

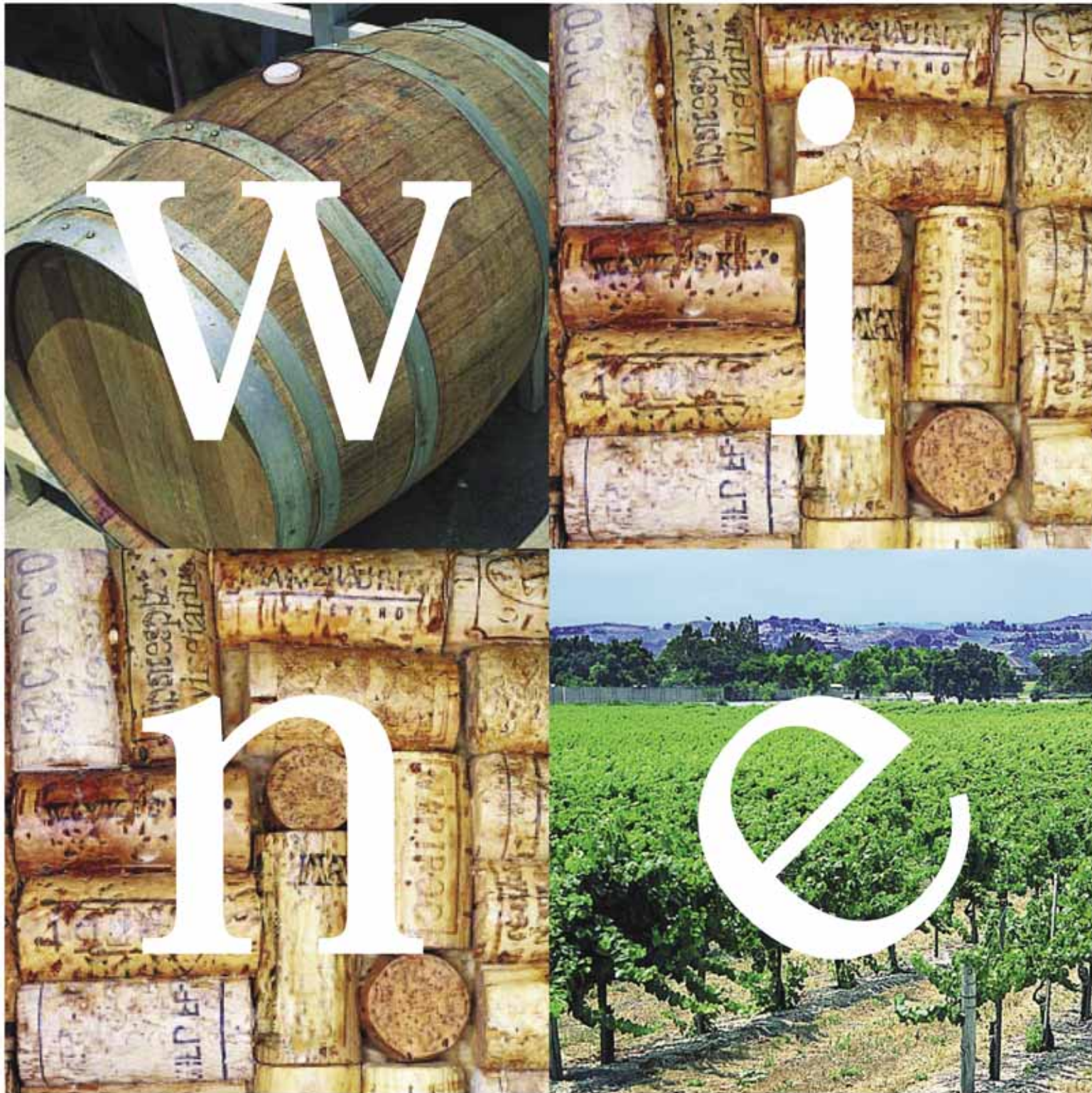
A Special Supplement To After Five Magazine



Shasta-Cascade Viticulture Association Presents

VINEYARDS OF THE NORTH STATE

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Autumn 2006

Man on a mission in perfect place

Roger Matson is a man on a mission – he wants to change how people think about wine.

He's in the perfect place to do it. The son of celebrated Shasta County winemaker Oscar Matson, he's now in charge of the venerable Matson Vineyards and free to experiment with different grapes, flavors, varieties and cultivation techniques.

With a bachelor's degree in fermentation science from the University of California at Davis and several years of experience at Mendocino County wineries, Matson is all about following his muse and exploring the exceptionally large world of wine – a world that happily extends beyond Chardonnay and Merlot.

Take a stroll through Matson Vineyards in east Redding and Matson will soon be pointing out varieties like Aglianco, Tannat and Tempranillo that he's hoping will gain a foothold in the north state, both because of their character and the fact that they do well with Redding's hot summers.

"I think we're missing the boat in this type of climate by not attempting to grow these different varieties," Matson said. Plus, with more varieties on hand, there are more opportunities to mix and match and develop intriguing blends. "I don't know why there isn't more curiosity about the way flavors come together."

In addition to the five acres of vineyards in Redding, Matson Vineyards is expanding with an acre of vines in Inwood, a small valley at about 2,000 feet elevation near Shingletown. Matson has planted Viognier and Cabernet there and has hopes of eventually building a tasting room on the property, which he refers to as Wisteria Vineyards.

Shasta Claret, a lively blend of Zinfandel, Merlot, Syrah, Ruby Cabernet and Petite Sirah grapes, has been the workhorse for Matson Vineyards and remains its biggest seller. Other blends include Shasta Glacier, a white table wine, and Stellar Red, a wine created in tribute to the late Stella Matson, Oscar Matson's wife, who passed away in 1992. Stellar Red combines Merlot, Zinfandel, Grenache, Barbera, and Valdiguié grapes.

In 1999, shortly after returning to the north state to help his father operate the winery, Matson bowed to entrenched consumer demands and introduced three varietals: Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Shiraz.

Matson has not lost his enthusiasm for mixing and matching and this fall will introduce Shasta Ensemble, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and late-ripening Petit Verdot grapes.

Oscar Matson planted the first vines in 1981 and established the winery in 1984, making it Shasta County's oldest winery. A former Shasta College instructor of German, French, Spanish and English, the senior Matson would frequently have his winery be the focal point of social



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Varieties: Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Viognier, Petite Sirah Total vines: 3,600

gatherings where many a song – and a few glasses of wine – were shared.

Community involvement has always been a big part of life at Matson Vineyards, including an annual harvest feast to thank the friends who pitch in each year to help with harvest and the crush.

Matson is joined in his efforts by his wife, Keiko Goto, a food scientist and nutritionist who will begin teaching at Chico State University this fall. For the winery, Keiko serves as a wine analyst and marketing manager. She has taken a keen interest in pairing Matson wines with food from her native Japan. The couple have a daughter, Erika.

-Jon Lewis