

SMALL VINES GO HIGH TECH

Small Vines Viticulture Unveils First-of-its-Kind Specialized Tractor With Demo Aimed at Growers and Winemakers

Sebastapol, Ca (October 2004) Paul Sloan of Sonoma County's Small Vines Viticulture, Inc. (SVV) has announced the arrival of America's first **Caval Tractor**. The ultra-light, state-of-the-art tractor was manufactured in France, modified by Sloan and imported by Lampson Tractor especially for SVV. The Caval's ability to cultivate multiple rows at a time – it can spray as many as 10 rows at once – represents a quantum leap in high-density viticulture. The over the row function, multi-row capabilities, compact design and lower price point make it the most exciting, versatile and cost effective, close-spaced cultivator to come along in years. And SVV has the only one in the U.S.. The company plans to preview the new tractor to growers, winemakers and press in late October (**Actual date to follow**) For further information on this event, please call Paul Sloan at SVV 707-823-0886 or Allan Kelly at Lampson Tractor 707-857-3443.

Explains Sloan, "We are Sonoma County's only viticulture company specializing in close spaced vineyard planting, so it's only natural that we would be on the leading edge of exploring new and better ways to address the specific requirements of high-density cultivation. Bringing the CAVAL tractor to the U.S. marks the culmination of two years' research, negotiation and modification to secure the most cost efficient, high-performance and environmentally-friendly tractor system for our specialized wine growing"

Close Spaced Wine Growing

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 the vine rows were determined by the width of a plow horse. The intensity and 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. Conversely, in California the land availability and existing tractor size mandated wider vine rows. To address the inverse relationship between grape yield and wine quality, California growers typically employed crop thinning (the practice of reducing clusters before ripening) to reduce yields and concentrate flavors. SVV prefers the high-density planting approach. As Sloan 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 when the goal is to produce grapes that will garner 100 x the bottle price"

The CAVAL Difference

"The Caval Tractor is the biggest innovation in close spaced cultivation in years" says Sloan. The tractor, already in use in premier vineyards in Europe, has been modified for the US with a 40 hp Kubota engine. It is half the cost and less than half the size of tractors currently used for close spaced plantings in the US. "One of the gripes about close spacing is the cultivation cost, the CAVAL will go along way towards reducing costs and improving quality" declares Sloan. At only 7ft tall and approximately 2,500 pounds, the CAVAL is road legal, easy to operate and gentle on vineyard soils and precious root systems. In addition to shoot positioning two rows at a time, mowing and seed drilling three rows at a time and spraying up to seven rows at a time the CAVAL also performs hedging, leaf removal, French plowing, compost spreading and fruit hauling. "The only thing it doesn't do is harvest, which we prefer to do by hand" says Sloan.

Small Vines Viticulture

Compelled by the growing demand for close-spaced vineyard specialists, and buoyed by their conviction that close-spaced, compact vines produce the most balanced and refined wines, **Small Vines Viticulture** was launched in 1998. Family owned and operated by Paul and Kathryn McGrath Sloan, SVV specializes in the planning, installation and precision viticulture of close-spaced estate

SMALL VINES MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN WINE QUALITY

Small Vines

The simplicity of the company name reflects the simplicity of the philosophy. Smaller vines produce smaller more intensely flavored grapes and by extension higher quality wine. Every innovation and practice developed by Small Vines Viticulture, Inc (SVV) results from the conviction that superior wine can ONLY come from superior fruit.

High Density Planting

While relatively new in California, (where spacing is typically wide because of land availability and existing tractor size) the practice of controlling grape vines by planting high density vineyards or *petite vignes* (small vines) has been used for centuries in France, where the government limits grape yields in order to promote wine quality. Inspired by the belief that close-spaced, compact vines produce the most balanced and refined wines, **Small Vines Viticulture, Inc.** was launched in 1998. Family owned and operated by Paul and Kathryn McGrath Sloan, SVV specializes in the planning, installation and precision viticulture of close-spaced estate Pinot Noir vineyards in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast AVAs.

Innovative Viticulture

Close-spaced planting is part of a holistic viticulture approach aimed at coaxing the best wine grapes from a particular site. As with all viticulture, the approach is site sensitive. Sloan studied extensively the differences in fog intrusion, temperature spikes and rainfall between Burgundy and California, adjusting his particular approach to high-density planting accordingly. For example, to accommodate California's warmer climate, Sloan uses a unique fruiting height of between 24" and 32"; much higher than in France, where due to the cooler temperatures the grapes sit right at ground level. Explains Sloan, "Early attempts at high-density planting in California failed to adjust for the warmer soils and resulted in overripe or baked fruit qualities in the wine." Raising the fruiting wire to address the radiant heat of California's warmer soils while managing the canopy for better balance between pH and acids, required extensive research and debunked the theories of premier scientists. His drive to innovate, combined with his meticulous attention to site selection, preparation, design and farming has propelled Sloan to the leading edge of high-density viticulture.

The CAVAL Difference

Perhaps the most innovative of SVV's viticulture initiatives is their recent acquisition of the Caval Tractor. Imported from France in 2004, the ultra small, state-of-the-art tractor – the first of its kind in the U.S. -- is specifically designed for close-spaced vineyards (6ft wide or less). Its over-the-row function, multi-row capabilities, lightweight design and lower price point makes it a far superior option to the existing close-spaced tractors, which cost and weigh multiples more than the CAVAL. In short, the ultra-sleek, ultra-modern Caval is the biggest innovation in close-spaced planting to come along in years – and SVV has the only one in the U.S.

The SVV approach includes:

- **Close Spacing:** maximizes vines per acre and minimizes pounds per vine. A formula that sustains profitability and increases quality – critical when growing grapes aimed to sell at 100 x the bottle price of the wine.
- **Pinot Noir Focus:** well suited to the Russian River mesoclimates, the varietal responds well to close spacing as well as to vertical trellising and cane pruning.
- **Innovation:** years of study, research and experience, combined with a willingness to challenge accepted scientific theory, have established Small Vines Viticulture as the preeminent specialist in close-spaced viticulture. From designing and fabricating customized equipment for efficient function in high density plantings to establishing non-traditional fruiting heights for the smaller vines in order to maximize fruit quality, SVV has defied convention in pursuit of quality.

Business Name SMALL VINES VITICULTURE, INC
Ownership Paul Sloan and Kathryn McGrath-Sloan
Established 1998
Location 2160 Green Hill Rd. Sebastopol, CA 95472 or www.smallvines.com
Employees 10 full-time, 40 seasonal
Business Statement Small Vines Viticulture specializes in growing ultra premium Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Syrah in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast AVAs using the European tradition of *close-spaced vine planting*. This sustainable, quality-driven and cost effective approach results in more vines per acre, lower yields per vine and more complexed and balanced wines.

Close Spacing vs Conventional Spacing Close spacing originated in Europe where low vigor soils and the width of plow horses dictated maximum plant density per acre. SVV typically farms 4' x 3' (distance between rows x distance between vines)

Conventional (US) Spacing is wider due to land availability and existing tractor size. Typical row spacing ranges from 6' to 12'

Innovative Approach

- Customized vineyard equipment for close-spaced vine rows
- Non traditional fruiting height to maximize fruit quality
- Revolutionary, over-the-row CAVAL tractor –first of its kind in US.

Expert Consultants In addition to viticulturist Paul Sloan, the following specialists are available to Small Vines clients.

- Daniel Roberts, PhD – Viticulturist
- Alfred Cass, PhD – Soils Analyst
- Mike Bobbit – GPS, Weather Mapping Specialist

Services

- Close Spaced Viticulture
- Conventional Viticulture (possible removal)
- Site evaluation
- Soil Samples
- Varietal selection
- Land preparation
- Vineyard design/installation
- Irrigation
- Drainage
- Harvesting
- Erosion Control
- Custom Farming
- Consulting

Clients: Estate wineries in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast AVA's.

- **Sophisticated Analysis/Technology:** computerized weather tracking, data logging and GPS vineyard mapping aid in site selection and vineyard design, while pressure bomb irrigation ensures more precise watering.
- **Expert Consultants:** soil and climate specialists work with SVV clients to evaluate, prepare, design and farm vineyards.
- **Clean Stock:** only the healthiest, hand-selected plants are used.
- **State of the Art Cultivation:** SVV has imported first-of-its kind Caval Tractor – the state of the art approach to cultivating close-spaced vines.
- **Sustainability:** smaller vines require fewer inputs, take up less land, develop more extensive root systems and live longer.
- **Stewardship:** water conservation, organic fertilizers, hand cultivation and small lightweight and fuel efficient equipment are used to protect and nurture precious resources for future generations

Paul Sloan
President/CEO – Small Vines Viticulture, Inc.

A third generation Sonoman, Paul Sloan experienced the “ah-hah” moment that would prove to be the beginning of Small Vine Viticulture while working as a wine steward at Sonoma County’s popular John Ash Restaurant. During a rare tasting of extremely expensive White Burgundies, Paul tasted his first Le Montrechet. 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, he won the Greenwood Ridge California State Wine Tasting Championship, Professional Division. Recalls Kathryn, “The more Paul learned about 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 JC viticulture program and went to work for legendary grape grower Warren Dutton of Dutton Ranch. It was Dutton who instilled in Paul the value of meticulous preparation and precision viticulture.

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. Paul explains, “Warren wanted me to seize the moment. We were, in a way kindred spirits, both eager to do things better even if it meant doing things differently. He knew what my dream was and he wanted me to take what I’d learned and the contacts I’d made and get going”

In 1998, 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. Small Vines Viticulture specializes in the planning, installation and precision viticulture of close-spaced vineyard estates – predominantly Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Syrah -- in Sonoma County’s Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast AVAs.

“I’m a winemaker’s wine grower” says Paul, “I’m not a production farmer trying for high volume. Everything we do in the vineyard, whether high-density or conventional, is with the goal of producing wines with incredible depth of character and balance.”

Paul and Kathryn live in Forestville with their 14 month old son Dakota and their chocolate lab Shooter.

Pinot Noir vineyards in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley. A former wine steward and winner to the prestigious Greenwood Ridge California State Wine Tasting Competition, Paul Sloan first practiced viticulture under the tutelage of the late Warren Dutton, who encouraged the Sloans to start their own business. SVV clients include Terry Adams, Paul Hobbs, Sonoma Coast Vineyards and Red Car Wines. They are currently installing the estate vines for DuMol Winery. When completed it will be the largest close-spaced vineyard in Sonoma County.

Small Vines Viticulture is located at 2160 Green Hill Rd. Sebastopol, California 95472 or online at www.smallvines.com.

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