Lamorinda Nouveau – First Impressions of the 2011 Harvest

www.lamorindaweekly.com

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided by Bill Scanlin

late." Parker said became very

concerned because he knew he

would have to leave his grapes on

the vines longer for them to reach

Local wines were tasted, many of them made from the 2011 harvest, the wine 'nouveau' – by reference to the Beaujolais nouveau, the French wine ritually sold mid-November, two months after the harvest. Although 2011 has been Bill Scanlin has been harvesting in reported as a bad yield year in the neighboring Napa Valley due to This year's harvest was 90% of his cold weather, the mood of Lamorinda winegrowers did not appear to a cool summer and some early rain be dampened.

courtyard and warmer interior of

casual chic.

winegrower to brag about her first were very nice, well formed and 'Nouveau' at the Lamorinda Libations that night. "This is our first The sugar percentage was about 'Nouveau' and our first wine," said the Moraga resident and owner of Rheem Valley Vineyards— Haag lost her harvest to raccoons last year but was able to bring in 700 yards, may have been more impounds this year.

"My harvest this year was better than last year," said Mary Leigh Miller, who produces wine under her Bare Ash label, "2010 was my first harvest; my vineyard is only three years old."

for some time. The industry's we fell further behind and by Au-

he monthly gathering of grape production was very light gust 1st we were about one month local winegrowers and this year, she said, "Grapes in genfriends on December 15 was a eral were in demand and wineries cheerful affair, and despite the cold were scrambling after growers for weather guests drifted between the their grapes...normally it is the other way around." She added that the Moraga Barn, the women in Captain Vineyards harvested five festive holiday attire and men in and a half tons of grapes this year, down from eight tons last year. "For us, dry farming and the nature of the year did affect our quantity, but, I believe the quality will be amazing," said the enthusiastic winegrower.

Deer Hill Vineyards' owner Lafayette for more than 10 years. maximum. "Like last year, we had a couple weeks before we har-Carol Haag was not the last vested," he said, "but the clusters full, and the grapes tasted good. 24, so we may have a little less alcohol— which is okay and in the right range anyway."

Dave Parker, of Parkmon Vinepacted by the cold in Moraga, like the Captains. "Our yield was about 30% less than last year, and the sugar content is also lower," said Parker. "We had a damp and cool winter last year, the bud-breaking (when little leaves start appearing Susan Captain of Captain Vine- on the bare vine shoots) was two to yards has been a keen observer of three weeks late," he recalled, the local grape and wine markets "with the cool and mild summer



Photo provided by Susan Captain

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weather in October. Luckily, warmer days finally arrived in cluding gold medals, at blind-tastmid-August and September that really helped the maturation process. "What we harvested is very high quality," said Parker, who is happy to produce wines that will have a lower alcohol content but more flavor. "As my palate develops I appreciate more this type of wine, closer to the European wines, and they go fantastically well with food."

According to industry predictions, less grapes and less wine mean higher prices. "If the market supports it, the price of wine will go up within 18 months to two years when we release these wines," says Parker. "Everybody in the area has seen a drop in quantity. The evolution of the market might also be impacted by how the climate affected the southern hemisphere; we might see more wines coming from South Africa or Australia." But Parker is not concerned for the Lamorinda growers. "Beyond the appeal of drinking a

local wine, our products sell well because we win a lot of prizes, ining events," says the winemaker.



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Signed, Mary from Orinda

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Driving becomes more expensive

Driving becomes more dangerous Driving in a vehicle without proper alignment is an expensive enterprise. Not only does flawed alignment decrease gas mileage and tire life, it also adds stress to other vehicle components, including steering equipment and overall structural damage. Ideally, your ve-

Dear Jeff: During my recent visit to the that they meet these criteria is how service professionals ensure your ve-

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Jeff Jovce

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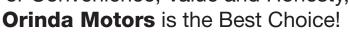
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