



1997 Wines Reviews

CONNOISSEURS' GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA WINE

1997 Paloma Merlot, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (November 1999) "(12% Cabernet Sauvignon). A deep and serious wine that conveys an impressive sense of extract and size from the very outset, this weighty, well-filled youngster is simply loaded with rich oak and ripe, black cherry fruitiness and hints at a bit of cassis and loamy spice. Its trailing tannins make comparisons with Cabernet impossible to ignore, yet even if slightly astringent, it has more than enough first-rate fruit to hold together and is a certain bet for the future. Give it five years before a second look, and expect it to improve for up to a decade. Three Puffs"

1997 Paloma Merlot, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (January 2000)

"Our recent year end look at Merlot found more than a handful of tempting new wines, but none impressed so much as the Three Puffs Paloma 1997. It has all of the hedonistic richness required of fine Merlot, but it is an order of magnitude deeper and more complex than most of its pricier cousin.."

1997 Paloma Syrah, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (November 1999) "Solidly varietal in the nose with broad-ranging expressions of pepper, spice, smoke and dark berries, this ripe and weighty Syrah follows up on its aromatic promise with nicely concentrated flavors of ripe berries, spice and very rich oak. Full and fleshy on entry, then firmed by acid and a little tough at the finish, this is one to set aside for another three to five years. Two Puffs"

THE INSIDERS' WINE LINE - JOE SULLIVAN (Volume 3, Number 4)

1997 Paloma Merlot, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley "The 1997 Merlot, Spring Mountain District-Napa Valley has a perfumed nose of black cherry, blackberry, chocolate, mint, roses, tea and spice. The flavors of cherries, berries, cocoa, dry citrus zest and vanilla are complex and flavorful followed by a fruity, spicy finish. 92"

1997 Paloma Syrah, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley "The 1997 Syrah, Spring Mountain District-Napa Valley has a lush perfumed bouquet of raspberry, boysenberry, black pepper, sage, dry orange peel and oliberry with toasty oak highlights. The bright flavors of layered berries, pomegranate, spice and toasty oak are very spicy and forward followed by a long, lingering, fruity finish. Delicious! 93"

INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR - STEPHEN TANZER

1997 Paloma Merlot, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (May/June '99) "Deep saturated ruby. Cooler, more floral but thoroughly ripe aromas of cassis, mint and oak spice. Pungent, powerful black fruit flavors show more depth than the '96. Strongly oaky today; the finish features substantial (wood?) tannins. A big wine with considerable potential, though the fruit and the oak are not yet completely integrated. 89-92"

1997 Paloma Merlot, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (May/June '00) " (With 16% Cabernet Sauvignon): Bright saturated ruby to the rim. Sappy, sweet aromas of black raspberry, black cherry, violet and tarry oak. Fat, dense, sweet and mouthfilling; intense dark fruit flavors complicated by notes of roast coffee, bitter chocolate and licorice. Firm acids give the fruit flavors superb vibrancy. A silky, persistence. All the components of this wine spend at least some time in new barrels, although much of this merlot goes into new barrels after the first or second racking, rather than the other way around. "We don't want to get sexy oak scents and then throw them out along with the lees, " explains wine maker Bob Foley. 92"

1997 Paloma Syrah, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (May/June '99) "Deep ruby. Perfumed, musky aromas of violet and blackberry; shows more oak today than the '96. Big, lush minerally; may be even larger-scaled than the '96, but seems higher in acidity and more strongly oaky. Currently comes across as a bit less pliant and in need of more barrel aging. Based on these two samples, this Spring Mountain site is yet another extremely promising spot for California syrah. 89-92" (these two samples, referred to the '96 and '97 which he tasted the same day - Jim R.)

1997 Paloma Syrah, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (May/June '00) "Medium ruby . Aromas of black raspberry, black plum, violet, dark chocolate, pepper and smoky oak. Juicy and intensely flavored, with blackberry and dark chocolate flavors given vibrancy by bracing acidity. Finishes with very fine tannins. From north-facing vines typically harvested in November. 90"

THE WINE ADVOCATE

1997 Paloma Merlot and 1997 Paloma Syrah, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (Issue 124, 8-27-99) "Two terrific wines from this small but impressive operation, both the 1997 Merlot and 1997 Syrah are rich, concentrated, multi-layered efforts with considerable purity, texture, and intensity. The 1997 Merlot exhibits a dark purple color as well as attractive, spicy, oaky notes intermixed with smoke and black cherry jam. Full-bodied, with low acidity and outstanding concentration, this wine has moderate tannin in the impressively-endowed finish. It should be cellared for 2-4- more years and drunk over the following 15. 92 The stunning, black/purple colored 1997 Syrah offers extraordinary purity of crème de cassis and peppery-like aromas, and powerful, concentrated, full-bodied flavors with the fruit and glycerin dominating all other components. There is enough acidity to buttress this large wine's considerable power and intensity. Vague notions of licorice, tar, and spice emerge with coaxing. However, this giant fruit bomb should continue to gain complexity, and become more delineated with bottle age. It should drink well for 12-15 years. 91"

WINE SPECTATOR - (Dec. 31, 1999 - Jan. 15, 2000)

1997 Paloma Merlot, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley "Supple and complex, an elegant, graceful style, with pretty current, plum, wild berry, sage and cedar notes. Drink now through 2007. 1,080 cases made.- J. L. 88"

1997 Paloma Syrah, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley "Distinctive for its aromatic and peppery flavors, it's lean and trim on the palate, in need of a little more stuffing. Drink now through 2004. 170 cases made. - J. L. 83"

UNGER WEINE - SPITZENWEINE FÜR GOURMETS

1997 Paloma Merlot, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (13139 Merlot) Wenn es einen Preis für die sympathischsten Winzer geben würde, Jim und Barbara Richards von Paloma würden ihn bekommen. Jim hat sich mit über 60 Jahren der Selbstvermarktung seiner Trauben zugewandt. Sein Weingut ist ein absoluter Traum. Wirklich auf der Spitze des Spring Mountain, auf über 650 Meter Meereshöhe gelegen, produzierte er bis dato Merlottrauben für andere Weingüter wie Pride Mountain. Stundenlang kann man sich mit ihm unterhalten über die mehrere Dutzend Klapperschlangen!, die er hier oben alljährlich erscheinen muß, über den Berglöwen, der den Hund des Nachbarn vor seinen eigenen Augen erlegte. Nur über seinen Wein erzählt er wenig. Ausverkauft ist er trotzdem immer. Die Produktion umfaßt nur 600 Kisten. Als Winemaker fungiert Bob Foley, der auch für die Weine von Pride Mountain zuständig ist. Das Ergebnis der noch aus der Vorreifezeit stammenden Reben in einer so großen Höhe ist beachtlich. Jim verfährt extrem vorsichtig mit Besuchern. Um die Übertragung der Reife zu verhindern, darf niemand mit Schuhen, die er in anderen Weinbergen benutzt, die Weinberge betreten. Wir können leider nur wenige Flaschen pro Kunde zuteilen.