

Bargain Wines

San Francisco Chronicle

By Leslie Sbrocco – May 13, 2004

Fun, fresh sips with packaging to match

A big hippo, a little pink box, a red truck, a sailboat, a heap of kangaroos, a dancing bull and a caped devil -- this week's wine picks sound like a roundup of children's toys. Nothing could be further from the truth, since they're names and label icons on friendly, fun, easy-drinking wines.

...Another Sonoma County winery,

Dry Creek Vineyard, is making waves with its 2003 Chenin Blanc (\$8).

The signature sailboat label is eye-catching, but many wine drinkers overlook it because they don't realize there's beauty inside. Chenin Blanc is a classic white grape planted in South Africa and in parts of France's Loire Valley, where the wine is often made in a sweeter style. In California, however, it's almost a forgotten variety.

Luckily, Dry Creek Vineyard has not given up on Chenin Blanc and produces the best domestic version from grapes grown in Sacramento's Clarksburg area. This wine is dry and snappy with exotic fruit notes and floral aromas.

Owner Kim Stare Wallace recommends Chenin oyster shooters -- simply fill a shot glass with the Chenin Blanc, add a raw oyster, then down the hatch.



Dry Creek
VINEYARD