

Winegrower learns by experimenting

Dale Goode grows grapes in a northern Sonoma County growing region known as Alexander Valley. He grew up in California's central valley near Bakersfield, a very warm area for growing premium wine grapes, but a great climate for table grapes. The Bakersfield area climate aggravated Goode's severe allergies. Occasionally, he took trips to the coast to get relief.

ON ONE such trip, Goode met Russell Green and his career in winegrowing had its start. Green was a summer resident of Healdsburg, Calif., in the heart of Sonoma wine country. He and friend Harry Wetzel had purchased orchards in the Alexander Valley from the descendants of Cyrus Alexander with the intention of converting them to vineyards. Green and Wetzel needed someone to guide their grapegrowing efforts. Dale Goode was their man.

In the fall of 1965, Goode began to plant Green's and Wetzel's properties, now known as Alexander Valley Vineyards and Hoot Owl Creek, to wine grape varieties such as chardonnay, gewurztraminer, riesling, merlot, chenin blanc and cabernet sauvignon.

"We were the first growers in Alexander Valley to train vines on



focus on wine
Eleanor and Ray Heald

WINE SELECTIONS OF THE WEEK

1990 Murphy-Goode Chardonnay, Alexander Valley (\$15). Sweet, spicy oak aromas blend with melon and tropical fruit. A buttery character on the palate ends crisp and clean with lingering fruit.

1990 Murphy-Goode Fume Blanc, Alexander Valley (\$11). One of the best fume blancs produced in California. It features grapefruit and crisp citrus flavors with an extended finish.

1990 Murphy-Goode Reserve Fume Blanc, Alexander Valley (\$15) is a barrel-fermented sauvignon blanc that shows an earthy rather than fruity character. It is the perfect complement to a dish of angel hair pasta with seafood sauce.

1988 Murphy-Goode Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley (\$19) showcases blackberry jam aromas and flavors spiced with French oak and a hint of tobacco. The hearty mouthfeel calls for good old American beefsteak.

wine trellises," explains Goode. "The old timers here, who were growing zinfandel like small bushes, said grapes wouldn't grow when trained on wires. Today, that's the accepted method."

"VITICULTURE (GRAPE grow-

ing) is a constant experiment. We made guesses about the best locations for each variety. At first, we planted the white varieties on the hillsides and the red varieties on the valley floor. Now, this is all reversed."

"We are still learning how to grow grapes to make great wine. It takes a lifetime of experimentation in one location to eventually get it right. New trellis systems, farm equipment, buried irrigation and organic growing techniques are the hot topics in farming these days. It will probably take another 20 to 25 years before we have fine tuned our understanding of what grows best on each specific site."

Speaking of organic farming, Goode explained that organically

grown table grapes, fertilized with manure, have a better flavor and hold up better in cold storage. He still has to find out if this is true with wine grapes.

In 1979, Goode embarked on a joint venture, Murphy-Goode Vineyard, with friend and fellow Alexander Valley winegrower Tim Murphy. They developed 150 acres of well-drained, gravelly soil, on the Russian River in Alexander Valley and planted it to chardonnay, sauvignon blanc and pinot blanc.

MURPHY AND Goode are justifiably proud of their vineyard location which boasts neighbors like Jordan Vineyards, Robert Young Vineyards and Clos du Bois.

In 1985, Murphy, Goode and wine marketer Dave Ready established Murphy-Goode Estate Winery to make and market wine. The first Murphy-Goode wines were the 1985 Fume Blanc and Chardonnay. In 1986, Murphy-Goode bought red grapes to produce the first cabernet sauvignon and merlot. In 1987, a winery was constructed with the capacity to produce 25,000 cases annually.

The goal of Murphy-Goode is to produce wines that showcase the unique flavors of the vineyard's particular soil structure and exposure. They aim at producing a fruity sauvignon blanc with a long finish accenting the ripe pear and melon flavors characteristic of the vineyard. For chardonnay, barrel fermentation, partial malolactic fermentation, and sur lie aging create a creamy texture and toasty finish. They prefer a chardonnay style that lets the fruit show through accompanied by oak, but not overwhelmed by it.



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GIVE BLOOD, PLEASE

Sweet potato, carrot dishes have fall flair

See related story on Taste front.

SWEET POTATOES AND APPLES

- 6 medium-sized sweet potatoes
- Boiling salted water
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 1/2 cup butter
- 4 medium-sized red apples, cored and cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon grated orange rind
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Scrub the sweet potatoes, cover with the boiling salted water, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.

Meanwhile, beat 1/2 cup of the butter in a skillet. Add the apple slices and turn to coat with the mixture. Simmer very gently until barely tender, about 10 minutes, turning twice during the cooking.

Drain the potatoes, peel and mash or puree them. Add the remaining butter, remaining molasses, the orange juice, orange rind and salt. Beat until light and fluffy.

Mound the mixture on top of the apple rings and serve immediately.

Yield: About 10 servings.
The New York Times New Natural Foods Cookbook, by Jean DeWitt

ZUCCHINI-CARROT MUFFINS
(Makes 24)

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup unbleached white flour
- 4 tablespoons powdered milk
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup safflower oil
- 1/2 cup mild honey
- 4 heaping tablespoons orange or ginger marmalade
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup grated carrot
- 1 cup grated zucchini
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Butter muffin tins.

Sift together flours, powdered milk, baking powder, salt and spices. Beat together eggs, oil, honey, marmalade, vanilla and milk. Stir in grated carrot and zucchini. Quickly stir wet ingredients into dry, and fold in walnuts. Spoon into muffin tins, filling 3/4 full and bake

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