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R Collection Field Blend Lot No. 7 2009, California

By Dennis Sodomka
Columnist
Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2011

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WHAT: This wine is like a throwback to the old days when growers would have several varieties of grapes in a vineyard and harvest them all together. The wines that resulted often were remarkable and fun.

The folks at Raymond have produced a great blend of seven varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. The result is a beautiful, smooth, fruity wine that goes down easy. Raspberry and cherry come through on the nose, with a hint of spice. Strawberry, cedar and tobacco are the predominant flavors in this rich, supple, complex wine.

This is a wine you could drink every day and never get tired of it. The blend brings out layer upon layer of flavor with a smooth, lush finish.

I have enjoyed Raymond Cabernets for years. They have carried over the quality of the Cabs in this unique blend. The winemaking team says it aims for the three B's – Big, Bold, Balanced – yet with refinement and elegance. They hit a bull's-eye with the Field Blend.

WINERY: Raymond Vineyards traces its family roots to the origins of winemaking in Napa Valley. After arriving in the Napa Valley in 1933, Roy Ramond Sr. married Martha Jane Beringer in 1936 and enjoyed more than 35 years working in every facet of Beringer Winery. Roy decided in 1970 it was time for him and his sons Walter and Roy Jr. to put their family name on their labors.

For their first vintage crush in 1974, the family worked together caring for every facet of the winery – hospitality to farming, fermentation, bottling and sales.

The family quickly earned acclaim for its elegant wines with a beautiful balance of finesse, power and complexity. Five generations of the Raymond family imbued the winery with a commitment to honor its deep roots in the Napa Valley.

In 2009, Raymond Vineyards became a part of the Boisset Family Estates collection of wineries. Each house within the Boisset collection boasts a unique history, identity, style, personality and terroir focus.

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Glascock woman feared man charged in her death

The woman who was shot and then dragged more than a mile Thursday night had previously sought protection from the man being held in her death, according to court documents.

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Now, once again family-owned (Japanese brewer Kirin had purchased the winery in 1989), the Raymond winery is undergoing an evolution with a commitment to enhancing the winery's reputation as one of Napa's pioneering producers.

Raymond has 300 acres of Napa estate vineyards in Rutherford, St. Helena and Jameson Canyon, and arrangements with a dozen local growers. In February 2010, Raymond Vineyards began implementing organic and biodynamic farming methods to achieve certification for its 90-acre estate vineyards in Rutherford and St. Helena.

Rooted in the concept of balance, sustainable viticulture aims to boost environmental quality, enhance grape quality, maintain economic viability and ensure quality of life. Organic farming eliminates the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers to foster a greater level of awareness while reducing environmental impact. Biodynamic farming embraces a view of the vineyard as a single self-regulating, self-sustained entity in harmony with the forces of nature and the celestial rhythms.

They make some amazing wines in seven different tiers. The R Collection is the entry-level offering for Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and the Field Blend.

GOES WITH: This was fantastic paired with Argentine-marinated steak. It would do well with many red meats, pasta with tomato sauce, and hard cheeses and pizza.

WINE EVENTS

SEPT. 22

Tasting, 5 p.m., Veritas at La Maison on Telfair, 404 Telfair St.; four wines, three tapas, $19.99

Perfectly Aged: Antiques and Wine tasting/auction, 6:30 p.m., Saint Paul's River Room, 605 Reynolds St., fundraiser for Historic Augusta; $100 or $50 for ages 35 and younger. Tickets or to donate wine, (706) 724-0436

SEPT. 23

Octoberfest beer tasting, 4:30-6:30 p.m., The Vineyard Wine Market, 4414 Evans to Locks Road, Evans; (706) 922-9463

Pub Night beer and food pairing, 7:30-9 p.m., North Augusta Community Center, $49 Tasters Guild members, $55 others; food from Terry Wick will be paired with 10 beers; reservations, Wine World, (803) 279-9522

SEPT. 24



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Octoberfest beer tasting, 1-6 p.m., The Vineyard Wine Market, 4414 Evans to Locks Road, Evans; (706) 922-9463

SEPT. 29

Wine dinner, 6 p.m., Calvert's, 475 Highland Ave., Surrey Center; Favilla wines; $65; reservations, Ninth Street Wine Market, (706) 724-1442

SEPT. 30

Wines of South America seminar/tasting, 7-9 p.m., Wine World, 133 Georgia Ave., North Augusta; $15 advance, $20 at door; reservations, Wine World, (803) 279-9522

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