



Wine On Line

March 5th, 2009 at 8:33 pm

Wine Bytes

in: [French](#), [Beaujolais](#), [syndicated columns](#), [italian](#), [California](#), [Wine Reviews](#), [Blogroll](#), [Argentina](#), [Chile](#), [Uncategorized](#)

Wine Bytes

Special To: Wine On Line

by Our California Correspondents;

Monty and Sara Preiser

JAQs to Open

And speaking of gambling, it isn't often that a wine label inspires us toward play. In fact, after many years frequenting many a casino, we have almost stopped tossing for that eee-yo-leven or waiting for that ace in the hole. However, after only a few minutes spent examining the labels of the new Napa winery JAQK CELLARS, we were ready to invite a crowd over for some black jack or dice. But on second thought, since our corkscrew was already in hand we settled for a glass of the wine while watching reruns of the still brilliant Maverick on cable TV.

As for the wine bottles themselves, some are labeled in silkscreen and some employ antiqued paper labels, but all are at once graphically grabbing and whimsical - the packaging for this line of wine is almost irresistible. This was no longer a surprise once we learned that two of the founders of JAQK Cellars are graphic designers Katie Jain and Joel Templin, whose resume credits include Coke and Target. 'Nuff said.

But all the best marketing means nothing without the wine. The third founder is winemaker Craig MacLean, whose pedigree includes Chappellet, Markham, Cain, Spring Mt., plus of course his own MacLean label. Add on company president Bernard La Borie, whom we know from the days when he was instrumental in starting Darioush, and you have a team on which you can place your proverbial bet. We tasted the following reds:

-2006 JAQK Soldiers of Fortune Shiraz, Napa Valley (\$50). This wine is bright and bold with juicy blueberry, spices, orange peel, and a hint of spearmint in the upper front palate. After aeration we found the finish to be long, silky, and mouth coating.

-2006 JAQK Black Clover Merlot, Napa Valley (\$48). Dense red and black plums yielding to vanilla and dusty dry spices make up the front to mid palates. Black cherry pit tartness pervades the finish. This wine wants, and deserves, some lay-down time, or, at the very least, double decanting.

-2006 JAQK Bone Dance Merlot, California (\$29). Of the three wines we cover here, this was the best bargain and our favorite - both label and wine. It shows lots of red cherries, black raspberry, vanilla, and pie spices. It begs for grilled beef but went beautifully with our capellini and red pepper sauce. Soft tannins envelop the upper palate, while mouth watering acidity rounds out the mouth.