker at Far Niente and placed in charge of making the winery's estate Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. She manages all aspects of winemaking, including harvest, tasting and blending decisions.

Putnam lives in Napa with her two Labradors, Sophie and Spencer, and enjoys running, taekwondo and scuba diving.

Dolce Far Niente Society Offers Patrons Exclusive Opportunities

The Far Niente family is pleased to announce the creation of The Dolce Far Niente Society, a wine club devoted to providing rare wines and special opportunities from the Far Niente, Dolce and Nickel & Nickel wineries.

Society patrons enjoy an array of offerings throughout the year, including pre-release selections of limited-edition wines, the option to purchase highly allocated current releases, and opportunities to acquire carefully aged vintages. Patrons receive quarterly wine shipments that may also include recipes from Far Niente Executive Chef Michel Cornu, information on winery news and events and occasional commentary from the partners and winemaking staff.

Other benefits for Society patrons include discounts on wine purchases in addition to the quarterly shipments, VIP tours and tastings at Far Niente, which is closed to the public, advance notification of future releases and limited-edition wines, and access to the Online Patrons Lounge, where special access to wines, discounts and other exclusive offerings is granted.

Society membership is available to any person over the age of 21 with a shipping address in a reciprocal state. To learn more about the Dolce Far Niente Society, or to become a patron, log onto <http://www.farniente.com> and click the "Buy Online" button, or contact the winery at (707) 944-2861, extension 310.

Far Niente Announces 2002 Culinary Convergence Series



Michel Cornu

Join us for a day of food, wine, cooking and conviviality at Far Niente, co-hosted by Emile Henry, makers of gourmet, ceramic cookware, and *Wine Country Living Magazine*.

For the second year in a row, Far Niente will open its historic doors and lavish gardens to a few dedicated epicures for a daylong culinary immersion into learning the finer points of creating exceptional cuisine and enjoying rare wines. The dates for the 2002 series are June 24, July 15, August 26, September 16 and October 14.

Led by Executive Chef Michel Cornu, the day will begin in Far Niente's Cabernet Grill kitchen for a morning of cooking instruction and preparation. A late-morning break will include a guided wine tasting and will be followed by a light lunch, served outdoors under the cork oak trees, weather permitting.

After lunch, it's back to the kitchen to put the finishing touches on the grand meal that -- after returning to your home or hotel to refresh and dress for dinner -- you will enjoy in elaborate, Far Niente style. The evening includes a private tour of the historic Far Niente winery, followed by a reception and dinner where you will feast on the exquisite spoils of your labor, paired with current and rare Far Niente wines.

Classes are extremely limited in size and reservations are required. Please visit our website, <http://www.farniente.com>, for more information or to register.

Won't You Join Us?

Catch up with winery staff and taste some of the newest releases at these upcoming consumer events. Please contact the event locations for all details, including times and ticket prices.

EVENTS

May 7: Wine Spectator's Grand Tour
(Chicago, IL) (212) 684-4224

May 9: Pennsylvania Liquor
Control Board Wine Expo
(Philadelphia, PA) (717) 787-5986

May 17 – 19: Nantucket Wine Festival
(Nantucket, MA) (508) 228-1128

June 1: UCLA Jonsson Cancer
Center Foundation Benefit
(Los Angeles, CA) (310) 794-7643

June 14 – 16: Aspen Food & Wine Classic
(Aspen, CO) (877) 900-WINE

June 28 – 30: Grand Teton Music Festival
(Jackson Hole, WY) (307) 733-3050

VINTNER DINNERS

May 10: Four Seasons Restaurant
(New York, NY) (212) 754-9494

Nickel & Nickel Introduces Truchard Vineyard Chardonnay

Nickel & Nickel introduced the 2000 Truchard Vineyard Chardonnay in April, becoming the second Chardonnay to be produced by the winery. The Truchard joins the 2000 John's Creek Chardonnay, 1999 Suscol Ranch Merlot and 1999 Ponzo Vineyard Zinfandel to round out the winery's spring releases.

Produced from the Truchard family vineyard in Carneros, the Chardonnay offers ripe tropical fruit character and fullness on the palate, accented by mineral notes and vanilla and spice from the oak.

Dolce Finishes 2001 Harvest in Record Time

The 2001 Dolce harvest kicked off on October 15 and was completed in a record eight days, a quick pace compared to most years, when harvest usually lasts up to six weeks and requires several picking passes through the vineyard.

"We experienced exceptionally fortuitous weather conditions in the weeks leading up to harvest, with rain, persistent humidity and drying conditions at just the right intervals to produce an extensive and uniform botrytis infection in the vineyard," says Dolce Winemaker Greg Allen. "Almost all at once, the grapes were ready to come in."

Allen says the wine, which completed fermentation at the end of January, is already showing complex fruit and botrytis character. "But we still have a long way to go. Dolce doesn't really become Dolce until at least a year in barrel, but so far, all indications are good," says Allen.

While the 2001 Dolce won't be released for a few more years, the current release, 1998, shows a wonderful balance between sweetness, acidity, fruit and botrytis character. Youthful and exuberant now, it will continue to develop richer flavors in the years to come.

Questions and Comments

We welcome your thoughts and observations about **The Far Niente Family eNews**, as well as ideas about what you would like to see included in forthcoming issues. Please e-mail your comments to info@farniente.com, and include "eNews" on the subject line.