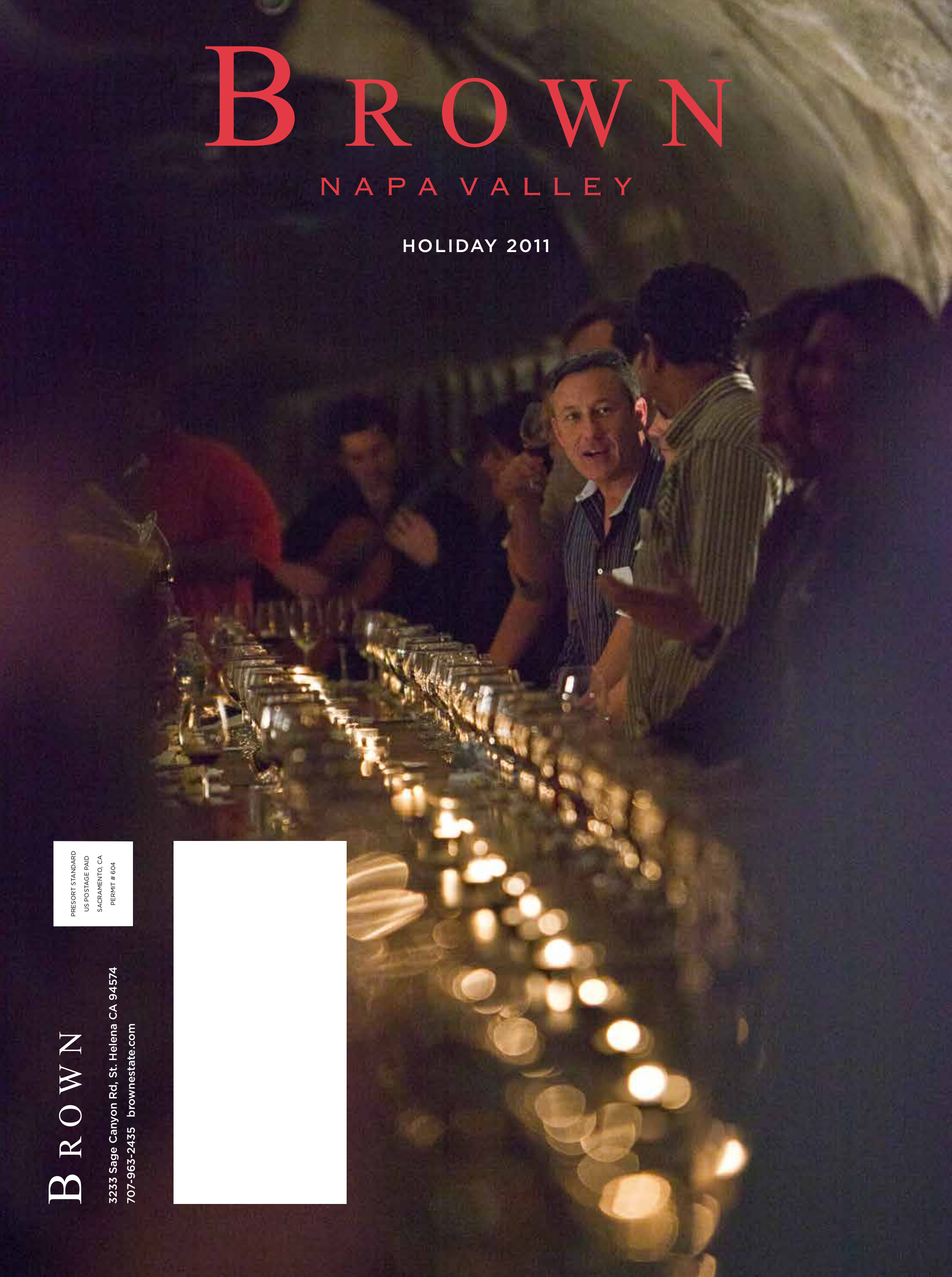


BROWN

NAPA VALLEY

HOLIDAY 2011



BROWN

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Cheers!



IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE that a year has passed since we put out the first issue of our BE Paper. This homegrown publication is conceptualized each quarter by our fearless leader and resident visionary, Deneen, and is produced by our de facto editor-in-chief, Stefanie. (Aiding and abetting are our partners New Leaf Press of Berkeley and designer Chris Fettin of San Francisco.)

The response to the BE Paper has been overwhelmingly positive, but we've had a few people mistakenly interpret its appearance as a sign that we've "gone corporate." Come on now! Nothing could be further from the truth. What *is* true is that we've grown up a little from "mom & pop" mode (though Mom and Dad are still keeping an eye on us), as evidenced by a few new faces on our team.

As the holidays approach, we are celebrating the release of our 2008 Recluse Zinfandel—an event that just couldn't wait until 2012. For reasons you will discover in the story on page 3 (if you've not already read it on our blog), this wine is near and dear to our hearts. We are gratified by the tremendous reception it has received so far, not least because we love it so much ourselves. It is the embodiment of our brilliant winegrower taking zinfandel to a new level.

Speaking of our brilliant winegrower, we are delighted to feature a Q&A with David in this issue. As we—and many of you—know, David is not a big talker. But when he does speak up, it's always in well-formed, well-thought-out paragraphs that reveal his quiet genius. We share some of his winemaking wisdom with you on page 7.

Finally, Winter allocations for our Estate and Library Club members! Our 2010 Napa Valley Zinfandel magnums are a festive variation on last year's "Message on a Bottle" theme, and Library members get an early introduction to the second generation of our Mickey's and Rosemary's Block zins. See page 6 for details.

We wish you and your family a stellar holiday season and we thank you for continuing to engage with us, and for keeping our wines in your rotation!



The Legend Behind Our 2008 RECLUSE ZINFANDEL

WE alternately refer to it as "the fire story" or "the story of our lost 1998 vintage." If we've told it once we've told it a hundred times, and if you've been around us for a while you've probably heard or read about it. Yet it continues to take on new dimensions.

In June of 2000, not long after we bottled our 1998 Napa Valley Zinfandel—our third vintage, and the only wine we were making at that time—a fire broke out at the warehouse where we stored our case goods. We were among dozens of producers who lost precious inventory in that event, and for us the impact was particularly devastating not only because we had no other wine to release in its place, but because our fledgling brand had just begun gaining momentum.

Our post-fire inspection revealed that amidst the pallets of charred boxes, crushed bottles, and spilled wine, a number of interior cases of our 1998 zin remained physically intact. However, since there was no way to determine the condition of the wine inside every bottle without opening each one up, there was no point in attempting to salvage them. The entire vintage was written off as a loss, the insurance company agreed to have the intact bottles destroyed, eventually we received a settlement, and we went on to release our 1999 Napa zin ahead of schedule to bridge the revenue gap—thus triggering an accelerated release schedule for every subsequent vintage of our flagship wine.

Then a funny thing started happening. We began hearing from people claiming they'd had our 1998 zin. *No you didn't*, we would tell them. *You're mistaken*. But the urban legend persisted—despite a lack of concrete evidence on our end.



Top: Fire damaged bottles of our 1998 Napa Valley Zinfandel from June 2000. Center: When this photo was emailed to us in May 2011, we felt like we'd seen a ghost. Bottom: In September 2011, six water damaged "gray market" bottles of our '98 zin were returned to us by a good samaritan.

That all changed this summer when yet another report came our way, this time from one of our wine club members. "Had a bottle of your '98 zin..." he wrote in an email. "No you didn't," we wrote back. "Yes I did," he wrote back, and attached a photo proving his point.

Nobody move! Immediately we conducted an email investigation, and several months later, in early September, a miraculous bounty of six bottles of our 1998 Napa Valley Zinfandel—"gray market" survivors, complete with water damaged labels from the fire—was delivered to us at the winery.

The timing of this meaningful homecoming could not have been more serendipitous, for just three weeks later we would release to our Library members our 2008 Recluse Zinfandel, a wine we created as an homage to our lost 1998 vintage.

Ten vintages descended from our '98 zin, this wine represents the inaugural offering from a quiet side project we have been developing over the last several years: a "reserve" line of zinfandels that receive extended cellaring under the watchful eye of resident zinmaster Dave Brown. Comprised of a special blend from small lots that were hand selected by the winegrower and held back from our 2008 Napa Valley zin, this sleeping giant introduces a new dimension to the Brown zin lineup. Taking its name from our 2007 Brown Recluse reserve cab sauv—itself a sleeper hit in our tasting room,

where it is sold exclusively—offerings from our Recluse line may or may not appear from vintage to vintage, depending upon what Mother Nature affords us. But one thing we can promise: When our Recluse wines do show up, they will be extraordinary.



2008 Recluse Zinfandel 750ml
\$58 Retail | \$52.20 Estate & California | \$49.30 Library

Vineyard Source Chiles Valley, Rosemary's, Mickey's & Westside Blocks • **Appellation** Chiles Valley District, Napa Valley • **Barrel Aging** 30 months in 30% new oak—100% French • **Alcohol** 14.9% by vol. • **Production** 390 cases in 12 x 750ml format

THE PROCESS In 2008, we embarked upon a new chapter in the storied history of Brown Estate zinfandel: We set out to create a "reserve" zin as an homage to our lost '98 vintage. Winegrower Dave Brown selected by hand from the 2008 vintage a small lot of small-cluster berries—sourced from all four of our estate zinfandel blocks—that was held back from our flagship Napa zin blend and lavished with prolonged cellaring. The result: A Brown zin unlike any other we've ever produced.

TASTING NOTES Deep, dense, dark, and seductive with carnelian core and crimson rim, this wine captivates instantly with the promise of lush decadence. The nose bursts forth with an alluring bouquet of blackberry, boysenberry, and tangerine interwoven with subtle smoke, cedar wood, eucalyptus, saddle, and bay laurel. Following closely are exotic cascades of coriander, cinnamon, fennel, and clove, topped off by savory notes of grilled herbs, dried tobacco leaves, and gamey black currant. Time in the glass reveals glorious aromas of English toffee with caramel, praline, and crème anglaise. Mouthfeel is structural and complex with texture and depth reminiscent of a big mountain cabernet, yet with luscious fruit, lively acidity, and supple, sublime tannins that deliver magnificent, seamless balance. Drink now through 2022.



BE *Fabulous!*

Long before social media became de rigueur for forward thinking brands, our tasting room was functioning as a social networking hub for our customers. Today we have a vibrant online presence—a dynamic extension of the brick-and-mortar “Brown Estate experience”—but the real action continues at the winery, where our members gather regularly to celebrate life's goodness. Here, friendships are forged and rekindled, business relationships are sparked, and our extended family continues to grow. We thank all of you who have made Brown estate a part of your recreational rituals—your love, support, and enjoyment of our wines mean the world to us.

WINTER 2011

Estate Member Allocation

2010 Napa Valley Zinfandel 1.5L (2 bottles)

"Message on a Bottle" Holiday Magnum

\$95 Retail | \$85.50 Estate & California | \$80.75 Library

Our second annual "Message on a Bottle" holiday magnum is signed by the Brown Estate "Core Four"—David, Deneen, Coral & Stefanie. The message reads:

This 2010 vintage represents the 15th bottling of our flagship Napa Valley Zinfandel, the wine that launched our Brown Estate label, and with it an out-of-bounds dream. For sixteen years—inspired by your enthusiasm—we have stayed the course, quietly producing premium estate grown wines and transforming our "little winery that could" into an established Napa Valley brand. As we turn this corner and begin heading toward our next milestone, we again take stock of where we have come from and where we are going. It has been and continues to be an extraordinary adventure. Out here in the woods, far off the beaten path, we have built our very own wine oasis. And to every intrepid wine enthusiast we meet—from eager newby to seasoned connoisseur—we profess our golden rule: "Wine should not be stressful." May this bottle of our pride and joy bring you and yours a magical evening and many cherished memories. Salud!

As always, we suggest you lay these magnums down until the 2012 holiday season, when they will BE-dazzle you and your guests. Needless to say, this bottle makes a stunning gift. Full details, including tasting notes, will appear in our Spring 2012 BE Paper.



Q&A with David

With your sixteenth crush and many more harvests behind you, how has your winegrowing/winemaking philosophy evolved over the years?

In the beginning it was exclusively farming—my responsibility ended at the scale. Quality and quantity were synonymous. Now, the farming only exists in the context of winemaking, the vineyards are part of a larger ecosystem, and quality is paramount. In the early days I wasn't sure what my philosophy was. I believed in the land and always knew that we had something special, but I needed time and experience to discover what was possible. I still like to approach each growing season as I did the first, not sure of what to do and asking the same questions—most importantly, resisting the temptation to fall into a routine. The lessons learned in one vintage do very little to prepare you for the challenges you will face in the next. As with so many things in life, success comes from being able to accurately predict what is coming next, which is something I am still trying to figure out how to do.

Growing wine and making wine seem like such vastly different tasks. Do you approach them differently?

They really are one job. That's why I like the term winegrower. For a winery of our small size it is possible to do both. This eliminates the inherent conflict between grower and winemaker—the quantity vs. quality dichotomy. In our case, the winemaking objective dictates the farming practices. The economic sustainability of the vineyard is a direct factor of the quality of the finished product rather than the quantity of fruit to cross the scale. You also have to take into consideration the variety. Cabernet is very easy to grow but requires more technique on the winemaking side. Zinfandel is very difficult to grow, and the fruit is so delicious that every animal in the surrounding forest—all 400 acres, in our case—is trying to get at it. That irresistible flavor is evident in every stage of the winemaking process.

The 2011 growing season was quite challenging. Some of our neighbors hired helicopters to dry out the vines after the rain. What is your strategy when Mother Nature throws a curve ball?

Never give up! Perseverance is what it's all about at that point. There's usually a bit of a lull before harvest when we're waiting for flavor or sugar



or both. The fruit has to be hanging in a way that it can handle some amount of rain, which is always a possibility. Especially with zinfandel I like to thin the fruit out in a way that keeps the bunches from clumping together. Sometimes we thin the individual clusters to keep them from getting too tight. Then when the rain comes we know the vineyard can handle it. Sometimes there's nothing you can do and the fruit just has to be dropped. That's why we grow cabernet in addition to zin—the cab is much more resilient on the vine.

What inspired you to produce the Recluse line of wines? Will there be a Recluse Petite Sirah down the line?

The Recluse concept arose from our cabernet production—it always seems to need more time. Whenever we would talk about the personalities of the wines, the cab was always the recluse. Our Brown Recluse cab represents the acknowledgment of this character trait and embraces winemaking techniques that help to coax the recluse

out of its shell. For the Recluse zin it's much the opposite, with the goal of creating a more refined style by employing a more time-consuming vinification process. As for the petite sirah, I've found our traditional zinfandel techniques work very well. At some point a Recluse petite may become a reality, but for now I love the big fruit and unrestrained style we're bringing to the table.

Do you consider yourself to be more of a scientist or an artist when it comes to producing wine?

Both! When you look at the whole winegrowing process—meaning farming plus winemaking—science and art are fused together in many ways. I try to understand it as much as possible by employing a scientific method, while recognizing that it's so complex and dynamic that it must be acknowledged and approached as an art form. The laws of nature are constant and the need to understand what is happening physically, chemically, and biologically necessitates that I be a student of nature. The process of imagining the finished product and then applying the science to realize that product is art. To employ any type of scientific method requires control. Careful winemaking can achieve this, but on the farming side Mother Nature is the true artist—free to bend and break the laws of nature as she sees fit.

WINTER 2011

Library Member Allocation



2010 Napa Valley Zinfandel 1.5L (2 bottles)

See above for details

2010 Mickey's Block Zinfandel 750ml (2 bottles)

\$55 Retail | \$49.50 Estate & California | \$46.75 Library
February 2012 Release

2010 Rosemary's Block Zinfandel 750ml (2 bottles)

\$50 Retail | \$45 Estate & California | \$42.50 Library
February 2012 Release

Uncle Mickey and Aunt Rosemary (pictured here on their wedding day in 1956) celebrated five and a half decades of marriage this year. Their namesake single vineyard zin bottlings have been going steady for just two vintages, but already each has a fervent following. The 2010 vintage delivers ramped-up versions of both of these stunners, each bigger and bolder than its predecessor. Estate and California Club members will receive these wines in Spring 2012. Full details, including tasting notes, will appear in our Spring 2012 BE Paper.



other CURRENT RELEASES



2009 NAPA VALLEY ZINFANDEL 750ml

\$36 Retail | \$32.40 Estate & California | \$30.60 Library

Commemorative "Message on a Bottle" Anniversary Magnum 1.5L

\$95 Retail | \$85.50 Estate & California | \$80.75 Library

Our flagship zin. You know it, you love it, you shouldn't live without it.

2009 CHAOS THEORY 750ml

\$40 Retail | \$36 Estate & California | \$34 Library

Never mind that bowl of cherries. Life is a bottle of Chaos!

2006 CABERNET SAUVIGNON 750ml

\$55 Retail | \$49.50 Estate & California | \$46.75 Library

Plays well with others... especially when they're a steak or something chocolaty!

2007 DUPPY CONQUEROR

CABERNET SAUVIGNON DESSERT WINE 375ml

\$98 Retail | \$88.20 Estate & California | \$83.30 Library

The ultimate stocking stuffer.



Calendar of Events

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14TH

Twelve Days of Christmas Dinner
Meadowood Restaurant, Saint Helena

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH

ZAP Grand Tasting
Concourse Exhibition Center,
San Francisco

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH

Member Open House at the Winery

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH

Brown Estate Winemaker Dinner
Pican Restaurant, Oakland

SATURDAY, MARCH 10TH

Library Member Private Tasting Event

TUESDAY, APRIL 3RD

Brown Estate Winemaker Dinner
Village Pub Restaurant, Woodside

FRIDAY, APRIL 20TH

Brown Estate Winemaker Dinner
UC Berkeley Faculty Club

SATURDAY, MAY 5TH

(CINCO DE MAYO!)
Fifth Annual Derby Day Party at the
Winery (Members Only)

*Heads-up: We will be reprising our
Zinapalooza tasting series beginning in
Spring 2012. Members will receive first
notice once dates are set.*



WINTER Tasting Room Schedule

During the Winter 2011-2012 season, we will host tastings at the winery by appointment Monday through Friday. For more information or to request an appointment, go to www.brownestate.com/visit.

As an alternative to the winery, while you are visiting the Napa Valley, you may enjoy our wines at the following venues:

- Angele Restaurant, Napa—707.252.8115
- Bardessono Inn, Yountville—707.204.6000
- Bouchon Bistro, Yountville—707.944.8037
- Bottega Restaurant, Yountville—707.945.1050
- Carpe Diem Wine Bar, Napa—707.224.0800
- Cindy's Backstreet Kitchen, St.Helena—707.963.1200
- Cole's Chop House, Napa—707.224.6328
- The Restaurant at Meadowood, St. Helena—707.965.1205
- Press Restaurant, St. Helena—707.967.0550
- SolBar at Solage, Calistoga—707.226.0850
- Tra Vigne Restaurant, St. Helena—707.963.4444

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Special thanks to BE member Erik Yewell for facilitating the return of those 1998 zin bottles on page 3!

