

MARK WEST WINERY

VINTAGE
2007

Est.  1978

MARK WEST

Pinot Noir

APPELLATION CALIFORNIA

— VINTAGE 2007 —

PREPARED & BOTTLED BY MARK WEST WINERY, GRATON, SONOMA COUNTY, CA

MARK WEST WINERY SPECIALIZES IN PRODUCING GREAT VALUE CALIFORNIA PINOT NOIR WITH VARIETAL INTEGRITY AND QUALITY. MARK WEST'S PINOT NOIR APPEALS TO A WIDE RANGE OF WINE DRINKERS WHO ENJOY AN AFFORDABLE EVERYDAY PINOT NOIR AT HOME OR BY THE GLASS IN RESTAURANTS.

THE COMPANY

COMPANY DETAILS

- Parent Company: Purple Wine Company, LLC.
- Founder: Derek Benham, CEO
- Winemaker: Alex Cose
- Location: 9119 Graton Road, Graton, CA 95444

BRAND DETAILS

- Mark West Winery was founded in 1978 and acquired by Purple Wine Company in 2001.
- Suggested national retail price of the California Pinot Noir: **\$12.99**
- 1 of every 10 bottles of Pinot Noir sold in the U.S. is Mark West
- Additional wines: Russian River Pinot Noir (\$35), Central Coast Chardonnay (\$10)
- Spokespeople: Derek Benham, founder; Alex Cose, winemaker

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION DETAILS

- Mark West Pinot Noir is made from 100% California Pinot Noir. Vineyard sources include Santa Barbara, Central Coast, Sonoma Valley, Napa Valley, Mendocino County and others.
- Stainless steel fermented, aged in 100% neutral French oak
- Produced in an facility using water and energy conservation practices while reducing Green House Gas emissions
- Distributed in all 50 states

CURRENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- "Best of Category" and voted "#1 light New World Red" by *The Wine Trials* in 2008
- *USA Today* Thanksgiving Wine Pick 2008
- *Food & Wine Magazine* "Best American Wines \$15 & Under: Merlot & Pinot Noir" in 2008
- Nominated for "Steal of the Year" for *Sunset Magazine's* 2007 Western Wine Awards

PINOT NOIR GROWTH IN THE US

- Pinot Noir is still the fastest growing varietal in the U.S. in 2008. In dollar sales, Pinot Noir grew 18%. By volume, Pinot Noir increased 21.2% (IRI, Infoscan)



DEREK BENHAM: FOUNDER

A second generation Californian, Derek Benham grew up in an agricultural environment in the great San Joaquin Valley. While working summers on his Dad's farm, he began to dream of building his own wine company.

After graduating from UC Berkeley in 1982, Derek went to work in sales for a small winery near Lodi. Eventually, he assumed the role of General Manager and learned all aspects of running a wine company, culminating in the sale of the winery to La Crema Winery. In 1990, Derek founded the Codera Wine Group and created the Blackstone Merlot brand. After seven very successful years, he sold the brand in 2001 to Constellation Wines.

No longer trapped by preconceived notions, and having a knack for knowing what the consumers wanted, Derek set off on his next project. He would cast off the misconception that wine was only for the privileged. And to prove his point, he would bring the most elusive of grapes – Pinot Noir– to the people.

Derek launched the Mark West brand in 2001 with a Pinot Noir worthy of the grandest of occasions but priced for the greatest occasion - today. Mark West is one brand under Benham's parent company, Purple Wine Company.



MARK WEST



ALEX COSE: WINEMAKER

After six years of the banking industry, Alex Cose decided that perhaps his true talent and where he would find his greatest personal reward was working with wine. In 1992 he decided to work a harvest internship at Monticello Vineyards in Napa Valley and see if the wine business had more to offer.

Through the weeks of being covered in grape juice, performing small maintenance, bottling, and a fermentation research project, his dream became more of a possibility and he began to make plans. Alex entered California State University, Fresno in the spring of 1993. Before graduating in 1996, he had completed another internship with Montevina Winery in Plymouth and at Joseph Phelps Winery in St. Helena.

Fortunate beyond his wildest dreams, Alex was selected in May 1996 for a harvest internship at Peter Michael Winery in Calistoga. His fortune continued when his internship developed into a full-time position. For six years, he was part of the artisanally focused winemaking team responsible for producing one of California's most sought after Cabernet Sauvignons - *Les Pavots*, as well world-class single vineyard Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and the first vintages of Pinot Noir at the winery.

In 2002, Alex was hired as winemaker for Mark West, with the goal of bringing high-quality, varietally-accurate wines to consumers targeted at value pricing. The challenge was one Cose could not ignore and felt compelled to tackle. Pinot Noir lovers have benefited from his talent from day one.



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MARK WEST PINOT NOIR RECOGNIZED AS #1 IN BLIND TASTING TRIALS

GRATON, CA, October 6, 2008 - Mark West Pinot Noir was recently recognized as the #1 wine in its category of wines with a high quality to price ratio, as a result of a series of brown-bag blind tastings organized for The Wine Trials, a study and subsequent book by wine critic and author, Robin Goldstein.

The Wine Trials, released in early summer 2008, highlighted 100 wines under \$15 that beat out \$50-\$150 wines in a blind tasting by 500 wine experts and everyday wine drinkers. Over 560 different wines were tasted in multiple cities across New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Texas. All wines were tasted blind in an attempt to prove Goldstein's theory that wine preferences were not in direct correlation to published wine scores and price.

Scientific evidence was derived from a series of studies in which tasting notes were compiled, analyzed, and reviewed by a team of scientists, statisticians and economists from such esteemed organizations as Yale University, Brown University, Stockholm School of Economics, Harvard, and MIT. These findings show that wine actually tastes better when the taster knows it's expensive: "the taste of money" as Goldstein calls it. The unconventional wine book has received press from publications such as *The New York Times*, *Newsweek* and *USA Today* responding to the blind tasting trials.

Eleven categories were assigned and the #1 wine of each category was highlighted. Mark West Pinot Noir earned the #1 rank in its category of light New World reds. Significantly, out of 560 wines and 11 category winners only two red category winners were from the U.S. One of those was Mark West Pinot Noir, the other, Avalon Cabernet Sauvignon. Both wines are made by winemaker Alex Cose and share a parent company, Purple Wine Company. Mark West Pinot Noir was voted #1 out of 50 wines in its category, which included pinot noirs.

Goldstein published The Wine Trials hoping that he can help the everyday wine drinker "stop spending too much money on wines they think they should like, and start spending less money on wines they really do like." Also included in the book is a guide to doing brown-bag tasting at home and a full list of the other 99 wines under \$15 that beat out \$50-\$150 wines.

The Wine Trials is published by Fearless Critic Media and distributed by Workman Publishing. For more information visit www.thewinetrials.com.

Samples available upon request. For more press information or images, please contact: Kendall Johnson, Charles Communications Associates at kendall@charlescomm.com or (415) 701-9463. www.charlescomm.com.



MARK WEST

GREAT ECONOMIC NEWS: EVERYTHING'S COMING UP PINOT FOR MARK WEST WINERY

Graton, CA, January 30, 2009...While the economic crisis may be gloom and doom for some, it's been a boom for wine companies like Mark West Winery, who deliver great quality at a value price. As the dominant player in the Pinot Noir space, the company is proud to share the good news that:

- 2008 sales increased 45% over prior year
- December 2008 were 46% greater than prior year
- Mark West is now the largest selling single SKU of Pinot Noir in the U.S.

"Our business proposition has always been to deliver single varietal, hand-crafted wines at a value price," shared founder, Derek Benham. "We had great traction going into 2008 which set the stage for us to respond well to the economy driven demands of the savvy consumer looking for a great wine."

No strangers to success, Derek Benham is a veteran of the wine world, who sold his first varietally driven venture, Blackstone Winery to Pacific Wine Partners in October 2001. This success was due to understanding consumer trends and predicting the next one. When he acquired Mark West, he knew the benefits of a focused varietal approach and chose Pinot Noir as his next hot wine. It certainly didn't hurt that his efforts coincided with the film *Sideways*, which brought great attention to the California varietal, putting the relative unknown grape on the map in America.

Choosing to work with high-end winemaking genius turned value-driven craftsman Alex Cose (formerly of Peter Michael Winery), was also prophetic for the times. Cose has applied his talents to Mark West, which has raised the wine's profile and popularity among consumers, restaurateurs and critics alike.

One boost to sales in 2008 was the fact that Mark West Pinot Noir was featured in *The Wine Trials*, a book by Robin Goldstein. In the book, Goldstein challenged sommeliers to blind taste value-driven wines along side their high-end sisters. The 2005 Mark West Pinot Noir beat the old guard hands down - ranking #1 of 52 wines. Not bad for a wine at a remarkable price of around \$12 a bottle.

Media in the fourth quarter highlighting consumer trends toward purchasing wines under \$15, combined with the fact that the economic woes hit right before the holidays proved to be another boost for Mark West in 2008. The holidays traditionally are a time when Pinot Noir sales are at their peak since the wine pairs so well with turkey, salmon, lamb and other favorites. Consumers flocked to Mark West to share a popular, affordable and trusted brand at the holiday dinner table.

In addition to the perfect storm of varietal foresight, craftsmanship, and an economy that drove consumers into the value-priced market place, Mark West scored points as it hit its stride in 2008 on the green frontier, gaining recognition for its energy efficient, water-conserving, eco-conscious winemaking facility in Graton. The facility, which works under the name of Sonoma Wine Company, was recognized by the EPA and became an accredited Sonoma County Green Business in 2008.

For more information on Mark West wines and the people behind them, contact Kendall Johnson, Charles Communications Associates, press@charlescomm.com or 415.701.9463.

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MARK WEST

MARK WEST PINOT NOIR TEAMS UP WITH RALEY'S MARKET TO CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Graton, CA, April 17, 2009... Everyday at Mark West is Earth Day, where its winery's energy and water conservation practices are built into the eco-conscious winemaking process. Although everyone has been touting their green report cards of late, Mark West has quietly focused more on producing an exceptional value Pinot Noir for under \$15 than elaborating on the number of awards they've won for their energy and water conservation measures as well as greenhouse gas emissions reductions. We, as their PR firm think that it's something to talk about hence our release to you

This Earth Day however, the green initiatives are reaching beyond the winery practices and being embraced by Raley's customers in stand-up displays throughout California for an Earth Day kick off promotion. Mark West has designed "plantable" coasters, which have been embedded with basil seeds and will be tied around the neck of bottles of Mark West Pinot Noir. When consumers are done using the coasters, they can be planted in soil and yield this most versatile of summer herbs.

"Mark West's Pinot Noir has always been about providing everyday wine drinkers with an affordable and enjoyable Pinot Noir. We are happy to be able to provide Raley's customers with a fun way to enjoy Earth Day by reminding them that even at the value level, you can still find great, eco-friendly wine." Says Ron Janowczyk, Vice President of Sales. "Raley's commitment to sustainability, local producer and the environment made them a perfect partner to work with on this Earth Day special offering."

About Mark West

Mark West specializes in producing great value California Pinot Noir with varietal integrity and quality. Mark West's Pinot Noir appeals to a wide range of wine drinkers who enjoy an affordable everyday Pinot Noir at home or by the glass in restaurants. Mark West is one of the top five best selling Pinot Noirs in the country and was selected as one of the "Most Popular Pinot Noirs" in Wine & Spirits Magazine's Restaurant Poll 2009. The winery in Graton has been recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency, granted an Energy Star Award & became an accredited Sonoma County Green Business in 2008.

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