



A FAMILY PASSION

“I’m a bit sad,” said Winemaker Luc Morlet, as he surveyed the visible signs of his accomplishments at Peter Michael Winery: the patent-pending “Le Trieur” sorting device and settling tanks that he had engineered himself, the building going up to house the future Pinot Noir from PMW’s new Seaview estate on the Sonoma coast, and the wines still in barrels from the last harvests. “It’s a good thing I get to come back often.”

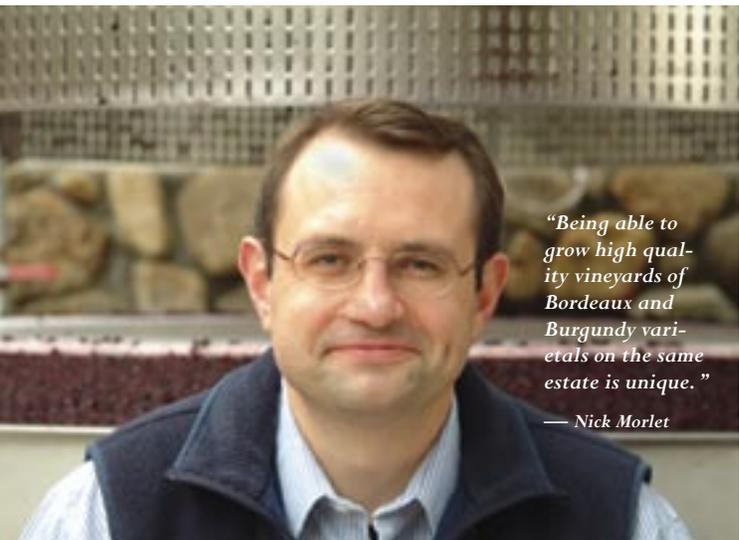
Luc has graduated to consultant for PMW, while joining Staglin Family Vineyard in Rutherford and launching his own label, “Morlet Family Vineyards.” Replacing him as full-time winemaker at Peter Michael is his brother Nicolas Morlet. At 32, Nick is three vintages younger than Luc—the youngest of three wine-making brothers. The middle brother, Paulin Morlet, continues to run the “Champagne Pierre Morlet” family vineyards near Epernay, France. Says Luc, “Of course I would have transmitted my knowledge of Peter Michael winemaking to the next winemaker with pleasure in any case. However, the joy I feel in working with my brother greatly magnifies that pleasure. This joy comes not only from our brotherhood but also because we have shared a common passion for a very long time. Nicolas’ passion for viticulture and winemaking is the same as mine—and the same as that of the Michael family. We come from a family tradition of limited-production and hand-crafted winemaking, which is about the on-going pursuit of ultimate quality and about artistry, not industry.”

This family passion is now blooming with its fifth generation. As children, the Morlet brothers spent all their free time from school working on the family estate. At 40 acres, it was small enough to be managed by the family alone most of the year, but large enough to require the efforts of all its members. By the age of 15, Nicolas Morlet was officially certified as

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PMW’s new Winemaker Nick Morlet, right, with Vineyard Manager Javier Aviña and consulting Winemaker Luc Morlet at left.



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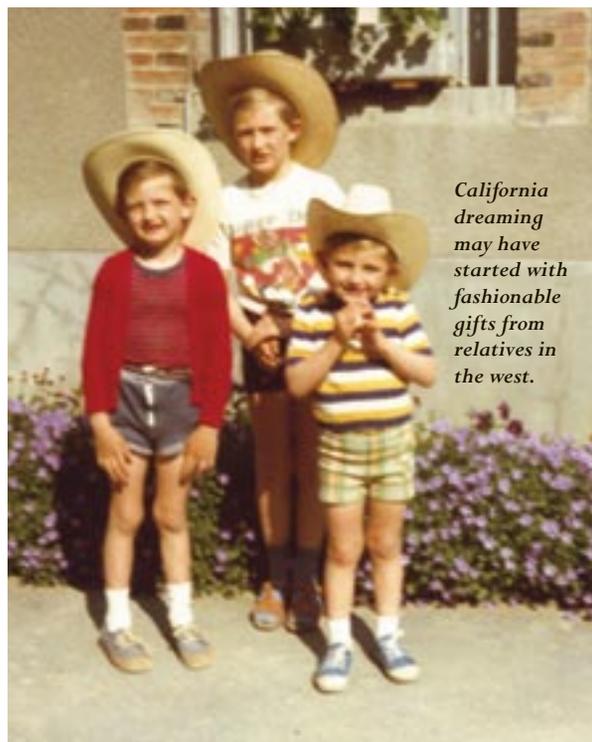
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an expert pruner of vines. Even school was focused on winemaking. The high school had as its motto, “Passe ici avant Mont-Hurlé” exhorting students to tarry awhile before returning to the vineyards. The Ecole Viti-Vinicole de Champagne, where Luc, Nick and Paulin (as well as their father and grandfather before them) studied following high school, was a working wine estate and produced its own Champagne.

Nick remembers their first steps in winemaking: “When we were in our early teens, our father exposed us to all of the winemaking activities— but he didn’t permit us to practice the task of disgorgement on actual Champagne bottles for fear that we would lose too much wine while trying to remove the sediment. We thought he was right, and, at the end of the day, he would have certainly lost more money than he would have gained by using us as labor. Determined, the three of us decided to go through the entire champagne-making process using apples, including a secondary fermentation in the bottle. We then practiced disgorgement for years on our cheap

sparkling cider. Finally in 1988, when we had several vintages of perfectly made and disgorged bottles to show for our efforts, we were allowed to disgorge the actual Pierre Morlet Champagne.”

“Before you settle in an area, you must experience winemaking in many different places” Pierre Morlet had advised his sons. Nick, as had Luc, pursued education and work that immersed him in the classic winemaking techniques of Champagne, Burgundy and Bordeaux. Following his degree in Viticulture, Enology and Wine Business at Lycée Viti-Vinicole de Beaune, Burgundy, Nick worked, as Luc did two years earlier, at Maison Chanson Père & Fils in producing Premiers and Grands Crus of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Then, while working at Margaux’s 2nd Grand Cru Classé “Chateau Lascombes” Nicolas researched the advantages of macerating Cab-



California dreaming may have started with fashionable gifts from relatives in the west.

ernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot in small oak barrels. His thesis on “vinification intégrale” won him honors when he received his Bachelor of Science in Enology from the prestigious University of Dijon in Burgundy (Jules Guyot Institute). “I enjoyed school, being something of a science buff,” says Nick. “But as I studied, I placed everything I learned against the background of all those seasons I spent in the vineyards and cellars. I truly believe in the constant observation of nature and the use of our senses to guide our decisions.”

Nick’s first trip of many to California was in 1994, when he combined agricultural work with two months of traveling to national parks and mountains. This visiting started to become a real move last year, when Nick began a stint at Joseph Phelps for the Insignia and Backus labels, working with Winemaker Craig Williams.

Though Nick was living and working in France, he always followed his brother’s work at Peter Michael Winery closely. His first taste of La Carrière led him to declare, “This is the best Chardonnay in the world I have ever tasted!”

Luc states, “Nick has been unofficially involved with assessing and blending the barrels starting with the 2001 vintage. Even when he couldn’t travel to California, I would send him barrel samples by express carrier and we would talk over the phone as we evaluated their qualities and possibilities.”

“I was seduced by all of the Peter Michael wines,” Nick says, “and I developed the sense that here in California, there is an opportunity to actually discover new terroirs. The Seaview venture into coastal vineyards to produce vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs is tremendously exciting. That kind of viticultural exploration is not available in France anymore. There’s a sense of freedom here. European history can be a big weight on your shoulders. In France, too often, you have to prune, harvest, press or blend a certain way just because it has always been done that way or because of an orthodox regulation. It may not be the best way to express



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— Nick Morlet

the fruit and the terroir. Freedom is crucial to let art express itself. Freedom is vital to achieve the best quality possible.” This passionate approach to classical winemaking with a sense of innovation is natural to Peter Michael Winery’s philosophy. Innovations such as the exclusive use of wild yeast take us more deeply into the legacy begun by Helen Turley and developed by Mark Aubert and Luc.

As Nick walks through the vineyards with Javier and Luc, contemplating the dormant vines, he shows his enthusiasm: “This estate is simply amazing for the beauty of its natural scenery and for its oenological features. Being able to grow high quality vineyards of Bordeaux and Burgundy varietals on the same estate is unique. In France, I had to travel between Bordeaux and Burgundy. I am eager to learn from Javier and my brother about the subtle influences the elevation and the ocean breeze have on the different terroirs of this gorgeous estate— and to experience this diversity for myself.”

Luc agrees: “The integrity of terroir is of utmost importance. To achieve it, the vineyard manager, the winemaker, and everyone associated with the wine must have integrity themselves. It’s a combination of respect for the land and the grapes and having the patience to just be, sometimes, a spectator. This “laissez-faire” approach must continue into the cellars.

“No one knows better than I do the high level of integrity, skill and dedication of the staff that will work with Nick. Enologist Amanda McPhee, senior Cellar Worker Rafael Aviña and Cellar Worker Epifano Esquivel have been living and breathing the Peter Michael style for years,” says Luc. “And of course, there is Javier Aviña, whose 15 years as Peter Michael’s vineyard manager have produced such exceptional fruit, while maintaining a dedication to the environment. In all these people, passion is teamed with skill.

“Sad as I am to leave the estate, I could not ask for a better successor. I simply cannot wait to taste the wines my brother will craft here at Peter Michael Winery.” ■

2006 SPRING RELEASE TASTING NOTES

2004 LA CARRIÈRE

Estate Vineyard Chardonnay



A terroir-driven minerality dominates the aroma: crushed stone, baking

flour and sweet pear. The minerality is highlighted by notes of citrus oils, William pear and lemon. Touches of tangerine and sweet vanilla complete the elegant bouquet. Rich and intense, 2004 La Carrière presents on the palate wonderful concentration and elegance. Its bright acidity and minerality will allow it to age well over the next 7-10 years, much like its Burgundian cousins from Puligny-Montrachet.

Robert Parker, Jr: "The spectacular Chardonnay La Carrière is becoming one of my favorite California Chardonnays as it tastes like a Corton-Charlemagne on steroids... While the 2004 Chardonnay La Carrière does not display the size and power of the 2003, it possesses that extraordinary minerality, orange marmalade, and layered, full-bodied, concentrated palate. This beauty is a great expression of stone fruits and higher elevation, cool climate Chardonnay. It should drink well for 4-5 years. (93-95 points)"

2004 BELLE CÔTE

Estate Vineyard Chardonnay



Distinctly intense, muscular and hedonistic. Aromas of rose, lychee nuts and

citrus blossom come to mind with a background of minerals and spices, accompanied by a final touch of nutmeg and cedar. Full-bodied and creamy, the palate displays a rich, sensual,

seamless texture. High natural acidity and notes of brioche and *pain grillé* complete the mouth feel. Enjoyable now and will continue to develop its unique character for 7+ years.

Robert Parker, Jr: "Elegant and feminine, the 2004 Chardonnay Belle Côte offers aromas of tropical fruit, crushed rocks, sweet white currants, and peaches. Again, it does not have the body or richness of the 2003, but it is dose in style. (92-94 points)"

2003 LES PAVOTS

Estate Vineyard Bordeaux Blend



Saturated ruby color with a hint of purple, 2003 Les Pavots reveals a gorgeous and intense bouquet of red cherry, blackcurrant, blueberry and blackberry, interspersed

with nuances of cedar, tobacco (cigar box), graphite, lavender and sweet vanilla. Very rich and full-bodied, this wine offers the same ripe fruit impressions on the palate. The mouth feel is creamy, with gorgeous velvet and slightly firm tannins, leading to a long finish. 2003 Les Pavots will benefit from another year of cellaring for near term enjoyment and will age gracefully for several decades.

Robert Parker, Jr: "The 2003 Les Pavots (61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Cabernet Franc, 13% Merlot, and 4% Petit Verdot) exhibits notes of melted licorice, tapenade, damp earth, black currants, and cedar. Slightly more herbaceous than the 2004, with notions of barbecued meat as well as blue and black fruits, this full-bodied, dense 2003 may not have quite the potential of the 2002 or 2001, but it is a brilliant effort to consume between 2008-2020. (94 points)"

THE 2005 GROWING SEASON AND HARVEST

By Luc Morlet

The hallmark of the 2005 vintage was its perfect ripening conditions. Winter and spring had been very wet, with some hail during spring, and rain during the mid-May through June blooming period of the Chardonnay vineyards, leading to some shattering. Then during the ripening process we saw a lot of sun and some hot temperatures, but no aggressive heat spikes. The weather remained ideal until the very end of harvest, and the fruit showed great flavors and ripe tannin development.

Most other wineries' valley floor vineyards had some big, even huge, yields. PMW was not in that category thanks to its unique mountain location and well-drained soils. Our crop yield remained at a very satisfactory low level, allowing us to get an excellent expression of our different terroirs.

A common theme has emerged for our white wines: high acids across the board combined with excellent quality fruit, great concentration and wonderful ageing capability. For our red varieties, the sunny and warm-to-hot weather gave us the perfect conditions to reach the "crescendo" of physiological ripeness. We were able to pick calmly, as each block was getting fully ready.

The wines are currently undergoing malolactic fermentation, after a long, healthy and complete alcoholic fermentation. Blind tastings this spring should confirm the unique character of the 2005 vintage of Peter Michael Winery. Stay tuned!

"Mountain vineyards, classical winemaking, limited production"



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SAVE THE DATE!
SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 2006
CHARITY FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT



HANDS AND HEARTS
FOR CANCER
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