



# SKY WRITING

## Musqué Business

The sauvignon blanc that's also a perfume. **BY F. PAUL PACULT**



**WHITE WINE** Dry Creek 2003 Taylor's Vineyard Sauvignon Musqué, Sonoma County, California (\$25)

With smells of green melon, jasmine, lemon zest and yellow roses, this is the most musqué California sauvignon blanc I've met of late. Made of 93 percent sauvignon blanc musqué and 7 percent viognier, it has tastes of pear, persimmon and nectarine. ★★★★★ (out of a possible five) stars.



**RED WINE** Gran Araucano 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon, Colchagua Valley, Chile (\$35)

I tasted this powerful yet subtle beauty twice and loved it both times. Made from 100 percent cabernet sauvignon, plump and berry-rich Gran Araucano is named for the Chilean estate on which the grapes are hand-picked. Serve with grilled sirloin, and don't answer with the phone. ★★★★★



**SPIRITS** Xellent Swiss Vodka, Switzerland (\$34)

An aromatic banquet of the highest order, the bouquet bursts open like a piñata at a birthday party for Barry Bonds with scents of fresh-from-the-garden herbs, black tea and crystals/minerals. With lithe, silky flavors of toasted grain and nuts, this is one of the few superpremium vodkas worth the expense. ★★★★★



### Impact BEVERAGE

**Stareway to Heaven** In 1972, Sonoma County pioneer winemaker David S. Stare, proprietor of **Dry Creek Vineyard**, released his first fumé blanc—style (meaning “smoky” or “flinty”) wine after touring the Loire Valley. Stare's version—like his astute vision—of sauvignon blanc was based directly on Pouilly-Fumé, the highly aromatic sauvignon blanc produced in the Pouilly-sur-Loire district. Pouilly-Fumés were renowned for their tongue-on-stone qualities of squeaky-clean dryness, razor-blade acidity, and fig- and gooseberry-like fruitiness.

More than three decades later, Kim Stare Wallace, Don Wallace and William Knuttel (Dry Creek Vineyard's next generation) added yet another chapter to the legacy using an obscure strain of sauvignon blanc called **sauvignon musqué** (pronounced “moos-kay”). After years of combining sauvignon musqué with the juice from their standard sauvignon blanc grapes, Knuttel suggested that they try bottling sauvignon musqué on its own. The result is an

unusually musky and earthy white wine that evokes impressions of grapefruit one moment, papaya and guava the next, and casaba melon the next.

“It was time for us to expand the Fumé Blanc line at Dry Creek Vineyard,” Knuttel says over dinner in a mid-Hudson Valley steakhouse. “The next logical step was to showcase **this sensational grape**. Think it works?” I gulp the Taylor's Vineyard Musqué as though it's the last wine I'll ever drink. “Man,” I think but don't say, “this stuff shimmies on the palate like Jeff Gordon barreling into the final turn at Daytona.”

*Dry Creek*  
VINEYARD