

# RUTHERFORD DUST SOCIETY



*"It takes Rutherford Dust to grow Great Cabernet."*  
—André Tchelistcheff

E - NEWSLETTER — APRIL 2009

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## RUTHERFORD HISTORY: FROM WASTE TO WONDER – THE CREAM OF TARTAR WORKS

by Rebecca Yerger

Rutherford's early era of prosperity was built in part on a by-product of winemaking. Pomace, lees and argols were transformed into the baking ingredient cream of tartar at a facility in Rutherford, taking advantage of our famed region's raw ingredients.

Until the late 1800s, most cream of tartar was produced in Europe. However, by the late 1870s, the first west coast cream of tartar plant began operations in San Francisco. Then in 1880 the local factories opened in Napa and St. Helena.

Rutherford's cream of tartar industry was established



in May of 1900 when Georges de Latour purchased the Charles Thompson property for the tartar factory. That facility was constructed near Seneca Ewer's winery, Latour's future Beaulieu Vineyard.

At Latour's factory the pomace, lees and argols, or "grape and wine cheese" as they were called in his day, were boiled in kettles and then poured into wooden tanks to allow crystal formation. Those crystals were boiled again, and then, to ensure their purity, the solution was placed in copper crystallization tanks. The final processing included whitening and then milling the crystals into a fine powder.

While it was an involved process, the cream of tartar business was also lucrative. According to a circa 1900 Commissioners of California Viticulture report, Latour and the other local cream of tartar entrepreneurs netted over \$500,000 annually.

The Rutherford cream of tartar factory thrived until Prohibition. While the other local facilities closed immediately, the Latour plant continued operation until the local supply of "grape and wine cheese" finally ran out.

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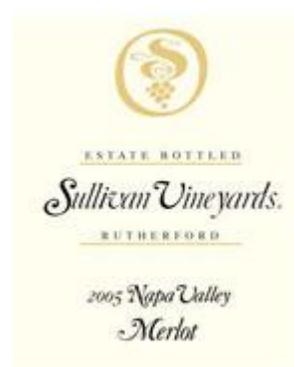
## **RAYMOND VINEYARD CELEBRATES THE REPEAL OF PROHIBITION**

In early December, Raymond Vineyards hosted a Repeal of Prohibition Celebration. The newly released 2005 vintages of Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon and Napa Valley Merlot were poured, along with their other current release wines, all paired with delicious cheese and charcuterie from Oxbow Cheese Merchant and The Fatted Calf. To find out more about Raymond Vineyards visit [www.raymondvineyards.com](http://www.raymondvineyards.com).



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## **SULLIVAN VINEYARDS WINS GOLD MEDALS**



*Double Gold Medal – 2005 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford  
International Tasters Guild 2008 Wine Competition*

*Gold Medal – 2005 Estate Merlot, Rutherford  
International Tasters Guild 2008 Wine Competition*

*Gold Medal – 2005 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford  
San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*

See more acclaim of Sullivan Vineyard wines at [www.sullivanwine.com/scripts/awardlist.cfm](http://www.sullivanwine.com/scripts/awardlist.cfm).

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## **RUTHERFORD EMBRACES “NAPA GREEN”**

Rutherford Dust Society has established a special workshop series with Laurel Marcus, Executive Director of the California Land Stewardship Institute, to assist Rutherford Viticultural Area growers in obtaining certification under the “Napa Green” Program.

"This Napa Green initiative, combined with our RDRT Napa River Restoration Program, puts Rutherford at the center for environmental sensitivity in the Napa Valley," said Andy Beckstoffer, Rutherford Dust Society founder and past president. "We are determined not only to grow ultra premium quality grapes, but also to do it in the right way: the environmentally sensitive way," said Beckstoffer.



Frank Leeds, long-time Rutherford organic farmer and Napa Green participant, has offered his services to assist any grower who wishes to begin the certification process. "This is not only the right thing to do," said Leeds, "but it also will satisfy TMDL requirements of the Napa County Regional Water Quality Control Board. Growers will be much better off to participate in this voluntary program than to come under the government mandates for TMDL compliance."

Napa grower workshops were held at the Beckstoffer Vineyards Farm Center in February and March. Both Laurel Marcus and Frank Leeds were there to assist growers. For more information on Napa Green please visit: [www.napavintners.com/wineries/napa\\_green\\_wineries.asp](http://www.napavintners.com/wineries/napa_green_wineries.asp).

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## **PEJU WINERY'S PINK WINE SUPPORTS NAPA QUEEN OF THE VALLEY BREAST CENTER**



Peju Winery donated more than \$12,000 in January 2009 to the Napa Queen of the Valley Medical Center Breast Center from a portion of the sales of the 2007 vintage of its Peju Pink Wine. The contribution was designated to directly assist women in need of breast cancer treatment and care.

"The Queen of the Valley Breast Center was just the type of facility we were looking for," Peju Owner Ariana Peju said. "We wanted to immediately help those who needed assistance in receiving these life-saving treatments. Many women are not able to obtain the proper care because of

expense and insurance limitations. We're going to continue producing the Peju Pink so that we can give back to this worthwhile effort, and we thank all of the customers and supporters of this wine and cause."

Dick Green, Vice President at Queen of the Valley Medical Center Foundation, acknowledged Peju's donation, stating, "We are grateful Peju Winery has decided to support our Cancer Program. The community will greatly benefit from this kind donation. We look forward to a continued community partnership."

In conjunction with the production of the Peju Pink wine, the Peju staff participated in both the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer in San Francisco and the American Cancer Society Relay for Life in Napa. The combined efforts have donated nearly \$50,000 to breast cancer organizations, most recently to the Queen of the Valley Breast Center.

In the winter of 2007, the women of Peju wanted to create a wine to honor the many lives that have been touched by breast cancer. Winemaker Sara Fowler, along with owners Herta, Lisa and Ariana Peju, created a blush-style blend and chose to donate 25 percent of its net proceeds to breast cancer research and patient care.

The small production of Peju Pink is available for sale exclusively in Peju's tasting room and online at [www.peju.com](http://www.peju.com). Peju Pink is a fragrant blush-style wine with hints of crisp peach and passion fruit and is best served chilled. The Peju Pink label features a woman in pink who depicts one of the three Greek graces from a 100-year-old stained glass window in the Peju tasting room tower.

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## ECO-FRIENDLY FARMING STRATEGIES AND METHODS

by Jack Neal & Son Vineyard Management Team

In today's media, green and eco-friendly slogans are everywhere, with more cropping up every day. How do you decide which have value and which are simply marketing genius? What does sustainable or organic or biodynamic mean, and what is the difference between certified and uncertified? Jack Neal and Son would like to provide some basic information comparing and contrasting the various winegrowing strategies. Over the past decades, farming methods and strategies have diversified and practices that were once considered novel have become mainstream.

*Conventional Farming* can be described as a method of farming that seeks to maximize production and yield of a given commodity at the lowest possible expense. The 2009 version of conventional farming and the tools used are completely different from the conventional farming of the 1970s and the era of *Silent Spring*.

*Organic Farming*, as defined by the USDA, consists of growers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. As a viticulturist who practices organic farming, I would expand that definition to the following: Organic Farming is a method of farming that emphasizes long-term environmental sustainability and high quality agricultural commodities. This is accomplished through the use of naturally occurring or naturally derived materials and is an integrated systems approach to farming.

*Sustainable Farming* is a method of farming that refers to the ability of a farm to produce a given commodity—in our case, winegrapes—indefinitely, without causing severe or irreversible damage to ecosystem health. The key issues are biophysical (the long-term effects of various practices on soil properties and processes essential for crop productivity) and socio-economic (the long-term ability of farmers to obtain inputs and manage resources such as labor). Growers examine their entire operation, using a typically voluntary set of sustainable farming guidelines or best management practices as tools in order to move their operation towards increased sustainability over time.



*Biodynamic Farming* is a method of farming based on a spiritual world-view called anthroposophy, which was first propounded by Rudolf Steiner. This system treats farms as unified and individual organisms, emphasizing a balanced, holistic development and the interrelationship of the soil, plants and animals as a closed, self-nourishing system. Biodynamic Farming emphasizes the use of living and natural materials and the exclusion of artificial chemicals from treatments used on the soil and plants. Biodynamic Farming also has many unique production practices.

Each of the Neal Family Winery vineyard-designate wines are made from 100% certified organic grapes and fermented with indigenous or "wild" yeast. Read more at [www.jacknealandson.com/vineyardnews/winter09](http://www.jacknealandson.com/vineyardnews/winter09).

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## LIEFF PROTECTS VINEYARDS WITH THE LAND TRUST OF NAPA COUNTY



Nestled in the hills above Rutherford sits the home of Robert and Gretchen Lieff. Viewed from the Silverado Trail, their property blends into the mixed oak and hardwood forests above Auberge du Soleil. With an eye to the future, the Lieffs chose to protect those 22 acres from future development in a conservation agreement with The Land Trust of Napa County.

The Lieff Conservation Agreement preserves over 17 acres of native oak forest in its relatively natural state. Running in a north-south direction, the property also boasts

several small vineyards from which the Lieffs produce their Lieff Auberge Road Cabernet Sauvignon ([www.lieffwines.com/wine/index.htm](http://www.lieffwines.com/wine/index.htm))

Conservation agreements are legal agreements between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limit the use of the land to protect its conservation values. They allow landowners to continue to own, live and work on their lands while also being able to sell or pass them on to heirs. Because development rights are given up in the conservation agreement, these documents provide flexibility according to the needs of the landowners. In Napa County, over 21,000 acres of land have been protected by conservation agreement with The Land Trust of Napa County.

Thanks to the support of people like the Lieffs, The Land Trust of Napa County continues to make tremendous strides in saving land in Napa Valley. All of the agriculture agreements it holds along with the Lieffs' easement allow it to protect important water- and viewshed as well as a critical biodiversity habitat. Since 1976 The Land Trust has been working hard with landowners who together have protected over 50,000 acres, over 10% of Napa County. To find out more about The Land Trust visit [www.napalandtrust.org](http://www.napalandtrust.org).

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