



Ryan Beauregard checks the progress of one of Beauregard Vineyard's 2006 zinfandels.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Back to the Ranch

Winemaker Ryan Beauregard returns to Bonny Doon roots

✓ *Wineries*

By STACEY VREEKEN

svreeken@santacruzsentinel.com

Ryan Beauregard grew up roaming the rural Bonny Doon countryside and scampering around the vineyards at Beauregard Ranch, which his great-grandfather bought in 1949.

Last year Ryan came full circle, returning with his family to Pine Flat Road, where wines are offered proudly bearing the Beauregard name. Today, he is the fourth

generation to carry on the tradition of growing grapes and making wine in his family.

"It was normal. I didn't realize how special, how amazing it was until I clicked with wine. I was about 24 years old," Ryan says with a wistful tone of voice.

At 34, Ryan is married to Rachel, a former nurse, and parent to year-old Nora. In the space of one year, he got married, fathered a child and used 27 semi-trucks to move his wine business to Bonny Doon, a busy time that still leaves him a bit breathless.

"We're 100 percent family run," says Ryan. "My dad is the grower. I'm the winemaker, and

my wife runs the business."

Ryan got his start in 1998 with the help of his dad, Jim Beauregard, who gave him surplus fruit from the vineyard and supported early efforts. Ryan made wine in his carport, worked at Hallcrest Vineyards, and began making bigger and bigger lots of wine on his own, leasing space at area wineries.

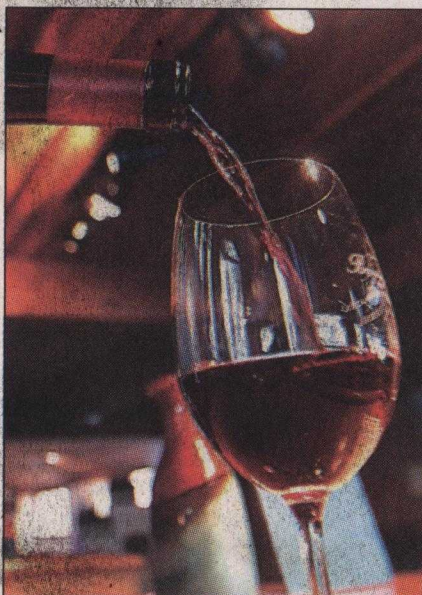
"He was incredibly supportive," Ryan says of how his dad supplied fruit, money for barrels and encouragement in a business that can take 10 years to turn a profit. "He got us to where we're at."

"Jim always wanted it for one of



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Beauregard Vineyards sells its wine at its Bonny Doon tasting room, Shopper's Corner, Vino Primo and online.



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Ryan Beauregard pours a glass of pinot noir at the Beauregard Vineyards tasting room in Bonny Doon.

IF YOU GO

PASSPORT WEEKEND

More than 50 Santa Cruz Mountains wineries will open their doors Saturday during the Spring Passport to the Wineries. Passport holders are able to tour the facilities, meet winemakers and sample the vintages, including wines poured only for participants in the Passport program. Passports are valid until all wineries have been visited.

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Also the third Saturday of January, July and November.

WHERE: Ahlgren Vineyard, Alfaro Vineyards, Aptos Creek Vineyard, Bargetto Winery, Beauregard Vineyards, Black Ridge Vineyards, Bonny Doon Vineyards, Burrell School Vineyards, Byington Winery, Cinnabar Vineyards, Clos LaChance Wines, Clos Tita, Cooper-Garrod Vineyards, Cordon Creek, David Bruce Winery, Domenico Wines, Downhill Winery, Equinox Methode Champenoise, Follom Ranch Vineyard, Farwood

the vineyard and supported early efforts. Ryan made wine in his carport, worked at Hallcrest Vineyards, and began making bigger and bigger lots of wine on his own, leasing space at area wineries.

"He was incredibly supportive,"

Ryan says of how his dad supplied fruit, money for barrels and encouragement in a business that can take 10 years to turn a profit. "He got us to where we're at."

"Jim always wanted it for one of the kids," says Rachel.

Ryan has a brother Andre who helps his dad run Shopper's Corner. His mom Gwendolyn works as a hair stylist in Santa Cruz, and Jim's wife, Amie, runs a horse ranch across the street from winery.

After Randall Grahm of Bonny Doon Vineyards decided to move his tasting room to Santa Cruz's Westside, Ryan negotiated to take over the space and shared the Pine Flat Road property with him for six months. Moving into the tasting room in Bonny Doon was a natural fit.

Operations now are concentrated in one site. Ryan gets grapes from his dad's Bonny Doon vineyards, makes the wines and operates the tasting room in the 100-year-old bar once called the Lost Weekend.

"Our whole thing is terroir,"

Ryan says of the philosophy that wine should reflect its geography and soil. He advocates "minimal



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Ryan Beauregard pours a glass of pinot noir at the Beauregard Vineyards tasting room in Bonny Doon.

impact winemaking," using as little technology as possible, "letting the wine become wine without forcing it." The fruit goes straight into barrels after pressing, with little or no additives, no racking and long barrel and bottle time. He especially favors new American oak.

The biggest factors for Ryan are where the grapes are grown, what grape clones are used, minimal impact winemaking and oak. "Age on the lees" gives the wine a heavy mouth feel that Ryan favors.

"The flavor of Bonny Doon is flint," he says.

The grapes his father grows dominate the Ben Lomond subappellation, which includes Bonny Doon, and has its own flavor profile emphasizing a mineral aspect.

"We take the tech out of wine, and the wine becomes better," Ryan says

SEE RANCH ON C2

the third Saturday of January, July and November.

WHERE: Ahlgren Vineyard, Alfaro Vineyards, Aptos Creek Vineyard, Bargetto Winery, Beauregard Vineyards, Black Ridge Vineyards, Bonny Doon Vineyards, Burrell School Vineyards, Byington Winery, Cinnabar Vineyards, Clos LaChance Wines, Clos Tita, Cooper-Garrod Vineyards, Cordon Creek, David Bruce Winery, Domenico Wines, Downhill Winery, Equinox Methode Champenoise, Fellom Ranch Vineyards, Fernwood Cellars, Fleming Jenkins Vineyards & Winery, Glenwood Oaks Winery, Hallcrest Vineyards, Heart O' The Mountain, Hunter Hill Winery & Vineyard, La Honda Winery, La Rusticana, Loma Prieta Winery, Martin Ranch Winery, McHenry Vineyard, Michael Martella Wines, Natal Vineyards, Naumann Vineyards, Nicholson Vineyards, La Nebbia Winery, Pelican Ranch Winery, Picchetti Winery, Pinder Winery, Pleasant Valley Vineyards, Ridge Vineyards, Roudon-Smith Winery, Santa Cruz Mountains Vineyard, Sarah's Vineyard, Savannah-Chanelle Vineyards, Silver Mountain Vineyards, Sones Cellars, Soquel Vineyards, Storrs Winery, Testarossa Vineyard, Thomas Fogarty Winery, Trout-Gulch Vineyards, Vine Hill Winery and Zayante Vineyards

COST: \$40, purchase at any participating winery or from the Santa Cruz Mountains Wineries Association office, 7605-A Old Dominion Court, Aptos

DETAILS: 685-VINE, www.scmwa.com

RANCH

Continued from C1

with a grin, describing how they even crushed grapes using their feet. "The wines are developed not rushed."

His latest focus is on sustainability, which not only includes wine practices but also how you interact with your neighbors, an important issue for fellow Bonny Doon residents. Ryan looks around the tasting room property and envisions a park filled with native landscaping.

Coming from the family ranch, working the land is in Ryan's blood and gardening is a passion. But he also loves surfing, sailing, hiking and riding his bike along West Cliff Drive.

Avanti is a favorite restaurant, and the couple enjoys wines from Soquel Vineyards, Mount Eden, Ridge and Windy Oaks as well as their own.

His voice warms with respect when he talks about Rachel. "She's on it 100 percent. My mind floats around quite a bit but Rachel is always really focused."

An Aptos native, Rachel grew up around science with her dad, Cabrillo College chemistry instructor Harry Ungar, but gave up nursing to

WHERE TO FIND BEAUREGARD WINE

Ryan Beauregard likes to say, 'Fed-Ex is our main distributor,' and he's got a point, as Beauregard wines are only available at select spots.

■ Beauregard wine is available only at the tasting room in Bonny Doon; Shopper's Corner in Santa Cruz, his father's store; Vino Prima wine shop, Santa Cruz; and by the glass at the Crow's Nest restaurant at the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor. Otherwise you can order the wines online at www.beauregardvineyards.com.

work at the winery and doesn't regret a thing.

Rachel runs the tasting room, the wine club and balances the books while Ryan is in the cellar. They work hard and put in long hours but neither is complaining.

"We really like being around each other," says Rachel.

The admiration is mutual with Ryan, who says the key to success is having a team, a family whose members have each other's backs, no matter what.