



“The smaller the vine, the better the wine!”™

From that “ah-hah” moment

[A Small Vines History]

To fully appreciate this lengthy labor of love we call Small Vines, we have to go back nearly fifteen years to Paul’s first time.... yes, his “ah-hah” moment.

A third generation Sonoman, Paul Sloan experienced the “Ah-Hah” moment while working as a wine steward at Sonoma County’s popular John Ash restaurant. That moment would prove to be the spark for Small Vines Viticulture, and in turn, the eventual genesis of Small Vines Wines. During a rare tasting of an icon red burgundy, Paul tasted his first Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. He was floored by the wine and wanted to know how it could have such depth of complexity and yet be so soft and approachable on the palate. His interest in Burgundian wines and wine growing was ignited that day. As it happened, it was a passion that he shared with then girlfriend and now wife, Kathryn McGrath.

Together, Paul and Kathryn immersed themselves in learning all they could about the correlation between vineyard and wine. At the same time, Paul continued to refine his palate and in 1995, along with fellow wine steward Matthew Gustafson, won the Greenwood Ridge California State Wine Tasting Championship, Professional Division. Recalls Kathryn, “the more Paul learned about the viticulture and winemaking, the more he became convinced that, with proper site selection and some modifications, the European style of high-density planting could produce wines in California that would rival those of Burgundy.”

For the next several years Paul devoted himself full time to the study and practice of viticulture. He enrolled in the Santa Rosa Junior College viticulture program and went to work for legendary grape grower Warren Dutton of Dutton Ranch. In 1998, as Paul prepared to enter the viticulture program at San Luis Obispo, Dutton, who had become his friend and mentor, pulled him aside and encouraged Paul to consider starting his own winegrowing company. Buoyed by Dutton’s encouragement and their own conviction that close spaced, compact vines produce the most balanced and refined wines, Small Vines Viticulture was launched.



Following six years of planting high-density vineyards for many an esteemed grower, in 2004 Paul and Kathryn began leasing back more and more of the acreage they planted to gain total control of the farming and furnish the crops they would eventually need to realize Small Vines Wines. In 2005, Small Vines Wines was born with our first harvest and crush vintage produced from the tiny Old Mill Vineyard, the present site of their Viticulture offices. While continuing to expand their leased acreage, in the fall 2007, they formally debuted Small Vine Wines with the inaugural release of the Small Vines Wines 2005 Russian River Pinot Noir – to an incredible reception! The wine sold out very quickly and has received much attention. By the end of that year, they purchased their first twelve and one half acres that soon will

become the Small Vines Estate. 2009 will see the planting of eight acres of the estate to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, all to be farmed biodynamically. They are also planning on additional acreage dedicated to bio-diverse crops including apples, berries, vegetables, and will eventually add livestock.



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“Cosmically Green”

[Welcome to Our Vineyard Universe]

As every successful farmer knows, “the soil is everything” and with faithful, balanced care, the soil – *our Earth* – will continue to provide. This is the philosophy at the heart of biodynamic farming and defines the regenerating regimen practiced by Small Vines.

Although echoing the current expanding call for “green” processes and products, biodynamic farming dates back to mid-1920’s Germany and the then farming communities’ need to improve declining soil conditions. At that time, Dr. Rudolph Steiner proposed and promoted a progressive, unified approach to agriculture that related the ecology of the earth organism to that of the entire cosmos... *biodynamic agriculture was born*. Essentially, biodynamic farming views the soil and the farm (the vineyard), as living organisms; that maintenance and furtherance of soil life is a basic necessity if the soil is to be preserved for generations. In broader holistic terms, Steiner advocated that the farm should be a self-contained, self-sustaining microcosm; whereby the health of the soil is maintained utilizing natural-occurring, indigenous elements.



Definitely an oversimplification, but for Small Vines, reaping the rewards of a biodynamically cared for vineyard has required a wholehearted commitment to an annual ritual involving creating and spreading specific, configured-to-vineyard, organic fertilizer; applying updated versions of ancient remedies for controlling underground pests and foragers through the design of a vineyard which encourages “visitors” away from the crop areas. Additionally, there is an inter-row strategy involving the post-harvest planting of diverse, alternating crops which serve to revitalize the soil with their unique nutrients.

With the acquisition of their new acreage - the Small Vines Estate, the Sloans intend to dedicate additional time and resources to enhancing their biodynamic based operations with livestock, fruit trees, and berries. In their effort to fully realize a truly self-contained, self-sustaining vineyard; Paul and Kathryn apply the guiding principals of biodynamics to their overall business perspective, even to their personal lives, remaining attentive to the rhythms of nature, appreciating the value of observation and exercising good, common sense. For the Sloans, it’s all wrapped up in a point of view, they are merely players in an interdependent universe – the entire cosmos realized daily as they step out into their little patch of this beautiful Earth.



SMALL VINES
WINES

“The smaller the vine, the better the wine!”™

Less really is More...

[The Close Spaced Vineyard Pay-off]

In the end, isn't it all about flavor and producing a truly exceptional wine? For Paul Sloan and Small Vines, the correlation is obvious – superior fruit is at the absolute heart of any great wine. Simply put, Paul summarizes his role as a viticulturist – “I'm a winemaker's wine grower.”

In a sense, he works backwards, drawing on his extensive knowledge of winemaking in farming exceptional grapes for his own coveted Pinots. Paul knows how crucial each ingredient is and accepts only the deep, concentrated flavors derived from fruit grown on a small vine, in one of his close spaced vineyards.



Small Vines wines are the delicious culmination of Paul and Kathryn's dedication and intimate involvement in their entire wine producing process – from planting to bottle. It might be said the Sloans chose the hard road, assuming a more substantial initial investment planting more highest-quality vines per acre, the labor and maintenance costs associated with high-density planting, and the expense involved in acquiring specialized equipment to facilitate

harvesting. Nevertheless, it is the high road, one that has led to broad accolades from critic and customer alike for Small Vines Pinots.

The philosophy is simple: smaller vines produce smaller, more intensely flavored grapes and by extension, higher quality wine. While relatively new in California, the practice of controlling grape vines by planting high density vineyards or *petite vignes* (small vines) has existed for centuries in Europe where the practice was mandated by low-vigor soils and vine rows determined by the width of a plow horse. The intensity and the site signature of the resulting low yields was so significant that the French government imposed restrictions on grape yields in order to maintain wine quality. California growers typically employ crop thinning (the practice of reducing clusters before ripening) to reduce yields and concentrate flavors. Small Vines prefers the high-density planting approach. As Paul explains, “You can either reduce yields by dropping fruit or by creating less of it in the first place. Intuition and experience has shown us that the latter is the better option.”





SMALL VINES
WINES

“The smaller the vine, the better the wine!”™

“There’s Something Strange In The Vineyard”

[The Cavals have landed]

On first sighting, you might take it for a planet crawling ATV from a sci-fi movie – something out of “Alien” comes to mind. Its metallic, extending, spider-like arms reach out from the bulging, giant eye... “They’re here” (now call the viticulturist!)



As unusual looking as they are unique in their myriad applications to close-spaced vineyard farming, the French-built Caval tractor has become an vital component in year-round vineyard management. Paul credits their design as representing “the biggest innovation in close-spaced cultivation in years.”

The Right Tool For The Job

Unlike the relatively low fruiting heights common in France, the radiant heat from the warmer California soil requires a higher fruiting elevation – a greater distance from soil surface to the lowest growing fruit on the vine to better control the ripening process.

In order to accommodate the taller California stakes (employed to raise the fruit further from the ground), some redesigning of the Caval frame was required. The Small Vines’ Cavals are also fitted with a 40 hp Kubota engine, larger than the standard engine of Cavals used in France. The world’s most expensive wine comes from vineyards traditionally farmed with horses.

Recently however, we have seen the first Caval (or horse) tractors enter these farmed vineyards.



The key advantage of the Caval is row spacing adjustability. The machines can spray three to as many as nine rows at a time and mow three rows simultaneously.

This efficient farming equals fewer passes made which reduces both fuel use as well as soil compaction. At half the cost and less than half the size of tractors currently used in close-spaced planting, the Caval is more efficient and overall aids in reducing farming costs, while improving vine-

yard quality. With a height of seven feet and weighing but thirty-seven hundred pounds, the Caval is road legal, easy to operate, and gentle on vineyard soils and precious root systems.



Small Vines premiered the first Caval tractor used in close-spaced vineyard farming in the U.S. and subsequently purchased an additional machine. “The only thing it doesn’t do is harvest, which we prefer to do by hand.” – Paul Sloan.



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“The Read on Small Vines”

[The Press is Impressed]



“Fruit from vineyards the Sloan’s farm is destined for luxury wines (\$35 retail per bottle and up), often through by-the-acre or even bottle-price contracts... I discovered that the smaller you could get the vine, if the vine was balanced at that spacing, the better the wine quality would be.”



“The people who have come to us are the ones that want to take their vineyards to the next level and are willing to try something a little out of the norm to get that done... our goal is to create a harmony between the small plant, the small crop load it carries, and the naturally competitive root system below the surface.”



“To yield the highest-quality fruit, Small Vines relies on a broad range of tools and technologies in their operation, including automated weather tracking equipment... having used the equipment since 1998, Sloan feels that his company has been able to not only produce great fruit, but also maintain a competitive edge in the market.”



SMALL VINES
WINES

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“Under The Radar..”

[but not for long!]

– Accolades for Small Vines Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 2006

“DOUBLE GOLD!!”

2009 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition

“... truly a wine of great density and length.”

Ray Johnson’s Wine Blog, September, 2008

“Deep and rich Pinot with a lot of interesting layers of flavor..”

“Complex Pinot with great structure and flavor. It’s tough to decide whether to drink it or cellar it..”

Score 93 *Pinot Report, July 2008*

“EXCEPTIONAL... lighter color, but perfectly balanced aroma of red cherry; medium weight, but excellent fruit on the palate.”

Dan Berger’s Vintage Experiences, April 2008

“Shows rich cherry fruit, elegant and balance with hints of brown spice.”

5 Wine Stains (Out of 5!)*

“Sleek and seductive with lush cherry fruit, lively acidity, and a caressing texture.”

Pinotfile, July, 2008



– Accolades for Small Vines Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 2006

“Complex Pinot with great structure and flavor. It’s tough to decide whether to drink it or cellar it..”

Score 95 *Pinot Report, July, 2008*

“Strawberry and cranberry notes.”

4.5 Wine Stains*

“Small Vines... under the radar, but not for long!”*

** Tom Simoneau “The Wine Guy” Radio Stations KSRO, KCTC, KBOQ, KKZZ, KMGQ, September, 2008*