

## STAGS' LEAP WINERY

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NAPA, CALIFORNIA 94558

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*Stags' Leap*

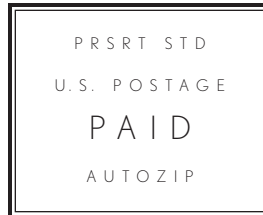
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## A HOLIDAY TRADITION AT STAGS' LEAP

YOU KNOW, I almost had that block ripped out when I arrived—one of the first things I recommended. Robert Brittan is sitting on a bench overlooking the estate vineyards, a spot where he can stretch out his long legs and think back over fourteen years of winemaking at Stags' Leap. Something got in the way of this most practical and exemplary urge. He made Petite Syrah his first season, using grapes from that 70-year-old block of mixed vines, and the wine was so good, he went back and stood in front of those vines and wanted to understand them.

This curiosity led to the DNA quest and the making of Ne Cede

Malis (pronounced Nay Kayday Mahlees, Never give in to misfortune, the estate motto circa 1890).

Brittan brought in Dr. Carole Meredith, geneticist from the Department of Viticulture and Enology at U.C. Davis. He was able to show her Petite Syrah vines that looked similar but made wines that tasted entirely different from each other. He will be donating samples of these selections to the repository at Davis; Meredith determined through DNA fingerprinting that they are different varieties at a genetic level.

### *Recipe: Lamb & Petite Syrah*

Brittan bought the testing equipment himself, brought in a young technician with a degree in genetics, arranged for her training in the DNA analysis procedure, and began to sort through the vineyards, making wine from different blocks, evaluating, building successive blends of Petite Syrah as he replanted the estate from select genetic material.

The 1993 reserve Petite Syrah was a first effort at pulling together the results of the genetic quest, with first official bottlings under the Ne Cede Malis label in 1997, and the 1998 due out this spring. When the barrels for this wine are being racked, you can back out of the old cellar and all the way over to the Manor House and still smell it, the aromas are so intense.

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## STAGS' LEAP



OLAF BECKMANN

FALL/WINTER 2002

THE SOIL COCKTAIL: GEOLOGY & FLAVOR...

NOTE: edited excerpt; read the complete version of newsletter articles at [stagsleap.com/art/literature.html](http://stagsleap.com/art/literature.html)

*There's not a wild tempo, but a steady wave through the rock, always urging itself towards the vertical...*



MY FATHER HAD tractor work in the vineyards, rototilling for other people along with our own fields, and he was a humane man. Occasionally his tractor ran over a nest, and he'd stop his machine and get out to check the damage. If there were some eggs that weren't crushed or a baby quail or jack rabbit, he'd tuck it into his shirt and bring it home to me.

Gina Stonis, on the cellar crew at Stags' Leap Winery, has been rehabilitating wild animals all her life, and has been observing the wildlife on the estate for over six years. You'll see blonde coyotes out here, she says. They're almost apricot in color. From her vantage point at the base of the Stags Leap Palisades, the sharp blue air around the immediate crest of rock develops dark, revolving spots—vultures and hawks. A Red Shouldered Hawk perches on a tree about midway up the slope. Notice how much color he's got on his chest? Red Tails aren't so colorful right there. She pats her own chest in sympathy. Swainson's Hawks are a little larger. A pair of Peregrine Falcons nest on the palisades, and she's seen Kite Hawks and Kestrels, and one eagle she couldn't identify. It wasn't a Golden; you see those on the other side of the valley. Must be different lift. Hawks will sometimes try to camouflage themselves by soaring with the buzzards. Squirrels and rabbits seem to know the buzzards aren't interested in them, and they'll make the mistake of coming out into the open. She's seen it happen time and again.

Recently, a young Red Tail Hawk got stuck in the old cellar. He was flying around and around and he couldn't seem to find the doorway, which is huge, a two-story arch with the paneled oak doors flung open. The only way she could help him was to chase him all over until he tired himself out. It took a

THE SOIL  
COCKTAIL:  
GEOLOGY  
& FLAVOR



TEXT & DESIGN THERESA WHITEHILL, COLORED HORSE STUDIOS  
PHOTOGRAPHY: OLAF BECKMANN

STAGS' LEAP WINERY NEWSLETTER VOLUME TWO, NUMBER TWO, OCTOBER 2002



THE MOON GARDEN  
& COYOTE BLOCK

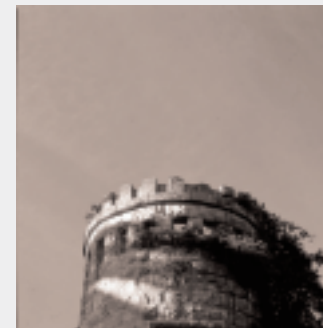
IT'S BEEN A while since I wrote, over a hundred years, and though it may seem odd to you that we still have this connection, with us both being long dead, I've thought about you so much recently. Perhaps it is the spring air, its uncanny softness, the way it steals over the mountainside and woos the stones with its warm breath. You know what it can be like here. For me it was my paradise, the place I came to when I married, and yet it felt so much like a continuation of my childhood in Benicia, among many loving brothers, that I felt twice blessed. Even now. Wildflowers carpet the hillside like hands soothing a beautiful quilt over a bed, and we rest in a grotto when the heat becomes immense; falcons rise up when we walk.

We had a window made in which was written this feeling. *Ne cede malis* was how it was said. I didn't understand it then, perhaps because I didn't need to, but we had found the rip in time. What came later also became contained within this feeling as in a frame... losing the estate to our creditors, my husband becoming one of those fathers who bury their own sons. I feel that we are almost continuous now, rising up from our chairs on the lawn, climbing the grassy hill absurdly dense with blossoms to where it becomes steep and breathless and a little dangerous, grandly surveying our domain with sticks like we used

to from on top of the fence, making jokes.

My son, Horace Jr., harnesses his pony up to the cart and proudly escorts guests around the estate. It is all so close I can almost feel the rough bark of the oak under my fingers and smell the fragrance of pennyroyal where we've crushed it by the spring in that little grotto.

We were recklessly happy.



*Wildflowers carpet the hillside*

*like hands soothing a quilt over a bed, and we rest*

*in a grotto when the heat becomes immense; falcons rise up when we walk...*

FALL/WINTER 2002 RELEASES FROM STAGS' LEAP WINERY

VINTAGE	VARIETAL	RELEASE DATE	CASES	PRICE/BTL.	NOTES & SPECIAL OFFERS
1998	Ne Cede Malis	January 2002	810	\$ 50.	Inspired by Petite Syrah (see feature article in this newsletter)
1998	Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	April 2002	855	\$ 65.	Available in March for newsletter subscribers (use insert or call 800 640-LEAP)
1999	Estate Merlot	April 2002	572	\$ 50.	Available in March for newsletter subscribers (use insert or call 800 640-LEAP)
2000	Viognier	January 2002	479	\$ 25.	A full bodied white wine that caresses the palette & finishes in the citrus register crisp and dry