

# Santa Cruz's Fogarty wines have good value, good location

**O**NE OF the few wineries in San Mateo County, south of San Francisco and at the north end of the Santa Cruz Mountains appellation, is Thomas Fogarty. It is named for its founder, a very successful cardiovascular surgeon, inventor and patent holder of several pieces of equipment that make modern heart surgery possible.

The winery itself looks like a two-story residence from a distance, and it has a most beautiful setting on a hillside overlooking the south end of the San Francisco Bay. A lovely terrace is frequently used for weddings and special winery events.

Visitors are welcomed by appointment only (besides which you'd need directions to find it.) It so blends in with its environment you can hardly see it when you're looking for it. The first time I visited some years back I drove past it twice, and I had directions.

Fogarty has some estate vineyards that are entitled to the Santa Cruz Mountain appellation and buys additional fruit from vineyards farther south in Santa Cruz County. Grapes also are purchased from Monterey County and from the Napa area.

Fogarty's production is limited, but the wines are available in specialty stores in a large number of states. For assistance finding local retail outlets, contact: Thomas Fogarty Winery, 5937 Alpine Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028 (650) 851-6777.

► **Thomas Fogarty 1997 "Santa Cruz" Chardonnay** (\$21). Big, yummy, pineapple and tropical fruit flavors, with a good crisp lemon-citrus finish. Very forward oak vanillin; buttery; toasty. Aged in one-third brand new barrels. Rating: 94/85.

► **Thomas Fogarty 1995 "Santa Cruz" Pinot Noir** (\$25). Big, ripe, plum and black cherry fruit. Concentrated, very long lasting flavors. Still a baby. Will develop complexity with a few years of cellaring. Rating: 90/86.

**Jerry MEAD**



refined and elegant. There's a pleasant hint of coffee bean bitterness in the finish that will help cut through tomato sauce or garlic and spice. Rating: 90/91.

## Elderberry wine

The number one producer of elderberry wines in America is Wildwood Cellars in Mulvane, Kan., in what more people think of as wheat country than wine country. You can request information at: Wildwood Cellars, 105 W. Main St., Mulvane, KS 66710 (316) 777-9191; E-mail: merry@elderberrys.com.

And if you've never tried an elderberry wine, I'm here to tell you that they are really tasty. Like grape wines, they come in a variety of styles from nearly dry to dessert sweet. There's also an award-winning spiced elderberry wine which received a gold medal and was named Best New World Fruit or Berry Wine in 1998.

Elderberries, by the way, have a long history in folk medicine. The Romans had an adage that anyone who cultivated elderberries would die of old age and not sickness. Native Americans used them for treating colds, flu, asthma, constipation, colic, diarrhea, diabetes, rheumatism, insomnia and migraine. Also for weight loss, soothing sunburn and dying cloth.

Here's an example of a small winery frustrated by the difficulty with interstate shipping of wine. Many state laws (some say in violation of the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution) ban wineries and wine clubs from shipping wine direct to consumers. Vintners like Wildwood Cellars are then virtually locked out of doing business in those states at all, because traditional wholesale channels aren't interested in very small producers that might only be able to supply small quantities. It amounts to de facto restraint of trade.

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*Wines are scored using a 100-point system. First number rates quality; second number rates value.*

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► **Thomas Fogarty 1996 "Santa Cruz" Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$25). Really big, black cherry, cassis and blackberry fruit; very firm structure. Slightly tannic, but there's enough fruit to sustain it through softening with age. A wine for the cellar. Rating: 88/84.

► **Thomas Fogarty 1996 "Napa" Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$27). A rounder, fatter more immediately accessible cabernet, with softly appealing plum and black cherry flavors. A very satisfying red wine experience. Rating: 90/87.

## White wine of the week

► **Thomas Fogarty 1997 "Monterey" Gewurztraminer** (\$12.50). This is a wine with a track record of critical acclaim and gold medals. It is simply as good as California gewurztraminer gets. Very aromatic with rose petal and spice in the nose, yielding to lichee, grapefruit and rose oil flavors and after flavors. The fruit is from famous Ventana Vineyard. It is very fruity and the sweetness is balanced just at human threshold for detecting sugar. A wonderful brunch or poolside wine, a great companion to Asian and spicy cuisines and just flat out fun to drink. Buy a case to get you through summer. Rating: 98/92.

## Best buy red wine

► **Montes Alpha 1996 "Curico Valley" Chile" Cabernet Sauvignon** (\$15). This is the equivalent of a "Reserve" wine in the Montes line and is indeed several steps in quality above the regular value-priced line. The wine has fairly good national distribution. Call the importer for more information: TGIC Imports (818) 386-9877. Black cherry and black currant fruit, big and intense but also