

Annual Tasting

This was the 42nd year of the Annual Tasting. The tasting was again held on the front nine of the South Course of Silverado Country Club, in the Oak Grove. Nearly all 114 wineries which had accepted an invitation to pour were on hand for the estimated 1,100 to 1,200 Wine Library members attending the event. Cabernet Sauvignon was poured at nearly every table. Meritage, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, reds of young and old releases, were ready to be tasted as well. And a few whites for contrast.

On this warm day it was substantially cooler under the oaks and the smell of crushed grass and the light from a low-angled sun added to the pleasantness of the setting. We heard many French conversations among the membership as it moved from table to table and winery to winery. There were flowers fresh from their gardens on the tables for Aetna Springs and Spottswoode; candlelight was unique to Andretti. Board member Chris Howell said he particularly enjoyed seeing the sisters Heidi Barrett and Holly Barrett Mondavi pouring at the table for La Sirena.

H. Vincent Mueller, a wine historian from San Rafael, has been collecting labels for 30 years. He was invited to exhibit some of these at the tasting. He brought his 17 volumes of Napa Valley labels--one is all Beringer--and their index. Vince's collection is world-wide in

origin, but, he says, like Burgundy, is focused and well-organized. The labels from California are catalogued by appellation. Now that he's retired, Vince spends four to six hours a day on his collection, adding, correcting and enjoying the information he includes with the labels. To date he has 400 books (and counting).

Crystal Geyser again generously donated spring water for the tasting. Raymond & Co provided cheeses of all kinds, sizes and shapes and Genova Delicatessen offered cold cuts, cheeses, and breads and assorted platters of small edibles.

