

# INDUSTRY UPDATE

# Winter 2012

Allied Grape Growers:  
7030 N. Fruit Ave., Suite 115  
Fresno, CA 93711

Coastal Office:  
347 Healdsburg Ave., Suite J  
Healdsburg, CA 95448

FIRST-CLASS  
U S POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
FRESNO, CA 93706  
PERMIT #2029

*Allied Grape Growers is a winegrape marketing cooperative with over 600 grower members from major winegrape regions of California.*

*The association exists for the purpose of efficient and competitive marketing of its members' grapes as well as offering marketing services for non-members. Direct lines of communication are maintained year-round with growers and vintners for better understanding of market conditions and opportunities.*



## Is It Really Short This Time?

The buzz in the industry, following the 2011 winegrape crush, is that California produced a below average winegrape crop and that supply is restricted. But many people (including us) said that about the 2010 crop, and it turned out to be the third largest crush in history!

*So is it really short this time?* Following the 2010 harvest, the industry was estimating a winegrape crop anywhere from 3.2 to 3.4 million tons. It turned out to be 3.6 million tons, which may not sound like much of a difference, but for the analysts it caused a flurry of review. Those who track production and supply suddenly took a hard second look at their numbers to see how they could have been off by 10 percent.

As the months went on into 2011, it made it easier to swallow the reality pill of a large crop, because the market easily absorbed the additional 300,000 tons that most did not estimate was out there in the first place. This is primarily because the underestimated tonnage came from the value-priced Central Valley.....and let's face it, inexpensive wines are hip today.

*continued on Page 2*

## INDUSTRY UPDATE

### An "Allied Press" Newsletter Publication

Written for the growers and customers of  
Allied Grape Growers

QUALITY

INTEGRITY

STABILITY

# 2011 Wine Crush Predictions

We don't have the end-of-the-year numbers yet, but if shipment trends held true through December, it will show that around 90 percent of all of the shipment growth in 2011 came from the "Big 3" – Gallo, Constellation Wines and The Wine Group. So that extra tonnage we didn't know we had in the first place from 2010 is now gone. That incredible performance by the "Big 3" really set the stage for the 2011 crush.

Mother Nature also added some interesting twists that made buyers scurry for supply. So what makes the industry so sure this harvest isn't above average like last year? Does it just "feel" short because the market activity was so strong?

Despite our line of questioning, we do believe that the 2011 crop was near average, or likely less than average. Average would be about 3.3 to 3.4 million tons. Our official estimate is 3.25 million tons. As a comparison, the State of California has estimated a 3.3 million ton crop. Most industry estimates range from 3.1 to 3.3 million tons, so we are at the higher end of the range. Our analysis of crop, by region, points us in the direction of a likely smaller than average crop.

In the North Coast, tonnages were down. Internally, our North Coast AGG growers were off 15 percent from their delivery totals last year. There were numerous reports of light crops due mostly to select harvesting in reds after the October rains. Additionally, the 2011 crop just never looked real large in the North Coast, and anything that did have a decent crop early was most likely cut down by inclement weather throughout the growing and harvest seasons.

In the Central Coast, it is almost impossible to believe there could be a repeat performance of 2010's yields, since they had produced their

largest crop since 2005. So we are estimating that they are down by about one-third for 2011. The April frost and challenging growing season made it hard to produce another good crop in 2011.

As for the interior, Lodi was poised to experience a good crop in 2011 since 2010 seemed to be such a disaster, but it just didn't happen. Lodi's three main varieties, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel, are all estimated to be down from 2010. Merlot and others were slightly higher, but that couldn't make up for the shortfall in tonnage from the main three. Zinfandel was disastrously light, and when considering that it is Lodi's largest single producing varietal, we had no choice but to estimate Lodi's production to be off once again in 2011, and even about 5 percent below 2010.

The Central Interior (south of Lodi) is the region that is the largest challenge to estimate. The yields of new (and old) west-side plantings are untraditionally high, and large yielding varieties continue to become a larger portion of the production from the central interior. AGG's internal yields for 2011 were off by about 8 percent from 2010, but our representation of large-yielding, west-side plantings is light. We are estimating that the entire central interior was off by about 6 percent from 2010, but admittedly, this is the one region where a 150,000 ton swing either way is possible.

When you are talking about well over 1.5 million tons, it is hard to estimate it within a few percent. The table included indicates the sum of this year's regional estimates and provides some historical perspective as well for reference. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter if the crush was 3.0 million tons or 3.5 million tons, because there is a home for every ton. But it is still fun to make the guess every year.

## Production by Region

Region	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Est.	Est. Change
North Coast	455,257	370,162	465,938	443,360	385,000	-15.2%
Central Coast	407,044	366,392	508,709	537,202	400,000	-34.3%
Lodi/Clarksburg	731,035	627,535	906,949	705,066	670,000	-5.2%
Central Interior	1,579,790	1,593,588	1,738,182	1,831,629	1,730,000	-5.9%
Other	74,377	57,097	83,253	71,321	65,000	-9.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,247,503</b>	<b>3,014,774</b>	<b>3,703,031</b>	<b>3,588,578</b>	<b>3,250,000</b>	<b>-10.4%</b>

# Thoughts on Irrigation

This season, it appears that for many of us our winter rainfall will not be adequate to recharge the soil profile. To date, the Central Valley has received just over 1.57 inches of precipitation, measured from the period beginning on July 1 of 2011. Reservoir storage is good, however the snowpack, as reported this January by the California Department of Water Resources, is one of the driest on record at around 19 percent of normal statewide. We still have a ways to go, but here are a few things to consider:

During this time of year, vines are dormant, not dead. There must be enough moisture in the vine so as not to restrict sap flow. Recent low rainfall years in California have corresponded with an increase in the incidence of Delayed Spring Growth or DSG.

Symptoms, illustrated by the photos on this page, include poor or uneven bud-break, stunted growth, smaller or aborted clusters and failure of individual buds. With DSG, sometimes shoot growth is only delayed, but usually this delay leads to crop loss and / or uneven maturation of the crop (see top photo). Delayed shoot growth can also lead to an increase in sucker growth at the base or head of the vine (see bottom photo).

Lack of sufficient water in the soil profile can also lead to nutritional deficiency problems, such as boron and zinc deficiency, which can often be the result of winter / spring water stress.

Those who did not apply a post-harvest irrigation are especially vulnerable, as are vineyards with sandy soils which will be depleted of soil moisture much faster than finer-textured soils.

Insufficient soil moisture can also lead to winter injury to the root system during long periods of cold weather, as well as reduced root growth in the spring.

Maintaining soils in the readily available moisture range will help growers to maximize their yields. It is very important early in the growing season to have sufficient moisture in the soil so that a suitable canopy can be established prior to flowering.

Inadequate water can inhibit the flush of root growth that occurs three to four weeks after bud-burst. Early season water stress can lead to reduced shoot growth, can reduce leaf size,

and may also reduce the expansion of the rachis. Water stress during bloom can cause reduced set, smaller berries and reduce yields.

For all these reasons growers will want to make sure they have adequate soil moisture levels in their vineyards.

We have seen many irrigations occurring throughout the state this January. From the North Coast to the southern San Joaquin Valley, pumps are running. If you haven't given your vines a drink since last year, you might want to seriously consider turning on the pump.



Photos courtesy of:  
Stephen J. Vasquez,  
Farm Advisor, Fresno  
& Madera Counties  
and  
Matthew Fidelibus,  
Associate Coop-  
erative Extension  
Specialist, Kearney  
Ag Research and  
Extension Center.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Chairman of the Board**  
Mathew Andrew, Madera

**Vice Chairman**  
Michael Naito,  
Madera/Kerman

**Secretary**  
Jeff Cederlind, Turlock

**Treasurer**  
Timothy Norgard, Ukiah

**Directors**  
Steven K. Nickel, Lodi  
Ray Jacobsen, Fresno  
Paul Lanfranco, Kerman

**Director-at-Large**  
Don Gordon, Napa

## STAFF

**President & CEO**  
Nat DiBuduo

**Vice-President**  
Jeff Bitter

**Controller**  
Irene Ybarra

**Accounting Manager**  
Alesia Zion

**Viticulturist**  
Emilio Miranda

**Administration**  
Marcia Silva

**Grower Relations**  
Richard Schoenstein,  
Manager-Coastal Sales  
Chad Clark,  
Coastal Grower Services  
Joe Osterman,  
Northern Interior  
Brad Walters,  
Madera/Biola  
Karl Lehman,  
Kerman & Fresno South

**Main Office:**  
(559) 276-7021

**Coastal Office:**  
(707) 433-6525



# President's Message:

What a difference a **decade** makes when we are looking at the California winegrape market. As I look back over my tenure at AGG, starting in May 2000, we have experienced **significant changes** in the winegrape industry. In the early 2000s, we heard the wineries saying: **oversupply; high quantities of bulk wine imports; low prices; I don't need any more grapes;** and that awful word **glut**. Then there was the movie *Sideways* and the negative effect it had on Merlot wine and grape sales. During the past decade, the growers responded by pulling

out thousands of acres of grapes and replanting them with almonds, pistachios and even pomegranate – all crops in California's prime SJV farm ground.

But the **past is in the past**. This is a **new decade**, and with that comes **new opportunities**. Starting in 2011, we saw both **demand and prices** strengthen for growers throughout California. We saw a lower crop produced by California winegrape growers. Admittedly the lower crop was not by their choice but at the hands of Mother Nature. We have experienced **strong California wine sales** in 2011, a **positive forecast for future wine sales**, and a **decrease in bulk wine imports**. All these are signs of a better future for both vintners and growers in 2012 and the decade coming.

In 2012, we are hearing there is a **winegrape shortage, strong demand, increased wine sales** and "**Buy local, buy Californian and buy American.**" We are receiving calls from all of our California winery representatives asking what is available at what price. The buyers want all the grapes they bought last year and any grapes they can entice the grower not to sale to another winery. There is finally competition for California's winegrapes at prices better than I've seen this past decade. The California wine sales are still feeling the effects of the weak economy, with the quality, lower-priced wines showing strong sales, but we are seeing a strengthening in sales at the higher price points as well. These are all signs of better pricing for both growers and vintners. I believe we should see better prices for the near future and far into this decade.

Let me address the need to supply the **future needs** of California wineries for **California-grown winegrapes**. As we've seen sales of California wines attain an average annual growth of 3 percent and an apparent growth in 2011 of 7 percent, we have not seen the development of new winegrape acreage and production to match the demand. Once again, we are seeing Californian wineries **outsourcing bottled and bulk imported wines** to satisfy their needs to develop and put wine products on the shelf. I know you've heard me and my predecessor say to **stop planting** over the past 10 to 15 years, and most recently I have shouted **don't plant without a contract!** At the beginning of this decade, as I analyze the wine sales and bulk wine market, study the grape supply of bearing and non-bearing winegrape vineyards, and compare that to the information gathered by AGG's survey of nurseries' sales, I come to the following conclusion:

California winegrape growers need to look at some moderate amount of vineyard plantings that meets the needs of any particular winery's specific program for a specific variety in a specific region and price point. There may still be a need for generic varieties for blending, but that should also be based on winery demand. California's winegrape growers need to do this and recapture the segment of California wineries' wine sales from the imports. I still **do not** encourage speculative planting, but we do need to implement **strategic planning and smart planting** of California vineyards to enhance winegrape sales and pricing for this decade.

Although I think demand and prices will be good in the future, I think the responsibility is still on the grower to provide a quality grape to the winery for whatever program that they are selling into, or, in the future, the competition (i.e.: imports) will.

*For more information on how Allied Grape Growers can assist you, please visit our website at [www.alliedgrapegrowers.org](http://www.alliedgrapegrowers.org), or call: 559-276-7021; our North Coast Office: 707-433-6525; our Northern Interior Representative: 209-606-4666.*

# Where We've Been . . .

As most of our readers know, the management team at Allied Grape Growers travels throughout the state during the winter and spring months, not only negotiating contracts and staying up on the market, but also providing much-valued market information to various industry groups and affiliates. In the recent months we have provided industry talks at all three of the 2011 *American Vineyard Magazine* Grape Expo's held in the state, as well as at the San Joaquin Valley Wine Industry Forum.

This month, for the eighth year in a row, we are providing the grape supply and winegrape acreage update for the General Session of the Unified Wine and Grape Symposium in Sacramento (the single largest attended industry session of the year). In addition to the General Session presentation, AGG is also moderating

## Honors, Accolades for AGG, DiBuduo

This has been a season of honors and industry citations for both Allied Grape Growers and its president, Nat DiBuduo.

AGG was honored in November as the recipient of the 2011 Baker, Peterson & Franklin Ag Business Award during ceremonies held in Fresno. This is the 16th time the award has been presented. DiBuduo accepted the award at the event on behalf of the entire AGG organization.

The citation notes that AGG "exemplifies a leading for-profit ag organization whose achievements and impact have significantly contributed to the ag industry and the Central Valley." In particular, AGG was noted for "its long and distinguished record of positive leadership, entrepreneurship, and service to the agriculture industry and our community...."

In addition, the award cites AGG's mission which is "to achieve financial stability for its members and their agricultural way of life. Not only is Allied Grape Growers a grower-owned and operated co-op, but all board members are growers and deeply rooted in their local communities."

Following that citation came news that DiBuduo was designated to be the first-ever California Association of Winegrape Growers' "Leader of the

*continued on Page 7*

a break-out panel discussion at the symposium. In February, we will be presenting free market information to the San Joaquin Valley Ag Lenders group as well as the Livermore Valley Winegrape Growers, and have been invited to participate as a speaker at the Midwest Grape & Wine Conference in Missouri. In addition, we will be lecturing in two different classes at California State University, Fresno, on grape contracts, viticulture and the current grape market.

In March and April, we will be joining with CAWG to provide information and insight at their "Smart Marketer" seminar series in Lodi and Mendocino County. In between these many events, we will be on target to provide market updates at the San Joaquin Valley Winegrowers' tailgate series in March and May, and will also travel the state to update AGG's members on the market via our scheduled district membership meetings in Selma, Kerman, Madera, Modesto, Lodi, Napa and Santa Rosa.

And finally, we will be holding our annual bulk wine tasting and bulk wine market review in the spring for our members who participated in the association's bulk wine program. Believe it or not, we are still available to speak some more! We believe free, credible information is key to making good decisions for growers. We provide this information to help assure the health of the market place. If there are informed participants in a market, it is likely to operate more on market reality than emotion, making it a healthier place for everyone involved.

# . . . and Where We're Going - Literally!



Nat DiBuduo (above) and Jeff Bitter (left) provide industry information at a wide variety of speaking venues each year.

# The Current Grape Market and

It hasn't been common to report on "current" market information in January over the recent years. Yes, we do put out a newsletter each January that summarizes how things are going, but rarely can we say that grapes are actually being traded or that offers are being made to purchase grapes at this time in the year. That is the reality today though.

The market is active.....at least from the buyer's side. But growers, including Allied Grape Growers, are not in any hurry to commit their crops. After last year's market run and very clear market evidence suggesting that buyers are still in great need of supply, it just doesn't appear advantageous to sell early. In addition, the same Mother Nature that wrecked havoc with a late crop, spring rains and harvest rains in 2011 is now indicating that she is out of water for 2012. For growers, no water can be as nerve-racking as untimely water.

**Mother Nature is indicating that she is out of water for 2012.**

For years we have heard people say, "Let's get through the frost season before making any decisions to sell." Considering the extremely dry winter we have had thus far, it is surely one of those years where this logic is applicable. There are many people already speculating about the negative crop impact of less-than-desirable amounts of soil moisture and available surface water.

Just to illustrate how dry it is, take a look at the picture below, which was taken just after daybreak on January 10 in the Central

Valley. The operator of the tractor is shredding brush from a freshly pruned vineyard. Notice anything funny about the picture considering the date it was taken? How about the dust? Not very often, if ever, does one see this kind of dust being kicked up by a brush shredder in January.

The follow-up question is whether or not the amount of rainfall, or lack thereof, has a direct correlation on yield. In researching a couple of decades of rainfall totals and comparing them to yields, there does seem to be some pattern of likeness, but nothing that definitively indicates that low rainfall years equal light crops. But we do know a couple of things for sure....dry frost seasons are dangerous, and dry winters and springs cause growers to have to make irrigation decisions that they are not normally faced with.

The first option for that decision is to go ahead and spend the extra money on irrigation (pumping costs, water costs, etc.). The second decision is to forego additional water and let nature take its course, all while praying that the vines / yields are not negatively impacted by the deficit. Either way, the result for the grower's bottom line is likely negative. So make sure to pay attention early this year to the operations growers can perform to provide the best potential for a healthy, sizable crop. The market should be strong overall, but it doesn't help the bottom line much to have high prices if the potential gain is chewed up by low production.

## Interior Update

It's hard to provide an accurate market update in January. We don't know the crop size or quality, and we don't know if all of the buyers are truly "in the market" at their highest potential. Even though there is activity and offers, it is probably premature to rattle them off one by one. However, we will say that all prices in 2012 should be no less than last year's levels, with many varieties experiencing the likelihood of higher pricing. All price offers on the table today by numerous buyers meet or exceed last year's offers. There has not been a single case, statewide, of lower offers than last year. But in looking specifically at some major varieties and categories, there is considerable demand for Zinfandel (for both white in the south valley and red in Lodi), Cabernet Sauvignon, florals and generics. Varieties like Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Merlot and Syrah are also in good demand on the spot market, but probably not to the extent



# ... Rain Dancing?

of the aforementioned varieties / categories. Sauvignon Blanc pricing / demand will be mostly dependent on crop size.

The real measure, of what wineries think they don't have enough future production of, is in the planting contracts being offered. For 2012, wineries have offered planting contracts for the following varieties in Lodi and / or the Central Valley: Alicante Bouschet, Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignane, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Fiesta, French Colombard, Grenache, Malbec, Merlot, Muscat (and other florals), Pinot Grigio, Pinot Noir, Syrah, Tannat?! and, of course, Zinfandel. Doesn't that just about cover all the major varieties plus some? The problem is that grower costs to allocate land and develop it are very high, and the price offers on these planting contracts are not always enticing enough to make a deal happen, especially when compared to alternative crops. But it is pretty clear that buyers are bullish about their sales into the future and growers should be likewise. However, the deal has to make economic sense for the long term, and we are seeing that more and more of them do as buyers move up their price offers.

## Coastal Update

The coastal grape market is also active for January...not as active as the interior, but certainly much more than it has been since 2008 for this point in the year. Buyers are ready to re-contract last year's supply for fear of another light crop and / or depleting inventories. Where buyers traditionally have counted on the bulk wine market to provide them with "emergency supplies," they are finding that the supply either no longer exists or its price reflects the fact that it is there for their "emergency."

Bulk wine inventories are as low as they have been in years, and it is a great time to have something to sell in the bulk wine market. This has certainly caused buyers to re-evaluate their procurement strategies and look back toward grapes as being the sure way to guarantee supply rather than counting on bulk wine.

We don't anticipate coastal prices to soften for 2012, even though last year's run-up was at least partly due to the short crop. Because inventories are depleted, buyers are actively seeking supply. The multi-year offers are starting to surface, as most buyers see the imminent reality that the coastal grape supply is not growing due to lack of planting over the last three years. In addition, the lower end of

the market is so strong and so short on supply that there is actually a trickle-up effect in the market where lower-end buyers are moving into certain regions of the coast to supplement their supply for California labels.

The Cabernet Sauvignon market is especially active, in all coastal districts. Other varieties (Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Pinot Noir) are also bringing strong interest. Merlot and Sauvignon Blanc seem to be the varieties that take a little more effort for which to find a buyer, but even with that said, we have already received offers on Lake County Sauvignon Blanc at last year's prices. Chardonnay is a mixed bag of demand depending on the district. We have had repeat offers on some coastal Chardonnay, and some of the price offers well-exceed last year's purchase prices.

Overall, things are certainly looking up for California winegrape growers. We plan a more substantive discussion on acreage and supply, as well as the market, in our next newsletter after the state acreage report is released. We will also have our first glimpse at the crop by then, and will know how we fared through the frost season, so ..... **stay tuned.**

## Honors, Accolades

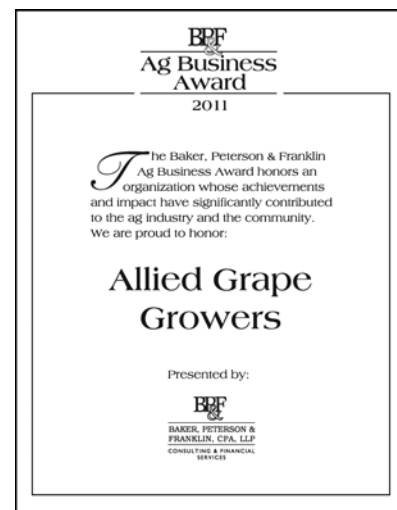
*continued from Page 5*

Year." The organization cited DiBuduo's "personal commitment and record of leadership that has benefitted California's wine industry."

"Nat is most deserving of this recognition and high honor," said Bill Pauli, chair of CAWG. "Nat stands up and fights on behalf of all California growers. He is a tenacious advocate for our industry and we're all better off because of his leadership."

DiBuduo credits a family-owned winery for his winegrape roots and experience. He says his family's winery was among the first to plant varietal winegrapes in the San Joaquin Valley and provided him the valuable industry experience in grape production and processing.

"He's an award-winner because he's done it all, from A to Z," said Pauli. "Nat has developed, grown, harvested and marketed 30 different varieties of grapes, from Alicante Bouschet to Zinfandel."



## Grower Profile:

# Rudy Smith

Quality Grower  
Lake County

This edition's grower profile features a grape grower that has not always grown grapes, but has quite a history in agriculture, from milking cows to sawing logs. Rudy Smith is our featured grower and is a long time North Coast resident.

Rudy's life began in 1936 in Rawlins County, Kansas. For history buffs, the county was named after Civil War General John Aaron Rawlins. Born on a wheat farm, a passion for farming was instilled in Rudy at a very young age - a passion he still holds dear to his heart today. The depression of the 30s, combined with drought, forced Rudy's family to relocate from their dry-farmed wheat ranch to Victor, Montana, which is in the southwestern part of the state. The Smiths purchased a dairy farm in Bitterroot Valley, where Rudy had daily duties that included milking, feeding and doctoring the animals.

In 1953, the family moved west again, to Cave Junction, which is located in the Siskiyou Mountain Range of southwest Oregon. With knowledge and background in dairy farming, and more specifically in milking cows, Rudy was able to land a job as a milker for a 130-head dairy owned and operated by the Estes family. His days began early, as he would get up at 3:30 a.m. to milk cows prior to going to school. After school, he would return for a second round on the udders.

When he graduated from high school, he and his father began logging under the name of Smith and Smith Logging. But then came the call from "Uncle Sam." The U.S. Army took him to Ft. Dix, New Jersey, for a two-year tour. After serving, he returned to Oregon where he and his father continued the logging operation, spreading into Northern California. This journey continued for 17 years. Due to his heavy involvement in logging, Rudy accumulated a lot of equipment, which eased his transition into the coming endeavors.

His next calling took him to California's North Coast, where he formed a partnership, Smith and Breazeale Construction. They concentrated on construction needs surrounding the geysers in Lake and Sonoma Counties.

Rudy continued to accumulate large amounts of heavy equipment, which was instrumental in building roads and drilling pads for geothermal power. As the company expanded, the need for storage for the increasing amount of equipment was evident, and Rudy purchased what is now known as Mount St. Helena Vineyard and Winery property in Middletown, California – just six miles north of the Napa County line in Lake County. It is a bonded winery site and Rudy has been known to store his wine there from time to time. The location was originally 159 acres of which approximately 90 acres were planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Zinfandel and Chenin Blanc.

After 10 years of having a vineyard manager looking after the vines, Rudy bought out his construction business partner and dissolved the company in order to become a full-time vineyard owner/farmer. During this time, Rudy and his wife actually lived in Cloverdale in Sonoma County, but in 1996 they relocated to Mount St. Helena Vineyard and called it their home. Prior to Rudy and his wife moving to the vineyard, their son, Keith, had also helped with the management of the vineyard, and he continued to work with Rudy in the vineyard for the years to follow. But eventually Keith moved to Darby, Montana, where he now owns and operates his own winery...in the Bitterroot Valley. Several of the wines actually come from his father's vineyard in California.

Over time, Rudy has replanted the original vineyard to include Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petite Sirah. Historically, the majority of his grapes have gone to Treasury Wine Estates (Beringer), but in more recent years, with the help of Allied Grape Growers, they have diversified their marketing to include smaller wineries in Napa as well as custom crushing for sale on the bulk wine market. The Smiths grow a great product worthy of additional marketing efforts in the bulk market to maximize their return. Their wines, without fail, are high in quality and always bring a premium.

In addition to considering farming a "hobby," Rudy and his wife, Faith, keep themselves busy being involved in the Middletown Lions Club, Moose Lodge and Elks Lodge, as well as the VFW. But Rudy and Faith also love to load up the fifth-wheel and "get out of Dodge." With the past few years being too busy to get away for extended periods, Rudy has made a promise to Faith (which we have witnessed) that he would take the fifth-wheel for a month to travel, relax, laugh and see the countryside.

It is a joy to work directly with Rudy and Faith. But we have to admit, they make it easy because of the quality product they have to offer, not only in grapes and wine, but also with their integrity, loyalty and overall personalities.

